Stageland
PRICE 15 CENTS
APRIL 1911

THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

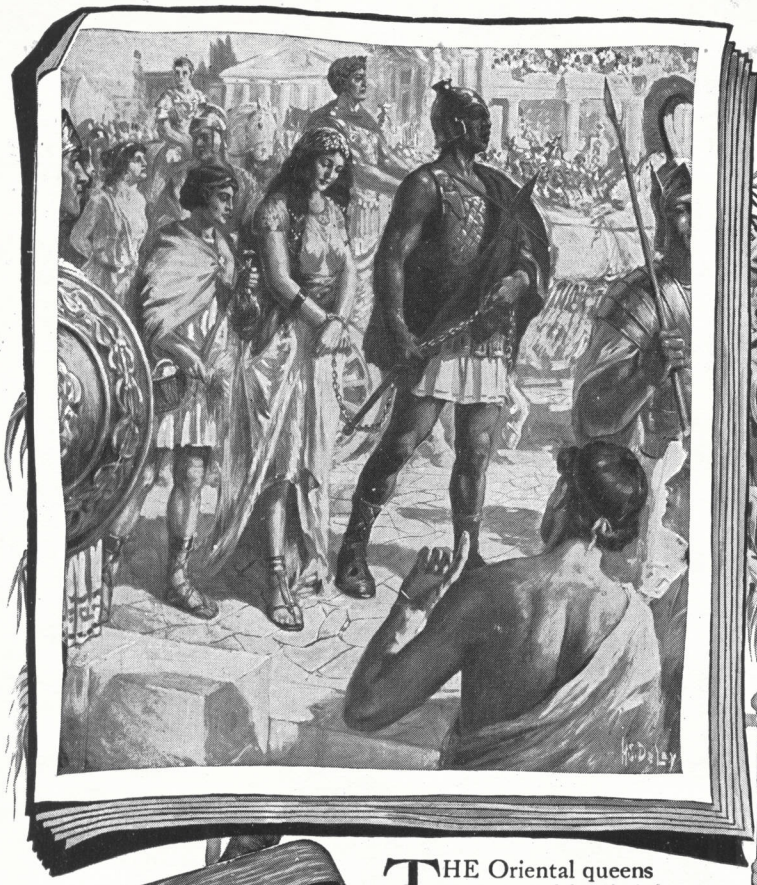
"The Girl of the Emeralds"

Complete Novelette by John H. Whitson in this Issue

THE STORY-PRESS CORPORATION
NORTH AMERICAN BLDG. CHICAGO

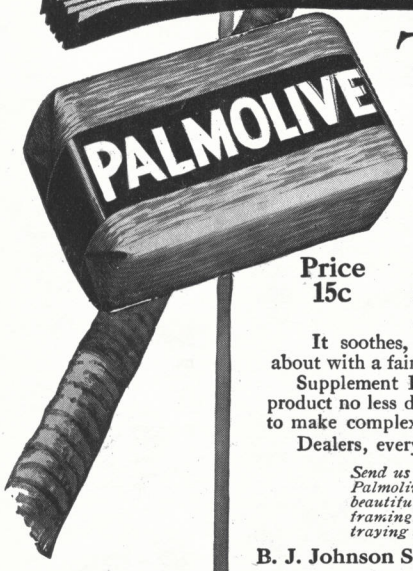
COPYRIGHT 1911 BY THE STORY-PRESS CORPORATION CHICAGO
ENTERED AT STATIONERS HALL LONDON ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

COLOR PHOTO OF MARY GARDEN AS SALOME



Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, Arabia, was captured in 273 A.D. by the Roman Emperor Aurelian, who besieged Palmyra and utterly destroyed it. The picture shows her being marched in chains in the triumphal procession of Aurelian into Rome.

Price 50c



Price 15c

THE Oriental queens were noted for their beauty.

Zenobia, especially, was famed for hers. She, like others, daily used both palm and olive oils to whiten, soften and invigorate the skin.

Much of her beauty came from her great care in this respect.

You can add to *your* good looks in a like effective manner by using—every day—**Palmolive Soap**—*the modern combination* of these Oriental oils.

It soothes, cleanses, beautifies the skin and fills the air about with a faint, alluring Oriental perfume.

Supplement Palmolive Soap with **Palmolive Cream,** a product no less dainty or less good. The two together never fail to make complexions perfect. Don't go without them longer.

Dealers, everywhere, sell both.

Send us twelve 2-cent stamps and the band from the Palmolive Cream carton and we'll send you a set of six beautiful artist's proofs, size 11½x14½ *(ready for framing), made from original paintings in oil, portraying several historically famous Oriental queens.* (145)

B. J. Johnson Soap Co., 412 Fowler St., Milwaukee, Wis.

MARY GARDEN as "Salome." *Copyrighted Photograph by Mishkin, New York.* Color supplement, April, 1911, issue, THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE.

Do You Know Jim Hands?

Richard Washburn Child discovered him on the job in the stitching-room of a shoe factory down in New England. He is the most human character in present day American fiction. His very latest story is in The Red Book Magazine for March, on sale at all news-stands.

Alfred Henry Lewis runs Mr. Child a close race in the same issue with a New York story of a young millionaire and a policeman, entitled, "Young Mr. Cruger and Jack."

Moreover, as it is on the 17th of March that all Irish-Americans celebrate, what more fitting than that the March Red Book Magazine should have a corking St. Patrick's Day story by the greatest living Irish story-teller—Seumas Mac Manus? Its title is "How the Dagoes Kept the Day"—at New Nineveh, Pa.

Now and again there is published a story that one can not forget. Such a tale is "The Eternity of Forms" by Jack London, which also appears in The Red Book Magazine for March. It will take its place unquestionably among the classics of American fiction.

Samuel Hopkins Adams is another big man who may be depended upon always to tell a new story. "The Million Dollar Dog" which appears in The Red Book Magazine for March, is that sort of story.

And there is George Hibbard whose "girl" stories you have read. He has never written more charmingly than in "The Mind Readers," which appears in The Red Book Magazine for March.

All of which is to say nothing of an east-side humorous story by Mary Heaton Vorse; an army story by Paul H. Harris; a story of international intrigue by Larry Evans; a story of the juvenile court, by Avery Abbott; a story of heroism by Ralph W. Gilman; another tale of the "Great Grafting Syndicate" by Thornton Chambers; a story of a shipping-room "kid," by Frances Ludwig; a story of finance by Gordon Thayer; a story of Alaska by Dave King; and a Dramatic Department that is up to the minute, by Louis V. De Foe.

A reading of The Red Book Magazine for March will demonstrate why it is regarded by those who know as the foremost fiction magazine in the world.

The March Red Book Magazine

At All News-stands — Price, 15 Cents

THE BLUE BOOK
MAGAZINE

The Blue Book Magazine

For May

A ROMANCE OF TELEGRAPHY entitled, "The Girl Operator," is the unusually attractive novelette which distinguishes THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE for May. It is a gladsome tale of the trials and triumphs of a telegraph operator; a charming love-affair develops by means of the magic wires; fascinating complications grow out of that situation; and these variously entangled mysteries are worked out in a most diverting fashion. Beside this complete novelette, we have selected a really remarkable collection of short stories for our next issue. Noteworthy among these are, "The Stolen Submarine," the third adventure of "The King of Knaves;" Matt Bardeen's exciting experience with sharks while building a breakwater in Samoa; "Rubies and Sapphires," an especially interesting exploit of Watts the "Unriddler." There will also be about twenty other tales—stories of widely varying character but of an invariably fine quality.

CONTENTS FOR APRIL, 1911

COLOR SUPPLEMENT—MARY GARDEN AS SALOME..... Photograph by Mishkin, New York

STAGELAND .....Thirty of the Latest Pictures of Plays and Players

THE MYSTERY OF SUPERSTITION RANGE ..... John H. Whitson.....1121
The uniquely interesting history of the girl of the Emeralds is detailed in this complete novelette.

MRS. SPRIGGS' DOMESTIC INCLINATION ..... Zenda Warde.....1173
The fantastic adventures of some shipwrecked people on a raft in mid-ocean

"THE KILLING"..... W. Bert Foster.....1183
How a bit of good fortune saved a bookkeeper who had unwisely "played the ponies."

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF MATT BARDEEN ..... Frederic Reddale.....1191
No. IV.—A FRESH WATER EPISODE. What happened when the Master Diver undertook to retrieve a shipload of copper billets sunk in the Thames.

DUTY..... Joseph W. Cox.....1194
An exciting episode of an imaginary invasion of the United States by the Japanese.

FAIR IN LOVE..... Agnes Boulton.....1203
A comedy of courtship.

THE BITERS AND THE BITTEN..... Richard Barker Shelton....1209
How an "informer" captured a convict—and caught a Tartar.

THE KING OF KNAVES..... H. M. Egbert.....1213
No. II.—THE TREASURE OF SPANDAU. The strange fashion in which a large number of German artillery shells came to be loaded with gold pieces.

BROWN'S HETEROGENEOUS HATCHERY ..... Ellis Proctor Holmes.....1218
An affair of eggs—hen's eggs, ostrich eggs, and serpent's eggs.

OLD MAN SIMMS..... Kingsbury Scott..... 1224
A fine narrative of a storm on Lake Michigan and a daring rescue by an old tug-boat captain.

SEÑORITA INTRIGUE ..... Harold C. Burr 1233
The romance of a Yankee Girl and a South American Officer.

NEEGAN'S DEBT ..... John Barton Oxford.....1238
How a prize-fighter rewarded the man who had saved his life.

HOLLY OF "BIG NINE"..... Frank X. Finnegan.....1243
No. VI.—A WEDDING FEAST DELAYED.

THE UNSEEN HAND..... J. A. Tiffany.....1252
The strange story of a curious plot; its temporary success and final failure.

A TEMPEST IN A TRUNK..... Guy C. Baker 1258
Watts again unriddles a mystery and aids the Attorney General in a "trust-busting" campaign.

HIS DAY OFF..... Nalbro Bartley..... 1264
An appealing story of an old reporter and his wedding anniversary.

THE WATCH OF FATE..... Paul H. Harris.....1270
Dramatic episodes of an American soldier's life at home and in the Philippines.

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF A DIPLOMATIC FREE LANCE
No. 1.—WHEN THE FOX STOLE THE BAIT. Clarence Herbert New.....1278

THE WHISTLING WHANG..... Annie Hinrichsen..... 1292
An affecting description of an old soldier's experience "in politics."

THE TRIAL SPIN..... Earl Hennessy.....1300
How a staid old dame becomes converted to the automobile habit.

THE KIDNAPPER..... Virginia Depuy Holton.....1304
Romance flies in an aeroplane,

REQUIRED BY CONTRACT..... Frederick B. Linton.....1310
How an inventor outwitted an over-reaching business man.

Copyright, 1911, by the Story-Press Corporation. Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, Eng. All rights reserved

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. Foreign postage $1.00 additional. Canadian postage 50c.

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 news-stands, 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, 158-164 State Street, CHICAGO

LOUIS ECKSTEIN, President CHARLES M. RICHTER, Business Manager

RALPH K. STRASSMAN, Advertising Manager, 1172 Fifth Avenue Building, New York

R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 201 Devonshire St., Boston. 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.

Rexall
"93" HAIR TONIC
Two Sizes, 50c. and $1.00
Invigorates the Scalp-Nourishes the Hair Roots
Your Money Back if it Doesn't
Sold and guaranteed by Only One Druggist in a place. Look for The Rexall Stores
They are the Druggists in over 3000 towns and cities in the United States and Canada.
UNITED DRUG CO., BOSTON, MASS. CHICAGO, ILL. TORONTO, CANADA
COPYRIGHT, 1910, UNITED DRUG COMPANY

STAGELAND

"Chantecler." MAUDE ADAMS, as Chantecler.
Photograph by White, New York
Copyright, 1911, by Charles Frohman

"Chantecler"

By Edmond Rostand

It was a fowl plot. CHANTECLER is supported by his harem of hens in the fond belief that it is his own matutinal crow which calls forth the glories of the dawn. One day, however, it happens that a pretty little HEN-PHEASANT takes refuge from the hunters in his barn-yard and this feathered adventuress starts trouble in the harem by a shameless flirtation with SIR CHANTECLER. She entices the Lord of the Gallinae to a five o'clock (in the morning) tea given by a fashionable GUINEA-HEN. There the giddy HEN-PHEASANT induces the cock-sure CHANTECLER, as a pledge of his love for her, to put this question as to the cause of the sunrise to the test, by omitting to crow next morning. He does so, learns that he is not the lord of creation and for the time being his proud *panache* no longer waves Then there are other chicken-hearted plots and conspiracies. The NIGHT-OWLS conspire against CHANTECLER in revenge for his reputed summoning of the sun—upon whose appearance, they are every day obliged to go to roost. These shady villains endeavor to introduce a GAME-COCK at the polite GUINEA-HEN'S little function and, arming him with murderous spurs, have him kill CHANTECLER in combat. These divers feather-brained schemes work out in their several ways, many other barn-yard birds and beasts—a CAT, a BLACKBIRD, a PEACOCK, a NIGHTINGALE, a HEN-TURKEY and sundry lesser poultry play characteristic roles. At the end, in a chastened but still gallant spirit, CHANTECLER is glad to return to the wives of his bosom.

Produced by Charles Frohman

MAUDE ADAMS, as "Chantecler."
Photograph by White, New York. Copyright, 1911, by Charles Frohman

Scene from "Chantecler." MAY BLAYNEY, as the Hen Pheasant, and MAUDE ADAMS, as Chantecler. Chantecler shows the Hen Pheasant his power in making the sun rise.

Photograph by White, New York. Copyright, 1911, by Charles Frohman

This and the other half of the picture on opposite page show a scene from "Chantecler," where Chantecler

is about to begin battle with the Game Cock. *Photograph by White, New York. Copyright, 1911 by Charles Frohman*

"Trelawney of the 'Wells'"

By Sir Arthur Pinero

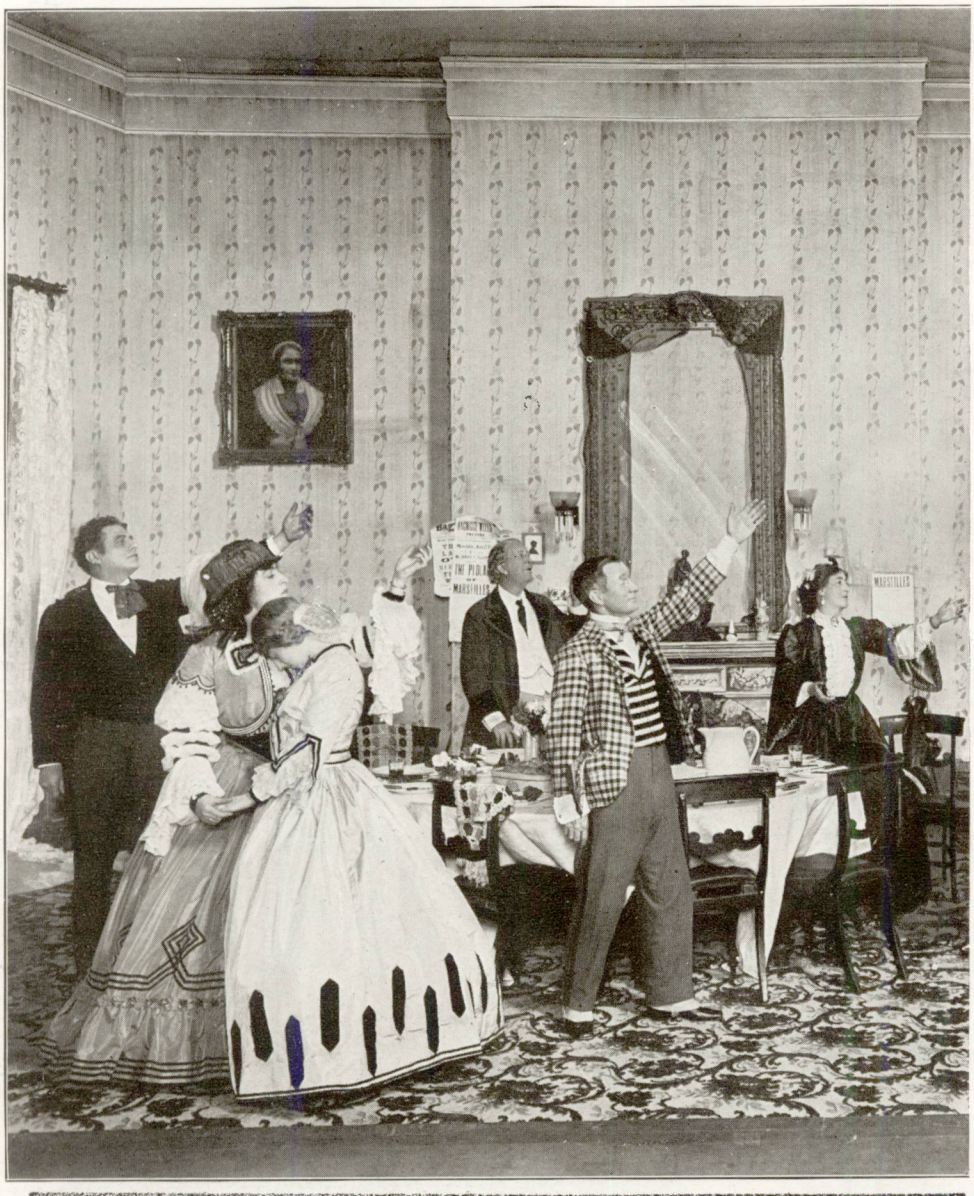
ROSE TRELAWNEY, one of a company of actor-folk who play in a theatre at the "Wells," a London watering place, is engaged to a timorous young man named ARTHUR GOWER. ROSE is asked to make a visit at the house of ARTHUR'S grandfather, SIR WILLIAM GOWER, the Vice Chancellor—a blustering old martinet whom she finds to domineer most shamelessly over ARTHUR GOWER, CAPTAIN DE FOENIX, CLARA DE FOENIX and the other members of his household. While at SIR WILLIAM'S, some of ROSE'S theatrical friends visit her late one night. Their high, histrionic hilarity disturbs the irascible SIR WILLIAM; he appears in a rage; and presently ROSE returns to her native theatric heath. There, however, distracted by her love for ARTHUR and by a longing again to taste the joys of conventional respectability, ROSE languishes and allows her art to deterioriate. Soon thereafter, SIR WILLIAM, who had been an ardent admirer of Edmund Kean, calls upon ROSE and sees her in the interesting "stage atmosphere" and among her many attractive fellow Thespians. ROSE shows SIR WILLIAM some personal relics of Edmund Kean and he is eventually won over to a truer appreciation of things theatric and to a real liking for these children of Momus. As an evidence of his change of heart, he undertakes to finance the production of a play by the unsuccessful actor TOM WRENCH—and becomes reconciled to the marriage of grandson ARTHUR to the actress ROSE TRELAWNEY.

Produced by Charles Frohman

Act II. "Trelawney of the Wells." ETHEL BARRYMORE, as Rose Trelawney. *Photograph by White, New York. Copyright, 1910, by Charles Frohman*

Act II. "Trelawney of the Wells." CHARLES WALCOT, as Sir William Gower, goes behind the scenes to visit ETHEL BARRYMORE, as Rose Trelawney, his son's fiancée, and is made to recall his own youthful days.

Photograph by White, New York. *Copyright, 1910, by Charles Frohman*



This and the other half of same picture on opposite page show a scene in Act I. "Trelawney of the Wells." ETHEL BARRYMORE, as

Rose Trelawney, says good-by to the lodgers in Brydon Crescent as she departs to visit the family of her fiancé in Cavendish Square.
Photograph by White, New York. Copyright, 1910, by Charles Frohman

"Green Stockings"

By A. E. W. Mason and George Fleming

Green stockings are supposed to be worn by Irish girls at the betrothal or marriage of a younger sister. CELIA FARADAY has become tired of green stockings, for she has had to wear them for each of three younger sisters, and in whimsical rebellion she invents a love affair with a certain imaginary COLONEL SMITH. To carry out the deception she announces that COLONEL SMITH has been ordered to Africa and then proceeds to write *billets doux* to him. Presently, however, to put an end to her troublesome imposture, CELIA is heartless enough to murder COLONEL SMITH by the simple device of inserting his death notice in the *Times*. But before this, one of her little love-letters to "COLONEL SMITH" has actually been mailed by an officious meddler; it reaches a real COLONEL SMITH in Africa and a little later CELIA is horrified to have that gentleman present himself This flesh-and-blood officer pretends to have been a friend of the dead COLONEL of CELIA'S fiction and proceeds to tell harrowing tales of the last days of the late lamented nonentity CELIA has actually to put on mourning and is otherwise made to pay for her elaborately embroidered mendacity. Soon, however, the real COLONEL SMITH falls in love with her and the green stockings are cast aside forever.

Produced by Liebler & Co.

Act I. "Green Stockings." MISS MARGARET ANGLIN, as Celia Faraday, burns the army list.
Photograph by White, New York

Act II. "Green Stockings." MAUDE GRANGER, as Aunt Ida, and MARGARET ANGLIN, as Celia Faraday, congratulate themselves over their disposal of the myth of the "Colonel." *Photograph by White, New York*

This and the other half of same picture on opposite page show a scene from Act III, "Green Stockings." IVOR DAWSON, as Bobby Tarver; RUTH ROSE, as Phyllis; GEORGE WOODWARD, as Admiral Gryce.

CROSBY LITTLE, as Celia's married sister; MARGARET ANGLIN, as Celia Faraday; RUTH BOUCICAULT, as the widowed sister of Celia; MAUDE GRANGER, as Aunt Ida, and CHARLES GARRY, as Mr. Faraday. Celia reads the announcement of the "Colonel's" death. *Photograph by White, New York*

"The Happiest Night of His Life"

By Junie Mc Cree and Sydney Rosenfeld

Music by Albert von Tilzer

OFFICER FLANNIGAN was an Irish policeman with red hair, whose uniform had been stolen by a peddler of sausages This horrible loss caused him for the nonce to jump his job and become a butler for MRS RICKETTS—a lady who was giving a reception in honor of the birthday of her daughter JANE. Now this reception was quite the most extraordinary of social functions. Strange things happened, funny things happened, romantic things happened. MINNIE RANDOLPH, a Chicago widow; DICK BRENNAN, a New Yorker disguised as a parson; HARRY JELLIMAN, a Pecksniffian bachelor, and many other nimble-tongued people help the happenings along in a most vivacious fashion. DICK BRENNAN has trouble in maintaining his ecclesiastical pose; MR. JELLIMAN takes a drop too much and has difficulty in keeping up his sober, celibate poise. There is much scintillant badinage both sung and spoken. Notable among the songs is the duet "Oh, You Chicago, Oh, You New York."

Produced by Frazee and Lederer

Act II. "The Happiest Night of His Life." VICTOR MOORE, as Dick Brennan, and ANNABELLE WHITFORD, as Minnie Randolph. *Photograph by Hall, New York*

Act II. "The Happiest Night of his Life." The scene of the garage dance.
Photograph by Hall, New York

Act I. "The Happiest Night of His Life." MAE PHELPS, as Mrs. Ricketts; VICTOR MOORE, as Dick Brennan, and ANNABELLE WHITFORD, as Minnie Randolph.

Photograph by Hall, New York

Act II. "The Paradise of Mahomet." GRACE VAN STUDDIFORD, as Bengaline, singing "The Joys of Love."
Photograph by White, New York

"The Paradise of Mahomet"

By Robert Planquette and Henri Blondeau

Adapted by Robert B. Smith and Harry B. Smith

On the quay of Constantinople is a café kept by a former French music-hall singer named CLARISSE and her niece, the blithe and beauteous BENGALINE. Of course such piquant damsels in so picturesque an atmosphere, are by no means allowed to remain in dull seclusion; on the contrary, their mad-cap matrimonial affairs are varied, quaint and surprising. Then there are other people of divers nationalities, characters and proclivities. NOAH VALE, an American chauffeur who is a consummate and inveterate fun-maker; MABOUL, a Turk, who is sadly hen-pecked in his harem; ALPHONSE, a Frenchman of sorts; PRINCE CASSIM, an Oriental potentate who entertains a gorgeous assemblage amid the Lucullan luxuries of his gardens. Besides these, there are many other gay and glittering people of lesser note. And one and all they sing—sing singly, sing in duets, sing in choruses—continually, joyously, charmingly. Among the more notable songs are, "When Two Eyes Look Into Mine," by Miss Van Studdiford and George Leon Moore as BENGALINE and PRINCE CASSIM; "You're So Different from the Rest," by Maude Odell and Robert Pitkin as CLARISSE and NOAH VALE; and "I Can't Get Enough," by the last named.

Produced by Daniel V. Arthur

Act II. "The Paradise of Mahomet," MAUDE ODELL, as Clarisse and HARRY MAC DONOUGH, as Maboul.
Photograph by White, New York

Act I. "The Paradise of Mahomet." GRACE VAN STUDDIFORD, as Bengaline, singing "Rose of the Orient."
Photograph by White, New York

Act I. "The Faun." MISS JULIE OPP, as Lady Alexandra Vancey.
Photograph by White, New York

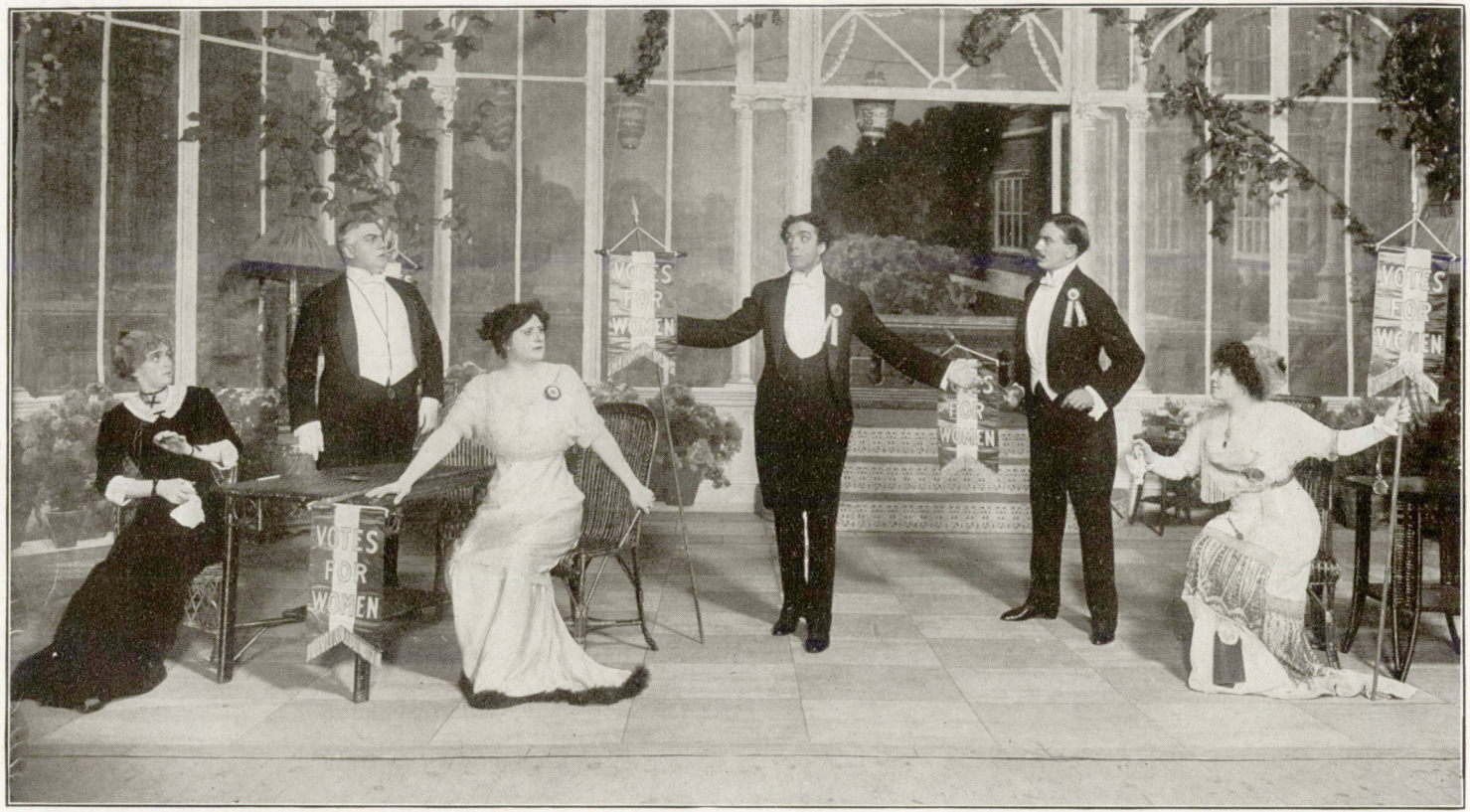
"The Faun"

By Edward Knoblauch

LORD STONBURY has lost all his money on the race-track and is about to commit suicide. He arranges his affairs and is just pointing the pistol at his head when he is startled by a strange noise in his garden. Raising the window, he is astonished to discover that a fantastic creature—FAUN, the God of shepherds, no less—has wandered into London and taken refuge by the fountain in his garden. This surprising being (who is impersonated by MR. FAVERSHAM) interests LORD STONBURY exceedingly and the two fall into whimsical converse. FAUN laughs at LORD STONBURY'S stupidity in losing his fortune on horses, and as he, FAUN, knows all about all animals, he offers to instruct STONBURY as to the true abilities of every race-horse in England. In return for this favor, LORD STONBURY agrees to dress up the FAUN as a human being and to introduce him to society. Under this arrangement LORD STONBURY is able to build up his fallen fortunes and the FAUN, as PRINCE SILVANI, is made acquainted with the race of human beings. To the simple Arcadian intellect of SILVANI the genus *homo* appears a very quaint, curious and illogical race. He finds the wrong people married, and engaged to be married; and although his blunt rusticity of speech shocks them horribly, he contrives to rearrange these ill-assorted matings in a way better calculated to insure happiness—and then hies him back to his woodland wilds.

Produced by William Faversham

Act II. "The Faun." WILLIAM FAVERSHAM, as the Faun, in man's attire, finds JULIE OPP, as Lady Alexandra Vancey, cold, and attempts to arouse some warmth in her.
Photograph by White, New York



Act II. "The Faun." WILLIAM FAVERSHAM, as the Faun, tells the suffragettes that they are no worse than other silly women.
Photograph by White, New York

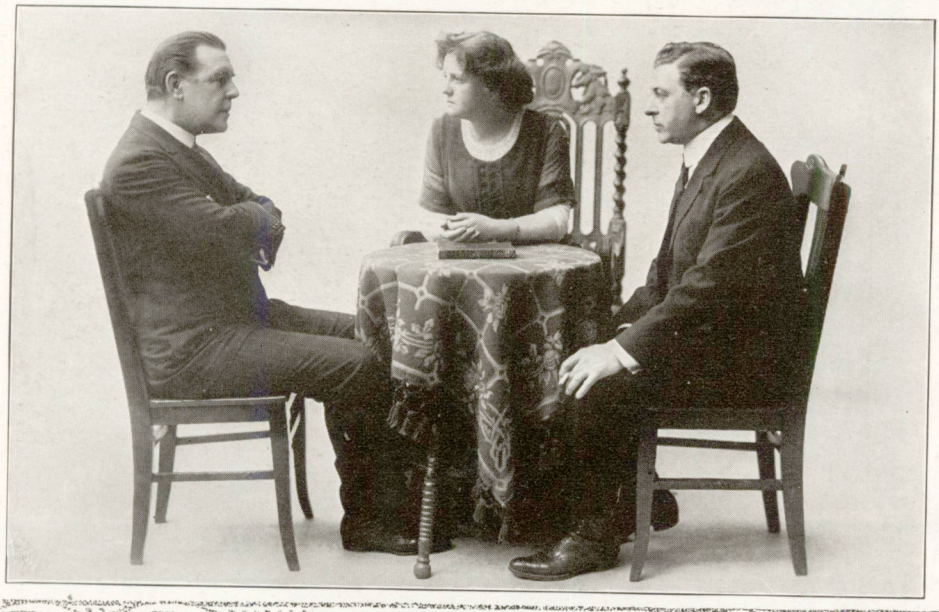
Act I. "The Faun." WILLIAM FAVERSHAM, as the Faun.
Photograph by White, New York

"The Havoc

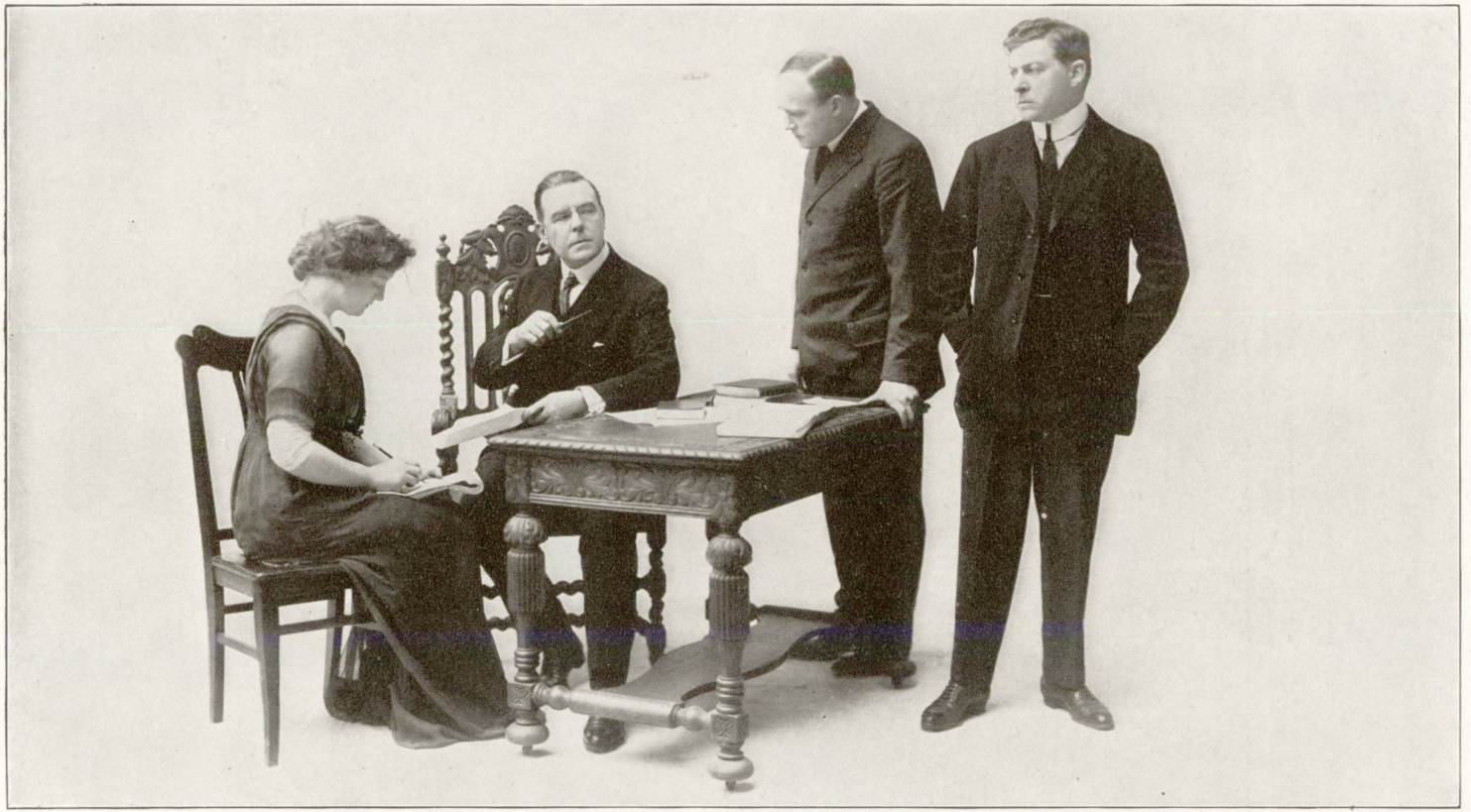
By H. S. Sheldon

RICHARD CRAIG and his wife KATE have been living together in peace and contentment, but gradually CRAIG'S business has encroached upon his leisure so that he is unable to maintain a proper husbandly devotion At this point, a poet named PAUL HESSERT becomes a member of the CRAIG *menage* and an attachment springs up between the poet and the wife CRAIG presently becomes aware of the state of affairs and agrees—upon one condition—to divorce his wife, in order that she may marry HESSERT. This condition is that he may live with them, exactly as HESSERT had lived in the CRAIG household As a last resort, KATE and HESSERT agree to this plan and it is carried out Very soon, however, KATE discovers what a thing of shreds and patches her newly acquired husband is, and she begs to return to her first "life-partner." CRAIG puts her to work in his office as a stenographer, drives HESSERT (who has been caught in an attempt at embezzlement) from the country, and in a final denunciation of the man, delivers a fine Philippic against HESSERT and all such workers of "havoc."

Produced by Henry Miller



Scene from "The Havoc." HENRY MILLER, as Richard Craig; LAURA HOPE CREWS, as Kate; FRANCIS BYRNE, as Paul Hessert. Craig having discovered the guilt of his wife and their boarder Hessert, plans that his wife may divorce him and marry Hessert, provided that he may return as the boarder. *Photograph by White, New York*



Scene from "The Havoc." LAURA HOPE CREWS, as Kate; HENRY MILLER, as Richard Craig; DANIEL PENNELL, as Denton, and FRANCIS BYRNE, as Paul Hessert. Having engaged his former wife as stenographer, Craig instructs his clerk to see that Hessert (who succeeded him as husband), having confessed to embezzlement, is kept in charge of a detective until he leaves the country.
Photograph by White, New York.

This and the other half of same picture on opposite page reproduce a scene from "The Havoc." HENRY MILLER, as Richard Craig, FRANCIS BYRNE, as Paul Hessert, and LAURA HOPE CREWS, as Kate.

Having secured a confession from his wife and their boarder, Craig threatens to kill them both if they do not agree to his plans for the future.
Photograph by White, New York

"The Scarecrow"

By Percy MacKaye

GOODY RICKBY, a reputed witch, determines to avenge herself upon JUSTICE MERTON for a wrong he had done her twenty years before. In the furtherance of this plan, she builds a scarecrow out of a broomstick, a poker, a pumpkin, a flail and some other things. Then she summons THE DEVIL to help her. DICKON (which is a New England name for His Satanic Majesty) appears and endows the SCARECROW with the semblance and attributes of a man—all except a soul. GOODY RICKBY (who is also called BLACKSMITH BESS) now disguises this make-believe automaton as foppish young LORD RAVENSBANE and, to attain her vengeful ends, sends him to win JUSTICE MERTON'S daughter, RACHEL. With DICKON as guide and mentor, the SCARECROW, LORD RAVENSBANE (who is ignorant of his infernal origin) wooes and wins RACHEL MERTON. That witch-created Frankenstein, LORD RAVENSBANE, is ennobled by RACHEL'S love and companionship, but DICKON now shows him to himself in a magic mirror which reveals him as the mere thing of sticks and straws that he is. At this point moreover, rather than carry out the Satanic plan of his marriage with RACHEL, LORD RAVENSBANE rebels against DICKON. This rebellion costs the poor SCARECROW his life, but it gains for him what he had hitherto lacked—a Soul Thus just as he dies, he is born.

Produced by Henry B. Harris

Act II. "The Scarecrow." EDMUND BREESE, as Dickon; FOLA LA FOLLETTE, as Rachel Merton, and FRANK REICHER, as Lord Ravensbane. *Photograph by White, New York*

Act I. "The Scarecrow." ALICE FISHER, as Goody Rickby, the witch, and EDMUND BREESE, as Dickon, the devil, bring to life FRANK REICHER as the Scarecrow, "Lord Ravensbane."
Photograph by White, New York

"The Scarecrow." The Devil, disguised, tells the company that the witch has escaped.
Photograph by White, New York

THE BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE

VOL. XII APRIL, 1911 NO. 6

The Mystery of Superstition Range

THE STORY OF THE GIRL OF THE EMERALDS

By JOHN H. WHITSON

Author of "THE WINGS OF MARS," "THE CASTLE OF DOUBT," "THE RAINBOW CHASERS," etc.

THE GIRL OF THE EMERALDS meets with a most exciting series of adventures, out in the wild, desert region of the Superstition Mountains. The story of her romance is no ordinary "Wild West" tale, but is delightfully unusual and entrancingly mysterious. How she first meets her lover; how he rescues her from Black Thompson, the outlaw; how they discover the strange fate of her long-disappeared brother; how the secret of the emeralds is at last disclosed—these and many other elements are combined to make a narrative of absorbing interest. We know you will find it one of the most entertaining novelettes we have ever published.—THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I

THE French tell us that it is the unexpected which happens. And to Fred Edgerly it seemed that certainly nothing ordinary could occur in that land. The blue hills had a hazy vagueness which might hide anything; and the name, "Superstition Range," of itself suggested mystery. Where he had seen the hills near at hand, stripped of their blue mistiness, they had looked ancient, wrinkled, bald, burnt-out, as if they were very old men hobnobbing senilely over the history of a strange past.

Twenty or thirty, perhaps forty, years before, the red hunter had trailed his game and fought the encroaching white man up and down those notched blue gorges. Now the red men were "good Indians," or herded on government reservations. The whistling elk were gone, and most of the deer. On some inaccessible peaks, a few mountain sheep were said to exist; there were still sage grouse; and jack rabbits abounded. Also, the previous night, Edgerly had heard coyotes give tongue, as if a hundred of them serenaded his lonely campfire.

The sand was deep, and here trailless; his horse "pluff-pluffed" through it wearily, with dripping flanks. The new saddle leather creaked. The coiled rope at the saddle-bow was also new, and stiff as a ship's hawser. Even an experienced cowboy could not have hurled it with accuracy. But it was part of the equipment bought with the horse in the

Copyright, 1911, by the Story-Press Corporation. Entered at Stationers' Hall, London. All rights reserved.

near-by town of Crescent Butte. The shining revolver flapping in its yellow case of new leather at Edgerly's hip, and the natty take-down repeating rifle resting across the saddle before him, had been bought there too. So, likewise, the webbed belt about his waist, crammed with cartridges and the wide-brimmed white Stetson and the cowboy clothing he wore. Though the fervid sun had tanned his youthful face an attractive brown, and burned his nose until it was peeling in blisters, he was the stage variety of cowboy, in appearance.

Edgerly was debating whether to return to the town and admit there was no game worth shooting at or seek the blue hills and try for some of the wonderful big-horns of which he had heard, when, on rounding a gravelly ridge that had obstructed his view, he came suddenly upon—the unexpected.

Before him was an automobile stalled in the deep sand, and by it a perplexed young woman, wrench in hand. In that desert region, it was the most wonderful thing that Fred Edgerly could have imagined. His highest flights of fancy had pictured possible road-agents hiding behind that ridge of time-hammered gravel—though he was sure there were none—or perhaps a cowboy, clad in hairy "chaps," astride a pinto. Hairy "chap-ped" cowboys on pintos had careered through the last Western story he had read; and he had seen hairy "chaps," and came near purchasing a pair, in Crescent Butte, and had been told that a pinto was a spotted pony. But an automobile! And a young woman! And an attractive young woman, too!

When on hearing the "pluff-pluff" of his horse's feet, she turned toward him, and he lifted his dusty white Stetson, he discovered that while the young woman was not a beauty of the highest type, she was wonderfully good to look at, with her clear gray eyes and frank face. Little tendrils of wind-blown brown hair whipped her forehead, and she threw them back impatiently with a bare brown hand, and stared at him. The color came into her face—which was as tanned as his own; and that, with her quick smile, made her more attractive than if she had been merely beautiful. Edgerly knew that it held a haunting quality, too, which he could not label, but which he was not likely soon to forget.

"You seem to be in trouble here," he said, drawing rein, "and if I can help you—"

"Well, I wish you would," she declared quite frankly. "It's the sand, I think."

"Yes, it's deep enough here to stall a camel."

He swung out of the saddle and threw the bridle reins down over the head of his horse, letting them trail on the ground. He understood that this was quite the cowboy way, and on picking this horse, he had required of the dealer that it should be one of its qualifications—to stand without being hitched, when the reins were on the ground. He had tested it a dozen times since, and it would really do it. The fact now made him proud.

"I think the machine stopped because sand got into the wheels, or the cogs, or something," she informed him. "I've been trying to find out what the trouble is, but don't seem able to."

The touch of her hand as she gave him the wrench was a pleasant sensation. There was a stain of axle grease on that small, firm hand, and it got on his from the contact. But he would not have wiped it off if he could. He was rather glad to drop down and peer under the automobile. When he did so, bringing his reddening face close to the ground, the heat waves that beat into it were like those from a furnace.

"It's hotter than hinges here," he said, speaking before he thought. But her laugh reassured him.

"I've been finding that out. I hope you don't mind spoiling your complexion; I assure you *that* heat will do it."

"It's spoiled already," he said, looking about for the trouble. "You can't get away from this heat wherever you are."

"But I suppose you cowboys get so that you don't mind it?"

He grinned joyfully and ferociously at the "works" of the machine, his face hidden from her. She took him for a cowboy!

"It's a part of the job," he said, grinning again, and whacking with the wrench at a wheel, where he saw sand had lodged.

He did some more whacking, some more peering; then came up, red-faced and perspiring.

"It's sand?" she said, looking at him anxiously. "I knew it was."

"Yes, it's sand, all right; but it's the sand in *front* of the wheels, that's made the trouble, in my opinion. The wheels spun round, didn't they, before the automobile stopped?"

"They spun round *when* it stopped, and nearly buried themselves."

"That's what I thought—what I meant; they couldn't grip the sand—it rolled under them; and they simply dug holes in it!"

He stood up, looking at her, and knew that she was sweet and comely. Above the whipping threads of brown hair, a little blue-visored cap was perched, jaunty as a sailor's. And she had on a blue shirt-waist of some soft material, a short dark walking skirt, and high, close-buttoned boots. The walking skirt cleared the tops of them. In addition, her slim waist was zoned with cartridge webbing, holding a dozen or so blue-nosed, brass-jacketed revolver cartridges. The revolver that went with them, a thirty-two Smith & Wesson, lay on the automobile seat, as his eyes had shown him.

"It was a mistake to try to go through here," he was saying, though not in a tone of reproof.

"Is there another way? I didn't know it. You see, I'm a stranger here."

"I'm rather that myself," he admitted. "I never saw the country before yesterday."

"And I supposed you belonged here! There ought to be a road—a trail I mean; but after I left it, some distance from here, I couldn't find it again. But you live in the vicinity?"

"In Kansas City," he said.

"Oh!" She stared at him. "Then you are not a cowboy at all, and I thought you were! I suppose I shall have to beg your pardon for that? But it was a natural mistake; like everybody else, I presume to judge a man by his clothing."

"Just hunting a bit," he informed her. "I'm taking my vacation out here, that's all. Perhaps you're doing the same?"

She flushed again.

"Forgive my impertinence," he begged, turning to the machine. "I should say," he said, looking at the wheels half-buried in the sand, "that our best chance to get this out, is to hitch my horse to it, with the lariat, and see if we can't start it in that way."

"But I don't consider it an impertinence," he heard her saying, behind him. "I would have no right to think that, in this instance, and—"

"And under the circumstances?" He turned about, smiling. "It's good of you, don't you know, to think of my desires in the matter, when really—"

"When really I don't know you, or that I ought to know you, and don't know that I can believe anything you may say; and also, the other way round? Is that it?"

"Pretty near," he admitted.

"You wonder what I'm doing here—out in this sand desert, with a thirty-horse-power auto—a shiny, varnished, nickel-plated auto—that has no business to be anywhere off a well-ordered highway somewhere within the bounds of civilization! Well, I don't blame you; I wonder myself, sometimes. But, good sir, I don't always run this auto—or rather, I don't always *try* to run it; I have a chauffeur, or my brother has, a dark-chocolate person who is vastly capable and knows how to run an automobile as it should be run, and who never, never would have guided it into a bog of sand like this. He—I'm speaking of my brother now—is at our camp over there—well, over there somewhere; I admit I'm bewildered as to the right direction, but I think it is straight ahead, after we get around this ridge, if we ever get round it; and he is—my brother is—a student, also spending his vacation out here hunting—bones."

"Bones?" Edgerly stared.

"Just bones. But they're fossil ones, ever so many thousands or millions of years old, and therefore of some value; also they're nice and clean—just like stones, you know."

It was his time to say "Oh!" And he said it. Then he added: "I see."

"His name—I'm still talking of my brother—is James Montgomery Frazer; we call him Jimmie. He calls me Alice."

"Which is your name, of course? Permit me to introduce myself." He smiled and lifted his dusty white Stetson again. "My name is Edgerly—Frederick Edgerly."

"And you're not a cowboy?"

"Hardly," he said. "But, as I told you, I'm Western—that is, reasonably Western. Last year I finished at the University of Kansas; they call it a university anyway, and it's a mighty good college. It's located at Lawrence—a town you may have noticed as you came through, if you came by way of Kansas City. As for my birthplace, it's in Missouri—"

She smiled and pushed back a strand of the flying hair. They had forgotten the sand and the heat.

"Are there any cowboys in Missouri?" she asked, and there was a queer twinkle in her gray eyes. In her tone there was something that made him stare.

"No," he said, seriously, "nor in eastern Kansas, and mighty few, if any, even in the western part of that State. But there ought to be some out here, I should think; anyway—" He checked himself suddenly. "Why did you ask?"

"The question just came to me." She glanced demurely at the automobile. "Now that we have exchanged cards, Mr. Edgerly, and know each other so well, do you suppose there is a chance we can get this automobile started? I think it is about five miles to where my brother is, but it may be twenty; I didn't take much note of the distance, nor of the time."

"And it is getting late. We'll try my horse."

"A thirty-horse-power auto, to be drawn by a one-horse-power horse! I'm afraid, Mr. Edgerly, that I'm also from Missouri; but I am cherishing a large hope."

He dug away the compacted sand; then clawed out an ascending yard-long trench before each front wheel, which he paved with small stones brought from the base of the ridge, to make a firm roadway. That done, he pulled the coiled rope from the saddle bow, saw that an end was secured there, and tied the other end to the forward axle.

"Now if you'll let me assist you in," he said, "so that you can take the wheel and throw in the gear at the proper time, we'll try it."

She slipped by him, and took her seat at the wheel.

The horse forgot its training and began an excited dance when Edgerly cranked the automobile; but he gained the saddle before the nervous brute tried to bolt.

"All ready!" he shouted, digging its flanks with his heels; and the motor went into action like a battery of repeating rifles.

The scared horse pulled with unexpected energy, and the automobile mounted out of its pit, then crawled through the deep sand to the solid ground at the base of the ridge.

"Well done, Sir Cowboy!" the girl called, when the thing was accomplished. "I shall begin to believe they teach practical common-sense in that University of Kansas."

Edgerly threw his right leg across the withers of his horse—it had troubled him to keep that leg safe from the bite of the straining rope!—and smiled back at her.

"I thought we could do it."

He slid to the ground, and went back to remove the rope from the axle. Not able to untie it, he had to cut it.

"No genuine cowboy would let a knot like that baffle him," he said.

"No genuine cowboy would tie a knot like that."

"True enough." He closed his knife with a click and dropped it into his pocket. "I think this solid ground continues on round the ridge, and beyond. But you may need my horse again."

He saw her gray eyes laugh with amusement.

"Well, you *do* need an escort," he declared, meeting her laughing gaze as steadily as he could, "at least until you're sure your automobile wont bog again. And there are wolves round here; I heard them howling last night."

"Coyotes—cowardly little coyotes! Were you afraid of them?"

"Certainly not. And if you say you don't wish me to go even a part of the way with you, why—I'll go in the other direction."

"Sir Cowboy, the sand is very deep in the other direction; and you may go with me. You see," she added, "I'm not perfectly certain of the way, and I may require you to ride your horse now and then to the top of a convenient hill and spy out the land. But I think the true course lies right off there." She pointed.

Fred Edgerly rode at the side of the automobile, as they went on. Now and then he ascended an elevation. But to himself he confessed that he was in no hurry to sight the cabin which Miss Frazer told him to look for. He was discovering that he could not be too long in her company. There was a peculiar vibrant quality in her voice which made him like to hear it; it was not because it was musical—he did not know what it was, and did not try to know. And her face; there were some defects in it, he admitted, but he had never seen another which so held that elusive and indefinable thing called charm.

When he beheld the cabin, after an hour of search, a small, dark blotch in the midst of dusty cottonwoods at the base of a hill, he was almost sorry they had located it at last. But the brilliant Western sun was sliding down the sky, and the afternoon was drawing toward its close. He made up his mind, as they went on toward the cabin, that he could not willingly drop the acquaintance so pleasantly begun.

He did not stop to consider that a third party might undertake to say something about it.

II

The countenance of Jimmie Frazer clouded when he saw his sister returning in the automobile, with a cowboy-looking stranger galloping cheerfully beside her.

"What the mischief?" he growled, staring. "Hasn't Alice any sense?"

Instead of stepping forth to meet them, he turned back into the cabin, and taking a hammerless automatic revolver from the table he dropped it into his pocket.

But when the automobile and the horseman arrived, Jimmie Frazer showed neither anxiety nor perturbation, but stood smiling, on the rim of the grass-plot, his hands dropped carelessly into the pockets of his corduroy coat. The pockets were capacious and baggy, and usually filled with chips of granite and fossil bones. In another minute his sister had introduced "Mr. Edgerly, of Kansas City, who is a stranger in this section, like ourselves," and was telling of the mishap to the automobile and how it had been rescued from its dire position.

Fred Edgerly was prepared to like the brother almost as well as he already liked the sister, and was much gratified when Jimmie Frazer greeted him with all the apparent warmth demanded by the much-vaunted hospitality of the great West.

"We're not as well outfitted as we might be," Frazer explained, "but you're welcome to share what we have." He was studying Edgerly's face. "I've got a colored man 'round here somewhere; he'll appear soon, I think, and will knock us up something for supper." He turned to his sister. "You didn't find anything?"

"Not a thing," she said.

"We're hunting fossil bones, you see," Jimmie explained. "There are some really wonderful remains in this region—remarkable remains. I'll take pleasure in showing you, after a while, some of the things we have already collected."

As Edgerly cared for his tired horse, and watered it at the little stream below the cabin, Jimmie Frazer talked fossils, and studied his guest. He informed Edgerly that he was a medical student, but that fossil remains had become his hobby.

The grass was lush and green beside the stream and about the cabin, the spot being an oasis in the desert, made by the spring that bubbled from the foot of the hill. The low cabin, of cottonwood poles, had lines of yellow clay

filling the crevices, so that it reminded Edgerly of a brown and yellow frog squatting beside the spring. Though a short story and a half, with four rooms —two below and two above—it seemed a tiny thing contrasted with the great hill behind it. At one side was a brush lean-to, which Frazer said he had built for a garage, but which he now offered for the use of Edgerly's horse, if he preferred not to picket it out.

"The automobile can be covered," he explained. "We haven't any dew here anyway, to rust it; so it doesn't really need a shelter."

"You have an ideal place for a camp," commented Edgerly, looking about, while his horse's nose was buried deep in the cool water. "You certainly showed good taste in selecting it as a permanent site."

"We didn't build the cabin," Jimmie Frazer corrected. "We"—he broke off queerly—"found it. You can see from the looks that it's a year or so old."

"And you don't know who built it?"

Frazer evaded this; but Edgerly, romancing about the cabin, through his rose-colored glasses, did not notice the evasion. When he had stabbed his picket pin into the ground with his heel and lariated his horse on the grass, he walked back toward the cabin with Frazer, with earnest glances at the door, where he hoped for a glimpse of Jimmie's attractive sister. He was already wondering how he could so shape his plans as to make this spot the center of his hunting operations; he no longer desired to return to the town, or even thought of it. Altogether, he was very much pleased with the situation.

Heavy feet clumped down the hillside toward the two young men, and a soft voice drawled, in the negro dialect of the far South:

"You want me tuh put dat ot'mobile under de bresh shed?"

Asbury Jett, the colored chauffeur mentioned by Miss Alice Frazer, had arrived.

"No," said Jimmie, "we'll probably put this gentleman's horse there; the horses might get to kicking, if we stabled them together. You're to get up some supper, Asbury, as quick as you can—supper for three."

The Frazers had a horse, as well as an automobile, and Edgerly had not known it!

"We have a small shed for our horse out in the cottonwoods," Frazer explained, "so that he wont be too near the cabin."

Then he went back to the fossils. "As I was remarking—about brontosaurs. Perhaps you know something of Doyle, of Ann Arbor—celebrated paleontologist, you know? Well, it was Doyle who got us started. A year or so ago he gave a whole month to brontosaurs, nothing else. You wouldn't believe so much could be dug out of it. It made us all want to go hunting for the things. Perhaps you had brontosaurs, in your final year?"

"No," said Edgerly, "we didn't; the only study we gave such things, so far as I remember, was as phosphate material; you see, they rung in some scientific agriculture on us, and we had to learn all about the bone beds of Florida and the South."

Jimmie Frazer's lips twisted awry. "After that, a fossil wouldn't mean anything to a man, except as material for fertilizers," he complained. "All the romance gone out of it, you know; all thought of the millions of years the bones had lain there, the wonderful geologic changes, the shapes and habits of the queer beasts themselves; and all the slow upward movement of life, climbing heavenward, until it stood upright and became man, drops out, and we have—fertilizers, selling at so much a ton, warranted to grow sugar beets. Pah!"

Fred Edgerly laughed—Jimmie Frazer's attitude was one of such reproach and disgust. "Sugar beets are all right," he said, "when they have been evolved into chocolate caramels. So I believe in evolution too, you see—fossil bone to fertilizer, fertilizer to sugar beets, sugar beets to chocolate caramels. It's merely the point of view."

"And the training," said Frazer.

They had passed a corner of the cabin and there came into view a low mound and a wooden head-board—evidently a grave. Jimmie Frazer stopped suddenly; apparently he had forgotten about that grave.

But Fred Edgerly, his curiosity excited, went forward, and stood reading the inscription; the letters had been burned with a hot iron into the board, and were like script:

PHILIP STERLING
Died August 10th, 1904
Age—about 50 years

The grave was within a few steps of the rear of the cabin, close against the hill. Weeds and dusty grass grew on it, and the head-board was weather-stained.

"That's a bit queer," was Edgerly's comment, as he stooped over it; "'*about* fifty years.' The person who set this up didn't seem to be sure of it!"

"That was here when we found the cabin," said Frazer, beginning to sift tobacco into the paper trough of a cigaret, looking down as he did so as if to hide his thoughts.

"Then you don't know who this Philip Sterling was?"

"No," said Frazer. He turned back to the door of the cabin. His manner was perturbed.

But Fred Edgerly did not observe—he was not interested in the moods of Jimmie Frazer and just then he heard within the cabin the voice of Jimmie's sister. As for the man lying in that grave, his only thought concerning him was an idle curiosity. He followed Frazer into the cabin, was greeted pleasantly by Alice Frazer—who was laying a tiny table—and he forgot the whole matter in listening to her bright talk.

Calling to Edgerly in a little while, Jimmie Frazer made his way into the back room, where Asbury Jett was cramming wood into a rusted sheet-iron stove. Frazer turned to a shelf, on which lay a number of fossils.

"I suppose you're aware how rich this region is in such things?" he said; and began to display his collection, drawing attention to a bone which he said was undoubtedly from the wing of a pterodactyl. Having only a vague idea of what a pterodactyl was, Edgerly wondered how Jimmie Frazer knew.

"I'm trying to find the rest of the skeleton," said Frazer; "I've spent a whole day digging where I found this, and intend to tackle it again."

Asbury Jett, uninterested, began to sing, as he went about his work:

W'en de coon he see de possum, 'way up in de 'simmon tree,
Says he, "Misteh Possum, come down!"
Says de possum to de coon, "Is you speakin' to me?
Den you'd better keep yo' footses on de groun'."

"Misteh Frazer,"—he looked up, bending above the stove—"does you lak yo' batteh cakes well done on bofe sides, or des only mejium?"

"Medium," said Frazer, and went on about his pterodactyl.

Fred Edgerly was quite sure he had never spent so pleasant an evening as in that rude cabin of cottonwood poles, far in the wilds. Alice Frazer, who had disappeared for a time into the upper rooms, reappeared daintily and becomingly clad, to preside at the table, when Asbury Jett's musical voice announced that supper was ready. Edgerly knew that she was dressed in white, that she was trim and slender, that her gray eyes held a challenging, laughing light, and that she was altogether charming. Asbury Jett came and went, between the cramped dining-room and the still more cramped kitchen, a soft-voiced, soft-footed servitor. The cabin was only a camp, with little space for comfort; each room had its narrow, built-into-the-wall cot of poles, taking up valuable space; the chairs were stools, boxes, and even blocks of wood.

At intervals Jimmie Frazer recurred to the subject that obsessed him, and talked learnedly, but without affectation, of Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous, Tertiary, and other remote periods of world-building time, as he forked at the delicious "batteh cakes" which Asbury Jett's skill had produced. It developed that Alice had been out in the automobile, searching for fossil relics of those ages; that Jimmie had spent the day on foot in the same search; and that Asbury Jett had also pursued it, on horseback. These fossil remains were to be found, it appeared, in the most unexpected places; but mainly search was made where torrents and wash-outs had cut away and channeled the earth.

"I should imagine," said Edgerly, "that in such places one ought to look for emeralds; I've heard that now and then some are to be picked up round here."

Frazer shot him a sharp look; and Miss Alice, pouring a cup of tea, seemed suddenly confused, and joggled the cup so that it fell with a crash to the floor. There was an awkward pause, while Jett stooped to gather up the fragments of the broken cup. Some of the tea had splashed on Miss Frazer's white dress.

"Asbury says it's bad luck to knock over a cup of tea," she declared.

"Yes'm; 'tis so!" said Jett.

Jimmie Frazer was looking at Edgerly, as if studying him mentally and questioning.

"Just what did you hear about emeralds?" he inquired.

"That's all," said Edgerly. "I heard that occasionally they are found throughout this region; there's been some prospecting for them, I believe; but I think they're not abundant. Whenever one is found it is by an accident."

"No emeralds are ever found in this section," said Frazer with emphasis.

Jett opened the door and flung the fragments of the cup out into the night. Miss Frazer stood up and brushed industriously at her dress. Jimmie Frazer still eyed Edgerly, so that the latter felt uncomfortable, though he could not have said why.

Miss Frazer sat down at the table again, and gave the conversation a new turn, by telling the story of a little girl who once took delight in letting her mother's chinaware fall, just to hear it crash. It appeared that she had been that little girl.

Then the serenading coyotes began their yapping in the hills, so that the course of the talk was shunted again, and the subject of the emeralds seemed forgotten.

Later in the evening Jimmie Frazer showed Edgerly a slip of yellowed paper, which he drew from a wallet in his pocket. It contained, in addition to a name and an incomplete address, two crosses, a circle, and the letters, H. F., thus + + o H. F.

"You've knocked round here some," said Frazer. "Have you seen anything like that anywhere—say on a rock, or a tree?"

"I haven't," Edgerly answered.

"Well, if you do come on anything of the kind," said Frazer earnestly, "let me know about it, will you."

It was a promise Edgerly was glad to give; though Jimmie Frazer did not explain what the characters meant, or why he was anxious to locate them.

The hour was late when Frazer showed Edgerly to the box-like space upstairs where he was to sleep. Long before that, Asbury Jett had ridden away from the cabin, taking Frazer's horse to some night pasture, Edgerly supposed, though it was not apparent why the grass by the stream would not answer. Edgerly did not know how tired he was, until he sat down on the blanket-covered cot of cottonwood poles and lighted his pipe for a few whiffs before turning in. He had arrived at a tentative arrangement with Jimmie Frazer, whereby this cabin was to become his headquarters while he hunted a few days in the vicinity. He thought he could make that cover a week or so of time and—well, if the chances are favorable one may go far in a week.

While Edgerly sat smoking and thinking, Frazer appeared, with a bottle of wine and a pair of collapsible drinking cups.

"I'm a doctor, you know," he said, laughing—"or I will be when I get my sheepskin. And as I can see that you're pretty well beat out, I'm going to prescribe for you. A glass of this wine with me will do you good. You see, we're not hardened to this rough, out-of-doors work, though we try to make ourselves think that we are."

He snapped the cups open, and poured the wine.

"Here's how!" he said. "We'll drink to our better acquaintance."

"And continued friendship," said Edgerly. "I hope you'll find a dinosaur, and all the other things you want."

They touched the cups together, and drank.

When Frazer had slipped downstairs again, Edgerly still sat on the edge of the cot, smoking and dreaming. The one little window was open, and

he could hear the "ruh-ruh" of his horse tearing at the lush grass by the river.

As he pleasantly reviewed the events of the afternoon and evening he found that he was growing unaccountably sleepy. On making this discovery he put aside his pipe, with the intention of getting ready for bed, and blew out his candle. Then he stooped to take off his shoes. But his hands were clumsy. He straightened up, yawned, and tried again. The sounds of the gurgling stream and the wind in the cottonwoods became fainter, as a dull lethargy crept over his mental faculties.

"Wow!" he yawned, throwing up his arms. "I'm dead sleepy."

The foot he had drawn up dropped lumpily to the floor, and he leaned back against the wall, to make the work of thinking easier. But he grew sleepier sitting there; finally he slipped sidewise, and with a sliding motion slumped softly down on the cot.

III

When Fred Edgerly came again to himself the sun was high in the sky, and he had a feeling that he had slept heavily and long. He did not at once know where he was, and stared blankly at the square of the little window. A slender cottonwood waved dusty leaves against the sky there, and somewhere he heard a bird singing.

On attempting to rise, he discovered that he was fully dressed, except that one shoe was half unlaced; the blankets were gone from the cot. Propping himself on his elbow, he stared round. His mind was heavy, his head ached; recent events came back to him hazily, yet with gathering force and clearness. With a shock, everything then became plain, and he leaped from the cot and looked about. As his feet thumped clumsily on the floor of cottonwood poles, he discovered that his revolver and his belt of cartridges were gone; even his knife and his pocket book, had vanished. He began to awake to the fact that he had been robbed.

The window of his room being open, he did not at once connect the Frazers with the robbery, but imagined that some one had got into the room by way of the window. Stumbling to it, he thrust out his head and looked below for footprints. Glancing out toward the river, he observed that his horse was not in sight, where it should have been.

This gave him a start. With an exclamation of anger and alarm snapping through his teeth, he tumbled to the cramped stairs and began to descend. He had heard no one below; but not until he passed through both lower rooms and looked from the front door, which stood open, did he begin to conceive that he had been deserted. Even then he ran out into the yard, and to the edge of the baked area beyond the grass plot, not able to believe it. The sun was high in the heavens—surprisingly high; he felt for his watch, to ascertain the time, but that, too, was gone. He called; yet no one answered.

He now ran toward the river, looking for his horse. It was not there. Even the lariat and the iron picket-pin had gone with the horse. And the automobile—it was not by the cabin, nor under the brush lean-to.

Edgerly clasped his hands to his head—his brain seemed reeling. He could not believe what all this suggested—he would not believe it! Jimmie Frazer had done and said some queer things, passed over and ignored at the time; but, though he might now doubt Frazer, Edgerly could not doubt Frazer's sister. And there was Asbury Jett. True, he recalled now that Jett had ridden away in the night. That was before Edgerly went upstairs—long before Jimmie Frazer came up with the collapsible drinking cups and the wine.

The wine!

Fred Edgerly dropped heavily to a seat on the gravel slope, when that struck him. The wine! He had not thought of that. Had the wine been drugged? He recalled the sleepiness which had so overpowered him. And the time was now nearly noon—eleven o'clock, anyway; he had slept like a log—slept twelve hours, as if he had been a dead man. And during that time everything he had with him but the clothing he wore and his white Stetson had disappeared.

Going back into the cabin, he looked about there, in the corner where he had set his repeating rifle, and elsewhere. The rifle was gone; the blankets had been stripped from the cots; the cooked food had been taken from the cupboard box nailed to the wall. When he went out to the lean-to—in which he had not, after all, stalled his horse—the can of gasoline he had noticed there was gone likewise.

In a sort of bewildered frenzy he now ran out beyond the cabin; soon he found the tracks of the automobile, with the hoof-prints of a horse—his own horse, he was sure. He followed the tracks, his heart pumping so that it choked in his throat; for a quarter of a mile he held to the trail of the automobile; then it struck a lava slope and vanished.

Standing there, Edgerly looked off in the general direction the automobile had been taking. Somewhere off there was the trail which ran between Crescent Butte and Glenwood; the automobile had gone in the direction of Glenwood.

The bewildered youth sat down and tried to think the matter out. But simply because he could not connect Alice Frazer with any thought of wrong-doing, he found that it was beyond him. Yet she had gone, left the cabin, with her brother, and perhaps Asbury Jett, after Edgerly had been stripped of everything, even of his weapons and his horse. Of that there seemed to be no doubt; if he could he would have doubted it gladly.

"It looks as if I'm in need of a guardian!" he exclaimed. "I'm not fit to be out by myself alone. Well, don't that—" Words failed him.

When he went back to the cabin, the conclusion had soaked into him that he had been "taken in and done for;" and now he was groping for the reason why. He looked the cabin over; and he ate some cooked food which had been overlooked, though not without a fear that it held some of the opiate which apparently had been placed in his wine cup. That had been cleverly done—quite a feat of jugglery—the way *his* cup of wine had been doped and Frazer's had not; he would compliment Jimmie Frazer on that, he concluded, if ever he met him again. With the exception of some uncooked provisions and a paper bag of flour, everything portable of value had been carried away.

Still groping for a reason, Edgerly went out to the lonely grave behind the cabin and re-read the head-board. Jimmie Frazer had told him nothing about the man buried there, he remembered; in fact, Frazer had even seemed annoyed when Edgerly caught sight of the grave. But there was nothing on the head-board nor about the grave, to give knowledge. Nor, in thinking it over, could Edgerly see what there had been in his casual remark about emeralds to arouse anxiety; yet he recalled clearly that it had apparently created mental confusion. Edgerly gave up the subject; it was too deep for him.

It was high noon when he finally left the cabin and struck out in the course taken by the automobile. The scraps of food he had eaten had strengthened him, and his head was clearer. But he was troubled. He could stand the loss of his horse and personal belongings, stand the thought that he had been taken in by Jimmie Frazer, even stolidly endure the self-condemnation with which he assured himself that he was all the fifty-seven varieties of fools. But Alice Frazer! That was what hurt.

Edgerly struck the trail of the automobile again, in the sand beyond the lava fields. But there were no hoof-marks; the horse had turned off in some other direction, for a reason he could not fathom. The motor car, ploughing heavily, had left a trail in the sand which a blind man might have followed. But the sand soon gave way to bunch-grass levels, where the going must have been easier for the machine, if harder for the occupants; then again the trail was lost, on a gravelly mesa.

But Edgerly's blood was now up, his curiosity sharply whetted by mystery, and he continued doggedly on. Beyond the mesa, it was apparent an effort had been made to baffle pursuit; the automobile had swung in a half-circle, so did not leave the gravelly area at the point where he first looked for the familiar tire-tracks. He lost an hour, before he found them again.

But they still continued in the direction of Glenwood. One thing had become apparent—the automobile had not gone over this entire route by night; the way was too rough, and there had been careful steering, of a kind not to be done in the darkness. Hence it appeared that Jimmie Frazer had tarried at the cabin, or in its vicinity, until daybreak—a fact which indicated he had no fear that Edgerly would come quickly out of his drug-induced sleep.

And of course—there could be no other conclusion!—Jimmie Frazer's sister was consenting to all that was done. Still this was inexplicable. Edgerly refused to believe her the conscienceless creature that her behavior implied. He tried to find some explanation which would leave that out of the reckoning and failed; he could not think she so feared her brother that he could force her to keep silent and go with him against her will.

Fred Edgerly clung to the automobile tracks until he saw them enter the beaten trail running to Glenwood—which was thirty miles away; then he stopped. Behind him, at the other end of the trail, but nearer, was the town of Crescent Butte, his headquarters; he had taken a room in a hotel there, and his trunk was there. He had never been in Glenwood, though he had expected to go there soon; but a railway, as well as the trail, connected the two places. He could reach Glenwood, if he wished, more speedily and easily by rail from Crescent Butte, than on foot by way of the exhausting trail. He considered the matter, and turned back toward Crescent Butte.

When he arrived on the hills above the little town the sun had gone down, and before he set his weary feet in the narrow streets, the electric lights were shining to guide his way. The town lay in a hollow of the hills, with a mountain stream plunging along below, the railway keeping close to the stream. Crescent Butte had soaring summer-resort ambitions; highly colored folders heralded its manifold attractions; it had been one of these which had captured the vagrant fancy of Fred Edgerly and drawn him thither, when otherwise he might have gone elsewhere.

The hotel which Edgerly had chosen, the best in the place, was located near the railway station, down by the roaring river. Not far from it was the brick building occupied jointly by the police and fire departments. On coming to this building Edgerly stopped, and stood looking thoughtfully at a sign over one of the doors, indicating the office of "Chief of Police." By appealing to the chief of police, a telegram would be sent by the latter to Glenwood, and cause the arrest of the occupants of the automobile—which had no doubt reached Glenwood long before. But Edgerly passed on. He was not yet ready to subject Alice Frazer to the indignity of an arrest.

"I'm a fool, I suppose," he thought.

The luxury of a bath, after the grime of the trail, made him more cheerful. He shaved in his room, then took clothing from his trunk and discarded the cowboy attire which he had so much admired. Having dressed to his satisfaction, he spent the interval before supper in considering what he should do, now that he was in Crescent Butte. One thing pressed on him—he had no money, since his pocketbook had been taken at the cabin. He could get money by wiring to Kansas City; and he determined to do that. But he could not decide what to do about the Frazers.

While still at sea on that point, he went downstairs, and made his way into the dining room. It was a long room, filled with guests, sitting at small tables. Conducted to the further end, Edgerly glanced about incuriously as he passed along, recalling here and there a face he had seen before. Then he came near stopping dead in his tracks, thrilled by the shock of seeing at one of the tables the very people who occupied his thoughts—Jimmie Frazer and his sister. He went on, almost trembling with excitement, before his gaping stare was noticed.

IV

Though Jimmie Frazer glanced up, it was in an unobservant manner; so that Edgerly had the assurance, as he settled into the chair drawn out for him, that he had not been recognized. Pos-

sibly, he thought, this was due to the alteration in his appearance, made by his change of clothing and a clean shave. He had been a theatrical cowboy, in looks, with a two days' stubble on his face, when at the cabin in the hills. Now he was a well-dressed young fellow, outwardly not greatly unlike a dozen others in that dining room. He drew a deep breath, glanced around, fumbled with his napkin to hide his confusion, and gave his order.

When the attendant had gone he looked again at the table where sat the Frazers. It was not far away, and his view was unobstructed. As if his gaze made itself felt, at this instant Alice Frazer lifted her head and glanced in his direction. Their eyes met, and the girl's widened with surprise, while her face paled—the pallor being succeeded by a swift flush of confusion. That flush burned in her brown cheeks even after she had withdrawn her gaze.

"What does it mean?"

But even while asking that, Fred Edgerly was conscious of a sense of gratification; it was, somehow, good to see her again, in spite of everything. In his bewilderment he was still staring at her rudely, and at her brother. He could not make it seem right—the things that had happened in connection with them; they did not look as if they were thieves.

"Well, I'm going to find out the truth. It may be a fool notion, that I was drugged; but I certainly was deserted in the cabin, with my money, horse, and everything gone. I've a right to know what it meant; and I want my property. There's nothing wrong in making a demand like that; and now that I've found them here I'll make it; I'll have satisfaction of some kind—"

He saw Alice Frazer glance in his direction again; though, as her gaze seemed to rove in a casual manner, covering him and passing on, he did not this time catch her eye. But he was sure she communicated her discovery to her brother, for in a little while Jimmie Frazer looked up and in his direction.

The waiter had returned, and Fred Edgerly gave attention to the things set before him, yet with occasional glances at the other table. When he saw the Frazers rise and leave the dining room, he hastened the completion of his supper, and followed. But they had disappeared.

"Gone up to their rooms," he thought. "Well, I can wait."

He went out on the piazza, on the river side, intent on finding a place which would give him a view of the front door. He did not believe they would leave the hotel immediately, but if they did he wanted to know it. Then he saw a young woman sitting in a rocker at the piazza's farther end, in a light that was fairly good. Her appearance was familiar, and as he advanced toward her he knew that she was Alice Frazer. He had a feeling, too, that she had placed herself there purposely, to meet him.

"Is it you?" he asked, coming up to her awkwardly.

She half arose, as she looked up.

"Mr. Edgerly! I thought I recognized you, in the dining room."

"But were not quite sure?"

He made himself bold, and drew up a chair, whereupon she settled back in the comfortable rocker.

"You supposed I was still out in the wilds, eh?" he said. "Or perhaps asleep in that cabin?" There was a trace of bitterness in his voice.

"I didn't know but you might still be at the cabin," she confessed. "You weren't pleased with the eccentric manner of our leave-taking—is that it? But, Sir Cowboy, there were reasons; very adequate reasons, my brother thought."

"The drugged wine worked well!"

"Don't talk in riddles, please," she urged.

"You don't know anything about the drugged wine?"

"Assuredly not; there was no drugged wine, that I know of. Just what do you mean by that?"

"I may have been mistaken, of course," he admitted, wondering if he could have been. "But your brother brought up some wine, which we drank together; after that I became so dead sleepy I simply tumbled over on my cot, and didn't know a thing afterward until nearly noon to-day."

He thought she laughed.

"That is ridiculous; you were tired, and that made you sleepy."

"It sounds ridiculous to you? But it's not like me, to fall asleep in that manner, and sleep so long, and wake up with a splitting headache."

"It is supremely silly—your notion; for don't you see, if the wine had been drugged, and my brother drank it with you, he would have been affected in the same way."

"Perhaps," said Edgerly. "Unless he contrived to drink some that was not drugged. Anyhow, it was queer, the way you disappeared in the night, and left me there asleep."

"Sir Cowboy, there was a reason, as I have said. I'm glad to be able to tell you that, as you might think otherwise. Even eccentric things are not done without some reason!"

"Is it too much to ask you to tell me what that reason was?"

"It is. But I may say that my brother concluded suddenly that he could not trust you. I'm not saying that I agreed with him, but I obeyed him. He is in charge here, and has some very important things to accomplish. He didn't want your company, and didn't want you to know where he had gone. I suppose my answer isn't full enough. Still—" she hesitated—"I'm not saying that justified what he did, and particularly his manner of doing it; yet he is very competent and capable."

"Even though he didn't want my company—even though *you* didn't want it—" He stopped, but she did not gratify him by a declaration that in *this* she did not agree with her brother. "No matter how unsatisfactory my presence may have been, or had become, that surely did not justify him in robbing me!"

She turned quickly, and looked straight into his face.

"What is this?" she said. "You have been robbed? And you think my brother did it?"

"I was robbed of everything, while I lay asleep in that cabin—of my rifle and revolver, my pocketbook and watch. Even my horse was taken. I was simply stripped!"

His voice rose a little. The girl seemed amazed, as if she could not comprehend it.

"There is some mistake," she said. "There is some mistake."

"None!" he declared. "When I awoke, I found myself alone and robbed. What the shock was, mental and otherwise, when I made that discovery, I shall not try to tell you, but will simply say that at first I could not believe it. I had received such kindness, we had passed so pleasant an evening together—well, it was incomprehensible."

She rose half out of her chair.

"I think I ought to find my brother and let him know about this," she said. "It will distress him, even though—" She sank back, giving over her half-formed intention. "Let me hear about it," she begged, "—all about it."

"That is really all," said Edgerly. "I saw the tracks of your automobile, and followed them to the edge of the lava field; then I went back and made another search through the cabin, and round it, and down by the stream; the picket pin and rope were gone, as well as my horse, and the saddle and bridle—and there were horse tracks accompanying the tire tracks of the auto. I still couldn't believe what had happened—what the evidence of my eyes told me!"

She drew a long breath, and seemed frightened.

"Let me understand this," she begged. "You slept so soundly, that when you awoke you thought you must have been drugged; but you wouldn't have thought that, it never would have occurred to you, if we had been there, and everything had been all right. I am correct in that?"

"I'll admit," said Edgerly, "that I probably should never have thought of the wine being drugged, if everything had been normal when I awoke. Still—"

"Everything you had was gone—your money, watch, weapons, and your horse!"

"You're right—everything was gone."

"And you thought you had been robbed by—your friends! I think I can understand how you felt. But, Sir Cowboy, we didn't do that. You probably wont believe it, but it's the truth. When we left the cabin in the automobile your horse was picketed by the stream—I myself heard it moving there; and I am quite sure that none of your personal belongings had been disturbed; and

more, no horse accompanied us. On my honor—perhaps you wont think I have any!—I assure you that we know nothing about it!"

"But you did leave me!"

"I must admit it."

"And you can't explain why."

"Sir Cowboy, I can't explain why. If you really don't know, it will have to remain a mystery to you."

"You think I *do* know the reason."

"I am sincerely hoping that you don't."

There was an awkward pause.

"Yes?"

"That's a question? Then I will say that I hope so, because if you *do* know, without being told, it may indicate that you *are* the villain my brother fears you are. And—well, really, it wouldn't please me to know that you are a villain. I'd much rather think well of you. Besides, if you are what my brother thinks you are, you may give us trouble. Has it occurred to you that we ran away from you to escape trouble?"

"It does now, since you tell me; I should never have thought of it."

"It seems very much as if you followed us here, don't you think?"

"You knew I was stopping here, didn't you?"

"I know you told us you *had* been stopping here; but we gathered the idea that you expected to go on to Glenwood—not that you expected to return here."

"I did intend to go to Glenwood; but I meant to come here first, and get my trunk and other things."

"So," she explained, "we ran to Glenwood, then took the other road, round by Cottonwood Crossing, and came here. And here you came, just as if you were dogging us. You went to Glenwood, I suppose, following our auto; and there you learned that an automobile had been shipped west this morning; there was one shipped, as we discovered, and we thought you would suppose that it was ours! But that didn't fool you. So you took the first train for this point; it got in not long ago. Am I right? And doesn't it seem we may be warranted in supposing you followed us here? I knew you would come out of the dining room looking for us; so I came out here on this piazza, to discover just what you mean, if I can. Am I not quite frank? My brother says I'm the frankest person alive; but his judgment is partial. Come, Sir Cowboy, did you follow us?"

Edgerly began to explain, clumsily: telling her he had gone to Glenwood, and why he had, on the other hand, hastened back to Crescent Butte. He even admitted stopping before the office of the chief of police, with thoughts of having a telegram sent to Glenwood ordering their arrest.

"So, if we had remained there, we should have been arrested! Sir Cowboy, it makes me glad we did not go there. Yet I think there is where we should have gone if we had known you were to come here. I am still ungraciously honest in what I say, you see!"

She continued insisting that Jimmie Frazer was honest and honorable; he had not doctored the wine, and he had stolen nothing.

"You see," she urged, as she defended her brother's actions, "it was so plain that you were not a cowboy, while pretending to be one, that, ignorant as I am, I knew it at once. Why were you wearing that ridiculous cowboy clothing? It didn't deceive any one; and—it didn't become you."

Fred Edgerly flushed at this rebuke; he had thought the cowboy clothing became him immensely.

"It was just a romantic idea," he explained. "This is, or has been recently, cowboy land."

"Um-m!" He thought she tilted her nose in the air. "Perhaps so. It made you look like a stage villain."

"Will you excuse me," she added then, rising, "while I go and recount this remarkable story to my brother? It will interest and astonish him. I am even afraid he will not credit it. For, you see, he suspects you."

"*You* do not, I hope?" he said, also rising.

"Perhaps I do, Sir Cowboy. As to that, we shall see later. I hope you are everything you ought to be."

She hurried away, with a little wave of her hand to him, her boot-heels clicking on the bare boards of the piazza floor.

Fred Edgerly followed, more slowly, pondering the situation in its new light.

Hearing the sound of billiard balls, he turned aimlessly to the lighted stairs which led to the billiard room in the basement. When he got there he found only one man, and that was Jimmie Frazer himself, at a pool table, chalking his cue, after a shot, with the balls well scattered over the table.

After a moment of hesitation, Edgerly went boldly forward. Frazer turned to the table on seeing him, giving Edgerly a view of his back. He was a trim, athletic young fellow, under twenty-five, well dressed, with a dark, attractive face, which in some lines resembled his sister's. It seemed he meant to ignore Edgerly's presence.

"You wouldn't care for a game with me?"

Edgerly asked the question, stepping to the rack and taking down a cue.

"No, I don't think I would," said Frazer, without turning round; "I'm not much of a player—just practicing. You'd be sure to beat me—see?"

"I've been having a talk with your sister," said Edgerly, dropping the heavy butt of his cue to the floor and folding his hands over the top of the chalked end.

"That's interesting."

Frazer wielded his cue and sent a ball caroming into a pocket.

"She declared that you didn't drug my wine—and that you didn't take away my rifle and horse and other property."

Frazer turned round, eyeing him.

"What's that?"

"I slept until nearly noon, in that cabin where you left me; and when I woke up my horse and everything I had was gone. How do you account for that?"

Frazer looked him over with irritating coolness.

"I don't try to account for it, as I know nothing about it."

"Yet you must admit that you drove away in your auto and left me."

"Yes," said Frazer, a sudden fire in his gray eyes, "and if you follow me round, I warn you that you will meet worse treatment. I think I know you—know who you are, and what you're after. At first, when you came there, I thought I might be mistaken; but now I don't think that I am. As for that alleged robbery—in my opinion it's all rot."

Fred Edgerly's anger leaped at that. "Then I'm a liar?" he said, his face suddenly white, his hands trembling on top of the cue.

Frazer coughed out a scornful laugh, and turning to the table set his cue ball in position. "I never call a man a liar—out here, in this wild and woolly West. It's said not to be healthy."

"But you said—"

"Forget it. All I ask of you is that you will keep away from me. But you'll do that, anyhow, I think, as I'm going to get out of here. But if you try to follow me—why, then I'll know—" He shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, what's the use? I guess you know what I mean, all right."

"But I don't," said Edgerly obstinately. "And I demand an understanding."

Jimmie Frazer made his shot.

"We wont talk about it," he said. "If I'm wronging you, I'm sorry. But I don't think I am, and I refuse to quarrel with you." He walked around the table, dug a ball out of a pocket, and laid it up with some others. "So you'll excuse me, please. I haven't any chip on my shoulder."

"You're a coward," said Edgerly. He felt that he had been not only wronged, but snubbed, and his wrath blazed forth. "You drugged me at the cabin, and deserted me there, even if you didn't rob me, yet you refuse to give me any satisfaction."

Frazer stopped and sighted at the balls across the table.

"I refuse to be bullied into a fight with you," he said. "It's perhaps what you want, but you wont get it. Now go away and leave me alone. If I find later that I'm mistaken in you, I'll tender the proper apologies, but just now—Well, you see I'm trying to pocket as many of these balls as I can, and you're making me nervous."

Edgerly glared at him.

"How about the dinosaurs?" he sneered. "And the emeralds? It startled your sister, when I spoke of the emeralds! And that grave and head-board; and the marks and letters on that pa-

per, which you wouldn't explain, after trying to see what I knew about them. If any one is playing double it is you, Jimmie Frazer—if that is your name, which I'm beginning to doubt."

When Frazer did not even look at him he turned and climbed angrily out of the billiard room. He was white with wrath; he had grown angrier every minute, and knew if he remained a more violent explosion would follow.

At the top of the stairs he came face to face with Asbury Jett, descending to the billiard room. Judging by his manner, it appeared that Jett would have avoided the meeting.

"What's the matter with that crazy man in there?" Edgerly snarled. "And what's the matter with *you?* Do you think I've got smallpox, that you must avoid me, and run away from me?"

"Which man you meanin'?" asked Jett, rolling his eyes.

"The man you have been with—Frazer. He's down in the billiard room, and refuses to explain why he left me last night the way he did, and why he took my horse and everything I had! Perhaps you can explain it; I can't get anything out of him."

Jett recoiled. "What you talkin' 'bout?" he cried.

"Don't you know?"

"Ah sho don't know none o' dem things!"

"You saw Frazer and his sister drive away in the auto while I was asleep, and—"

"No, suh, ah didn't; I wasn't wid 'em; I went away befo' midnight, on de hoss."

"What for; why did *you* leave?" Edgerly demanded.

"They sent me heah tuh see about some things an' git their rooms ready—yes, suh!"

"And to get you out of the way; perhaps they didn't want you to know, or couldn't trust you!"

Asbury Jett stared. "Say, boss, I reckum yo' head is sho hurtin' you; ef you aint been drinkin', you suttinly shows signs o' crazy. I dunno what you talkin' about, man. Lemme pas', will you?"

He slid past, and hurried down the steps.

"Crazy?" said Edgerly, looking at the negro's vanishing back. "Perhaps I am. But I don't think so. Yet this is enough to make a man crazy. If it wasn't for his sister, I'd have Jimmie Frazer in jail inside of an hour!"

But when passing out of the hotel he considered the matter, he began to see what slight grounds he would have for bringing any serious charge against Jimmie Frazer. While he affirmed, Frazer could deny: it would become simply a question of who was worthy of credence. And when Frazer's sister and Asbury Jett sided with Jimmie, as they would do, Edgerly's claims must fall to the ground.

But if Asbury Jett had brought Edgerly's horse to Crescent Butte, that would establish a working point. So Edgerly set out for the hotel stable, with that in view. But his horse was not there. He visited the other stables in the town, with the same result. A thing which puzzled him, was that he did not see Frazer's motor car anywhere.

Fred Edgerly's wrath against Jimmie Frazer wore its edge off as he prosecuted his search. On leaving the hotel he had been ready to demand a warrant for Frazer's arrest, if some proof could be found to back his demand. But this desire had passed by the time he returned to the hotel. In going over everything, he saw how easy it would have been for some one to enter the cabin and rob him, after the Frazers had departed; and that same person could have taken his horse as readily. The fact that the hoof-marks he had seen had not continued on with the tracks of the automobile might stand as proof of that, until further light came.

But the thing that troubled Fred Edgerly most was that he stood a chance now of losing forever the good opinion of Alice Frazer, if he had not already lost it; that seemed a very serious matter. In view of his desire to stand well in her estimation his angry fling at her brother in the billiard room had been very unwise. Nor could he forget Jimmie Frazer's statement, that he expected to depart from Crescent Butte soon, with the intention of putting himself, and of course his sister, beyond the scope of Edgerly's ken.

"And certainly I can't chase them about, if they don't want me near them," was his uneasy conclusion.

He set out to find Alice Frazer again, hoping he could make some explanation, or say something, which would cushion the effect of what her brother would undoubtedly tell her. But she was not to be found. Apparently she had retired to her room for the night.

At the desk of the clerk, Edgerly glanced with a casual air over the registries for that day. And he found the names of J. M. Frazer and Alice Frazer in a fair, round hand, evidently Jimmie's. The address was set down as Grand Rapids. It tallied with the information they had given him.

While he smoked a cigaret, camped in a chair on the front piazza still cogitating, a young colored man belonging at the hotel came out and poised himself on the near-by railing.

"See here," said Edgerly, tossing away his cigaret, "you've met Asbury Jett, I suppose?"

"The cullud gemman that's sho-fuhin' fo' Misteh Frazeh?"

"Yes, that's the one. They may go away before I'm up in the morning, and I'd like to see them before they go. Will you be up all night?"

"Yes, suh. I has to meet the five o'clock train in the mawnin'!"

"All right, then. If they leave before morning, come up to my room and tell me about it, will you? It will be worth a dollar to you!"

He hadn't a cent in his pocket.

"Yes, suh; I'll do it, suh!"

Edgerly hated himself heartily for that arrangement, as he made his way across to the telegraph office at the railway station and sent a message to an uncle in Kansas City requesting money. He wondered how Alice Frazer would regard it, if she knew. Yet he could not be sorry; he felt that he must know it, if the Frazers hastened away, as he feared they would do.

He was beginning to be very sleepy again, when he reached his room—not dead sleepy, as on the previous evening, yet noticeably so. He had passed through a strenuous day. That sense of drowsiness made him again wonder if he had been mistaken about the wine. Yet he had not been mistaken as to the fact that they had deserted him, and their joint confession that it was because Jimmie Frazer feared him. He undressed slowly and went to bed, and fell asleep while trying to solve the puzzle of why Frazer was afraid of him, and thought him a villain. The solution eluded him, and he pursued it all night long in his dreams.

V

When Fred Edgerly appeared in the hotel office, early in the morning, one of the first persons he saw was the young colored man he had spoken to just before going to bed.

"They went on the five o'clock, boss," the factotum informed him.

"What is that?" said Edgerly.

"Jes' so; they went on the five o'clock train, east."

The blood had mounted to Edgerly's face. "But you promised me you would let me know" he said.

"Yes, suh. An' you promised me a dollar, but I didn't git it. The yuther man give me five, an' tol' me to keep still. It was betteh pay, an mo' certain. A buhd in the han', you know."

"Did they ship the automobile?"

"It was shipped yisti'day. I could 'a' tol' you 'bout that las' night, but you didn't ask me; it went by freight."

"You don't know their destination, I suppose?"

"Yes, suh; it was Laramie. Misteh Jett tol' me they was goin' straight th'ough to Laramie."

"It's all right," said Edgerly, trying to conceal his deep disappointment, "but you ought to have called me."

He turned back to the desk of the clerk; he had been talking by the outer door.

"No telegrams," said the clerk, when Edgerly asked.

Down at the telegraph office he received the same information. Thereupon he shot another "collect" dispatch at his uncle in Kansas City and then inquired of the ticket agent at the next window if Mr. Frazer and Miss Frazer, from the near-by hotel, had purchased tickets for Laramie that morning.

"I sold some tickets for Laramie," said the agent, looking up over the edge of the newspaper he was reading. "I don't know who bought them."

About nine o'clock a telegram was brought up to Edgerly's room. The sight of the yellow envelope brightened him. But when he tore it open he read:

> Father gone to Chicago—absent several days, BESSIE.

Bessie was Edgerly's cousin; a pert, black-eyed girl, whom he liked, but who was rather shy. Probably Bessie did not know her father's Chicago address.

In his anxiety, Edgerly sent a "collect" message to Bessie, stating briefly his financial position. Having dispatched that, he pawed some things out of his trunk, selected a pair of gold cuff buttons, his fountain pen, and a scarf pin with a small brilliant, for which he had handed over the sum of twenty-five dollars, and sallied forth to try his luck at a pawn-shop he had seen around the corner. For the first time in his life he was in a strange place and penniless, and it was so unpleasant a position that the thought of it frightened him. He had visions of the landlord demanding payment, and tumbling him and his trunk contemptuously into the street.

The broker who, under the Lombard sign of the three balls, was relieving the pressing needs of his fellow men at a profit of six hundred per cent and upwards, already had a customer when Fred Edgerly popped hastily in through the little door. This customer was a rough-looking fellow, wearing slouch hat and shirt of soiled red flannel, who closed his hand convulsively over some small object resembling a bit of green glass, and shuffled into an adjoining room to wait until Edgerly was through.

Displaying a petrified smile, the pawnbroker turned to Edgerly. "Somet'ing I can do for you, eh?" he asked, leaning over his little counter.

On the wall behind him were musical instruments, revolvers, rifles, watches, even articles of clothing, which necessitous men had confided to his keeping; and at his elbow was a large glass case holding more watches, with rings and jewelry.

In the back of Edgerly's head questions were buzzing about the bit of green glass he had seen, as he fished up the articles he desired to pawn, and exhibited them.

The pawnbroker spread them out before him, looked at them carefully, tested them with his tongue, then used a small magnifying glass.

"How mooch you want, mine friendt?"

"All I can get," said Edgerly. "I think I can pay you back this evening, or tomorrow."

The broker shrugged his spare shoulders.

"T'ree dollars," he said.

"Make it five, anyway; it's little enough. They're worth ten times that."

"T'ree dollars."

"Five, I say."

The thin shoulders went up again.

"No; I could not pay more if it vas to my own fader; it is more as dey are vort. I vill gift you t'ree dollars. Yes?"

"Take them," said Edgerly impatiently.

When he had pocketed his pawn ticket and the three silver dollars passed out to him, and had left the pawnshop, Edgerly strolled down to the corner, and stood there, near the hotel, waiting to see the other man depart. But though he waited fully half an hour he was not gratified.

"Slipped out the back way," he said, and went on into the hotel.

Having a speaking acquaintance with the day clerk, he lounged by the latter's desk, after inquiring for mail he did not expect; then remarked with an uninterested air:

"I understand that emeralds are found in these hills sometimes."

"Rubies, you mean," the clerk corrected. "That is they're called rubies, but they're only red agates. There was a lot of excitement about them some time back; the prospectors were crazy."

He pulled open a drawer and threw some of the rubies out on the desk—half a handful of them.

"Agates," he said. "Handsome, aint they? Too bad they aint rubies."

Edgerly looked them over.

"So there are no emeralds found here?"

The clerk's keen eyes bored him. "You heard there were emeralds?"

"I must have misunderstood what I heard."

"No emeralds were ever found round here. We've lots of black diamonds, though." He referred to the coal fields. "That's something worth while, eh?"

As he left the desk Edgerly was cogitating on his curious mistake. If no emeralds were to be found in the neighborhood, what had he seen in the rough palm of the man in the pawnshop? And why had his reference to emeralds at the cabin brought confusion? He turned that over and over in his mind. What did Jimmie Frazer mean by taking umbrage when emeralds were spoken of? And Jimmie's sister—why had that mention so startled her? Or was he himself mistaken about the whole thing?

Fred Edgerly went outside, and tried to study that out. But he failed to arrive anywhere; all the highways of thinking were blocked and the finger posts torn down. "I give it up," he said; "and I suppose it is really none of my business. But I wish I had my property, and my money. If my lovely uncle in K. C. don't cough up, and Bessie can't help me, I'm going to be in a pickle here; I'll have all I want to do to pull myself out of it, without troubling about matters that don't concern me. Still, there's Dodson. I guess I'll send another telegram; I'll try Dodson, this time."

Dodson was in charge of the bit of Kansas City real estate which Fred Edgerly owned—his patrimony. The rents from it were not much and had already been paid to him. Still Dodson might do something, if he understood the situation.

When he had sent the telegrams "collect," as usual—he could not afford to break into that precious three dollars of iron money sagging in his pocket until he was forced to—he went back to the neighborhood of the pawnshop, and after waiting there a while, he wandered out along the narrow street, toward the trail he had traversed the day before.

Absorbed in thought, he was a mile or more beyond the town before he became sensible of it. But he continued on, for the exertion of walking was a relief. When three miles at least from Crescent Butte he stopped on a rise of ground, and looked back over the way he had come. As he looked, drawing in deep breaths of the wine-like air, a horseman came in view in the trail below him. There was something so familiar in the appearance of the rider and horse that after a staring gaze Edgerly dropped down on a stone by the way, and waited for the horseman to come up.

In a little while he was sure the man was the one he had seen in the pawnshop. This was of itself interesting, but even more interesting was the fact that Edgerly was looking at his own horse, the one he had lost at the cabin. He did not need to look twice to be sure of it. Yet he wanted to see if the familiar, rangy, red roan bore on its right hip the brand he remembered—a flying Y, sprawled like a banyan over the red-and-white hair. Behind the saddle was a big bundle—a filled gunny bag strapped in position there.

It was Fred Edgerly's belief that the man was a cowboy. And as his knowledge of cowboys and cowboy character had been gained solely from reading and books, with a "look-in" at a wild West show now and then, he hesitated as to his manner of approach, in demanding the restoration of his property. Perhaps the rough-looking rider was a road-agent! Anyway appearances at the moment indicated that he was the thief who had gone through Edgerly at the cabin. If his character was so desperate, he might resent Edgerly's demand with gun-play. Nevertheless, Fred Edgerly was resolved to recover his horse, or know why. So, though he felt the helplessness of his unarmed position, his mind was made up.

Edgerly did not speak until the man came opposite in the trail. The rider was looking at him curiously; probably, it seemed, because he recalled the incident in the pawn-shop; Edgerly suspected it was also on account of the horse. The banyan Y was plainly to be seen now. Edgerly observed, too, that the saddle and blanket, and the bridle, were the ones he had purchased and paid a round price for. With the man still eyeing him, he stepped forward.

"I don't know where you picked up that horse, stranger," he said, "but I have a lively recollection that I bought him in Crescent Butte no longer than four days ago—as I can prove to you, if you will go with me to the man I bought him of. And that saddle and bridle and the saddle blanket I got at the same time."

The man drew the horse in with an abrupt jerk. Edgerly discovered now that the horseman had mild blue eyes and a not unpleasant face—points he had failed to perceive in the pawnshop.

"That so?" said the man.

"Yes, it's so," said Edgerly. It pleased and encouraged him, that the man did not seem inclined to be combative.

"A feller claimin' property," said the man, "could mention, I s'pose, where he had it last, with sim'lar p'ints?"

"I was at a cabin off there in the edge of the hills." Edgerly pointed. "It's a cabin of cottonwood poles, and it was occupied at the time by a brother and sister named Frazer. They had an automobile, and went to the town in it, and have now gone on to Laramie. I slept sound that night in the cabin, with my horse on a picket rope down by the river. When I woke up he was gone—and the saddle and blanket, and bridle were gone too. They're on the horse now; and that's the horse."

The man smiled.

"Sounds straight enough," he said, "but it's tough on me, as I reckon it means I've got to hoof it the rest o' the way to my camp, and pack that bag o' stuff on my back. Still, I dunno as I've any right to feel peeved. I didn't steal your horse, an' you can have him. Truth is, I found him, jest as you see him, with his nose in the grass, down at the crick below my shack. I cal'lated that he had throwed his rider, and that I'd be called on sooner or earlier to give him up. I was expectin' the tackle in the town back there, but as it hadn't come I was jest congratulatin' my luck, thinkin' I'd found a horse I could keep."

He slid out of the saddle.

It was so easy a victory that Fred Edgerly was taken by surprise; he had expected a wrangle at least, having yet to learn that when a man knows he is in the wrong he is not quick to fight. It argued, too, that this man was honest—he looked honest. Yet Edgerly did not forget the emerald seen in the pawnshop—if it was an emerald. The man began to untie the heavy looking bag.

"How far is it to your camp?" asked Edgerly.

"All o' five miles."

"And I suppose that bag is kind of heavy?"

"Well, it's kinda heavy." He turned, smiling. "Things for the Prince—treats an' sech like." Edgerly's stare brought a laugh, and an explanation. "That's what I call him—Prince Charming—out of a story book I got for him, y' know. Kinda fits him. He's only a kid—cute, though, cute as hell."

Fred Edgerly decided quickly that one who had a soft spot in his heart for a child could not be a very bad man. Still, he remembered the emerald. Connecting it with that mention of emeralds which had startled the Frazers, it generated curiosity; and a desire to solve that mystery decided him.

"Just leave the bag on there," he said. "I'm out for a walk and have got all the rest of the afternoon before me. You can take the bag on to your shack, and I'll go with you; after that I'll ride back to Crescent Butte."

The man's face showed distrust.

"You're kind," he said. "But ain't it askin' too durn much?"

"Not if I like to do it. In fact, you've made me want to see that boy, and your camp; so that counts."

"'Taint much—jest a sheep camp. I've got a few sheep I'm runnin' there. I kinda like the business; they aint no money in it, in a small way, yet it makes a feller sorty independent; that's something."

"It's everything," said Edgerly. "I'll go with you."

The man's distrust seemed to pass; yet the next moment he asked, showing that he, too, remembered:

"I think I seen you in Butte while I was there t'-day? When I was in a pawn-shop, trading a gun I had, for money to buy some things for the Prince."

"Yes, I recollect—I saw you," Edgerly admitted, smiling. "I called on our

uncle of the three balls also, for a loan, and left some little trinkets in his care; I can't agree that he was generous."

The sheep man spat in disgust.

"Generous; there's a place with a winter resort climate that's waitin' for generous souls like his'n! Why, say, that ol' cuss would skin a flea for his hide!"

Both laughed.

"We'll go on together then—eh?" Edgerly asked. "I'd like to see your camp and the boy."

This mention of the boy melted the final frost of the sheep-man's reluctance.

"Oh, all right," he assented. "I don't know your name, though."

"It's Fred Edgerly."

"Mine's Harrigan; I'm called 'Happy' Harrigan generally by people that knows me. The Prince kinda likes it; I reckon he thinks that Happy sounds like Pappy."

"Then he isn't your child?" said Edgerly.

"Bless you, no. He's an orphant." He stepped back from the horse. "Hop on here, and we'll be movin'; the horse is yours! Anyway, I know he aint mine; finding aint ownership, out in this country, an' a man what hangs onto a horse that don't belong to him is registerin' for trouble. It will take us two hours to git there, unless we both ride; an' with the bag, that'd be kinda too much for old Grizzly. I call him Grizzly to please the Prince. He likes to think 't the horse is a grizzly bear—called him one, soon's he seen him."

They settled it by taking turns at riding. Happy Harrigan beguiled the way with talk pertaining chiefly to himself and his sheep, and the Prince. He had also a collie, unbelievably intelligent, that guarded the Prince while he was away, and looked out for the sheep. The name of the collie was Tiger—likewise bestowed to please the fancies of the Prince.

"Y' see, the Prince likes wild stories," he explained. "Stories about fierce animals that will eat you up quick and think about it afterwards, yet animals that kin be tamed to play with. So it kinda pleases him to think that the collie is a meat-wranglin' tiger from the Superstition jungles that has been tamed; an' that this horse, which I got only yisterday, is a grizzly. Onct I got a young sage rabbit; and me an' the Prince had quite a time gittin' him tamed down from the terrible wild cat he had been when out in the sage brush to the meek and docile critter that we could handle. Whenever the rabbit would hop and squeak, the Prince would climb onto a chair or a box an' howl for me to come and rescue him. Yet he knowed 'twasn't reely a wild cat."

It was interesting to hear the sheep-man talk. In his cheery optimism he seemed to justify the title of "Happy." Yet jostling round in the dim back regions of Edgerly's conscious thought was that recollection of the "emerald," and questions about the stolen horse and Happy Harrigan's honesty.

The sheep-man's home was humble, yet beautiful by reason of its environment. Projecting ridges of the Superstition Range enfolded it, protecting it from the fierce sand storms of the desert and the sting of the winter's north wind. Down from the hills wandered a trickle of water, which splashed into and filled a rounded basin, or water-hole from which it emerged as a thinner trickle, and lost itself completely not far off, while trying to find a way out into the desert sands. The trickle fed a ribbon of green grass, and round the water-hole this ribbon widened into a green cloak covering many acres, the support of the sheep-man's small flock. But close about the water-hole the grass was trodden out.

When the shack was approached, Happy Harrigan gave a whoop that startled the echoes in the hills. It brought a white-breasted collie out of the grass by the pool; and, tumbling out of the door of the shack, a small toddler, marvelously clothed in rags, who fell as he attempted to run toward the whooping rider, then picked himself up and fell again.

"The Prince!" yelped Harrigan. "As glad to see me as if I was a new Teddy bear. He's got two of 'em now, an's been yowlin' like a locoed tom-cat for another; I've got it here in the bag. Wow! Prince Charming, I got comp'ny for ye—a friendly gent that's owner o' the horse I'm straddlin', he says."

He turned to Edgerly.

"Aint he it? Only thing eatin' me is, I aint his daddy—I'd be proud to be."

He slid out of the saddle, and after tossing the bridle rein to Edgerly ran on to meet the Prince.

But not until the gunny bag was carried into the shack and its bulging contents poured out upon the floor was Happy Harrigan's joy complete, as he watched the capering delight of the Prince.

Edgerly found the boy interesting, and good to look at. His skin, in spite of the desert sun and wind, was like velvet—his eyes like violets. Even the rags he wore could not make him look commonplace; to Edgerly it seemed that he had an unearthly intelligence; those big blue eyes seemed to see right through him—through all his secret thoughts and suspicions—and accuse him.

"This is a great place," said Harrigan. "I call myself The First Man—the first man in this valley. With sech a home, and sech a kid, no man could ever think o' leavin' the sunshine o' this spot for another; yet I did, no more'n a year ago, soon after I'd found the little devil. Y' see, it was this way."

He pulled down a cracker box, and drew from it a newspaper and a large soiled manila envelope bearing a name and address.

"Kinda gives the hist'ry of the Prince," he said, glancing at the boy playing on the floor with his new treasures.

He unfolded the yellow newspaper, and laid a grimy forefinger on a paragraph marked round in lead pencil:

> Our esteemed fellow-townsman, Happy Harrigan, the bounding sheepman of the Superstition Range, appeared before the surprised eyes of Miss Mattie Medlar, at the post office window, yesterday, trying to send a small urchin by Uncle Sam's mail to his home back East. It scared up Miss Mattie a whole lot, for she thought that our esteemed F-T was a candidate for the nearest Fool Factory, when in fact he had only been toying too long with the wine cup, and had about seven drinks too many. He had a blotter of postage stamps stuck on the boy's forehead, and the address to which he was to be expedited pinned onto the boy's jacket. That address was somewhere in the metropolis of New York. It is unnecessary to say that the squirming parcel was not accepted by Postmaster Jackson as mailable matter. In spite of Miss Mattie's scare, Happy Harrigan was permitted to wander back to the Superstition ranges, where he can listen again to the song of his sheep, and shun the primrose path of temptation. It seems that Happy found the lad somewhere with that address on him, and considered it his Christian duty, after tanking up, to try to get the kid through to his people. Though thrown down in his first attempt, Happy Harrigan is not depressed—nothing could keep that soaring spirit down; and he says that he will take the kid through, even if they both have to walk. Bully for you, Happy. Hip, hip!

Happy Harrigan laid the manila envelope across the paragraph, when he saw that Edgerly had finished reading.

"That's the address," he said.

Fred Edgerly read on the face of the envelope:

> Mr. William Catterlin,
> Care of Amersley & Company,
> Broadway, New York.

"I went there," said Harrigan, "after writin' a letter, and gittin' no answer. I kinda feared 'twouldn't do no good, yet I felt it was my duty, seein' how the Prince had come into my hands. Y' see, I found him, maverickin' round on the edge o' the desert, with only that big envelope, which was in his pocket, as a brand to establish his ownership—and him no more able to tell me anything worth while than if he had been a blattin' range calf, on account of his tender youth. Appearances indicated that he had jest growed, like Topsy, out there where I found him; there wasn't a house, or a man, or a blamed thing, 'cept sand and sage brush and big black rocks. 'Twas so queer that it kinda stunned me, first off. As I'd been drinkin' some too much recent, thinks I—'Well, I've shore got 'em; but instid of seein' woolly dogs, with diamond eyes, chasin' tail-less snakes, as before, I'm now lookin' at a pa'r o' angel twins, of the male persuasin, judgin' by the clo'es.' Y' know, I was seein' double, and thought then that I was lookin' at two boys." He laughed over the recollection.

"Well," he went on, "soon's I felt equal to it, I pirooted over to Glenwood, taking the kid. And there, bracin' my shakin' nerves with some o' the hairs of the dog that had bit me, I concludes to

ship the kid to his people, by ticketin' him through the post office—billin' him special as a vallyble article. I allowed if I got him started Uncle Sam wouldn't chuck him out o' the car winder, but would look out for him, and see that he got safe through. That newspaper feller tried to be funny about it; but I didn't then, an' can't yit, see where it was funny to want to send a kid like him to the place where it seemed he belonged. I s'pose, mebby, I'm kinda weak in my sense of humor!

"When they wouldn't take him—I hadn't money enough to ship him by the passenger route—I buys him some toys, and a story book, and we romps back here. That story book I'll show you bimeby—it's all about a classy young thing called Prince Charming. An' the kid, takin' to it, mainly on account of the red pictures, and sayin' the name over and over, kinda as if 'twas his own, got me started to callin' him the Prince; name fit him, too.

"In a month, or mebby six weeks, when the letter I'd sent had time to sift back to me, I set out for New York, takin' the Prince, to see if I could find his folks, yet almost hopin' I couldn't, for I had got to likin' him that well I didn't want to give him up. I went to the place named on that envelope. 'Twas a big jewelry store, and it had every establishment o' the kind that I'd ever seen elsewhere backed clean off the map. But Mr. William Catterlin wasn't there; seemed he had been, some months before, but sense then he had evaporated, and his whereabouts was unknown; and nobody didn't know nothing about the Prince.

"So after knockin' round a spell, and spending enough money to keep me goin' here a year, the Prince and me hit the high places for the home range ag'in. That tin soldier over there, with one arm off and his muskit bent, is all that's left o' the toys an' things we brung back with us—the only reminder, 'ceptin' memories o' scandalous high charges everywhere, of our big trip East; the rest of the things is lost, in the sand out there, or in the water-hole—the water-hole gits most of 'em. If Prince keeps on in his youthful recklessness he'll fill it up; and then what'll the sheep do for a place to drink at—I tell him!"

He leaned back, smiling at the boy on the floor, and taking the newspaper began to fold it up carefully.

"And you've never had a word of information since?" said Edgerly.

"Not a thing; it's what some folks 'd call a myst'ry. I'm inclined to call it kindness o' Providence, an' let it go at that. Y' see, I was purty lonesome here, in spite o' the sheep and the dog. And sense the Prince come I've been able to cut the acquaintance of my former intimate friend, Old Red-Eye. I'm kinda responsible to Providence for the Prince's keep and good care now and that means I've got to hold myself straight—and I do. I've trained the dog to look out for him when I'm away; but I'm never gone for more'n a few hours, unless he goes with me."

"You'll have to see to educating him by and by," Edgerly suggested.

Happy Harrigan looked worried.

"But mebby I wont have to send him away to do that," he said. "The peartness o' that kid is amazing, and I dunno but he kin learn enough right here. I've been practicin' at educatin' him a little, and you can see how smart he is. Jest to show you—he knows all his letters and can spell like a schoolma'am, a'ready."

When Edgerly questioned the toddler of three, he found that the Prince had merely a hazy memory of a man he called "Papa."

"He recklected a bit more than that at first," said Harrigan. "Recklected somethin' about his mother, who had died. But he didn't know their names—they were jest Pappy and Mammy; he allowed they didn't have any other names, and that his name was Baby—though bimeby he remembered it was George. But you can see that didn't give me much to go on. He said there was another man, but he didn't know who. And there y' air; now you know as much about him as I do, but 'taint much."

VI

Having decided not to return to Crescent Butte that afternoon, Fred Ed-

gerly sat on the stool before the shack, and watched Happy Harrigan and the collie corral the sheep for the night, down by the water-hole. The corral was a high inclosure of cottonwood poles sharpened and driven into the ground, and was coyote-proof.

Edgerly had come to his decision to stay because he felt lonely since the disappearance of the Frazers. They had not treated him right, but that made no difference; it never does, in a case like Edgerly's. He disliked to think that probably he would never again see the attractive young woman he had come to like so well in so short a time; yet that did not keep him from thinking of it, and regretting it. But it was plain that he could not follow the Frazers to Laramie; his self-respect would have forbidden that, even if he had the money.

There were other considerations tempting him to linger over night with the sheep-man, who had extended a warm invitation. He liked the sheep-man; and there was that lure of the "emeralds," and some dim hope of getting on the trail of the man who had stolen his horse and other property.

Before Happy Harrigan finished his work at the sheep corral and set the high gate of poles in place for the night, the stars were out in the sky, looking pale in the dim after-glow of the departed sun; and the white, new moon, thin as Diana's crescent, rested in beauty on the forehead of the ridge beyond the stream. Edgerly watched the moon and the brightening stars, as the purple dusk deepened, and thought of Laramie and the Frazers and what he had begun to call the "mysteries." Coyotes were yapping in the hills, and a distant prairie-dog owl called like the ghost of a cuckoo, as Harrigan's boots clumped up the slope to the shack.

"There's a lot o' things along them ridges that seems like ghosts a-callin' and squallin'," said Harrigan, when Edgerly spoke of it. "If you should live here long's I have you'd know why that's called the Superstition Range. But I'm used to 'em, and don't mind. Yet they made me feel lonesome, in New York, missin' 'em, noisy as 'twas there. I wanted to hear coyotes howlin'. Speakin' to a feller about it, he said: 'Coyotes; no—there aint none here. But there's wolves plenty."

He swung the coffee pot round on his sheet-iron stove. "I kinda kep' an eye out for them human wolves but I didn't meet up with any, s'fur's I knowed; seemed as nice a place as you'd want to see, to live in; though the papers was full of stories of hold-ups and the like. But it's too blame fur away from the West, seems to me. An' I dunno what people want to pack themselves in so like sardines for, anyhow, when out here you can have the whole world to romp round in. Still, I aint in no hurry to have any of them men come out here an' mebby squabble with me about who shall use that water-hole out there. It'll come to that bimeby, I reckon."

Fred Edgerly slept well that night, once he was asleep, in the shack of the sheep-man, undisturbed by "mysteries" or troublesome memories of the Frazers; he was tired out.

In the morning, after breakfast, when the sheep had been released from their corral to go pouring in a noisy, dirty-white flood over the green grass, Happy Harrigan conducted Edgerly to the spot where he had found and captured the red roan, grazing by the stream, bridle reins slumped down round its ears and the stirrups swinging free.

"The proof was plain enough that he had pitched his rider and got away," said Harrigan. "For, y' see, if he had been turned adrift, which no sensible man could think had happened, the stirrups would been crossed over the saddle and the bridle rein would been hooked over the saddle horn or fastened to a stirrup leather; and if he had jest broke away from where he was hitched, then the bridle rein would have been busted."

As they studied the hoof-marks in the soft soil, Harrigan suggested that if the trail could be followed backward some indications of what had happened, and who the thief was, might be found. But the work of following the backward trail where the ground was not soft was beyond the ability of either the sheep-man or Edgerly.

About eight o'clock Fred Edgerly mounted the red roan and turned his

back on the lonely shack of Happy Harrigan, after promising to return as soon as he could. The sheep-man stood by the door, saying his farewells, the Prince in his arms, and in the arms of the Prince a triumphant Teddy bear. The collie squatted at the sheep-man's side.

Instead of taking the trail Edgerly turned eastwardly, out from the higher hills, along a path indicated by Harrigan, with the intention of again visiting the abandoned cabin of the Frazers. He was not satisfied to make no further investigation of the loss of his property; and the easy recovery of his horse inspired him to further effort. But if the horse and other things had been stolen by some one who visited the cabin while Edgerly lay asleep in it, it would seem that a thief was in the region; and, of course, a thief would put up a fight. But the sheep-man had said there were no robbers in the hills, so far as he knew; and he had been there long enough to know. It was his opinion that the man who committed the robbery came from Crescent Butte, that he probably had been out hunting, and that he took advantage of an opportunity that came to him, on visiting the cabin and finding no one there but a man sunk deep in slumber. It was at least a reasonable theory.

When he was within a mile or two of the cabin, Edgerly was startled by a shot crashing sharply through the silence from behind a low hill. It was followed instantly by a woman's screams.

Though unarmed, Edgerly lost no time in swinging his horse around. As he raced the animal to the top of the hill he heard another scream. Then he topped the hill, and beheld a sight in the valley beyond that amazed him, and at the same time threw him into a rage.

A tiny wall tent of new white duck shone like a spot of snow in the sunlight, with a fire-pole beside it, and a fire sending up a tangled skein of blue smoke. An automobile stood here, its brass-work and varnish a-glitter. But the sight which drew and held Fred Edgerly's startled gaze was a young woman, Alice Frazer, engaged in a struggling fight with a man, who held her by the right wrist, and in spite of her screaming protests was drawing her bodily away from the tent. This man was armed. But the big revolver which swung in his free hand hampered his efforts, and gave the girl some advantage; he seemed on the point of hammering her over the head with the gun.

His wrath smoking hot at that sight, Edgerly yelled at the man, to make him desist, and spurred wildly down the slope. The girl screamed again as she saw and heard him; and with her free hand she beat at the ruffian's face, trying to release herself.

"Stop it, you scoundrel!" Edgerly roared, plunging straight at the man. "Stop it!"

Still holding the girl, the man whirled, snapping out an oath, and turned his revolver on the horseman. There was an exploding roar, then another. Instead of falling, Edgerly pitched himself from the saddle with a jump and sprang for the man's throat, not heeding the lead sent at him and the powder flashes that almost scorched his face.

The ferocity of Edgerly's rush broke the man's nerve; and when the girl, fighting to get hold of the revolver or turn it aside caused him to drop it, he bolted and sped in a frightened run for the cover of the brush. Instead of leaping for the fallen revolver, Edgerly caught the girl, who seemed about to topple over, and thus he lost his opportunity of stopping the escaping miscreant.

A crash of thundering hoofs was heard and a yell from Asbury Jett, who now came pounding down the valley on horseback. Miss Frazer concluded not to faint, and Edgerly assisted her to a seat on the grass before the tent.

Fred Edgerly was almost too astonished to speak. The girl he had been thinking of as in Laramie was here, and he could not understand it. The presence of Asbury Jett declared that Jimmie Frazer was here also. And here was their camp, a very small tent, hidden away in this rocky hollow, so surrounded by ridges and sage brush as to be well screened from the observation of any chance passer-by. This much was clear, however puzzling. But who was Alice Frazer's assailant? No doubt,

thought Edgerly, some miscreant made over-bold by finding her at the camp alone and unprotected.

"You are not—hurt, Mr. Edgerly?" she was asking breathlessly, as Edgerly dropped down beside her, solicitous for her safety and comfort.

"No," he said hoarsely, "—but you?"

"I—I think I am only frightened; but he did twist my wrist awfully—I thought I should die with the pain of it."

He still knelt by her, with the unpleasant feeling that he must be dreaming. He put his fingers on her wrist; it was red and swollen, with deep red marks on it. But she drew it away and flung a glance at him—a questioning glance, as full of wonder as his own.

"It's strange—perfectly incomprehensible, that you are here!" she exclaimed.

"And you! I was assured you had gone to Laramie."

"You were told that? By whom, pray?" She seemed astonished.

"By the colored man at the hotel in Crescent Butte," he admitted.

"But why should he—"

Jett was close at hand, riding hard.

"I might as well confess it," said Edgerly. "I promised to pay him, if he would notify me in case you planned to leave Crescent Butte by the five o'clock train yesterday morning. But your brother out-bid me—bought him off, by paying him five dollars, as against the one dollar I had merely promised to pay. It was taking an unfair advantage of me." He tried to smile and be pleasant about it; it seemed the only way, or least the best way, in the midst of his bewilderment, as well as his joy, over finding her there.

Jett came up, galloping heavily, eyeing Edgerly with mistrust.

"He ran in that direction," said Edgerly, "if you want to follow him."

Jett's eyes took in everything, including Edgerly's panting horse, and the revolvers lying on the grass.

"Who was shootin'?" he demanded.

Alice Frazer, clutching the tent pole, got up unsteadily.

"Where is Jimmie?" she asked.

"Ah dunno," said Jett. "But he aint fur."

"I was attacked here," she explained, her voice shaking, "by a man, a stranger, who came up to the tent while I was inside and didn't know he was near. He made threats, and talked horribly. I think that at first he didn't know I was alone. When he caught me by the wrist, I shot at him with my revolver, and missed him, of course. And then I screamed for help. And then—Mr. Edgerly came and there was more shooting by the man. But Mr. Edgerly wasn't hurt and then the man ran."

"You'll find his tracks out there," said Edgerly. "And that is his revolver—the biggest one."

Jett gave him another sharp look.

"You's all right, Miss Frazer?" he asked.

"My wrist hurts—where he twisted it; but I'm not hurt at all, otherwise. Asbury, I wish you would find Jimmie; he ought to know about this at once. I think it was Black Thompson, or one of his men."

"Whoever he is, I wish you'd find the scoundrel and put a bullet in him," snarled Edgerly.

Jett rode off in the direction pointed out. Soon he seemed to find tracks, for he went on, bending over in the saddle, his eyes on the ground.

"I'm not able to understand this," said Edgerly. He stepped out and picked up the largest revolver; it was a Colt's 45, with two chambers empty. He merely glanced at it, then picked up the other—the smaller Smith & Wesson. which he knew as Alice Frazer's. "You're here—which is proof enough that the colored man at the hotel lied. Of course, you didn't start for Laramie"

"We never intended to start for Laramie, so far as I know," she declared.

"It was just a ruse, to shake my unpleasant company. I can see that now; the automobile had not been shipped, and you came out here in it, bringing that tent, and camped down here."

"Because we wanted to be in this neighborhood, yet didn't care to occupy the cabin again," she explained. "We thought we had here found a spot so secluded no one could locate us; yet here I was attacked by that man, and here you came. But I'm glad you did."

"I can assure you that I had no desire to intrude," he said. "I came because I heard a revolver shot, and then heard a woman's scream. I should not have been here but for that, nor known you were here."

She looked at him steadily, something of her former manner, that he had liked so well, returning.

"You were not searching for us—honestly, you were not?" she asked.

"Certainly I was not," he declared. "I never even dreamed you had not gone to Laramie. I was told that, and believed it, and believed you had shipped your automobile the previous day. I regretted it, but I had no intention of following you, or trying to spy on you. It was none of my affair, and I had no right to. But—"

"Yes?"

"Well, it made me sorry—I regretted that I should probably never see you again."

"Did you, really?" She smiled her approval of him.

"It wasn't pleasant—that thought," he confessed. "And, naturally, I felt hurt over your brother's insinuations. I knew I was doing a foolish and unwarranted thing, when I asked that colored man at the hotel to tell me if you came down to take the five o'clock train; it was none of my business, and what I sought to do was an impertinence that was justly rebuked by your brother. Still—I felt hurt though I had no right to be."

"I think I almost like you for that, Sir Cowboy," she declared.

"I'm still under your brother's distrust and displeasure; I supposed I was under yours, but I hope not."

She glanced in the direction Jett had gone.

"You hadn't the least notion who that man was?"

"Not the least. I heard you say that perhaps he was Black Thompson, or one of his men. But who Black Thompson is, I can't guess; I think I never heard of him. But the name has a villainous sound. Whoever he was, I hope to meet him again."

"And if you do, Sir Cowboy?" She looked into his face.

"Perhaps I shall do nothing," he said, flushing. "It would all depend on the temper I happened to be in at the time, I suppose."

"But you were very brave—here; I know that. In rushing to my assistance, you risked your life and it's a wonder you were not shot down. I expected you to be and he tried hard enough to do it. He shot at you twice—the second time when you were not a yard from him."

"And you were clinging to his revolver arm, so that the second bullet went into the ground. That was very brave of you, don't you think? As for me, I was too much excited to realize that I was in any danger at all, so you can't call that bravery."

But he knew, by the look in her gray eyes, that she very much approved what he had done. Her face was pale in spite of her self-control, and now and then a little tremor shook her, like a spasm of fear.

"I believe this is your revolver," he said, extending it.

He held up the other, and clicked the cylinder round, looking at the loaded and the empty chambers.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. He was staring at the revolver. "Well, by George, this is interesting—and queer! Do you know whose revolver this is?"

"That man's; he let it fall, before he ran."

"It was in his possession, but it's mine. It's the revolver I had when I came to your cabin over there the other afternoon. It disappeared, with my horse and other things, you remember. Well, here it is; I know it by this little rust speck. One Colt 45 looks pretty much like another, but I know this weapon."

"Then you have found your thief," she said and it seemed to give her relief. She remembered that her brother had been accused by Edgerly at first.

"I've seen him, and I hope Asbury Jett finds him. My own revolver! Isn't that enough to jar the cherries on your grandmother's bonnet?" He clicked the cylinder again, and stared at the rust spot; and as he did so he heard the girl laugh.

"You're feeling better," he said. "That's good." He stuck the revolver

into his hip pocket, but the weapon was so large and long that the handle stood up in view. "Tell me about Black Thompson; that is, if it isn't one of the things you have been ordered not to tell."

He drew out a box for her, before the tent; then he dropped down on the grass beside it. Jett was gone from sight, the ruffian who had frightened her had vanished completely, and Jimmie Frazer was not yet to be seen.

"I suppose we might as well talk it over," she admitted, taking a seat on the box.

"Nothing would please me better. I'm suspected of following you about—a detestable thing of itself—with some ulterior purpose in view, of which I have no knowledge. And I have accused your brother of underhanded methods, and worse. And now this Black Thompson appears, to annoy and scare you!"

"A full explanation," she commented, "if one is made, will have to come from my brother, Sir Cowboy. I must admit that, in the beginning. That gives me a chance to pull up short, you see, if I find I am getting on ground that I ought to avoid. But—" she gave him a quick glance— "my confidence in you has been wonderfully restored."

"It was shattered?"

"Slightly fractured—but I clung to the pieces, hoping I could put them together again. That I have now done. Sir Cowboy, my good sense will not permit me to believe that a man who may be a friend of the scoundrel he attacked, would come to my aid, against that man, and run the risk of getting filled with bullets; nor can I believe that man would try to shoot a—pal. It's a horrid word; but I couldn't think of another."

"Then," said Edgerly, flushing uncomfortably, "I'm considered, or have been considered, a pal of that man, whoever he is—though I never saw him before!"

"Of that man, or men like him; I don't know who that man is myself, though I thought he might be Black Thompson—he had a black beard. Black Thompson is the leader of the gang my brother feared; and it is said he has a black beard. But I know now, Sir Cowboy, that you are not his friend and I shall believe you, when you tell me that you never saw him before."

"Thank you."

"You are laughing at me. Jimmie made the mistake of thinking you were probably a member of Black Thompson's gang. But you must understand that it was even then only a surmise—perhaps because he was so afraid of those men. I think one ought never to act hastily on a mere suspicion, don't you?"

"I can agree readily that it was very reprehensible—in my case."

"You're laughing, but it doesn't strike me as amusing. That's all I'm permitted to tell, or ought to tell. I can see now that Jimmie was a bit scared without reason to be; and he—both of us—acted like children frightened by shadows. But now I know I really have something to be frightened about!"

She looked in the direction Jett had taken, and her face paled again. As if to conceal it, she glanced at her swollen wrist.

"I think this will keep me frightened some time," she said. "As long as this wrist hurts me so, I sha'n't get over being afraid of that man, whether he is Black Thompson or some one else."

"Let me get some cold water for it," said Edgerly. "Pardon me for not thinking of that before."

He picked up a quart cup that had been knocked down and lay in the door of the tent, and started to go to the spring that he knew was close by in the hollow.

"It's good of you, Sir Cowboy," she said. "Really, I hadn't thought of that myself. But my head is spinning so that I can't think clearly, and I'll admit that I am still scared. I don't seem able to get over it. A grown woman ought to have more courage and strength—and I thought I had."

VII

When Jimmie Frazer returned to the camp, he was in haste. Two distant shots, heard by Alice Frazer and Fred Edgerly, had been heard also by him, and had sent him back in a hurry. But

they were the only shots he had heard. Edgerly and Alice had guessed they had some connection with Asbury Jett's pursuit of the black-bearded man, as they were in the direction Jett had gone. Still, Alice had been fearful that they concerned her brother.

Edgerly's horse was cropping the grass, at the end of its lariat, and Edgerly and the young woman were sitting in front of the tent, as Jimmie Frazer made his hasty appearance out of the concealing sage brush of the hillside. He was on foot.

As soon as he saw Edgerly he stopped. A moment later he came on again, but more slowly. There was an unpleasant light in his gray eyes, and distrust curled the corners of his mouth. Edgerly had risen, with a sense that his position was more awkward than it should have been. His face flushed and this gave him a look almost bellicose.

"So, you're here!" said Frazer, in a tone of irritation, as he came up.

"I seem to be," was Edgerly's stiff answer.

"If he hadn't been here, Jimmie," said Alice, "your precious sister wouldn't be as safely and comfortably situated as she is right now—which is a cryptic statement I'll hasten to explain, if you will be good and give me an audience."

Jimmie Frazer looked doubtfully from one to the other.

"Yes?" he said. "What do you mean? I thought Mr. Edgerly was in Crescent Butte."

"And that I would stay there!" added Edgerly. "As I thought you were in Laramie, we're even." The attitude of Jimmie Frazer angered him.

"Will this pair of Hotspurs keep the peace a minute, and let me talk?" said the girl, a frown of displeasure disfiguring her smooth brow. "I was in danger here and Mr. Edgerly came to my assistance at the risk of his life. So I think it is time we dropped this unbecoming attitude toward him. I never did like it, you know!"

"I know you didn't. But what was the trouble?"

"Black Thompson," said Alice. "Anyway, I think it was Black Thompson."

She proceeded to explain further, by telling him everything.

The look of distrust on the face of Jimmie Frazer gave way to one of anxiety and alarm. Also, there was in his new expression gratitude toward Edgerly—whom he awkwardly proceeded to thank,

"You'll have to go back to the town," he said to his sister.

"And leave you here?" she cried. "No, indeed. If I go back, you do."

"How long has Jett been gone?" he asked.

"Long enough," she replied, "to be back. I've been growing worried about him."

"I'll walk out in that direction, and look for him," Edgerly volunteered.

"You'll do nothing of the kind," said the assertive young woman. "If he doesn't appear soon, we'll all go, in the automobile. It will be safer!"

When Frazer sat down to wait, Fred Edgerly ventured a more extended explanation than Alice had given of why he was there. But he did not go into many details, and he did not speak of the Prince; his sole desire being to convince Jimmie Frazer that it was not by intention he chanced to come near the hidden camp.

"I don't want you to think that I followed you," he declared. "It's a thing I wouldn't do. I know that I'm suspected of being your enemy, perhaps even of being one of Black Thompson's men. I don't like that, of course. For, though I don't know what their crimes are, I've seen and heard enough to know they're a bad lot. Thompson is the man who stole my horse, I'm sure. And this is my revolver—with which he tried to shoot me!" He held it out. "I'm glad to get it back, as I was weaponless—though I've no cartridges for it, except those now in it."

Jimmie Frazer's suspicions were slowly slipping away from him.

"We've got plenty of cartridges, which you can have," he said. "And for coming to the aid of my sister, I can never thank you enough. In whatever way I've wronged you, it was due to what seems to me to have been a very natural mistake. We'll talk the whole matter over, and make a better start;

we're in need of a friend here, and help."

But he was too much concerned about Asbury Jett to go into that discussion then. He spoke of Jett again; then walked a few yards in the direction Jett had taken.

"Remember that we're all going, if you do!" Alice called to him.

He stopped, listening. "Jett's coming!" he said, his face suddenly bright.

A pounding of hoofs was heard. But when Jett's horse appeared at the upper end of the valley, it was riderless; the bridle reins were swinging loose on its neck, and the big wooden stirrups were hammering its belly.

Jimmie Frazer threw up his hands before the horse and as it came to a snorting halt, he ran out and caught it.

"Jett's in trouble," he said, as he came leading it in. "That is what those two shots off there meant. He oughtn't to have followed that man alone. I think, Alice, I shall have to insist on your return to Crescent Butte right away. But we must find out what has happened to Asbury."

The compression of Alice Frazer's lips proclaimed that she could be, when her mind was made up, as defiantly determined and stubborn as her brother. But she did not in words reply to his declaration.

"There's nothing in the camp we can't afford to lose, if they raid it while we're gone," said Jimmie, looking about.

"What do you mean to do?" she questioned.

"We'll take the automobile and prospect in the direction of those shots. If Mr. Edgerly still wishes to help us, he might bring the horses along; he could ride one and lead the other!"

"You're afraid Asbury has been killed?" she queried.

"I'm hoping not; it may be that his horse threw him."

With Frazer's horse in charge, Edgerly took his own off the picket-rope, as Alice Frazer made hasty preparations and Jimmie Frazer looked the automobile over carefully.

"After we get out of this valley," said Frazer, "the auto will go along all right; the only thing to fear is a puncture." He spoke to Alice. "Better wrap up some food, and I'll fill the water bottle; there's no knowing when we will get back, though I'm hoping we'll have no trouble, and wont be gone long!"

He explained to Edgerly: "This spring here, with the water at the cabin, and that which you say is at the sheepman's represents the sole water supply of this country, so far as I know anything about it!"

Within five minutes after Jimmie Frazer's determination to go to the aid of Asbury Jett, they were under way, the automobile leading. Beyond the rise, at the easterly entrance to the valley, they mounted to a level bench-land, where the short grass grew in wiry tufts. Snuggling ball-cacti lay here in wait for the auto tires, with the dog's-ear variety sprawled in visible clumps. In addition, straggling growths of whitish-gray sage-brush dotted the landscape. Over this mesa the automobile went bowling, guided by Jimmie Frazer, who kept one eye out for cactus spines and the other for human foes. Right behind the automobile, Fred Edgerly came galloping, the handle of his 45 Colt pumping the tail of his coat.

Beyond the valley they could not discern the tracks of Jett's horse. And though they went on for a mile or two, they made no discovery and at last turned back, swinging in a wide circle, to enlarge the boundaries of their search. They knew by this time Jett had met trouble.

But when they reached the head of the valley again, he burst on them suddenly, from the cover of the hillside, a wild figure that came down the slope in long jumps, like a fox fleeing from hounds. His manner showed how greatly he was frightened.

"Bless Gawd, it's you-all!" he cried, as he came up to the automobile, which Jimmie had stopped.

His big, scared eyes, and his chocolate-colored skin, grayed with fear, exuded panic. His clothing was torn, and his hands scratched.

"Dey come mighty neah gittin' me," he chattered, with a glance at the horse Edgerly was leading. Then he pulled off his hat, and exhibited a bullet hole in the brim. "Dey shot at me twict, while ah was runnin'. Ah done rid into

'um befo' ah knowed it, follerin' de tracks of dat yutheh man. He had jined 'um, an' dey laid fo' me. One got de hoss by de bridle, but de crittah bolted—an' me, too, on foot, afteh which dey begun to shoot, 'Bang—bang!' an' ah got dat frough mah hat." He laughed, a negro cackle, but nervous, breathing hard in his excitement. "Ah tell you ah was lif'en dese heah laigs mighty fas'. Dey chased me an', bein' on foot, ah was 'bleeged to hide. An' den you-all come along—looked mighty good tuh me, too."

"How many were there?" asked Frazer, surprisingly cool now.

"Jes' two uh 'um, 'sides de one I follehed!"

"I suppose you know that was Black Thompson—or we think so! Take that horse, and we'll get back to camp. They're not close at hand?"

"Ah dunno; seems lak I done run about fo'teen miles!"

"Well, we'll go on," said Jimmie. "And if they follow to the camp, we'll see if we can't make it interesting for them. We have been out looking for you. They must have thought they could force information out of you, or hold you as a club to beat us with. They're showing their hands recklessly; but I hope they don't think I scare easy."

Jimmie Frazer's eyes flashed in a way to make Fred Edgerly admire him, in spite of all that had passed between them. And when Edgerly looked at Alice Frazer, he saw there something of the same fighting spirit; it was revealed in the set look of her pale face, and in the very manner in which she sat, bolt upright and stiff, in the motor car.

Asbury Jett swung to the back of the led horse, which Fred Edgerly relinquished to him; and, the auto starting, they hurried on to the camp.

The time was now past noon. But before any thought was given to getting something to eat, the camp was turned into a barricade, with the automobile swung across the tent in front, and some handy stones heaped up in a little wall, behind which if need came they could hold off their enemies.

But Black Thompson and his men did not appear; and by and by Asbury Jett was ordered to start a fire and prepare a meal.

That night, in the tent, with Asbury Jett squatted outside in the darkness, after the new moon had gone down, Jimmie Frazer, perhaps made by the darkness to feel his need of assistance, took Fred Edgerly at last into his confidence, after having studied him and revolved the question of his honesty and integrity all day.

"I've acted mean," he said, "and begin to see it; but you'll understand the how and why of it, when I've put the situation before you!"

Alice Frazer sat by, approvingly. It was plain that by her talks with Jimmie she had overcome his distrust and reluctance.

"Alice never saw Black Thompson, to know him, until to-day," said Frazer; "but I encountered him in Crescent Butte. We came here to look into a mystery connected with the disappearance of my brother Henry. He was in college with me, and was older. Two years ago he came out here, for the dry air, and also because of some finds of fossils which one of our professors had made here the summer before. We were all fossil crazy.

"When he had been here a while I got a letter from him. He had made a remarkable find of fossil human remains in a cave that is somewhere in this region; he described the location of the cave in a general way, and the cabin in which he was staying. It was a hunter's cabin, that had been abandoned—the one where we were when you first came to us, as we are sure. The cave we have not been able to locate—yet. When we do we shall know it; for on a stone by the entrance, my brother had scratched marks of identification, like those I showed you on that slip of paper at the cabin.

"The fossil remains were unbelievably ancient, he said; so old, in fact, that he had named them 'The First Man.' They had been sealed in by a stalagmitic formation that must have taken ages to deposit. A settling of the floor of the cave had broken this open, so that the skeleton, changed to stone, lay revealed. Until he had better facilities he could not get it out of the stone

matrix. In the meantime he intended to look further, for other fossil treasures. So he closed the cave, to keep any one else from discovering it, and marked the entrance.

"There were briefer paragraphs in his letter, about other matters. In the edge of the desert he had chanced on an unfortunate fellow, ill with pneumonia, who had a small child with him; and he had taken the man and child to the cabin, to give the man needed care and treatment. I have told you that my brother was a physician—perhaps I should say a medical student. The strangest thing was that when he stripped the sick man, to put him to bed, he found a buckskin bag holding a necklace of emeralds. The man was not able to talk, and the child was too young to give my brother any information; so all he knew, when he wrote, was the man's name, which he found on some letters.

"No further information came from my brother after that; he did not write again; our letters to him remained unanswered, and were finally sent back to us, as uncalled for. I wrote to the postmaster at Crescent Butte, and received word from him that it was rumored my brother had killed a man and had fled out of the country. We didn't believe it then and do not now. I gathered that the report had been set in circulation by a man named James Thompson, with whom I at once got in communication; his answers to my questions, however, were unsatisfactory. Then I wrote to the chief of police of Crescent Butte, but he was not able to help me.

"That was nearly two years ago, as I said. At the time we had no money; I was working my way through college, and my sister was making her home with an aunt who was as poor as ourselves. So we could then do nothing. This summer, however, an uncle who had never done anything for us—or taken any interest in us apparently—died in Cincinnati; by his death we came into a considerable fortune.

"As soon as we got our hands on enough of his money we came out here, and instituted a search for brother Henry. We then learned that James Thompson was a disreputable character—a blackleg and gambler, locally known as Black Thompson. The chief of police couldn't or wouldn't help us. At the hotel in Crescent Butte no one knew anything, except that my brother had been there a day or two, as the hotel register showed.

"We came out here, and began a search for the cave. No one had ever heard of the sick man, or of the boy with him, but we found the cabin, and behind it a grave, with a head-board bearing the name of Philip Sterling—the name given in my brother's letter as that of the man ill with pneumonia. So we knew we had located the cabin, and were on the right track. Sterling had died, and my brother had buried him there: that is what we made out of it."

"And the lettering on the head-board," said Alice Frazer.

"The letters had been burned into the board by my brother—there is no doubt of it; they are like handwriting—like Henry's handwriting."

"It was proof of the most positive kind" Alice commented.

She sat with her feet drawn up, her hands locked round her knees; and very charming she was, Edgerly thought, with the red candle-light playing over her, lighting up her earnest face and eyes, and giving a touch of red gold to her thick brown hair. She wore again the short walking dress and the blue shirt-waist in which he had first seen her. Edgerly wanted to speak of the boy, and other matters, but waited.

"You didn't tell," said Alice, "about Black Thompson, in the town—the trouble you had there!"

"While investigating at Crescent Butte," Jimmie explained, "I was foolish enough to show Thompson the letter I had received from Henry and to speak of the emeralds. At that time I had not taken his measure; I now think he killed my brother for the emeralds and failed to get them. One day when he was intoxicated he attacked me; I knocked him down. He swore he would kill me. Since then we have been persistently shadowed and hounded. And as you have seen, he and some of his men are out here now. They intend to be close at hand when we find the emeralds, if we do, and take them from us. We know

we have been followed from the town each time we have come out here."

Alice Frazer's face paled.

"So you can perhaps understand," Frazer went on, looking at Edgerly, "how it came about that I suspected you, when you came to the cabin. You were unknown to me. And you asked about emeralds. Why did you speak of them? No emeralds are to be found in these hills."

Fred Edgerly explained, as he had to the clerk at the hotel.

"So!" said Frazer. "If I'd known that, things would have been different. As it was, I leaped to the conclusion that you were probably one of Black Thompson's men, or equally dangerous, and that I must get rid of you. I dissembled—"

"You did it well," said Edgerly. "You fooled me completely!"

"I dissembled. And I'll confess now that I doctored your wine, though Alice didn't know it, and would not have approved it. Yet I felt justified. I got the stuff out of the little medicine case I carry round with me, and put it in the glass as I poured your wine, and you didn't notice. You weren't very observant!"

"I was too tired," said Edgerly. "And too unsuspicious."

"I took an unfair advantage; it was a shame, and I'm sorry. And I'm sorry you were robbed after we left you there. I have never blamed you for thinking we did that; it looked it. But when you appeared at the hotel I was more than ever convinced that you were an enemy, and following us. I thought I knew it, when that colored man confessed there to me that you had offered him money to watch us. I raised your offer, as he expected me to when he came and told me about it; we got away; and he lied to you, saying we had started for Laramie, as I instructed him to do. And—well, after all that, you know I felt queer today when I saw you in this camp. And I'll admit that it was some time, even with what Alice told me before I could bring myself to feel that you were really a friend. You can thank Alice for the alteration in my view-point; that, and the fight you made to rescue her from Black Thompson."

"Just give me a chance to show my good will and honest intentions," said Edgerly.

"You'll have the chance, I fear. Alice's description was enough to let me know that the man who attacked her was Black Thompson. Having gone that far, he will go farther. But in spite of the danger here, I can't go back. Yet Alice ought to return to the town."

She did not answer this.

"I think my brother was killed; I refuse to believe that he committed a murder and ran away; that is a black lie, probably started by Thompson. How I'm to learn the truth, however, I don't know. Just now we are searching for that cave. If we can find it, we can perhaps secure that fossil skeleton, and confer on my brother the honor of the discovery of The First Man. He sought honor of that kind, and it would please him."

"But do you think the dead can know?" said Alice.

"Whether they do or not, I want his memory honored."

"Perhaps," Alice remarked, "if we can find the cave we may discover more fossil treasures in it. As for the emeralds, it is strange what became of them."

"I've been wanting to speak about that for some time," said Edgerly. "About the emeralds, and the boy. There was no description of the boy?"

"The letter didn't say 'boy;' it said 'child!'" Frazer corrected. "It was a small child, I gathered. There was no description."

"I've explained," said Edgerly, "how I got my horse back from the sheepman; but I haven't told you that I saw him with what I took to be an emerald in his hand; and that at his shack there is a small boy, whom he calls the Prince; he doesn't know the boy's right name."

The effect was electrical.

"What strikes me as peculiar now," Edgerly went on, "is that Harrigan called himself The First Man—the first man in that valley; though I suppose there is really no importance to be attached to that.

"I saw the emerald, as I took it to be, at a pawnshop in Crescent Butte. After the loss of all my things and my money at the cabin I needed some ready cash, and I went to the pawnbroker's, close

by the hotel there, to raise it. The sheep-man was in the pawnshop, with this green stone in his hand; he covered it up in his palm, and slipped into the other room, and didn't know that I had seen it."

"One of the emeralds!" cried Alice.

"And probably he has the others," added Jimmie Frazer.

"When I went with him to his shack, after getting my horse, a boy was there—a little fellow. Harrigan called him Prince Charming, and admitted he didn't know the boy's real name!"

"It must be the child mentioned in the letter," said Alice, eager and excited. "The sheep-man has the emeralds, I'm sure—and is pawning them. Perhaps—" she hesitated—"perhaps *he* is the man who killed my brother Henry!"

"Wouldn't it be remarkable," said Jimmie, "if after all our search and worry we find the boy and the emeralds right here, within touch almost, at the shack of the sheep-man?"

"I wish we could go over there tonight," Alice declared. "How far is it?"

"It is too far," said Edgerly, "for us to make the trip in the darkness. But we can go early in the morning."

"We'll start quite early. But it doesn't seem to me I can wait!"

The soft voice of Asbury Jett arose, slumberous in its sound, at the tent entrance.

"Was you-all callin' tuh me?" he asked; it was plain he had dropped asleep and been awakened by their talk.

A rustling, as of a nosing dog, sounded back of the tent.

"What's that behind the tent, Asbury?" Jimmie Frazer demanded.

"Ah dunno," said Jett, his voice still heavy with sleep. "Did you heah somethin'?" He began to get up. "What did you-alls heah?"

Jimmie Frazer jumped out of the tent, past him; those left within heard a man scramble to his feet back of the tent and go lumbering off. Jimmie Frazer ran round the tent, and let his revolver go in the darkness, stirring up the echoes and making the horses jump and snort. But the man did not stop running, and soon his footsteps died out.

When after this thunderclap of excitement, the Frazers and Fred Edgerly gathered again in the tent they looked at each other ruefully, and asked questions.

"Do you suppose he heard?" said Alice.

"There's no knowing," Jimmie admitted. "But I'm afraid that he did. It depends on how long he was there, and on what we were saying at the time, and how well he could hear us. Jett, come in here."

Asbury Jett shuffled in, trailing his rifle.

"You were asleep!" said Jimmie severely.

"Ah dunno but ah was, Boss," Jett admitted, adding—"but it couldn't been mo' than a minute. Ah had jes' squinched my eyes shet, when I heahs you-all callin'."

"We didn't call—you heard us talking. And I'm afraid that the man who was behind the tent also heard us and understood what we were saying. He was probably one of Black Thompson's men, or Thompson himself."

"Whoeveh he was, he couldn't been there mo' than a minute," Jett insisted.

"We hope you're right," said Jimmie. "But it was foolish in you to fall asleep, when you were set there to watch. We've got to start over to Harrigan's the first thing we do in the morning. If they get the idea that he has the emeralds, it will make trouble for him. We'll have to question him—about the emeralds and the child—and give him warning to look out for Black Thompson."

VIII

For the remainder of the night Fred Edgerly and Jimmie Frazer took turns at guard duty, Asbury Jett's inefficiency having been demonstrated. All were wide awake until after midnight, when Alice was induced by her brother to try to get some sleep.

Frazer had the morning watch. And the stars had not paled from the sky when Edgerly was aroused by him.

"Time to start!" said Jimmie.

Edgerly rolled from his bed, a soft hollow a few yards from the tent, and folded up his blanket.

Asbury Jett had already gone to get the horses; and the candle burning in the tent showed that Alice Frazer was moving about in there. Its light, as she passed it, threw her shadow grotesquely on the canvas.

The breakfast consisted of crackers and cheese, with tinned peaches, and water from the spring. As soon as it was despatched they were off, Jimmie and Alice Frazer in the automobile, Edgerly and Jett on the horses, Edgerly leading the way. Care for the automobile hampered them, but they moved as rapidly as they could. The sun was an hour high when they gained the small valley which held the sheep-man's home.

What they saw there shocked them. Happy Harrigan, covered with blood, which had streamed down over his face, wandered in wild delirium by the thready rivulet, shouting the name of the Prince. The collie lay dead by the water-hole; the boy was gone; the sheep were scattered.

Fred Edgerly flung himself out of the saddle by the shack, seeing a square of paper, with writing, pinned against the open door. It read:

> MR. J. M. FRAZER:
> This is to notify you that we hold the boy, and intend to hold him until you give up the emeralds. When you are ready, hoist a flag from the roof of this shanty, and we will bring him in. But be sure that you are alone. We can see whatever goes on here, from the hills; and if you try to give us the double-cross, it wont work, and it will be bad for the boy. We don't care anything about the kid—we want the emeralds. And as he is your brother's child, we think you will hand them over. If you don't you will never see him.

It was unsigned.

Jimmie Frazer had driven the automobile headlong toward the wild-looking and gruesome figure of Happy Harrigan. That apparently frightened the sheep-man, for he gave a screech, and started in a foot-race for his horse, which was running loose by the water-hole. He called to it, caught it, then vaulted to its back, and went clattering away, without saddle or bridle, a veritable madman on horseback.

Jimmie Frazer brought the auto to a stop. Only a hot chase, even if that, would have enabled him to overtake the frightened sheep-man. Swinging the automobile round in a short half-circle, he motored back to the shack; Edgerly was there, and now Asbury Jett came galloping up.

Having read the note pinned to the door, and called Frazer's attention to it, Fred Edgerly drew his revolver and strode into the shack; there he saw plentiful evidences that a fight had taken place. The table was broken, a stool showed a blood-splotch, and another was over-turned on the floor; the toys of the Prince were in helter-skelter confusion. Some old garments torn from nails on the wall lay scattered about.

"Devil's work!" was his comment. "Harrigan tried to stand 'em off here, but they were too many for him."

He turned round, to see Alice Frazer entering, her face pale, her gray eyes big and bright. Outside, Jimmie Frazer was talking with Jett, in excited tones.

"We got here too late; we should have come last night, as I wanted to!" Alice was speaking.

Jimmie Frazer entered.

"They heard our talk last night in the tent," he said, "about the emeralds!" He had taken the note from the door, and had it in his hand. "They struck quick, to get ahead of us. But they've made a curious mistake—about that boy being my brother's child."

"It will make them all the more determined to hold him against us, though," was the comment of Alice Frazer.

"Yes, that's so," Jimmie admitted. "I confess I don't know what to do; we haven't the emeralds."

"The first thing, I should say," said Alice, "would be to overtake this Harrigan, and see what we can do for him. He is out of his mind, don't you think?"

"Crazy ez a June bug," said Jett, who, though holding the horses, was standing in the doorway, where he could hear everything. "Dat man is sho' ready fo' a lunytic 'sylum. Did you heah him yell?"

"Did we?" said Jimmie. "But I don't wonder."

"He was delirious," said Alice. "That isn't crazy—and he needs help."

She shivered. That yell was a thing which she would never forget.

"Hello!" said Edgerly suddenly, staring at the wall. "Look at this, will you?"

Written apparently with a bit of rotten stone, which had left marks like red chalk, was a copy of the "cryptogram," as Edgerly had called it, shown by Jimmie Frazer to Edgerly in the cabin, and which he had said would be found scratched at the entrance to the cave holding the skeleton of The First Man. It was an amazing and suggestive discovery, in that place.

"It's queer you didn't see that before," said Jimmie, his face pale and his lips twitching—"when you stopped over night here with the sheep-man, I mean!"

He examined the marks closely, his sister by his side. They looked round, and up and down.

"The reason I didn't see it before, if it was there then," said Edgerly, "is that it was probably covered up by this old coat, which was no doubt hanging on that nail."

He too looked about, wondering if the "cryptogram" marked the hiding place of anything in the shack.

Jimmie Frazer turned to him.

"They came here to get the emeralds," he said. "There was a big fight; they hammered the sheep-man on the head—with that stool probably—or shot him, and perhaps they left him for dead; there's blood on those boards over there, where I judge he fell. And they searched the house; you can see how they tumbled things round. But if they saw these marks, they meant nothing to them, in my opinion. I wonder"—he hesitated—"I wonder if the marks mean anything to us?"

He looked about, puzzled.

"I was just thinking," he explained, "that inasmuch as my brother used them to mark the cave, he might have used them for another purpose—to mark something hid here; perhaps the emeralds. It seems a wild guess!" He turned to Edgerly. "You don't know, of course, whether he was ever here or not—ever lived in this shack! He might have, before the sheep-man took it!"

"Harrigan said that he was the first man in this valley."

"It's all guesswork," said Jimmie, knitting his brows. "The sheep-man must have made the marks. But if—"

"Why don't you go on?" said his sister.

"Well, I can't get any further. The sheep-man might have found the cave and seen those marks, and found the emeralds there; or—oh, pshaw! somebody else do some guessing!"

He walked round, tapping the floor with his heels, to see if it sounded hollow and thumped at the board walls with his knuckles.

"We can look into this later," he said finally. "It isn't important!"

The really important thing engaging immediate attention was to follow and if possible aid Happy Harrigan. That he had been shot or wounded in the head, had been made plain by his appearance; and that, or grief over the boy, had upset his mind. As for the boy, such haste to go to his aid was not required; he was probably frightened, in the hands of those rough strangers, but it was not likely they would injure him; at least they would not until after they had made attempts, through holding him, to get the emeralds—which were all they wanted.

Before the pursuit of Happy Harrigan was taken up, Jimmie Frazer and Asbury Jett rode round the water-hole, looking for tracks; and they went up the rivulet, one on each side, toward the higher slopes of the ridges. They did not spend many minutes, and discovered nothing. Close about the water-hole and along the stream the sharp hoofs of the sheep had packed the soil, so that it was like a road.

The course taken by the sheep-man had been down the little valley, to the edge of the desert, then toward the lower edge of the ridge on the right, and so on out of sight, beyond the end of the ridge. There was no immediate need to pick out the tracks of his horse.

Jimmie came galloping back from his fruitless search, with Jett at his heels.

"Nothing doing," he shouted; "and now we'll see if we can find the sheep-man. Come ahead, Jett!"

He sped on, with Asbury Jett bouncing heavily in his wake.

"Asbury would rather be in this auto; he doesn't like a horse," said Miss Frazer. "If you will give that crank a turn, Mr. Edgerly, we'll be off."

They rode away, in pursuit of the horsemen, the automobile barking loudly. Fred Edgerly, however, was very well satisfied to be where he was.

"So long as the emeralds are not to be had, I don't see how negotiations can be carried on for the return of the boy," said Edgerly, speaking out his thoughts.

"Sir Cowboy," she answered, with a return of her former manner, "if you ask me, I shall tell you that I think there will be fighting before that boy is surrendered."

She gave the wheel a turn, the machine a new direction, and sped on, with the explosions of the motor unmuffled.

"You mean *we* shall have to fight them?" said Edgerly, leaning nearer, to be heard.

"I'm going to ask Jimmie to get help from Crescent Butte," she said; "that's what I mean. These men are wolves. We'll want to take your sheep-man into town, to a doctor, and we can request help then."

"If we find him!"

She put on the muffler.

"Jimmie will find him; he never gives up anything—except," she added, "when he makes the mistake of telling me to do something I don't intend to do!"

"You wouldn't remain in the town—is that what you mean?"

"Not under the circumstances—would you? It would be worse than the danger of being out here—and I rather enjoy danger, when it isn't too imminent—just as I like to watch the lightning when it's a long way off, and dread it when it's near. I never could appreciate or understand that feminine idea of waiting and weeping at home, when the men are out, in the battle maybe, or fighting a storm. If the battle was going on, I'd get a gun and go help, it seems to me; but perhaps I wouldn't, if it really happened; one never can tell!"

The automobile had to sheer around rocks and around sheep that ran here and there, singly or in small bunches, bleating and frightened. It was losing time and she therefore sent it on again, br-r-r-ing and bouncing, with explosions like a gatling.

They saw Frazer and Jett round the nose of the ridge and go ploughing heavily ahead; there was sand at that point. The girl avoided the worst of it by keeping close to the ridge, then drove on at high speed again. Edgerly's nerves were tingling with the excitement of the chase.

Looking off over the desert, which stretched illimitably from the small foothills of the Superstition Range, he observed a gray veil of haze darkening and in places obscuring the blue of the sky. The wind was stiffer, when the automobile bored into it beyond the sheltering ridge. It pelted them with sand, snatched up in handfuls.

The girl stopped the auto, and put on a pair of goggles, handing out a pair to Edgerly.

"That sand stings," she said.

As they went on again, inexperienced as they were, neither considered the condition of the wind and the sky a matter for alarm. But Edgerly had remarked, while setting his goggles in place, that if the tracks of the sheep-man's horse were being followed, the flying sand would soon obliterate them.

Half a mile farther on they heard a shout, and observed that Jimmie Frazer was spurring vigorously, while far ahead was to be seen the sheep-man, riding in blind terror. Then the haze thickened, and the horsemen disappeared from sight.

IX

If Alice Frazer and Fred Edgerly had been wise in the ways of the arid lands, they would have turned back on beholding that blanket of gray haze which warning nature draped over the southern sky; or, at least, they would have sought shelter in the friendly, if rugged, hills, with or without the automobile, as soon as they were no longer able to follow the horsemen intelligently.

Though Jimmie Frazer and Asbury Jett, with the wild figure that had fled on before, had disappeared, Alice Frazer believed they could be sighted again shortly. So she put the auto at high speed, of itself a reckless thing, when the nature of the ground is considered. But she did not see them again. The wind, still increasing, hurled the sand with a keener sting. It not only irritated the face and eyes, but hid the

hoofprints they tried to follow, and began to hide even the outlines of the hills. A fine dust came with it; and that and the sand began to trouble the "works" of the purring machine, as well as the breathing of the occupants.

Fred Edgerly was growing alarmed; yet, not liking to show the white feather, he held in, while the girl zig-zagged the automobile back and forth along the base of the hill.

"Oh, dear!" she said, showing the vexation that tormented her. "I wonder what we're to do; we've lost them!"

Stopping the machine, she stood up, and looked about, the wind tearing at her clothing. The south was a deep gray pall, out of which the wind blew with increasing velocity. On the right were the blurred outlines of the hills. She pushed back the disfiguring goggles, to see better; but snapped them in place again, when the wind stung her eyes.

"My advice, if you ask me," said Edgerly, "is to give it up—for the present; we can't do anything. They've taken to the hills, I don't doubt; it would be the sensible and obvious thing for them to do. We shall be smothered, if we don't move out of this."

He coughed back the dust, and turned his face from the wind. In spite of the protecting goggles the flying sand stung intolerably.

"We're gaining nothing," he added, "by trying to go on."

"Do you think I would abandon Jimmie?" she snapped. The situation irritated her, and had got on her nerves. "I'm thinking of Jimmie, more than I am of myself. *He* wouldn't abandon *me!* He'll be coming back to see about us, and then we shall miss him; and perhaps he will get lost, and—"

She broke off abruptly and sent the automobile grinding on along the base of the hill, peering ahead through her goggles, with one hand held up now and then as an additional shield to her face. But soon she could not see two rods off. So she stopped again, as a heavy blast from the desert almost shook her out of the seat. Then she stood up once more, clinging to the wheel, and in shrill tones called her brother's name. Getting no response she dropped down in despair, one hand still on the wheel, the other clinging to her close-fitting cap of sailor blue.

"We'll never find them," she wailed, choking back the dust. "Why don't you tell me what to do; you're a man, and a man is supposed—"

"You objected, when I did tell you," said Edgerly—coughed Edgerly, would be more accurate—trying to reply mildly to her irritated demand, which somehow seemed to put him in the wrong. "I said we ought to try to find shelter; there's a lane, leading between those hills, and —"

"A lane! It's a gulch, or an arroyo." She laughed hysterically. "Pardon me for my rudeness, Sir Cowboy," she begged. "I forgot,"—she was still laughing in that unpleasant way—"that you're from the effete East and so can be expected to call a gulch a lane. But"—she dabbed at her cap again—"I think we shall have to take it, and take your advice."

The automobile creaked with a grinding sound, when she set it in motion; sand and dust were clogging the machinery. But it got under way, and plunged blindly for the mouth of the gulch which Edgerly had spoken of as a lane. Their condition was at once improved; for with the sandstorm at their back, and moving with it, they did not feel its full force, and the irritating drive of the sand was lessened.

At the end of half a mile the gulch became choked with rocks. When they could not go on, they began to look for a sheltered nook into which they might force the automobile and gain protection for themselves. Though the impact of the sand was no longer severely felt, the air was choked with dust; great clouds of it went swirling overhead, and all along the sides of the gulch the rocks and sage brush were being powdered. It rasped throat and lungs, and induced fits of coughing.

Spying a rocky hollow, Alice Frazer sent the automobile into it. Closing round them, it offered an agreeable, if only partial, shelter. High rock walls rose on each side, and the great pyramid of the hill was set as a shelter between them and the wind-harried desert. But still the dust came down, gray and powdery.

Edgerly sprang out and assisted Alice Frazer to dismount. Still a bit hysterical, she was trying hard to hide it.

"What an adventure!" she exclaimed, beating her skirts, so that a cloud of dust flew out of them. "I'm a sight—a fright! Isn't it horrible?"

But her thoughts were not so much of her own plight as of her brother's.

"If he does return, looking for us," she said, while Edgerly was getting some articles out of the automobile for her comfort, one of them being the bottle of water, "he will never dream of looking for us here; and so he will go searching aimlessly everywhere."

"I fancy he wont do much searching," said Edgerly, "until after this sandstorm blows itself out."

"And it seems to be getting worse; don't you think the wind seems higher, even in here?"

Edgerly poured water for her into a collapsible cup; but in spite of his efforts to screen it, sand flew into it; and finally she was forced to drink direct from the bottle.

"We'll just have to be savages," she said, trying to laugh over their misfortunes. "I think that hamper is filling with sand, too; and I don't like to eat sand with my food."

Edgerly tucked a blanket about the hamper.

"That's better," he said; "but we'll have to eat sand, just the same, or go hungry; my mouth is full of it."

They sat down, their backs against the rocky rampart of the hill, the automobile slewed across the opening of the cranny into which they had crept. The dust still came down on them, and now and then a gust of wind. Edgerly saw how useless it was to fight it, and made no attempt; but Alice Frazer, having a woman's horror of dust and dirt, continued to beat it from her clothing with little slaps of her brown hands, and to shake it off her cap and out of her hair. Hair and cap, the one naturally brown, the other blue, were of the same uniform dusty hue now.

They talked a good deal at first, about Jimmie Frazer, and what he had probably done, or could do; the conversation was punctuated with much coughing. Then, the dust thickening, Edgerly made a canopy of the blankets taken from the automobile, under which they crouched, side by side, while the sandstorm, raving up out of the far-flung desert, beat its angry way across the Superstition Range. The heat under the pent canopy was unpleasant, but not so unpleasant as to try to breathe the air outside. That Jimmie Frazer had no blankets with which to protect himself greatly troubled Jimmie's sister.

But she had other thoughts, too.

"Sir Cowboy," she said, after a long silence in which nothing had been heard but the raving of the wind and the beating of the sand on the cliffs, "what do you think was the meaning of those marks and letters on the wall of the sheep-man's shack?"

"I don't know," Edgerly answered. He had been thinking of that, too, and had suspicions; lacking knowledge, however, he hesitated to express them.

"Do you think the sheep-man was quite honest in all the things he told you?"

"I thought so, at the time," he hedged, "having no occasion to think otherwise. But he may have deceived me; it would have been easy. I accepted his statements without question."

"You are a bit easy, anyway, Sir Cowboy, don't you think? Don't be offended, please, if I say it! You were easy—gullible, when you first came to us; ready to believe anything, in a country noted for its untruthfulness. You've heard, no doubt, that many of its citizens have pasts they don't care to mention, and so are prone to deception. I'm beginning to believe this sheep-man was one of them and that *he*, instead of Black Thompson, may have had knowledge of the death of my brother Henry—in fact, that he may have killed him. I think he must know where that cave is, and there got his knowledge of what you call the cryptogram. For some reason, as it seems to me, he wanted to remember it, and chalked it down on the wall of his house, where hardly anyone ever came. Can you think of a better reason?"

"None so good," said Edgerly, "unless—"

"What?"

"Unless *he* is your brother Henry!"

He knew she stared hard at him.

"Don't be silly!" she said.

"I'm trying not to be; I meant what I said."

"But my brother Henry is dead."

"That's what you heard," he urged. "You don't know it."

"But that sheep-man didn't even look like him."

"You didn't see his face—it was covered with blood."

"But he had a beard," she objected, "a heavy beard."

"A man could grow one in two years,"

"But the story he told you! You recall what he said."

"Perhaps he lied. And he could easily have faked the talk and manner of an ignorant man—or done it unintentionally, if he was out of his mind."

She sat silent a while.

"It *is* silly," she said. "Think of something else."

"I can't," he confessed. "It's a dark puzzle to me."

"It isn't to me—now. The sheep-man killed my brother Henry. But I wonder why Black Thompson never suspected the sheep-man?"

They talked of this for an hour, at intervals, listening to the roar of the storm and trying to protect themselves from the sand and dust. Their position was most uncomfortable, and it fretted the girl. Fred Edgerly was singularly composed. She might have been in Laramie, and he might have missed ever seeing her again! So, uncomfortable as the situation was, it had for him many compensating advantages.

The sandstorm was blowing itself out by mid-afternoon. At the approach of evening the wind dropped and the sand and dust cleared away somewhat. But there was much dust still in the air, when Fred Edgerly and Alice Frazer abandoned the canopy of blankets and prowled forth, dust-covered figures, to investigate.

"We will walk down to the mouth of the gulch," she said, "and see how it is there—shall we?"

Edgerly brought along his revolver and hers—freeing them of sand and dust as well as he could. It pleased him to find them in good order, as he tried the hammers and the cylinders.

"We'll not need them, but it's best to take them," he explained, as he turned hers over to her.

At the mouth of the gulch the sand lay in drifts, and it was drifted in ridges along the base of the hill. Over the desert was a gray haze. Through it the westering sun glowed like a heated ball of red copper. Everywhere was that impalpable powder of gray dust, tossed by occasional windy gusts, which still scoured at the hills on the desert side, as if reluctant to leave off their destructive work.

Nowhere was there a sign of human life.

"It doesn't look very promising for the automobile out there," she said ruefully.

Edgerly called her attention to the fact that farther out the sand and pebbles had been beaten flat, and seemed packed like a roadway, though there were bare places, where the earth and rock showed.

"There are some drifts out there, too," he said, "but the auto could be taken round them, I think."

The drifts lay in parallel ridges which were mainly continuations of the outthrust spurs of the hill; between them were hollows, where the sand had been scooped out down to the bed-rock.

They walked far out, until they were beyond the largest of the sand ridges, and the desert lay before them, the gaunt skeleton of a landscape, wind-scarred and beaten—a world destroyed by its own violence. The gray haze still hovered; the hot copper globe that had gone into business in place of the sun was on the far edge of the desert now, ready to slip down out of sight; night was close at hand—night on the desert lands.

The girl shivered, though the air was warm.

"Let us go back," she said. "This—this is horrible. It makes me feel as if I were dead and buried, and had waked up in a dead planet. I can't stand the sight of it. Ugh! If Jimmie is out there, buried in some of those awful drifts, what shall I do?"

"Don't think about it," urged Edgerly. "He isn't out there."

"Oh, I hope so! But, Sir Cowboy, I

feel guilty. We'd better be going back, don't you think; we're a long way out, and the sun is going down."

The sun was quite down by the time they regained the mouth of the gulch. Within the gulch the shadows were gathering, hastened by the haze, as they went on to the automobile.

Seeing some broken boughs, torn from gnarled trees on the hillside, Edgerly gathered an armful.

"For our fire," he said. "We'll want to cook something."

"And a fire will help to keep off wild animals." She brightened. "And a beacon on top of the hill would be seen by Jimmie, maybe, if he is lost."

"And by Black Thompson's crowd!"

"I don't care; it might help Jimmie, and we can risk it."

She too began to gather sticks.

To please her, and because he agreed that a beacon fire on the hill might be seen, Fred Edgerly labored until dark, carrying wood to the top of the hill she had pointed out. When he had lighted the heaped-up pile, it made a blaze that brightened the hillside and flung red lights down into the gulch; he was sure it could be seen a goodly distance, in spite of the dust still in the air.

With that bonfire flaming cheerfully, he built a campfire in front of the cranny which had sheltered them during the afternoon. Fortunately there was a good supply of food in the automobile hamper, and plenty of water for immediate needs in the big bottle. Alice Frazer brewed tea and helped in getting the meal. And they tried to be merry over their plight.

"Sir Cowboy," she said, as they sat by their campfire and ate what they had prepared, "I've been thinking over what you said about the sheep-man. But it can't be. My brother Henry was an honest and honorable man."

"He might have lost his mind, you know; I've heard of the like."

"And that would make him tell lies?"

"It might. Only, they wouldn't seem to be lies to him."

"They wouldn't be lies to him, because he would believe them?"

"That's what I mean."

"It wont do," she declared; "there are a lot of holes in your theory."

"I think there are myself," he admitted meekly.

"Of course there are!" she declared. "It couldn't have meant anything—what he said to me, that he was The First Man?"

She stared at him through the red firelight.

"Just what are you driving at?" she demanded.

"I don't know, really—nothing, I guess; but I remember that he emphasized his statement that he was The First Man in that valley."

"In that valley—yes; but that doesn't suggest anything."

He finished his tea, and wished it were coffee.

"I don't know that it does," he admitted.

"Why, it's—it's positively silly."

"I believe you've told me that several times to-day—that I'm silly."

"Well, you are, you know. I see what you're thinking about; you fancy this sheep-man may be my brother Henry, who has lost his mind, has held on to the boy and the jewels; and, with a dim memory of that First Man in the cave, has taken to calling himself The First Man. But I can't agree with you."

"I didn't think you would," he assented.

"For it *is* silly."

"I accept the castigation," he said with mock seriousness. "So, we will pass that by. It *is* silly. But you're not eating anything, and you can't expect to get through this and find your brother, and rescue the boy, and the hundred other things there are to do, unless you keep up your strength."

She sat thinking over what had been said; then shook her head.

"I don't believe it; the sheep-man isn't my brother Henry."

Edgerly stretched blankets along the front of the hollow, for her shelter and protection; then he took his repeating rifle and his revolver, and went out into the gulch a short distance off, to pass the night.

"You'd better take one of these blankets you've been so generous with," she called to him.

When she insisted, he went back and

got one of the blankets; the automobile had held a roll of them, securely strapped in a water-proof.

Wrapped in his blanket, with a listening ear against the ground, Fred Edgerly lay awake a long time, even though he was dead tired. He had much to think about. The sky was starless, because of the haze, but the glowing remnants of the bonfire gave some light. The coyotes yapped in the hills. Hearing a furore of their yelping, he guessed that an unfortunate sheep, escaping the sandstorm, had not escaped those little gray fiends of the arid lands.

He did not intend to close his eyes, yet he did, falling asleep about midnight. When he awoke the sun was shining in his face, the dust haze was nearly gone, and Alice Frazer was calling to him. She had come out of her blanketed cranny, and was standing by the automobile. Good to look at, she was, in spite of all she had been through.

"Good morning, Sir Cowboy," she said. "I slept well, and I hope you did. I'm famished."

The sunshine and new brightness, so unexpected, of the morning, had given her increase of life and courage.

When they had taken the sharp edge off their ravenous hunger, Fred Edgerly fell to work on the automobile. He labored for the better part of an hour, and though not an automobile mechanic, with the aid of Miss Frazer's helpful suggestions, he removed the worst of the dusty compound that had been beaten into every bearing, cog and oil-cup; so that, when they tried to start it, the machinery ran quite as well as could be expected. They then started off on their search for Jimmie Frazer and Asbury Jett.

"I hope," she observed presently when they had left the gulch perhaps a half mile behind, "that the gasoline holds out; it's a long way to that tent, to get more."

"And perhaps," added Edgerly, "the blamed old tent, gasoline can and all, was blown away in that gale. But we're not going to worry."

"Sir Cowboy, that was a brand-new tent," she corrected. "But we're not going to worry about anything, if we can find Jimmie."

She had hardly pronounced the name, when they heard the bark of a revolver, flat and whip-like in the open air. Then came a pounding of hoofs and Jimmie Frazer himself came into view, with Asbury Jett riding close behind him, through an opening in the sand ridges close to the hill, on the right. And behind them came three men, two mounted and one on foot, the later clambering down the hill.

Jimmie Frazer had fired the shot heard; and now they saw him twist round in his saddle and fire again. The man on the hillside dropped down on one knee and replied to Jimmie's revolver shots with bullets from a repeating rifle—three shots, sent quickly. The occupants of the automobile saw sand spurt up close by Jimmie's horse, where the bullets struck.

This wholly unexpected change in the situation brought the automobile to an abrupt stop, and Alice Frazer to her feet with a jump. She began to shout in staccato to her brother.

Fred Edgerly leaped up, too—then climbed into the seat. He drew his revolver.

"It's Black Thompson's gang, I suppose," he said.

"Why don't you shoot at them?" the girl demanded shrilly, still waving her hands. "They'll kill Jimmie!" she screamed. "Where's that rifle?"

It was under the seat, knocked down for easy transportation. But Edgerly got it out and snapped it together in quick time, and turned it on the rifleman on the hillside, sending him at once to cover.

"You'd better get down—out of sight," he said to the excited girl. "That will draw their fire, maybe."

It did.

The rifleman replied from his cover, with his rifle sights raised for the automobile. His first shot fell short; the next passed with an unforgettable singing whew-ir-r-r-r high overhead, though it sounded close enough to make Edgerly pull his head down with a comical jerk, after it had passed; the third struck the back of the tonneau, tore out a splinter, and went on with a vicious whine.

"Get down!" Edgerly yelled, in terror

for the girl, who was still standing up as if unaware of her peril. He fired at the man on the hillside again. "Get down," he shouted, "or you'll be hit."

The girl dropped into the seat, started the automobile, and turned it back toward the gulch. Jimmie Frazer and Asbury Jett were hugging the base of the hill in their flight, and she thought of the gulch as a place of refuge for them. There was popping of revolvers, without execution, in addition to the rifles; for Frazer and Jett were being shot at, and Jimmie was pluckily returning the revolver fire.

As the automobile gained the sand ridges at the mouth of the gulch Frazer and Jett rounded the point of the hill, gaining temporary immunity, and came up to the automobile with a rush, the hoofs of their horses spurting the sand.

"Follow us in here!" Alice shouted, turning the automobile at the drifts.

The auto plunged through, with all power on, the motor barking lustily. The horses accompanied it, staggering through the deep sand.

"It's good to see you," said the girl. "You don't seem to be hurt? I've been worried to death about you. Where have you been?"

"Where have *you* been?" Jimmie countered.

"Right in here; the storm drove us in. Who are those men?"

"Black Thompson's, I think; they must be. Is there a place in here where we can stand them off? I wish, Alice—"

"Don't tire yourself," she cried, "by wishing I was somewhere else; I'm here. And we've just got to make the best of it. So long as you're alive and unhurt—"

The sentence went unfinished; they were through the deeper sand, and the automobile jumped ahead at quickened speed. Following the tracks made in coming out, she turned into the hollow where she and Edgerly had stood off the storm.

"In here—if you think those men mean to follow," she cried to her brother. "This is where we stayed. Why did they attack you?"

Jimmie Frazer explained that, as they busied themselves with preparations for a defense.

"It was the boy—I think," he said. "We took refuge from the sandstorm in a nook in the hills a mile or two from here; we had to. We had lost sight of the sheep-man, and the storm came on so suddenly and got so bad we couldn't get back to you. We stayed there all night and—well, I sha'n't stop to tell you what a tough time we had; but it certainly wasn't any picnic."

There had been shooting long before they sighted the automobile, he said; and he was surprised that they had not heard it. On the other hand, he and Jett had not seen the beacon fire in the night. "There was too much dust in the air," he explained.

"This morning," he elaborated, "as we were getting out, we almost stumbled into the camp of Black Thompson; they'd hunted shelter in there, too, and had the boy with them. When they saw us, they came for us—all three of them jumping out from their campfire to get at us. We pulled round, of course, to get away, as we didn't care for a closer look.

"And then—" he stopped impressively—"and then a singular thing happened, which made all the trouble afterward. The sheep-man came tumbling down the side of the hill beyond their camp, right into it; and before they knew he was there, and while they were yelling to us to halt, he caught the boy up in his arms and began to run with him along the hill, dodging in and out of the sage brush. It was just as if we had planned a demonstration to get them out of the camp to give him that opportunity; and I believe that is what they thought, as soon as they discovered it.

"When they saw him, we yelled encouragement to the sheep-man, and then tried to draw them in pursuit of us, to give him a better chance. But two of them turned back, to get him as he came abreast of them; and they began to shoot at him, whenever they got sight of him. We were doing a bit of shooting, too, on our own account, and some bullets came our way. We kicked up a big racket, and I don't know why you didn't hear it.

"The course the sheep-man took almost paralleled ours—you see, he also

seemed to want to get out of the hills. But as we got near the open ground we lost sight of him; and so I think did the men who had chased him. Anyway in a little while we found those three men together, following us, and shooting at us. The one afoot kept to the hill—I think he was looking for the sheep-man. And then—"

"An' 'en we seen you-all," Jett supplemented. "An' it look mighty good to us, too, tuh see dat ole ot'mobile, and you-all settin' in it, des lak you has been waitin' up all night fo' us tuh git back to you."

All were feverishly at work, heaping up a barricade of stones, with the automobile drawn cross the opening into the hollow—working rapidly even while Jimmie Frazer unfolded the story of his experiences.

"They've got it in for us," he said, "thinking we played a trick on them to get the boy. They'll be here soon, too; they couldn't miss those tracks."

"Was the sheep-man all right again—all right in his mind, do you think?" Alice Frazer asked, as she laid a stone in place, working with the men. "He seemed to know what he was doing; he seemed ready to take an advantage when it came. So he couldn't have been crazy—now."

"I don't know," said Jimmie; "all I know is, he looked as wild and bloody as he did yesterday."

The barricade was finished, and the horses tucked away in the most sheltered corner of the hollow, when Black Thompson and his two men, following the tracks of the horses and automobile, came up the gulch, looking warily for signs of an ambuscade. Seeing the automobile blocking the mouth of the hollow, and the heaps of stones, they let drive with their revolvers, and backed away. They had missed finding the sheep-man, and leaped to the conclusion that he and the boy were behind that automobile, with the others.

This became apparent when Black Thompson reappeared, this time on foot, bearing a dirty white rag on the end of a pole. He wanted a parley.

"Well, what is it?" snapped Jimmie Frazer. "If you're up to any tricks, cut 'em out; we'll not be fooled by you."

Jimmie's tones were thick, as well as indignant—at the moment his mouth was filled with cracker; he and Jett had attacked the food supply, being famished.

"Give up the boy, or give up them emeralds," said Thompson, "and we'll go away and not trouble you any more."

Jimmie was about to declare heatedly that they had neither, when his sister touched his arm.

"Let them think the boy is here," she whispered; "then they wont go hunting for him."

"Right—oh!" said Jimmie, clearing his mouth of the cracker.

"You, out there—Black Thompson," he called. "We've decided not to surrender the boy. As for the emeralds—and they're what you really want—we haven't got 'em, never had them, and don't know where they are. If you'll believe that, and it's the truth, and act on it—why it will save trouble for all of us."

"Then surrender the boy," was the truculent rejoinder. "We'll hold him till we get 'em. You've got the means of findin' out where they're *cached*. So, what's the use o' bluffin'? It aint goin' to work. Recollect I heard you talkin' that night, in the tent!"

"So that was you, eh?" said Jimmie, with cheerful satisfaction. "We thought so. But we haven't got the emeralds, understand, and can't get 'em. You didn't understand what we said, if you think we can."

"You, or the sheep-man, can get 'em and we're here for 'em." His tone was threatening, husky from liquor. "I'm goin' back," he added. "And if you don't surrender 'em or show us where they air, then we'll open on you."

"You know there's a woman in here—my sister?" said Jimmie—regretting it as soon as he had said it.

The answer was a threat that made Jimmie Frazer clutch the rifle which stood by him against the auto wheel. "Clear out," he yelled in a rage, "or I'll shoot your damned head off! I feel like shooting you, anyway."

Black Thompson and his dirty flag withdrew precipitately. And for a whole half-hour after that nothing was seen or heard of him or his men.

"It begins to look as if they're afraid to make the tackle," said Jimmie. "You see, they know we have just as strong a force in here as they have out there—there are three of them, and three of us."

"You're not counting on the Smith & Wesson of your darling sister," came from the shadows behind him. "We are *four* to their three, if it comes to that."

But Jimmie Frazer and his friends were premature in their conclusions; Black Thompson and his men were not afraid to make the tackle, at long range, as they made it. A rifle rang out on the hillside beyond the gulch, and its slug of lead struck the ground between Jett's feet, making him do the quickest double-shuffle on record.

"Down!" yelled Jimmie.

It was not needed; every one was down, as low as he could get.

"Dat bullet lak tuh git me!" Jett grumbled. "I reckum dem men aint gone yit."

"That one isn't," said Jimmie. He was peering out, his hand gripping the rifle. "Keep down, everybody."

"Keep down yourself, Jimmie," advised his sister. "They can't reach us behind these rocks, if we snuggle close."

"I don't know about that—that bullet came in, right over the top of the auto; and I'd like to get the villain that sent it."

When the rifle on the hillside whanged away again it was in a different place, showing that the cautious rifleman had shifted his position promptly, to prevent a successful return shot. But this time Jimmie answered, shooting at the tell-tale curl of smoke, for the fellow was using black-powder cartridges. But apparently Jimmie did not catch this man. The latter fired again, but his bullet went high, striking flat against the cliff and dropping downward in a spatter of lead.

In reply to Jimmie's second attempt to "get" the rifleman, a revolver barked off on the right; and then another, off on the left. One of the bullets struck a rock, and caromed into the gulch with an angry whir-r-r; the other tore through the top of the automobile tonneau, already bullet-splintered.

"Dey goin' tuh make a feesh basket out uh dat otto, ef dey keeps it up," said Jett.

Jimmie Frazer ordered his sister to get well behind the shoulder of rock which was serving as a screen for the horses.

"Why don't you hide in the stable yourself?" she retorted.

Jimmie's immediate answer was the gingery report of the repeater he was handling with so much nerve.

"That's why," he said. "I'll get that devil yet—I've pulled for him three times now."

"And haven't hit him once—and I don't want you to! Why not all get back where it seems safer?"

"And let them rush us?" Jimmie snorted. "Not any. Get back there, Alice, before you're killed!"

When a bullet found a crevice in the barricade and ripped a sacrilegious hole in her blue walking skirt that seemed to frighten her, she obeyed, and retreated hastily, calling to Jimmie and the others to do the same.

The long-range battle was kept up for half an hour or more, without injury to either side. Then it was ended in an unexpected manner, and more suddenly than it began. A man broke into view in the gulch—the sheep-man—jumping agilely from point to point, and bearing a burden on his stooping shoulders. The burden was the Prince, riding pig-a-back, his arms round the sheep-man's neck. Instantly the rifleman on the hillside opened on the sheep-man and the child.

The first dastardly shot brought Jimmie Frazer up standing, behind his barricade, his rifle lifting to his cheek, a bellow of rage on his lips.

"You damned scoundrel!" he growled and let fly again at the rifleman.

A shot came back in answer from the side of the hill, striking the top stones of the barricade. Jimmie recklessly pumped another bullet. Then Fred Edgerly came up, and Jett, using their revolvers; but they fired at another man, who had shown himself lower down on the slope, nearer Harrigan. Edgerly yelled to Harrigan, advising him to turn in there for shelter.

But the sheep-man did not heed, if he heard. He was bounding along like a

steel-springed automaton at a terrific pace, head down and shoulders bent, the boy clinging like a leech, supported by the sheep-man's hands locked behind his back. With bullets showering sand about him, the sheep-man passed up the gulch, then veered sharply toward a cliff wall, where giant sage brush grew; and there he disappeared.

As Harrigan vanished, Black Thompson and his men started in pursuit, dodging through the sage brush.

"Stay here—you and Jett," Jimmie Frazer ordered, "and look out for Alice."

He leaped the barricade, and was plunging down into the gulch before any one could protest, or his sister get out of her hiding place. When she did, and saw what he was doing, in her terror at the supposed danger he was running into, she called loudly to him to return—calls which went unheeded. Edgerly caught her by the arm, as she began to clamber up the barricade to follow.

"That wont do," he said, as gently as he could. "You musn't go out there."

"Dat's right," agreed Jett. "It sho' ain' no place fo' a 'oman."

She turned on Edgerly, her gray eyes flashing, her cheeks white.

"Coward!" she cried. "Why don't you go yourself, then?"

It was like a slap and it sent Edgerly over the wall at a leap.

As he neared the spot where the sheep-man and the others had now disappeared, Jimmie Frazer came in sight, returning, wildly excited, running as soon as he was clear of the sage brush. He slowed his hot pace when he beheld Edgerly.

"It's the cave!" he yelled. "The cave of The First Man—they've gone into it." He turned about to go back.

Fred Edgerly would have gone with him without a word but hearing a cry, he looked around and saw Alice Frazer. In her anxiety she had broken away from Jett and was coming hurriedly along the gulch. Jett could be heard protesting vainly, as he scrambled after her.

Breathing heavily in his excitement, Jimmie Frazer stopped, and waited for his sister to come up. Edgerly stood beside him, feeling uncomfortable, and somehow culpable; that word "Coward!" had hurt—coming from her.

"This is no place for you!" said Jimmie.

"But I'm here—and I couldn't stay there. I just couldn't. What has become of—"

"They're in the cave, I think; all of them. And say—" his voice rose—"it is the cave of The First Man! Those marks and initials are on a stone by the entrance—plain as the nose on your face."

"In *the cave!*" She did not look at Edgerly. "Perhaps," she added anxiously, "they're fighting in there."

"No telling," said Jimmie. "But maybe we can find out." He walked toward the straggling sage brush, and all followed close at his heels. "No need to get so near," he warned; "some one in there may take a shot at us. You'd better keep back, Alice."

He went on, with Fred Edgerly at his side. When the sage brush had yielded before them, Edgerly saw an oval hole in the cliff, like the entrance to a bear's den; and beside it, carved in the buttressing rock, the marks and letters spoken of by Jimmie Frazer. He observed, too, that the hole had been apparently closed with stones, which later had been clawed out; the stones, lying in ragged heaps at each side of the entrance, could never have so shaped themselves without the aid of human hands.

As they came to a hesitating halt before the opening, the sound of a shot came rumbling with subterranean echoes.

"There's a fight going on in there," said Jimmie, bending forward to listen. "I'll bet they've got the sheep-man cornered. Are you game to go in with me?"

"Yes, I'll go in with you," said Edgerly.

Jimmie stood up and called to his sister:

"We're going in. You stay here with Jett. And, Jett, if anyone comes about, to make trouble, down him—down him like a dog. Come on, Edgerly!"

Another shot sounded—and then a yell. With bent heads, Jimmie Frazer and Fred Edgerly passed into the cave.

X

When they were well within the cave they found it lighter than near the entrance. A portion of the roof having fallen in, let in light, and the outlines of the central space could be made out with comfortable distinctness.

Here Jimmie Frazer stopped abruptly. A portion of the floor, as well as of the roof, had dropped away, leaving a ragged hole, at the base of a broken stalagmite of immense size; and there in the niche where the stalagmite had been racked asunder lay the bones of a man. The skull, apparently intact, and the upper portions of the skeleton, all that could be seen, were roughened with a lime coating of the color of time-yellowed ivory. The bones were disposed nearly lengthwise of the stalagmite crack, and were still half imbedded. Through indeterminate centuries, while the stalagmite was being built up by the agency of water falling drop by drop from the roof, leaving its sediment of lime, the skeleton had lain there, until all the organic elements had disappeared and were replaced by inorganic; the skeleton was stone, incased in a matrix of stone, now broken. The thought of what it meant, as an interpretation of the length of time man had been on the earth, was even in that brief view, staggering.

But Jimmie Frazer did not tarry to inspect the skeleton, notwithstanding its manifold meanings for him. A shot sounding in the dim regions beyond the lighted area summoned him on.

"Come ahead!" he shouted.

Edgerly ran at his side, until a tongue of fire stabbed at them out of the darkness, and with racking echoes the report of a revolver split round their ears. Jimmie dropped down, tugging at Edgerly's coat. Edgerly dropped softly by him.

"Are you hurt?" he inquired.

"No," said Jimmie; "are you?"

"No."

"That must have come from Thompson's crowd!"

"No doubt of it, I guess."

"Look out for yourself now."

He began to creep forward on his hands and knees, pushing his revolver carefully before him. The fitful illumination given by the shot had left everything in Stygian darkness.

Then they heard a scrambling sound, a fall, and the wailing voice of a frightened child. They lay flat on the rocks like lizards, listening.

"That was the boy," Edgerly whispered.

"I guess yes. And Harrigan's with him but I can't see a—"

"Surrender!" was yelled, somewhere beyond.

"To hell with you!" came in the voice of Harrigan. "You've killed me, I reckon; but you aint got the Prince—yit!"

A revolver flamed and roared again; this time it was Harrigan who had pulled trigger, and he was shooting at his foes. Then he was heard to come on, stumbling heavily.

"He's trying to get out," panted Jimmie; "and they're after him, and have shot him." His voice rose. "This way, Harrigan; friends here—friends to back you! We'll make it hot for 'em, if they follow you!"

The sheep-man mumbled something, probably an exclamation of satisfaction, and stumbled on, toward them; then again the voice of Black Thompson commanded him to surrender.

After stumbling heavily, the sheep-man fell again. "Shoot, an' be dam' to you!" he cried; and his revolver barked his defiance. "You've got me, mebby; but you aint got the Prince—yit."

"He's down and wounded," said Jimmie. "We've got to help him!"

He jumped up. "This way!" he shouted to the sheep-man. "Use your revolver on 'em, Edgerly, if it's needed!" He disappeared at a quick run.

This action on the part of Jimmie Frazer, though perhaps not fully comprehended by them, brought revolver shots snapping and booming out of the darkness from Thompson and his men. And to these Fred Edgerly replied, lying flat on the rocks, letting drive at the lances of fire which marked the positions of the shooters. It was such reckless work, and he had such a horror of hitting Frazer, or the sheep-man, or the boy, that he felt deathly sick; yet, to his credit, it can be said that not for an instant did he think of his own danger.

Suddenly, in the midst of the wild fusillade, Jimmie Frazer reappeared, carrying the boy on his shoulder, while with his free hand he guided the stumbling steps of the sheep-man. Harrigan lurched past, his knees shaking and shambling, as if "all in." Edgerly sensed it rather than saw it. A few yards beyond, Harrigan collapsed and fell to the floor, bringing Jimmie Frazer to a halt. Footsteps of pursuers were heard, and a shot came out of the gloom.

"For God's sake, hold 'em back!" Jimmie begged of Edgerly; and then went down on his knees to the aid of the sheep-man.

Fred Edgerly complied, to the best of his ability. He rolled into position, flat on his face on the rocks, and shot away the two cartridges remaining in his revolver—which brought the pursuers to a halt. Then he dug down in his pockets for more cartridges, and reloaded hastily. He heard Jimmie Frazer and the boy get the sheep-man to his feet, heard them stumble on, and the sobbing of the frightened boy. It nerved him. It was his place to cover their retreat; and, not thinking much about it, he intended to do it. So he laid more cartridges on the rocks, ready to his hand.

A revolver crashed and a spot of fire leaped within the cave. Instantly Edgerly fired at it; then rolled to one side, to avoid a return shot. Another shot plunged at him from another of the pursuers; and Edgerly fired again. Thompson and his men seemed to have dropped into holes, for protection; they began a steady bombardment, which Edgerly answered with spirit. The darkness helped him, and he constantly shifted his position.

Behind him, toward the entrance, Jimmie Frazer, the sheep-man and the boy were continuing their flight, and it cheered him. He believed that in a little while he could safely follow them. He re-filled the chambers of his revolver, finding as he did so that the weapon, fouled by rapid work, had grown hot in his hands.

Again the weapons of his enemies crashed in the pent space, with flashes of red. Edgerly fired in return, rolled over and fired again. And as he did so a bullet struck him in the right shoulder. It gave him a strange sense of surprise—that he was hit and in that way, for the sensation was not anything like that he had fancied. There was so little pain—almost none. In truth, it was very much as if his shoulder had been given a quick, hard jab with the end of a cane or the tip of an umbrella: it pushed him back; instantly that side seemed paralyzed, and the revolver fell out of his hand.

He reached round with his left hand, clawed for the weapon, and drew it to him. Then, drawing the hammer back clumsily with his thumb, he let it slip, pointing the weapon in the direction of his foes. He did it again.

A cry, or a shot, was the answer. He did not know which it was, but if a shot it did not touch him, though he had *not* tried to shift his position. He knew he felt queer, and that his sight blurred; this last sensation was a thing felt, without proof, in the darkness, yet felt so clearly that he was as sure of it as if he had been out in broad daylight and the sky had become suddenly overcast. With it he had a feeling of giddiness. He coughed, with a warm tickling in his throat; the thought came that perhaps it was blood in his throat—that he was shot fatally and was dying.

Hearing a rush of feet, as of his enemies, he roused himself, and with his clumsy left hand fired the two remaining shots in his revolver. He heard a crash, as of a body falling. Forgetfulness tugged at him, even while he felt for more cartridges, pawing blunderingly for them over the rocks. Then he thought he heard the voice of Jimmie Frazer and unconsciousness closed about him.

When he came back to himself he was out of the cave, but close by the entrance, and Alice Frazer was down on her knees, crying, beside him, and shaking him, as if to arouse him. Jimmie Frazer was yelling something to Asbury Jett, but stopped long enough to pump a rifle bullet into the cavern. Fred Edgerly tried to catch the words that Alice Frazer was saying to him, or about him. She seemed to think he was dying, and was heart-broken because of it. But he was sure he was dreaming, or it couldn't be, of course. Why, she hadn't been ac-

quainted with him long enough to—Of course not. Though her words now seemed to indicate it, it couldn't be—young women do not give their hearts away so readily. Yet he felt glad and thankful, as he closed his eyes again, that he had been able to dream it. It was a pleasant dream; and if only a dream would be something to remember.

XI

It was days and days before Fred Edgerly learned anything more about that fight, or was in a condition to care anything about it—though in truth the story, when he heard it, was concerned largely with what happened after the fight, together with many things happening before, some of them long before.

The revelations, not all made at once, came to him in the cabin—that cabin of cottonwood poles, where he had gone through so singular an experience on his first meeting with the Frazers. To that cabin he had been conveyed, from the cave; and there he returned to himself, with his right arm and shoulder mummy-swathed in bandages. There was an odor in the room of carbolic acid and drugs. And there was a row of bottles on a shelf by the cot, which Jett had brought from the town, he learned later.

Edgerly felt very tired, as he looked curiously at these exhibits, with no clear understanding of what they meant. Then he discovered that Alice Frazer had come to the foot of the cot on which he lay. She smiled upon him; yet she seemed to be crying still, or again. How long ago was that, when he lay outside by the cave; or was that a dream? Had she been crying ever since? If so, it was a foolish and unwarranted thing, whatever it was about.

Alice drew back, as Edgerly was making up his mind to speak to her, and Jimmie Frazer took her place. Edgerly wished Jimmie had not done that—driven her away. It irritated him; Jimmie was always orderng his sister around! Jimmie left the foot of the cot and came along the side. He was not crying, but smiling; he seemed very much pleased.

"Hello!" he said; and his voice was cheery. "You're all right!"

"Sure, I am," said Edgerly. "Who said I wasn't? I've been asleep."

"Asleep about a week," Jimmie announced with disconcerting confidence. "But you're all right now. How does your shoulder feel—and your arm?"

"They're tied up. Let me see—yes, I was shot. I remember now; I was shot!"

"In the cave."

"No—in the shoulder. But—yes, you're right: I was shot in the shoulder, in the cave. I was shot?"

"I guess yes; through the shoulder, and a bad one. How do you feel?"

"All right. Say," Edgerly looked at him with an increase of intelligent interest, "where's the sheep-man?"

Jimmie Frazer hesitated.

"He's dead," he said. "I'll tell you all about it later. You're not in a condition to talk much yet, you know. It wont do for you to get excited, and perhaps make that wound feverish. But I must say, old man,"—that sounded like a term of endearment—"you made a great fight, I'll never forget it. You held those devils back—when they were drunk and crazy and let me get out with Harrigan and the boy. *You held 'em!* It was great—greatest thing ever!"

"Where are they?" Edgerly questioned feebly; not that he much cared—he preferred to think of Alice Frazer.

"Two of 'em got out of the cave, after we vamoosed—one of them badly wounded. But Black Thompson stayed there. He was dead. I found that out by going back later: one of your bullets had fixed him. And," he added with emphasis, "he had an empty whiskey bottle in his pocket."

Edgerly pondered this heavily. "Where is the boy?" he asked.

"Here; outside somewhere, with Jett. The boy is all right."

He seemed to think that would please Edgerly immensely, and his smile expanded liberally.

"And—your sister?" said Edgerly.

"She's all right—finest ever; she was right here a minute ago—thought you saw her. But, say, old man, I've got to shut off. Sorry to do it. Thought you would want to know these things, and that it would be better to tell 'em to you

than to let you worry about 'em; so I've told you. When you're stronger I'll tell you more—the particulars. I'm your doctor, you know, and as I was responsible for getting you into this trouble I've got to pull you out of it—see? But you've got to obey me. You're sleepy—you look it. Here, take this!"

He poured something into a glass, and gave it to Edgerly to drink.

"No more of that drugged wine," was Edgerly's protest—a comment which Jimmie Frazer must have thought funny, for he laughed.

"Honor bright, this isn't the forerunner of another robbery. It will do you good. Drink it down, old man; it's what you need!"

Three days later, or rather three evenings later, Fred Edgerly heard more of the story of the fight and what followed it. He was still in bed, in the cottonwood cabin, but mending fast.

Alice Frazer sat by, as Jimmie talked, and sometimes answered a question, or dipped into the narrative to clear up a point when Jimmie seemed obscure. She was looking better; there were now no tears in her eyes. In Edgerly's opinion, she had become really beautiful. It had troubled him to label her indefinable charm. Sometimes he thought it lay in her smile, and sometimes he thought it was her shadowed gray eyes, and often he believed it was her look of quick intelligence; but now he was sure it was because she was beautiful and her simple self, and the one girl in the world for him.

He did not reason this out, for he was listening to Jimmie Frazer's revelations, and they interested him very much; yet it was there, in its entirety, in that sub-conscious part of him, which never slept, nor forgot anything; and it gave him a feeling of content, that was still mixed with anxiety. For kindly as her impulses toward him might be, he knew that was not enough.

"Yes," he said, answering Jimmie, "you were telling me about Black Thompson."

"I said he was dead. And one of his men has been captured—the fellow you wounded in that fight. He said you shot to kill. Being wounded, he found trouble in getting out of the hills, and the sheriff's men caught him. But he didn't need to admit it, to me, that you put up a record fight."

It was good to hear this praise, even though Edgerly felt he did not deserve it; he had not fought to kill, nor for any other reason but to keep from being killed himself, while he tried to hold the drink-maddened ruffians at bay, that his friends might escape out of the cave. And he had not felt brave or heroic while doing it. Viewing it in retrospect, he did not feel brave and heroic now. Yet the praise was pleasant.

"We stirred up the lazy officers at Crescent Butte and Glenwood," Jimmie explained, "and the sheriff saw that it was up to him to do something—or at least make a bluff at it. The Crescent Butte chief of police isn't feeling any too good; for the man who was captured has claimed that the chief was really backing Black Thompson, or at least failed to interfere or warn us at all when he knew that Black Thompson was on our trail—which makes it clear to me why I couldn't get any satisfaction when I applied to him for aid, when I first came to Crescent Butte. He denies it, of course, but he can be expected to do that."

"Then you have recently visited Crescent Butte yourself?" said Edgerly, surprised.

"Been there twice," said Jimmie. "Second time to get a surgeon, when I was worried over your condition. And Alice went with me, to get a nurse; while Jett stayed by you. Jett has been invaluable—a jewel."

"A black diamond," was Alice's humorous amendment.

"The boy is in Crescent Butte now, with some good people. We're going to take him east with us, and make a hunt for his people. If we don't find them, Alice says she intends to adopt him. He will have quite a fortune, too, of his own, from the sale of those emeralds. Do you know what that bag of emeralds is worth. More than fifty thousand dollars, as near as we can make out. I think I didn't tell you that they were concealed in the wall of the sheep-man's shanty, right behind those marks you saw on the wall—remember? The sheep-man told us to look for them

there. Why he risked putting the marks there, copied from those at the cave, I don't know. He didn't tell me, but you know that always, when a man does a criminal thing, he makes some fool crack that lays him open to discovery in the end. Given time enough, those marks on the wall would have betrayed Harrigan."

"The nurse thinks he is the handsomest child she ever saw," said Alice. "And you know what beautiful violet blue eyes he has, and what fair cheeks —like rose petals, or velvet."

"But I'd like to know more about his parents," said Jimmie. "Just who they were. And especially about that bunch of emeralds. I think it had been a necklace, or something like that. I hope Philip Sterling didn't steal it."

"Of course he didn't," said Alice. "I'll never believe that the father of such a boy was a thief."

"Well, you can't tell," said Jimmie.

"That boy is a perfect angel," Alice declared.

"Oh, Alice raves, you know; it's her way!" Jimmie commented, with a superior air. Then he changed the subject. "She's back there—I mean the nurse." He jerked his head toward the tiny rear room. "You couldn't be moved," he added.

Edgerly stared at Alice.

"It's interesting about the emeralds," he admitted. "And you told me that Harrigan is dead. What about The First Man—you were very much interested in finding him!" Though looking at Alice, he was addressing Jimmie. "Seems queer to be *here*—where I went to sleep that time, and then woke up, and found—"

"Forget it!" said Jimmie. "Don't rub it in, old man."

"Thanks," said Edgerly. "I'll give immediate orders to my forgettery. But The First Man! And perhaps there is more to be told about those wonderful emeralds?"

"All of it," said Jimmie, "involves the story of Harrigan—the story he told me." But the nurse came in, and conversation ceased, while she made Edgerly drink what she had prepared.

"Beef tea!" he said, when he had swallowed it. "And I never did like beef tea."

Alice and Jimmie laughed; they even seemed to snatch at things to laugh about that weren't a bit funny.

"But you ought to like it by now," said Alice. "You've been living on it for a week—though perhaps that is the reason you don't like it."

Jimmie continued his story:

"Harrigan was shot through the body, as I discovered when I got him outside the cave. But in spite of that he held on several hours—long enough to tell me everything, and get it off his conscience.

"He assured me that my brother Henry wasn't killed—that is, he wasn't murdered, but died as the result of an accident—though he had been followed and shadowed by men willing enough to kill him—the same men who later followed us. They had followed Sterling, the man who first had the emeralds, from Crescent Butte. Then when they thought that perhaps the emeralds had passed into my brother's hands, they followed and watched him. Discovering this, my brother had put the gems in a leather bag, and stowed them in the boy's pocket and had left the boy in what he thought was a secure place, while he went back to the cave for a final look at The First Man. It was this that finished him; the roof is broken there, and as he was digging about the fossil remains, he loosened a stone, and it came down on him and crushed him.

"Henry got out of the cave, and tried to get back to the boy, but fell on the way. And there the sheep-man found him, dying. The cave isn't very far from the sheep-man's valley, you know. Henry told Harrigan about himself, and about the boy and the emeralds, and as much as he knew about Philip Sterling —who was the boy's father and the owner of the emeralds. Henry had got the idea, it seems, that they belonged to the boy's mother, who was dead—and that Sterling was on his way to San Francisco, where he expected to sell them. He had stopped off at Crescent Butt, in order to see a man who lived somewhere out in the hills, but he had lost his way, and took pneumonia from lying out all night without shelter, when he wasn't accustomed to it."

"It's singular it didn't hurt the boy," observed Alice.

"Pneumonia is a queer thing," Jimmie averred sagely. "No one can tell when it will strike, or where it will strike; and it's a good deal more likely to get a man, especially if he is a bit run down, than it is to get a strong and healthy boy. Well, anyway," he went on, "you know that my brother brought Sterling here to his cabin, and here he died. His grave is out there and you've seen it. But I was speaking of Harrigan. When my brother knew that he had been fatally hurt in the cave, he begged Harrigan to find the boy, and then to do what he could to get him to his people.

"But right there is where temptation suddenly came upon the sheep-man and got the better of him. He found the boy wandering on the edge of the desert —for the little fellow had left the place he had been told to remain in—and the boy had the emeralds. After seeing them, Harrigan decided to think the matter over, and took the boy to his sheep camp, and buried my brother Henry. We have located the grave, where Harrigan told us we would find it. For a week or two after that Harrigan did nothing, except that he began to like the boy, who was then so small a toddler that he could hardly talk.

"While thinking it over Harrigan kept watch for Black Thompson, against whom he had been warned by my brother. It seems that Thompson had first learned about the emeralds at Crescent Butte, where Philip Sterling stopped a while and made inquiries. If I were to make a guess, which I couldn't prove, I should say that Sterling went to the Chief of Police there and while inquiring for this friend whom he wanted to meet, told about the emeralds, or displayed them; and that the Chief of Police put Black Thompson wise. But, anyway, however it was, Black Thompson and a couple of his cronies began their shadow work; and when I arrived in Crescent Butte, asking about my brother, and also went to the Chief of Police, Black Thompson began to follow me about—he and his men literally hounded me."

"Harrigan must have told me a lot of lies!" said Edgerly.

"He sure warped the truth," said Jimmie. "Yet some of the things he told you were strictly true. He confessed to me that he had been attacked by what he called 'spells,' impelling him to do right. The first time was when he took the boy to Glenwood, intending to make inquiries. But, becoming intoxicated—he had the drink habit—he simply made a fool of himself, trying to ship the boy East by mail and got his name in the Glenwood paper. That scared him; and he came back to his sheep ranch, and laid low a while.

"When he had his second 'spell' of wanting to do right, he sold two of the emeralds to the pawnbroker in Crescent Butte, to get money for a search—justifying it to himself because it was for the sake of the boy. He got five hundred dollars and went to New York, on a wild goose chase, which amounted to nothing; you know all about that trip.

"The other day, needing money again, he sold another emerald, to the same pawnbroker; he had about decided to sell them all and compromise with his conscience by doing all that he could for the boy, whom he had come to like so well. We have been after that pawnbroker; and I think we will get those emeralds, or their value. Harrigan's final appeal to me, just before he died, was to urge me to do right by the boy."

Fred Edgerly pondered this story a while, looking at Alice Frazer. He found it difficult to adjust his ideas to the new focus, in which he was compelled to view Harrigan's character. Finally he said as much, with an apology for the sheep-man, whose conscience had broken down under the strain of a great temptation; the sheep-man had been poor, and the emeralds represented a fortune.

"That shows you've a soft heart," said Alice, "and also a romantic head. You liked the sheep-man, and so had to idealize him a little, and romance about him. But," she added, "we all idealize people whom we learn to like."

It didn't seem a rebuke; Edgerly was pleased to hear her say it, and pleased with the look she gave him.

"You're very wise—to hear *you* talk!" said Jimmie to his sister. "But

Mr. Edgerly ought to have suspected Harrigan, after he saw him with the emerald in the pawnshop. *I* should have, I know."

"Oh, *you* would have," she retorted. "Mr. Edgerly knows that—has had experiences with your over-quick suspicions."

Jimmie flushed. "We were going to forget that, you know," he urged.

Edgerly looked at Alice again. "How long do I have to lie here?" he asked.

"We can move you to Crescent Butte in a week, in the automobile," said Jimmie.

"That's good." Then he added slowly: "Still, I'm in no hurry."

Fred Edgerly journeyed to Crescent Butte in the automobile, with Alice Frazer beside him. He made himself think he had held back from making the trip sooner, that Jimmie Frazer might have more time for the duties that engrossed him. And now he was glad he had delayed; for Alice Frazer was very pleasant company, and the day was bright.

A number of things had been done while he lay helpless in the cabin, which he was very glad to have missed. They did not talk about them. The First Man had been moved from his age-long resting place, and had gone East, to be installed in a certain hall of learning, with a brass label above his stony head, accrediting his discovery to Henry Frazer.

Coming down from the hotel to the railway station at Crescent Butte—a month had passed—Jimmie Frazer looked about for his sister and Edgerly. He had been hurrying preparations for the departure of the party from the little Western town. Jett was at the station, standing by some trunks just brought down.

"Seen my sister anywhere?" said Jimmie.

"She an' Mistah Edgerly am down by the riveh side, I reckum," Jett answered.

As Jimmie Frazer turned his footsteps toward the river, he met Fred Edgerly and Alice returning. Something in their manner made him look at them questioningly. As they came up, greeting him, Edgerly laid his hand on Jimmie's shoulder.

"Any objection, old fellow?" he said.

Jimmie stared, flushed, and smiled.

"No," he said; "of course not. I suppose, though, that I ought to seem very much surprised. But I thought some time ago that you two were more interested in each other than in The First Man."

Mrs. Spriggs' Domestic Inclination

By ZENDA WARDE

> Doubtless you were born to be the head of a domestic household, and if you followed your own inclination you would be that, even if you were adrift with your family on a raft in the middle of the ocean.
>
> FRANK STOCKTON'S
> *The Associate Hermits.*

FOR quite a long while Mrs. Spriggs sat in the middle of the raft, with her legs stuck straight out before her, and her hands spread out wide at her sides, trying to steady herself as the raft made tumultuous dips and scoops on the tossing waves. Her small bonnet was comically awry on her head, but she did not dare to lift a hand to straighten it. Around her were the other passengers of the third starboard boat, and all were sitting much as Mrs. Spriggs sat, but they sat with their

backs to Mrs. Spriggs, so that their legs made, as it were, a circle of rays extending out around her.

At every swoop of the raft one edge or the other went under water, and as the raft swooped the other way, this water ran straight across the raft, so that those on the raft were really sitting in an inch or two of water all the while, and at times were in a foot of it. But the water was warm.

The wreck of the steamer on which Mrs. Spriggs had been taking a voyage had forced everyone to take to the boats, but an accident to the third starboard boat had rendered it useless, and those who had drawn places in it had been obliged to build this raft to take its place. The wreck had been what might be called a slow one, and had come about gradually. The hold had been loaded with dried apples, and these were in bulk, so that when the ship sprung a small leak there was no excitement whatever. For a day or two the captain hoped he could stop the leak, but it seemed to grow larger in an unaccountable way, and it was at last discovered that the reason of this was that the water had reached the dried apples and swelled them, and as they swelled they crowded the sides of the vessel apart, thus opening the leak. In time this swelling would open the ship like an opened oyster and let the entire insides of it drop to the bottom of the ocean, and the ship would follow. Yet it took quite a while for the water to soak into all the dried apples, and this gave the crew a chance to build a strong, durable raft, and plane the top boards smooth, so that there would be little danger of splinters.

The captain was very sorry that part of his passengers would have to take to the raft, but several of the crew were needed for each boat, and it could not be helped, but as long as he had to make some passengers take different accommodations than he gave the others, he did all he could to even things up. He made the raft as inhabitable as possible. The first thing he did was to attach a square table firmly in the middle of the raft, and on top of this he tied a number of chairs, a lot of bedding and various household utensils, including an oil stove and lamps. He also built small storehouses at each corner of the raft and filled these with foodstuffs and drink.

When this was done, he looked over the list of those passengers that were scheduled to leave the ship on the raft, and when he saw that one woman was among them he at once asked for a volunteer from the male passengers of the boats to exchange places with Mrs. Spriggs. About twenty men immediately volunteered. But when Mrs. Spriggs had peeked into the boats she decided to stick to the raft. That was how she happened to be sitting under the table, in the middle of the raft, in the middle of the ocean.

The truth was that Mrs. Spriggs had been born to be the head of a domestic household, and long before the ship had sprung a leak she had grown tired of boats, and the sight of the nicely planed surface of the raft with its pile of chairs and cooking utensils had made her homesick, and she but followed her inclination when she decided to be one of those to trust to the raft.

The men of the raft's company did not like this. While they were nice enough men, as men go, they had looked forward to making a stag party of the raft adventure. To many of them it seemed an unusual and rare opportunity to spend a time far from females. But they did not say anything that could hurt Mrs. Spriggs' feelings, and when she insisted on coming on the raft they all made up their minds to make the best of it and be as cheerful as they could. It was not as if Mrs. Spriggs was a giddy young girl, who would want to be flirted with all the time. She was a quiet, elderly woman, quite capable of taking care of herself.

In a few hours the heavy sea that had finally split the ship in two began to go down, and the ship's first officer, who had been put in charge of the raft, stood up and took a look around. His name was Boland, and he was an honest Irishman; and as he had been wrecked five times before this, he knew just what to do.

"Now then, men," he said. "The sea has gone down, and all signs point to fair weather, so we will just get to

work and put this raft in ship-shape. Up, one and all of you, and I will tell you what I want done."

At this Mrs. Spriggs crept out from under the table and stood up, holding to it with one hand.

"Now, just a minute," she said, "before you go any further with that order. In the first place I want you to know, Mr. Boland, that this raft is not going to be put in ship-shape. The shape of a ship is the very reason I don't like it. I don't like the shape of a boat or a canoe or a yacht. The reason I liked this raft was because it was not at all ship-shaped. I liked it because it was shaped like the downstairs of my house at home, and if the sea is going to be quiet now, this raft is going to be put in house-shape and not in ship-shape."

"Aye, aye, ma'm!" said the first officer, touching his cap. "House-shape be it, then. So, all hands to work to put the raft in house-shape."

But Mrs. Spriggs soon put a stop to that.

"That is all very well," she said, "and it is kind of you to offer, but I want no man putting any house of mine in shape. I put my own houses in shape, and I can do it better than any man can do it. I want no men puttering around my house while I am redding it up. So you can all go off somewhere until the house if fixed up, and then I will call you."

For a moment the mate stood irresolute, but it was easy to see that Mrs. Spriggs meant what she said.

"Aye, aye, ma'm," he said gracefully, "but as for going off somewhere, there is no place to go. The only 'off' of this raft is into the ocean, ma'm, and although we are wet to the skin now we hardly care to jump into the ocean."

Mrs. Spriggs thought for a minute.

"I think," she said at length, "you had better go into the parlor. I suppose you know which is north. The north end of the raft will be the parlor, because the parlor is on the north side of my house at home, and it will be more like home to me if I have it that way. When I have time I will tell you where the other rooms are, but for the present you can go into the parlor and wait until I call you."

The mate and the other male passengers therefore walked over to the north side of the raft, but their weight was enough to bear that side of the raft down quite a little, so that the other side tipped into the air. A pleasant breeze was blowing from the south, and this made working quite comfortable, and Mrs. Spriggs went about her task happily, while the men stood and looked on, but before she had done much the mate approached her respectfully.

"I beg your pardon, ma'm," he said, "but we men have got into a little discussion, and we want you to settle it. This is your house, and you are the person to settle disputes about it."

"If there are any disputes in this house," said Mrs. Spriggs, "you may well believe I shall settle them. That is my way. Now, what is the trouble?"

"Well—ma'm," said the mate, "when we went into the parlor, like you told us, the north end of the raft tipped down a little, so many of us being on it, and the south end tipped up just the same amount, and that was all very well and good. Rafts will do that. But the breeze, ma'm, blowing against the south end of the raft that was higher in the air, swung it around, and now the north end is in the south, and the south end is in the north. What we are disputing about is which end of the raft is the parlor? Is it the end that was the north end, or the end that is the north end?"

"North is north," said Mrs. Spriggs, without a moment's hesitation. "My parlor at home is on the north side of my house, and it was, and it will be, and it is ridiculous to talk of a parlor moving around to one point of the compass and another. A parlor can't do it, and that stands to reason. Once north, always north—that is what I say about parlors. I said the north side of this raft would be the parlor and the north side will always be the parlor."

"Thank you, ma'm," said the mate, touching his cap, and he went back to the men. As soon as he spoke to them they crossed the raft to the north side. They did not seem at all inclined to dispute Mrs. Spriggs' wishes, but in a minute another discussion began, which ended by the mate pulling out

his pocket compass and showing it to them. Already the raft had shifted another point or so, and they were no longer on its direct north. They were on its NNW. So they all moved around until they were actually in the north, and then the mate stood with his compass in his hand. It was plain that the breeze would continually move the higher edge of the raft toward the north, and as the edge of the raft on which the men stood would always be the lowest edge, the parlor would be continually getting out of the north. The only way for the men to stay in the parlor would be for them to walk slowly as the raft turned. So the mate arranged them in line, with himself at their head, and with the compass in his hand, and as the raft swung around one way they all took a step the other way. In this manner they hoped to be able to obey Mrs. Spriggs and remain in the parlor, but it was not so easy as it seemed, for as they walked they imparted more of a rotary motion to the raft, and as the raft revolved more rapidly, the men had to run more rapidly to keep in the north, and that made the raft rotate still more rapidly, and the men then burst into full speed.

By this time Mrs. Spriggs had taken a broom and was sweeping out the dining-room with long, powerful sweeps of the broom. As she kept her eyes on the floor she did not notice at first that the raft was revolving. Not until she heard the long, panting breathing of the men, who were struggling hard to keep in the parlor, did she look up, and by that time the raft was whirling rapidly. She was just in time to see the men, thrown by the great centrifugal force they had created, fly off at all angles and splash into the ocean. The sight of the rapidly revolving raft, the edges of which threw up great waves and masses of foam as they cut through the water, made Mrs. Spriggs exceedingly dizzy, and as the raft continued to revolve she became the victim of a peculiar sensation that was for all the world like drunkenness, and she could not keep her feet. She staggered and fell, and then grasped a leg of the table and wrapped an arm around it. By this means she was able to hold herself on the raft until its motion subsided, but she was ashamed, and feared the men, who were all swimming toward the raft, might think she had indulged in intoxicating liquor, whereas she was a strict teetotaler.

The mate was the first to board the raft, and he immediately began running around the edge again, keeping his eye on his compass, which he had luckily retained in his hand. As the other men clambered aboard they too began running, but as they were scattered on all edges of the raft the mate called and shouted to them, and although Mrs. Spriggs called and shouted to them too, they could not hear her, and they continued running until the centrifugal force again threw them into the ocean, into which they fell in all attitudes, and splashed in various ways.

By this time Mrs. Spriggs was exceedingly overcome with dizziness, and hardly dared to raise her head, and the men might have spent many hours climbing on the raft and being slung from it, had the sun not suddenly sunk below the horizon, rendering the world so dark that the mate could not see his compass. Consequently he could not tell which was north, and felt it useless to continue running around the edge of the raft. Of course he might have told the north by gazing at the stars, or by knowing that the sun usually sets in the west, but he was probably so exhausted by his numerous baths that he forgot this.

If Mrs. Spriggs had an irresistible domestic inclination, the first officer had an equally irresistible naval inclination. He was willing enough to defer to Mrs. Spriggs as long as her wishes did not interfere with his own ideas of right, and he did not mind at all what she did so long as she was "redding up." She might call it making the raft house-shape if she wished and he was satisfied, so long as she was also making the raft ship-shape, and that was what she had been doing. But now the first officer thought the time had come to say a word. He walked into the dining-room, and stood before Mrs. Spriggs, who was still sitting on the floor, holding to the leg of the table. The raft was gradually slowing down in its revolutions and the other members of the

household stood waiting for the first officer to return.

"Now, ma'm," he said, as soon as Mrs. Spriggs was able to hold up her head, "we men have done our best to stay in the parlor whilst you made things house-shape, and a terrible time we have had of it, too. We done our best, ma'm, but such a flighty parlor I never did see. When that there northern parlor got well under way, ma'm, it kept about ten feet ahead of us all the time, and whilst we was being thrown into the ocean it gained two laps each time. Right at present that parlor is eight laps ahead of us men, and we are all tired out, and if you make them men run after that northerly parlor any more to-night there's apt to be a mutiny. I aim to do everything for the best, ma'm, but I advise you to let us postpone catching that parlor until daylight. There are some things I've got to do, as an honest seaman, and it stands to reason it aint fair to keep us running around the edge of this raft trying to get into the parlor, while you take your ease sitting here, doing nothing but hold on to the leg of this table."

"And what are those things you feel you had ought to do?" asked Mrs. Spriggs with considerable asperity.

"Well, ma'am," said the mate, "for one thing I've got to put red and green lights at the masthead. It is against the law to navigate a craft without red and green lights, and I've got to have them."

"Mr. Boland," said Mrs. Spriggs shortly, "you can get over that idea right now. Nobody ever heard of a house with a mast, and nobody ever heard of a house putting out red and green lights at night. As for the laws of navigation, I don't care a snap for them. I have run a house of my own many years, and I guess I can run this one without calling in any laws of navigation. You don't put any signal lamps on this house!"

For a moment Mr. Boland thought deeply. He was a good officer and it would have broken his heart to have broken a law of navigation.

"Very well, ma'm," he said. "That shall be as you wish, but I suppose you have no objection to a couple of these men digging trenches alongside the house for the laying of gas pipes, have you?"

"Not at all," said Mrs. Spriggs. "It would be very nice to have gas in the house. But I don't think you will find any gas mains out there in the ocean."

"Neither do I," said the first officer, "but it is as well to be prepared in case we should, and while you are getting dinner I will see that the trenches are dug."

With that he went away and Mrs. Spriggs lighted a lamp and began getting dinner. She enjoyed this immensely, for it was a very domestic duty, and she was so taken up with it that she did not notice the hard work the first officer's two men were having in digging the trenches for the gas pipes. They stood on the edge of the raft, one on the parlor side and one on the kitchen side, and dug at the ocean with two spades the mate had found among the articles aboard the raft, but they did not make much progress. That part of the ocean was like a sand pit, and quite unstable, and as fast as the water was dug out it ran back into the hole and filled it up. But this did not bother the first officer at all. When the men had dug for half an hour he told them that would do for the present, and he walked into the dining-room and spoke to Mrs. Spriggs.

"Now, ma'm," he said, "my men have been digging trenches, but the water is so unstable around this house that it is impossible for them to complete the trenches to-night, and I think they had better stop now, for dinner will soon be ready. They can go ahead with the trench-digging to-morrow, but I consider it very dangerous to leave two open trenches like those unprotected. Anybody stepping off the house might fall into them in the dark and be injured. I propose to hang a lantern over each trench, if you have no objection, to warn people not to fall into them."

"By all means," said Mrs. Spriggs. "If anyone fell into those trenches and got hurt they could sue me for damages. Hang up those lanterns immediately."

"And I thought," said the first officer, "that as we have only two colored lanterns, I might hang the red lantern

over one trench and the green lantern over the other trench."

"But a green light means safety, if I know anything about it," said Mrs. Spriggs. "To hang a green light over an open trench would be to invite people to fall into it."

"Very well, ma'm," said the first officer, "if that is the case I will have my men fill in that trench before they hang the green light over it."

This satisfied Mrs. Spriggs and the mate went away and did it, and thus he satisfied the laws of navigation and the domestic inclination of Mrs. Spriggs.

When the party was gathered around the dining-table and Mrs. Spriggs had taken her place at the head of it, she looked at the first officer firmly.

"Mr. Boland," she said, "I want to take this occasion, while we are all together, to tell you and these other gentlemen that I have been thinking while I have been getting dinner and I have come to a conclusion. And this is what I have concluded:—When I decided to take to this raft instead of to one of the boats I felt that it was quite a proper thing to do. Of course I would be the only woman among a number of men, but I have been that before; I have kept a boarding-house and have had a large number of male boarders, and no one thought anything of it. If anyone had I would have made them sorry for it. A lot of boarders are like a lot of sheep. They are all on an equal level, and none of them is dangerous. I looked upon the men who were to be on this raft in exactly that way. But since this morning I have noticed that this raft is not altogether like a boarding-house. One man"—and here she looked at Mr. Boland very meaningly—"is pushing himself forward. While the rest of you are indeed like a lot of sheep, that one man stands out prominently."

"When the captain put me in charge of this raft—" the first officer began.

"When the captain put you in charge of this raft," said Mrs. Spriggs, "he had a silly idea that this raft was going to be a vessel, but it has turned out to be a house. If this raft had remained a vessel it would have been your duty to be prominent, but as it is a house and as I am the lady of the house, these other men cannot but look upon your prominence with suspicion, and the minute they look upon you with suspicion, they will begin to look upon me with suspicion, and when they begin to look upon us both with suspicion it is time something was being done about it. A lone widow cannot remain in a house with a man, when he and she are looked upon with suspicion. One of two things must be done."

The first officer was now so overcome by these unjust words that he did not know what to say.

"Either," said Mrs. Spriggs firmly, "you must leave this raft, or you must quiet the suspicions of these men by becoming my husband. I must have some one to protect me against the base insinuations that have entered, or may enter, into their minds."

Under ordinary circumstances the first officer would have preferred leaving the raft to becoming a husband, for he was a confirmed bachelor, but there were a number of reasons for not leaving the raft. In the first place it was impossible to leave it; in the second place his captain had put him in charge of the raft and no honest seaman ever deserts his craft; in another place he was a man of forcefulness and for that reason his day with Mrs. Spriggs had taught him to like her, for she was just as forceful as he, and a little more so. He felt that he might go far and fare worse in the matter of wives.

"All right, ma'm," he said, "just as soon as we reach a place where we can be married I am willing to become Mr. Spriggs."

"You mean," said Mrs. Spriggs, "that you are willing that I should become Mrs. Boland. But I can excuse your mistake. You have never been married before, and it is all new to you, but I know all about it, for I have been married. But there is no need of waiting at all. As soon as we finish this soup course, and while we are waiting for the meat, which is not quite done, we can be married. You know very little about Maria Spriggs if you think she would embark on a raft, to be gone for an indefinite time, without making sure

there was a minister of the gospel along so that regular Sunday services might be held. The green light trench digger is a minister, and he will marry us, I know. So hurry with your soup; there is no use letting that meat scorch just on account of a little thing like a wedding."

"Well, ma'm," said the first officer, "I don't know much about this sort of thing, as you say, but isn't there something about a license?"

"I should think so," said Mrs. Spriggs. "But it is evident you know very little about widows. No widow would think of making a long trip from home without taking a blank license along. In fact, I always carry two, in case one might be lost, or a husband might get killed."

There seemed nothing else necessary, and while Mrs. Spriggs was taking the soup plates off the table the green light trench digger prepared to make Mrs. Spriggs and Mr. Boland one. It was a very simple ceremony, and when it was over, Mrs. Spriggs brought the meat and the hot plates and Mr. Boland carved.

"We will have to postpone our wedding journey until we reach land," said Mrs. Boland, "but that does not matter much."

"Just as you say," said Mr. Spriggs—for, to save his life, the first officer could not remember that marrying Mrs. Spriggs did not make him Mr. Spriggs—"but I should think we were taking our wedding journey now. If floating in the middle of the ocean, several thousand miles from wherever our home is to be, is not taking a journey, I don't know what it is."

"Not at all," said Mrs. Boland. "This raft is my house, and no one ever heard of taking a wedding journey in a house. I shall not consider anything like that a wedding journey. It is not even a journey. I shall not, probably, step outside of the house at all. So it can't be a journey."

"Very well," said the new Mr. Spriggs, "we wont quarrel about that, but as a sailor man, you must permit me to call this *my* wedding journey. I know this raft is moving over the surface of the ocean, and I know I have just been wedded, so my conscience compels me to consider this my wedding journey."

"That is your right," said Mrs. Boland, "and you can be taking your wedding journey now, but I shall stay at home and attend to the house."

After dinner the castaways all pushed back their chairs, and Mrs. Boland showed them the corner of the raft where she had made the guest chamber, and they immediately threw themselves on their mattresses and went to sleep. For a moment or two Mr. Spriggs felt that duty compelled him to divide the party into watches and keep one watch on deck, but consideration showed him that a commanding officer would not think of such matters while he was off on his wedding trip, and when he spoke to Mrs. Boland about it, she said she certainly would not have a part of her guests sitting up at all hours of the night.

The next morning Mrs. Boland's domestic inclination had an opportunity for full play, for she found herself the mistress of a house and husband. As soon as breakfast was eaten she told the two trench diggers to go on with that work, and they took their spades and continued to dig in the ocean.

"And now, my dear," she said to Mr. Spriggs (for so the first officer preferred to be called, since, as he said, it gave him a more married feeling than being called Mr. Boland, as he had always been called). "Now, my dear, what do you intend doing to-day?"

"Well, ma'm," said Mr. Spriggs, "the first thing is to start these men into the parlor. Now that I am a husband I suppose it will not be necessary for me to sit in the parlor—"

"Now that you are a husband of *mine*," said Mrs. Boland, "I would like to see you dare to sit in my parlor! The parlor is no place for husbands."

"Aye, aye, ma'm!" said Mr. Spriggs. "What I was going to say is that I am the fastest runner of all the men, and if they could not keep up with the parlor with me leading them, they will have to run almighty fast to catch the parlor when it has six or eight laps gained on them, so I had better start them immediately."

"Mr. Spriggs," said Mrs. Boland, "before you do that, let me ask you a question. Is this raft going to spin around again like it did yesterday?"

"Probably," said Mr. Spriggs. "If you *will* have the parlor in the north, and if you *will* have all those men in the parlor, that parlor is going to be on the move."

"And I am going to be so dizzy that I shall have to sit on the floor and hug the table leg, when I ought to be about my duties. If that is so," said Mrs. Boland, "those men have got to keep out of the parlor, and you can tell them so. Two of them you have got digging trenches for the gas pipes, and I can use one for dining-room maid, and one for chamber-maid. That makes four." She hesitated, and then said; "And I can use one for a kitchen corner."

"Aye-aye, ma'm," said her husband, puzzled, "but how a man can be a kitchen corner, and why he *should* be one, is beyond me, ma'm."

"Mr. Spriggs," said his wife, "whenever I sweep the floor I use a broom, and when I have swept the floor it has always been my habit to stand the broom in the kitchen corner, and yesterday when I did that, the broom fell out of the house, because there was no kitchen corner. Now if one of these men stands in the corner of the kitchen he will do very well as a kitchen corner, and when I am through sweeping I can lean the broom against him, and the broom will not fall into the ocean—unless he does."

"That uses up five of those men," said the first officer, "and if you have no very pressing need of the others I think I ought to have them. You know I am on my wedding journey, and it has always been my wish, if I ever took a wedding journey, to take it on a yacht, and if you need five men in the house I certainly need five men to man the yacht."

"That suits me," said Mrs. Boland. "But you must not let your five yachtsmen interfere with my house."

"Certainly not," said Mr. Spriggs. "A house and a yacht could not possibly interfere with each other. My men will go about the yacht, and your men can go about the house, and neither need interfere with the other at all. Now, the first thing I want to do is to raise a mast and hoist a sail."

"That is quite proper on a yacht," said Mrs. Boland, "but it will not do at all in a house. I never heard of a house having a mast and a sail. But I have no objection at all to letting you set up a clothespole, and when you have the clothespole up you may hang a large tablecloth on it, if you want to. That would be quite right in a well regulated home."

In this way Mr. Spriggs and Mrs. Boland got along very well together on the house-yacht-raft. The clothespole-mast with its tablecloth-sail satisfied them both and infringed on neither's rights. If Mr. Spriggs wanted to swab down the deck of the yacht Mrs. Boland chose the same time to scrub the floor of the house; when Mr. Spriggs constructed a rudder on the stern of the yacht Mrs. Boland spoke of it as her new back porch, and thus Mr. Spriggs sailed away on his wedding journey and Mrs. Boland staid at home in her house, and neither had anything to complain of.

But about three o'clock that afternoon Mr. Spriggs seated himself in a chair on the afterdeck of his yacht and pulled out his pipe for a smoke. Mrs. Boland stopped sweeping the floor of her kitchen—which happened to be identical with the afterdeck of Mr. Spriggs' yacht—and said:—"Now, that is one thing I can't have! I hate to annoy you, but I cannot have my husband, or anyone else, smoke in the house."

"But, ma'm," said Mr. Spriggs, "I have a right to smoke on the deck of my yacht, so long as I remain aft of the mast."

"That is all right," said Mrs. Boland, "and I shall not interfere with your rights, but you cannot smoke in my house. If you want to smoke you must go out on the porch, the way the first Mr. Spriggs always did."

Mr. Sprigg sat a moment in thought, and then he arose. The only porch the house had was the back porch, and he had never heard of smoking a pipe on the rudder of a yacht, but he did not want to make trouble, and he went out and sat astride the rudder. When the

other men saw this they too came aft, and when they found they too would be allowed to smoke if they sat on the back porch, they also crawled out and sat astride of the rudder and smoked, and Mrs. Boland set her chair in the kitchen door and did some darning where she could watch them. She was enjoying herself to the utmost, for she was indulging her domestic inclination to the full.

"Well," she said suddenly, when she had darned for a while, "our back yard is getting all mussy. If there is anything I hate it is a mussy back yard, and if I had a rake I would go out there and rake the back yard. I wonder where all that muss is coming from."

Mr. Spriggs and the men looked at the water in the rear of the yacht. It was, indeed, becoming mussy, and for a minute they could not imagine what was happening to the ocean. They had never seen anything like this happen to an ocean before. The whole surface of it near them was becoming covered with some light brown substance and it was not until Mr. Spriggs put down his hand and took some of it up that he saw what it was.

"Dried apples!" he said.

By this time the whole ocean around the yacht-house-raft, for many yards, was brown with dried apples, and it was easy to imagine what had happened. When the ship went down it had made a vortex and this had drawn all the dried apples to the bottom of the ocean, and now they were coming to the top again. And as they looked, a still more remarkable thing happened, for directly in front of the raft a huge brown mass, larger than the raft itself, popped up, and then fell back with a splash and lay on the surface of the ocean. Mr. Spriggs and the men immediately extinguished their pipes and ran to the bow of the yacht, and Mrs. Boland dropped her darning and ran to the front of her house, and all looked at this strange island that had appeared immediately before them. No one could doubt for a moment what this was. It was the bulk of the dried apple cargo. Tons and tons of dried apples had gone down with the ship, and after the ship had struck the bottom, the apples had probably become loosened and floated to the surface again. Mr. Spriggs and Mrs. Boland both showed their joy.

"Well, if that isn't lucky," said Mrs. Boland. "All this house needed to make it perfect was a front yard, and here one comes, as if by magic."

"May I be classed as a land lubber," said Mr. Spriggs, "if this is not just what my heart would wish. Whenever I thought of a wedding journey, which wasn't often, I always said I would like to take a yacht and sail away and spend my honeymoon on some small island in the middle of the ocean, and here comes the island just when it is needed. I can spend my honeymoon on it as easily as not."

"And now," said Mrs. Boland, "you will not have to sit on that back porch when you want to smoke. You can go into the front yard."

Mr. Spriggs was now all excitement, and he called his crew and bade them make the yacht fast to the desert island, but Mrs. Boland stopped them.

"What are you going to do with that rope?" she asked when they had got out the cable. "I don't want any rope tied in my front yard."

"Now, ma'm," said Mr. Spriggs, "you can just pretend that rope is a clothesline, if you want to. Or if you don't want it to be a clothesline you can make it anything you please that will go with a house. But for me it is a cable to make my yacht fast to my island."

"I shall have no clotheslines in my front yard!" said Mrs. Boland firmly. "You men can take that rope back where you got it. To me that is not an island; it is my front yard; and this is not a yacht, it is a house; and I'll have no ropes scattered around the front yard. Off with it!"

For a moment Mr. Spriggs was very angry, and after that he was angrier still. He was a good seaman, and he knew better than to land on a desert island without making fast to it, and it touched him in his tenderest spot to think his wife would expect him to do such a thing.

"Very well, ma'm," he said coldly. "I shall not quarrel with you while I am on my wedding journey, but if you are going to act that way you can have

your raft all to yourself. It is no yacht to me after this! But you need not expect me to incline myself to domesticity before my wedding journey is over. When it is over I will gladly go to housekeeping, but for the present I shall not touch foot to your floor."

"My goodness!" said Mrs. Boland, flaring up, "Hear the man talk! And what do you intend doing, then, Mr. Spriggs, may I ask?"

"I'll spend my honeymoon on my desert island," said Mr. Spriggs, stepping across onto the dried apples, where he was quickly followed by his five yachtsmen.

"And what will you eat, may I ask?" asked Mrs. Boland.

"I'll eat the island," said Mr. Spriggs savagely, and not another word would he say, but walked to the opposite side of the island.

Mrs. Boland was not to be put upon by any such treatment, and she turned her back on him and walked into the kitchen. If there had been a door she would have slammed it.

That evening Mr. Spriggs and his five men dined on desert island, and it was not very good. The water in the apples was sea water, and this made it too salty for regular food, but after having eaten, the six men enjoyed their pipes. Mr. Spriggs sat and thought, and he decided that in the morning he would go back to the yacht and call it a yacht, or a house, or an airship, if Mrs. Boland wanted him to. He felt that he should give her a lesson, but he began to feel that he was getting the lesson himself, and he was afraid to turn around and look at the cozy raft for fear he could not resist the impulse to go back immediately. At length the desire to see how Mrs. Boland was standing the quarrel was too much for him and he turned and looked. He expected to see her sitting by the dining-room table, darning or knitting in the full enjoyment of her domestic inclinations, while the table lamp shed a warm glow on her head and face; but when he turned, he saw nothing at all.

At first he imagined there must be a hillock of dried apples that shut off his view, so he stood up, but there was nothing on Dried Apple Island to shut off his view. All around he saw nothing but intense darkness, until suddenly he spied, far, far off, two very small and indistinct lights, one red and one green, and as he stood wringing his hands in anguish these disappeared in the distance.

Mrs. Boland and the five men on the house did not discover the loss of the island until next morning, and she did not know whether she had run away from her husband or her husband had run away from her. For many months she floated about on the house, in company with the two trench diggers, the dining-room maid, the chambermaid and the kitchen corner, and up to the present day she does not know whether Mr. Spriggs is dead, or still spending his honeymoon on the dried apple island, or on the way home. And if he is dead, she doesn't know whether he died of over-eating dried apples or, having eaten all the island, was drowned in the front yard. Somehow she can't help feeling that if she had suppressed her domestic inclinations then, she would be in a better position to exercise them now, but regrets are vain, for if a woman is born to be the head of a domestic household, she will follow her own inclination, even if she is adrift on a raft in the middle of the ocean.

A TELEGRAPH TANGLE

"THE GIRL OPERATOR," the Blue Book novelette for May, is unmistakably a live wire. When Wilbur Crane sends these cryptic symbols— "—.. . .— . .." humming over the line to the girl at the transmitter a few stations down the road, he starts something decidedly interesting. Read this unique story in the BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE for May!

"The Killing"

By

W. BERT FOSTER

FOR ten years Bob Sledd's wages had been twenty-five dollars a week, and he had been honest. He was chief, confidential, and *only* clerk for Amos Slygh, and Old Amos did the neatest little note-shaving business in Wall Street. Of course, people didn't call it usury to Mr. Slygh's face, especially those who wanted accommodation from him; but behind his rusty broadcloth back, "skinflint" was one of the very mildest terms they used in referring to the old man.

And nobody knew his parsimony better than Bob Sledd. When Bob received his first week's pay-check, he had just been married, and to Rose and him twenty-five dollars seemed a magnificent sum. They laid by quite a bit of money during the first two years. Then the children began to come, and there were doctor's bills, and more mouths to feed, and more clothes to buy; and each month it seemed as though the dollars grew less elastic. They would not stretch as far as they once did.

Finally, after about eight years of the sort of scrambling to drive in step that ill-matched pair of nags, Expense and Income, that the families of most city clerks experience, Bob and Rose decided that the city was to blame, and they moved into the suburbs. Besides, the children were growing and the the streets were no place for them.

They found what they thought was a cheap little cottage at Elmbrake, within sight of the racetrack. But somehow the move did not put money in the bank for them. They lived up to the last cent of their income, although Bob had never learned extravagance, and Rose was one of the shrewdest little bargainers that ever did her own marketing and watched the department store advertisements in the papers.

And, in time, they learned that although the children might have a better chance for physical health out here, the atmosphere of Elmbrake was morally unhealthy. As miasma rises from a swamp and pollutes all the surrounding atmosphere, so an insidious poison was cast off by the social pool of Elmbrake.

The people there were cursed by the microbe of "Easy Money." The men were bookmakers, small horse-owners, trainers, sheet-writers, and other hangers-on of the racing game—men, who as a rule, knew nothing about steady work. Their toil did not callous the hand nor weary the brain; their harvest was but a few weeks in duration, when they reaped a sufficient crop to carry them through the year.

The second racing season after the Sledds moved into the neighborhood, the principal of the school expelled the son of a certain bookmaker for "making book" in the schoolyard for his boy associates. Rose was horrified to learn that young Bob had invested a quarter on several occasions on the running of his favorite horse.

"Oh, Bob! I want us to get away from it!" wept Rose, that night, when the children had gone to bed. "They will be ruined—*we* will be ruined! We are all being contaminated by the association."

"Well, Rose—perhaps that's true. But we're not fixed just right now to move, are we?"

"We must as soon as we can," was her rather ambiguous statement. "I'm afraid for the children."

But Bob could say nothing to the boys regarding the enormity of the sin of gambling. By this time he had learned to be on the lookout for an occasional "good thing" himself, and he sometimes risked a few dollars on the favorite.

When he had won his first ten dollars he was almost afraid to tell Rose; she despised "gambling." But there is a peculiar slant to a woman's conscience—women in general; and Rose's moral appreciation was like that of the majority of her sisters. *Gambling is when a man loses, not when he wins!*

That ten dollars paid for Rose's fall hat—Bob insisted on it. Later he won a few more dollars and something was bought for the house.

"Of course, you'll never be a gambler, or 'play the ponies' regularly, Bob," Rose said, a little quaveringly. "And we're doing just right with the money you *do* win. When we put it into the house, the bookies will never get it back."

But there were times that Bob played and did not win; the sums were small and Rose seldom knew about the losses. Bob began to spend most of his Sundays and early morning hours on the track when the horses were being exercised. He watched several stables religiously. Every man who plays the ponies has a "system" whether he owns it or not; even the man who only bets when he has a "hunch" follows a system of intuition. Bob watched certain horses run, studied their records, and tried to make himself believe that there was a science in the racing game and that he was learning it!

There was Dan Malone's string of horses—Big Dan lived in sight of the Sledd's modest cottage and occasionally he "passed the time of day" with Bob. It was known that Big Dan had "made a killing" more than once; he had been up before the stewards only the season before on charges, and one of his jockeys had been ruled off the track.

There was a three-year-old in the Malone stable named Beaunash. He had never run on the Elmbrake track, but as a two-year-old in the West, he had made a meteoric record. At the earlier meets in the East this season, the gelding had not made good; Beaunash ran much behind his previous record.

Big Dan admitted—on more than one occasion—that Beaunash was a distinct disappointment. But there was an air of suppressed excitement about the Malone stables, and Bob Sledd heard several hints to the effect that Beaunash was being reserved for a killing.

But Bob watched the try-out of the gelding morning after morning, and although the horse ran splendidly—making a fine appearance and being ridden with apparent earnestness by the boy—he could not equal his former time. Bob knew, for he secretly held his watch on the horse.

Old Curley Jake, the West Indian negro who mowed Bob Sledd's lawn on occasion, and the most undaunted "sure thing" prophet around the track, saw Bob watching the Malone gelding speeding around the oval, and he chuckled knowingly.

"I sees you knows a good thing when you sees it, Mistuh Sledd," he said.

"He don't run like a good thing," said the puzzled Bob.

"No—not yet," said the negro. "But wait till the day they lets him loose. He'll lift his heels some lighter then, Mistuh Sledd."

"What do you mean, Curley?" queried the amateur.

The old negro looked all around slyly, and then whispered a word or two in Bob's ear.

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Amos Slygh's honest clerk. "You're stringing me, Curley."

"Naw I aint—naw I aint, Mistuh Sledd! I knows Big Dan's blacksmif—an' you see yourse'f how the colt runs. He's carryin' weight, *he* is. Beaunash is goin' to make a killin', and I'm goin'

ter know *when*. If I put you wise in time, Mistuh Sledd, will you put on a two-spot for me?"

"Sure I will," returned Bob, laughing. But he did not take much stock in the old negro's story.

Matters had not been going well with the Sledds for some months. One of the little girls was delicate; the doctor's bills came regularly and were not small. Nobody—not even Bob himself—realized how hard Rose found making both ends of the household money meet.

Besides, there was a steady, if small, drain these days. There is little use saving at the spigot when there is a leak at the bunghole. While the races were on, a day seldom passed that Bob did not put down from two to five dollars; and he had a run of bad luck. His selections did not seem to know how to get under the wire first.

In a desperate moment he had asked Mr. Slygh again for a raise. This was a farce which was played at least once a year, with exactly the same result. Old Amos pulled a long face, talked "poor mouth" so earnestly that an unsophisticated listener would have been tempted to offer the old skinflint the loan of a dollar, and finally ended with the suggestion that, times being so hard, perhaps Bob had better be on the lookout for another position; twenty-five dollars a week was really more than he, Amos Slygh, headed straight for the poorhouse, should give a clerk.

This always stoppered Bob's mouth effectually. A recommendation—providing the old curmudgeon would have given him one—from Amos Slygh would scarcely aid Bob in obtaining an equally well paid position. The mantle of the old usurer had flung its shadow over Sledd's reputation; at least, the latter feared so.

He was a man in a rut. He did not know how to get out of it. And Bob dared not discuss the details of the situation even with Rose. He shrank from letting her know just how far they had run behind.

He could not often get away from Wall Street early enough to attend the races, but he watched the running off of the events at a pool-room around the corner from Slygh's office.

Bob had always attended to the payment of the house rent; but last month he had not paid it. In fact, he hadn't had the money. His life insurance premium was coming due, and Mabel's quarterly payment at the Conservatory; and there was coal to buy for the winter. Oh, there was good reason for his lying wide awake long hours each night beside his wife, desperately wondering what he should do when the storm burst.

One morning, just after Bob had fallen into a troubled sleep, there came a tapping at the chamber window. It was grey dawn only, and when he opened the sash he could scarcely distinguish the dusky features of Curley Jake.

"Mistuh Sledd! Mistuh Sledd!" stuttered the negro, excitedly. "Dat Beaunash hawse is entered in the third race to-day. It's a killing, suah!"

"I don't see it, Curley," said Bob. "He didn't run any better yesterday."

"Nor you wont see him run no better till the race," declared Curley, earnestly. "He wont be tried out this mawnin' at all. But Big Dan tol' his blacksmif to knock off the colt's old shoes and put on fresh ones. That hawse has been wearin' lead pads like I told you. He'll jest walk away from the field, boss—he suah will! Now, don't you fail to git down your bit on him, Mistuh Sledd—an' don't forgit old Curley."

There was no more sleep for Bob. He got out on the racetrack for his usual before-breakfast walk. The gelding was not worked out that morning. Going in on the train Bob saw by the paper that Beaunash was entered in the third event.

It was Saturday and a short day at the office; he could get away in season to see the actual racing at the track. But the best he could do was to scrape together twelve dollars for use in the betting ring. He had already drawn to the end of the month on his salary account.

Noon came and he banked the office money. When he returned, Mr. Slygh closed his own desk and trotted away. Bob methodically put the ledgers and the petty cash into the safe and locked it. He had closed the office door and was

just turning away when a messenger-boy dashed into the corridor and met him.

"Letter for Slygh, bo," said the youth, briskly. "Sign here."

"After office hours, sonny," said Bob, but he smilingly signed the receipt and accepted the sealed packet. He unlocked the office door again and went in with the thing in his hand.

He opened it and found two hundred dollars in crisp bills—interest on a note that would not be due yet for several days. To straighten the matter out at this time he would be obliged to open his desk, unlock the safe, get out the ledger and enter the amount. It was too late to deposit the money in the bank. And if he lingered here he would miss his train. Besides—

For the first time in his career Bob Sledd did something irregular. He slipped the crisp bills into his own thin wallet, gave another look about the office, as though perhaps he should never see it again, and went out.

As Bob made his way into the field while the band was playing a lively two-step, he saw Big Dan Malone, smoking a black cigar and smiling.

"Going to be a nice afternoon, Mr. Sledd," said the horse-owner, genially.

"And a good crowd," observed Bob. He hesitated and his voice went hoarse as he added: "What do you know, Mr. Malone?"

The big man grinned, one eyelid drooped, and he said:

"Nothing much, my boy, nothing much. But don't be afraid of my long shot in the third race."

It was an equivocal statement, but Bob's heart beat faster. He went into the ring. Beaunash was posted at 60 to 1. There were some likely horses in that third event and Massy's entry, Crestover, was the favorite.

Several acquaintances told Bob what they liked in the first race, but he let the horses go to the post without putting down a bet. The second race was a repetition of the first.

"Nothing but the favorites have got a chance to-day," one man told him. "Crestover will win the next one in a walk."

Bob went into the betting ring again. Big Dan was conspicuous by his absence; but there was some money being put down on Beaunash. A stranger was ahead of Bob at the first bookmaker.

"A hundred on the Malone entry, 60 to 1," said the bookie to his clerk.

Bob followed the stranger and saw the bet repeated at the next stand. Almost involuntarily Bob offered his own small bet of twelve dollars—two for Curley Jake. Sixty to one again. The interest in the Malone entry made no stir as yet; but the stranger went on down the line, offering his crisp hundred dollar bill to each bookmaker.

In the slang parlance of the game there was "something doing." More than Bob began to notice the steady betting on Beaunash. Touts and "regulars" were whispering in groups. If the tip was good—if Beaunash won—Bob stood to clean up six hundred dollars for himself. *With more capital he could win a fortune.*

Others had done the like. The race track is a fairyland where the lucky plunger turns to gold all that he touches. Stories which dwarfed those of the Arabian Nights hummed in Bob Sledd's brain. Drink, or drugs, never get a stronger hold on a man than does the racing "bug."

Suppose a man had a hundred dollars to put down on this Malone entry, and the horse came through? *Suppose he had two hundred?*

The blood pumped in Bob Sledd's ears. His face was pale and outwardly he remained cool; but there was fire flowing in his veins!

He watched the stranger lay another bet. Others followed him. Bob drew a yellow back from his wallet and put it down on the Malone entry. Same odds.

He had done it now! The Rubicon was crossed—his bridges burned. It seemed as though he must go on to the end—to fortune or to disaster.

Betting twenty at a time he went down the line. He got five bets down that way when, as he approached another bookmaker, the man reached up, rubbed out the 60 against the Malone entry and substituted 40. They were backing Beaunash down. The "wise" ones were plunging wildly.

Carried forward by the fever of the game, Bob tried to put down his second hundred in a lump. The bookie rubbed out the odds and refused the bet. Bob rushed to the other end of the ring and managed to get it down at 30 to 1. In five minutes he saw the odds fall on Beaunash to 20 to 1, then to 10 to 1. Without any doubt some of the bookmakers were covering their own bets on the long shot.

But if the Malone entry won the race, Bob Sledd stood to make nine thousand and six hundred dollars. If Beaunash did not lead, Amos Slygh's honest clerk would be utterly ruined, for he had played the Malone entry "straight."

The gong sounded and the horses went to the post. Bob clung to the barrier and watched, feeling as though his leg-strength had left him completely; he would have collapsed on the ground had he essayed to walk another step.

He could see the Malone colors—red, barred black—and the glistening, satin coat of Beaunash. The other horses he did not even notice; his eye was fixed on the brute that carried his money—*his money and the money he had stolen!*

There was little jockeying at the start. "They're off!" and the roar of voices from the grandstand and field announced the get-away. There was a mist in Bob Sledd's eyes, but through it he beheld the Malone colors in the front. His heart bounded with hope. Beaunash was running away from the field.

The Malone gelding led to the quarter. The race was being watched almost silently. The bulk of the audience believed Beaunash's running was only a spurt. Crestover was trailing the leader easily, his head well out of the ruck.

At the half the favorite had gained; but Beaunash was still half a length ahead. The whole field was fairly well bunched as they took the turn. It was a pretty race and excitement grew.

It seemed to Bob Sledd as though the horses were running very slow. His mouth was dry and he panted for breath. Beaunash kept the lead down to the third quarter; his stride never changed, but it seemed as though he *must* be doing his best.

And then, at the head of the stretch, it all changed in a flash. The boy riding Crestover let the favorite out. The great bay stretched his neck and seemed to redouble his speed. He passed the Malone entry like an express train flying by a cripple!

The grandstand went wild. Bob, with horror-stricken eyes, saw the grin with which the rider of the favorite favored the Malone jockey as he flashed past. The spurt carried Crestover two lengths ahead before Beaunash felt the first cut of the whip.

In a cloud of dust the seven horses came thundering down the track, all but Crestover's jockey using the whip. The delighted grandstand was calling the favorite home. Bob caught himself whispering "Crestover! oh, you Crestover!"—babbling the cry like a parrot, while his heart—aye, his very soul—was with the horse behind!

II

Rose, in a pink sunbonnet and with gloves on her still pretty hands, was working among her flowers in the little front garden. Bearing children and facing the eternal problem of making one dollar do the work of two, had lined her face, but under the bonnet it was flushed to match her own name; and her figure was still lissome.

She made a charming picture in the garden before the cottage; at least, so thought the old lady who, with her equally aged and old-fashioned looking partner, jogged along the avenue behind a rather spiritless horse. When she saw Rose she laid a gentle hand upon her husband's arm and drew his attention.

"See there, father. What pretty flowers—old-fashioned flowers," said the old lady. "And the girl there—eh?"

She smiled into her partner's face. It was a sharp, suspicious face, and the eyes were small and set near together; but he smiled quietly at his wife and nodded.

"Yes," he said. "It's like you, mother; as you were those first few years!"

"The happy years!" she sighed.

"Yes, the happy years," he repeated.

He was a shabbily dressed man; but

his wife, though in plain apparel, seemed somehow much better cared for than himself.

"I'm going to ask her for a flower," said the old lady, her soft cheeks flushing a little with excitement. The old man drew the horse to a willing stop before the gate.

Rose looked up when the carriage halted. The vehicle, as well as its occupants and the horse, seemed out of place on the avenue by the race-track, usually devoted to automobiles and very smart equipages. She saw the eager look in the old lady's eyes and understood it. Rose was a hearty, kindly creature and she went to the gate.

"May I give you some flowers, ma'am?" she asked, before the other could proffer the request.

"Oh, *will* you, my dear?" cried the old lady.

"A great bunch of them, if you will wait. Wont you come in and see them? It is cool on our porch too, and you are warm."

Such hearty hospitality made even the old man smile—though a little grimly. Rose crossed the walk and helped his wife down from the carriage. The two women spent so much time among the flowers that the old man tied the horse to the hitching-post and wandered up to the porch, where he found a comfortable chair. The children were all away and the blare of the band at the race-track was a pleasanter sound to him than the hum of the bees.

The old lady was saying: "I used to have just such a little garden as this—it was years ago."

Rose caught the wistful tone and thought to herself that the old couple had perhaps been "better off" once; old age and poverty are hard to bear together. She clipped her choicest flowers for the great bouquet she was arranging.

And just then a heavy touring-car came racing around the corner. The street sprinkler had recently passed and the car skidded in the mud. Crash it went into the carriage. The horse went down in a heap, squealing in agony as the broken shaft entered its side. In an instant the carriage had been made a ruin and the old horse only a pitiful thing to be shot!

But the reckless driver, alone in the car, dashed on with only one backward glance, and disappeared around the next corner, before any crowd gathered, or the number of the car could be secured.

Rose had to attend to the old lady. She led her to the porch and seated her behind the curtain of vines which sheltered it. But the excited old gentleman saw the policeman shoot the poor horse and helped cover the body with the carriage cloth. The officer took his name and address stolidly and promised to do what he could to find the guilty chauffeur.

"Four hundred dollars—that's what it means; four hundred dollars out of my pocket," groaned the old man, coming back to the porch.

"But think what might have happened had you been in the carriage," said Rose, sympathetically.

Her sympathy was deeper than mere words of compassion. She made the old couple promise to stay right where they were while she ran "'cross-lots" on an errand to a neighbor's. The neighbor was Big Dan Malone, and she found him on his veranda, field-glasses in hand, for he could see the track from that elevation.

"Didn't your boy, Frank, just come home with the automobile, Mr. Malone?" she asked.

Malone's eyes narrowed, but still he smiled.

"I reckon he did, Mis' Sledd—the young scamp! And he's hiding up in the barn loft now."

"I thought I knew that car," exclaimed Rose. "Now, Mr. Malone, what are you going to do about it? Those folks are at my house—an old couple, and she's just heart-broken about that horse. I guess they can't afford to lose all that money, either."

"Well," grinned Big Dan, "I suppose I'll have to lick the boy and pay the damage."

"And you will pay it without being sued, Mr. Malone?"

"I reckon you're right, Mis' Sledd. If they hear to reason I'll settle with 'em for spot-cash. I'll go right over with you. I reckon I can pay for it as well today as any time," and he winked slyly to himself. "I've got a horse in this race

they're running now; but I wont stop to watch it."

He set out with Rose at once. The little woman was eager, and she was shrewd. That old couple ought to have more than just the four hundred dollars the man had claimed. Malone could afford to be generous if he saved the expense of a lawsuit. So she "talked up" the value of the horse and carriage all the way home.

While Malone halted to view the wreck she ran ahead and whispered to the still excited old man:

"Don't you take a cent less than six hundred dollars damages. He'll pay it to you right down if you insist."

The old man's eyes twinkled and he nodded as he went down to meet the horse-owner.

Rose and the old lady got better acquainted while the conference was in progress. They met on the mutual ground of household expenses, and the way children wore out clothes and stubbed through the toes of their shoes. The old lady had had children of her own; they were all laid away in the churchyard, now; but she could hark back to the time when Rose's problems were her problems.

By and by the old man came back, grinning hugely. He threw a roll of bills into his wife's lap.

"There, mother," he said. "The horse was getting old, anyway. Mebbe we can buy another one—and a better carriage —with that."

He was in rare good humor. The old lady counted the bills, and exclaimed:

"Why, father, there is six hundred dollars here!"

The old man chuckled. "This little woman is a shrewd party, mother. She made that extry two hundred for me."

His wife looked up quickly, caught the glance of his twinkling eyes, and cried: "Why, it's *hers*, then! Of course it is. You'd have paid a lawyer that much to settle the damage case, father. I'm going to give it to her."

"Oh, no!" cried Rose, backing away from the bank notes.

"Oh, yes," said the old lady, looking to Rose like a veritable fairy godmother.

"You let mother do what she likes," said the old man, firmly. "She always has her way—and it's always the right way."

He wasn't a very nice looking old man, but Rose thought the way he smiled at "mother" and the way she smiled up at him, was the loveliest thing she had ever seen. And the two hundred dollars was pressed into her own little hand.

"No, no!" she murmured, almost in tears. "You can't afford such liberality."

"We can afford it better than you know, child," said the old lady, with dignity.

"Mother is perfectly right, Mrs. Sledd," said the old man, nodding.

III

Rose was intoxicated. While she entertained her "angels unaware," the thought of what she could do with that two hundred—the perfectly splendid things she could do—affected her like wine.

As a hospitable little housewife she would not hear of the old couple trudging away at once. The old lady must lie down for a nap on the cheap porch couch, which Rose had bought with soap coupons, and the old gentleman was ensconced in the most comfortable rocker, with a sofa pillow behind his head and a magazine in his hand—over which he nodded.

Then Rose stole back to the kitchen and lit the gas stove and began preparations for a collation in which her best china and some of her own plum preserves were to figure.

And just then she saw Bob sitting on the back stoop.

"Oh, Bob! Such a wonderful thing has happened," she cried, in a whisper. "You never could guess."

He said never a word but sat, his head down, his back to her.

"You were at the track, Bob?" she asked, doubtfully. He nodded. "Oh! and you—you lost?" Another silent affirmative answered her. "How much was it, Bob, dear?" she pursued, softly.

He lifted his head, turned slowly, and looked at her with soul-searching gaze.

"Everything!" he breathed. "Everything, Rose. My self-respect—your love

—my children's pride in their father's name—My God! I have lost everything but my life. And I wish I could have lost that too," he added, with a bitterness indescribable.

His wife's shocked, pallid face failed to impress him. He was too deep in the slough to realize how he hurt her. Rose's trembling lips begged at last:

"What do you mean, Bob?"

"I've robbed Old Slygh. I played the money on that skate of Malone's. It was due to make a killing, but the thing fell through somehow. They say he's lost a fortune. But I've lost more. I tell you, Rose, I've lost everything!"

"Oh, Bob!"

That was all. From the high plane of her simple delight she had fallen to his own level in an instant; but that one cry was her only audible contribution to woe. As he staggered to his feet she drew him into the kitchen.

"How much was it?" she asked.

"Nine thousand, six hundred dollars I stood to win," he mumbled.

"No, no! How much of the office money have you used? How long has this been going on?"

He awoke then to the fact that she feared he had been embezzling and "cooking" Amos Slygh's books.

"My God, Rose! It isn't as bad as that," he cried. And then, tremblingly, and with hanging head, he told her all. It was a sordid and miserable tale; but it was not as bad as she had feared. And something of the horror and despair Bob had felt while he saw Crestover leading the field home, with Malone's "good thing" away back in the ruck, crept into the man's voice as he told it. Like many a woman before her, Rose forgave—not parsimoniously, but forgave all—*all!*

For it had not been for himself the man had done this thing. It was for her and the children. Had the scale fallen the other way, he would have come home a conqueror! His crime of "borrowing" two hundred dollars to play on a sure thing would have merely shown his boldness and foresight.

Two hundred dollars! Suddenly she seized Bob close around the neck, and her lips sought his eagerly.

"Don't mind! don't mind! It doesn't matter, Bob. You *aren't* a thief—you sha'n't call yourself such a dreadful name. Listen to me. The most wonderful thing has happened. See here!" and she pressed the tightly rolled bills into his shaking hand. "You shall carry that two hundred dollars back to the office on Monday and nobody shall know—only you and I, dear. *And we have learned our lesson.*"

It was at the end of the month that Old Amos Slygh gave Bob Sledd his much needed and long desired raise.

"I tell you, Sledd, that you're not worth a cent more than I've been giving you," said the note-broker, tartly. "But mother—er—Mrs. Slygh, has taken a fancy to your wife, and she says you need it. Now, if *Mrs.* Sledd would come here and keep my books, I wouldn't begrudge her thirty dollars a week. That little woman, sir, has got more shrewd business sense in her little finger than you've got in your whole carcass, Sledd!"

And Bob repeated this, gratefully and humbly, to his wife; but Rose shook her head.

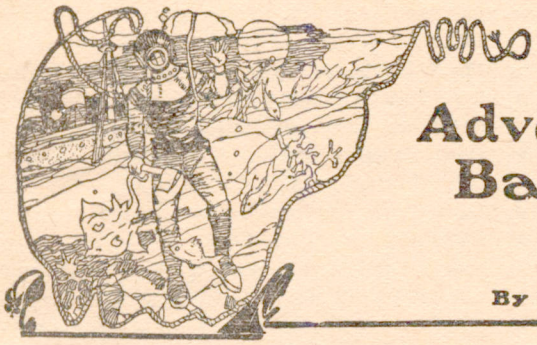
"No," she said. "If that were so, I never would have encouraged you to play the ponies. —But now we can move away from here, Bob. I just *hate* that old race-track!"

Curley Jake tried to pass Bob a tip the very day the old man helped pack the Sledd's furniture for shipment to their new home, but Bob turned down the proposition.

"Don't you go for to refuse a good thing, just because of that Beaunash business, Mistuh Sledd," said Curley, earnestly. "There would have been a killing that day, suah as you live. if it hadn't been for that blacksmif of Malone's. Dat nigger is so crooked that if he went for a walk he'd meet hisse'f comin' back!

"You see, Mistuh Sledd, that nigger had put down *his* money on Crestover, an' he never took them lead pads off Beaunash's heels. Oh yes! there'd have been a killin' if things had gone right."

"There *was* a killing," said Bob Sledd, with an involuntary sigh.



Further Adventures of Matt Bardeen—Master Diver

By FREDERIC REDDALE

IN THE murky waters of the famous river Thames, MATT BARDEEN *meets one of his most perilous adventures. The story of his exploit in going down after the cargo of the sunken ship* Huron *is here narrated in a most engaging fashion.*

No. IV—A FRESH WATER EPISODE

I DON'T suppose you heard the story of the first whaleback steamer that ever crossed th' Atlantic?" queried Matt Bardeen.

I hadn't, and said so. It should be chronicled here that my old friend had lately been tendered and accepted the post of assistant keeper at Ponquogue Light, for which he was admirably fitted in every way. Besides, as he said with a grin, now that he was "on the beach" he often found time hanging heavy after his more than usually strenuous career. Of course the stipend was not the attraction, yet eight hundred dollars a year and house rent free might not be sneezed at by the thrifty. But I think he took the place mainly to please Mrs. Matt, who was always obsessed by the fear that some fine day a particularly alluring diving job would tempt him to put on the rubber suit again.

However, this is merely by the way, to explain how it came about that we were foregathered once more in the grateful afternoon shade cast by the great red brick shaft towering a hundred and eighty feet into the blue. I had run down to Canoe Place purposely to congratulate the veteran on having broken into the Government service and to tell him that they couldn't find a better man from Jupiter Inlet to Cape Flattery—which seemed to please him mightily.

"It's a corking yarn," Matt went on. And then, with one of his inimitable chuckles—"Say, son, take it from me—those Britishers are a funny lot—the way they do things, I mean. Conservative, they call it, but I guess 'slow' 's a better name. And yet they treated me fine—saved my life really. But it certainly was a funny experience!" Here he relapsed into more rumbling laughter.

"What's the joke?" I inquired.

"Why, the joke was on me all right 'fore I got through. Ya-as, ya-as."

At that moment Mrs. Matt brought a sewing-chair and her knitting out on the grass to join us. Matt looked at her comically out of the corner of his eye. Then he confided to me: "'Twas such a good one on me that I didn't dare tell her for ever so long—eh, Min'?"

"Ef it's that old London story you're talking about," said his wife, "I'm not worrying *now,* but don't forget to tell how I begged you not to go. I just *knew* something would happen."

"That's what you said after it happened," said Matt, winking at me with his starboard eye. "If you'd only known ahead of time I'd never went."

Fearing a rather wearying interlude of conjugal reminders *pro* and *con* I made haste here to bring Bardeen up to his moorings by asking pointedly:

"But what were you doing on a whaleback and in the port of London, Matt?" So he began the yarn.

"Well, 'twas this a-way: For some years before the time I'm telling of, they'd been talking of sending grain, flour, and ore in bulk to Europe direct from the Great Lakes by way of the Welland, the Soo, an' the St. Lawrence, using some of those big whalebacks runnin' from Duluth t' Buffalo.

"Some said it couldn't be done, but everyone agreed that there'd be a great saving of both time an' expense, especially for rough and heavy cargoes. Others thought that a whaleback couldn't cross the North Atlantic, but it was pointed out in return that there's no heavier seas anywhere than you meet on the Great Lakes. Finally the whole scheme turned on whether the underwriters would insure ship an' cargo, and when that question was settled satisfactorily it was determined to make the experiment.

"The boat they chose was named *Huron*—four hundred feet long, steel built, able t' carry seven or eight thousand tons' dead weight. So they stowed four thousand tons o' copper billets in her, an' on top o' that ten thousand bushels o' prime number one hard Dakota wheat in bags, an' started her east'ard with a great send-off.

"'Twas the month o' July—she'd sailed from Duluth on th' Fourth—and I guess th' *Huron* didn't meet any great stress o' weather. Anyway she made the voyage across, up th' English Channel an' the Thames to London, creatin' all sorts o' queer comment by reason of her ugliness—for you know a whaleback is about as handsome as the critter she's named after.

"Now that port o' London is some peculiar. Ya-as, ya-as! There's considerable rise an' fall o' the tide there—twenty-one feet at London Bridge. Consequently ships can't lay at piers in th' open river same as in New York or Baltimore, or 'Frisco, 'cause they'd be aground in the mud at low water. So for miles an' miles on each side o' the stream they have magnificent tidal docks, lined with warehouses, railways along the quays, steam cranes, an' every device you can think of for handlin' perishable or valuable freight quickly.

"But for rough cargoes, such as th' *Huron* carried, they anchor vessels out in the stream in a wide part of th' Thames called the Pool. Here for a couple of miles you'll see two or three tiers of colliers, cattle boats, an' such craft, moored side by side or stem to stern, where they unload into lighters. It's a queer custom, but it's worked all right for a couple o' centuries an' th' English are slow t' change, I've heard.

"Well, son, that's where the whaleback *Huron* came to grief after making a voyage of more than five thousand miles through the Lakes, the canals, down the St. Lawrence, an' across the Atlantic. Just as she was swinging to take up the berth in The Pool that the port-warden or the harbor-master had assigned her, a big brute of a sharp-bowed six-thousand-ton cattle-ship from Australia rammed her amidships, pretty nigh cutting her in two, so that poor old *Huron* sank ten minutes later in forty feet o' water an' Thames mud. Likewise she was so inconsiderate as to swing her length 'cross channel, so's t' seriously impede navigation—which was an unpardonable sin!

"Well, there was as nice a mess as any one'd want. The Thames Conservancy ordered the wreck removed P. D. Q. Lloyds held a survey for th' American underwriters an' decided that it wouldn't pay to raise the two halves; the only thing to do was t' blow 'em up an' then grapple for the pieces. The wheat was spoiled, but the copper billets could be salvaged by divers. That's what Lloyds reported, an' then waited for instructions from this side, but urging quick action, otherwise the Government 'd take a hand.

"There was only one answer: Save the copper an' let ship an' wheat go. So that's where your Uncle Matt came in. 'Course there's lots o' good deep-water divers over there—none better—men like Dan Quoyle, Bob Battle, an' the Williamson brothers—so Lloyds put crews t' work pronto. But the insurance

people here thought they'd like t' have an American diver t' sort o' look after their interests, not t' say boss the job, an' the South Street people sent me.

"When I got on th' works, I found they was just gettin' ready to dynamite the two halves of the wreck. That was as far as they'd got. Pretty slow, thinks I, for the *Huron* had been sunk two weeks before. So naturally I thought I'd go under an' take a peek around. Well, son, I did so, an' got th' surprise of my life! No wonder they'd been workin' slow. They just had to. Why? 'Count o' the mud—black, sticky mud, on the bottom o' that Thames River; they used t' call it th' Silver Thames, I've heard, an' the rushin' tides up an' down an' the paddle-wheel steamers just keep it churned up till the water's fairly black. An' thick! Why the Chicago River in its worst days was a limpid, babblin' brook by comparison. There was just twice in the whole twenty-four hours when a man could see six feet in front of his face, an' that was at slack water.

"However, there was the job waitin' t' be did. Th' English divers, bein' used to the conditions, weren't saying a word, an' you can just bet I wasn't handin' out any fancy American kicks.

" 'What do you think of it?" says Quoyle t' me when I came up.

" 'Just a leetle bit thick,' I answers, 'but we'll get that copper O. K.'

" 'Right-O' says he. 'You'll soon get used to Father Thames. If there was time we'd build a caisson around her, but there isn't.'

"Well, my son, next day I stood my tricks with the other divers. They'd already began to hoist out what copper could be come at while some of 'em was puttin' in the shots an' wires. But in a week we'd salvaged all the billets we could—most o' the four thousand ton was in the mud, havin' slid out of the two halves of the hull when she split wide open. So there was no more to be done in that way until the *Huron* was blown t' smithereens, so all hands went to work placin' shots an' connectin' up th' electric wires that'd fire the mines when the time came. 'Twas about the meanest job I ever tackled—an' I'm no squealer.

"Well, that brings me to th' fifteenth of August, and I'll never forget the day. By four o'clock in th' afternoon we'd placed all the cartridges in both halves of the hull, an' us divers were goin' t' the surface one by one. Owing to th' crowded traffic on the river—excursion boats goin' an' comin' from Gravesend, Greenwich, Blackheath, Ramsgate, Margate, an' Southend, t' say nothin' of the river penny-boats—fussy little side-wheelers—we'd been ordered not to fire the mines until after dark—which in England at that season of the year, with their long twilight, wouldn't be till nine o'clock. Then we were to have two explosions—one for th' after part an' another for the forward portion of th' *Huron.*

"It so happened I was the last man t' go up. I was standin' on the turtle-deck right aft, the water boilin' past me yellow as pea-soup an' about as clear. I'd shut off my electric torch, and was lookin' about t' see that my lines an' hose were all clear, when the fool thing happened. It makes me laugh now, though it was no joke then. An' what do you suppose I did? Why, I just naturally an' easily stepped off that turtle-deck right overboard an' went plumpin' straight down for nearly twenty or thirty feet like a fisherman's sinker, landin' up t' my middle in that sticky black Thames mud!

"Lucky 'twas for me that I'd just seen my lines an' hose all free. If they hadn't been, if either had parted,—well there'd have been one American deep-sea diver missin' for keeps!

"What did I do? Why, after the first shock o' surprise I just laughed! It was such a fool trick, y'see—me, Matt Bardeen, who reckoned himself one o' the smartest in the business, t' get ketched that a-way! An' yet I was boilin' mad! But of course I never really lost my head after I realized what a crazy thing I'd done.

"Then I noticed that th' air was comin' all sweet an' regular. Next I reached out for the life-line and a gentle drag on that told me I was still in touch with th' upper world. Also I knew I'd soon be missed, an' that Quoyle or Battle would be comin' down t' see what was wrong. First I thought I'd try and

get up by my own efforts, but found I couldn't move my legs—I was stuck fast! I didn't dare signal to be pulled up, for I was afraid the suction of that sticky, gluey mass would prove too much for th' strength of that thin life-line, an' then I'd be worse off than ever, whereas if I waited for help some one'd surely come below.

"So I decided t' stick it out, an' gave them half an hour t' find me. But 'twas really only ten or twelve minutes that I had to wait—just enough time for Dan t' get into the harness he'd partly taken off. 'Course he located me by following the lead o' my line an' hose, but when he landed alongside an' saw how deep I was mired he couldn't have budged me if he hadn't thought t' have the boys above send down a rope.

"This he hitched around my chest and under my arms, an' by gettin' a purchase on that I managed t' work myself loose an' was hauled up.

"Was I any the worse? Not so as you'd notice it, son, but my feelings was hurt—Min' here says it was only my pride—at cuttin' such a caper before those English divers. But Quoyle never gave me away! No, sir—not a single peep!

"That's all—'cept that it cost me a good dinner for all hands at a swell ranch they call the Savoy, an' tickets for the bunch to a variety show at the Alhambra.

"I don't know as I want any more Thames mud in mine! Oh, yes—we got that copper, pretty nigh every darn billet."

Duty

By JOSEPH W. COX

IN RESPONSE to the orderly's summons, young Maxwell of the "ground scouts" swung his lithe form up to the headquarters door, and looked inside. The General, the commander of the northwest division, was there, grizzled, yet alert and tough as weathered oak for all that, pacing the floor with rapid strides. Maxwell sensed excitement; the General seldom betrayed such perturbation.

"You sent for me?" he asked, observing that his appearance had not been noticed.

"Yes." The General did not look up, or slacken his pacing. His lips pressed tightly together, as if he would thus keep within him the emotion with which he wrestled. His brows knit fiercely, and his fingers drove the nails deep into the soft flesh of his palms.

Maxwell stood without, awaiting a call to enter, but none was forthcoming.

Finally the General gathered himself in hand, and with a single glance through the door, motioned for the scout to come in and take a seat at the table. He then dropped into a chair on the opposite side.

"I sent for you," he explained, "that I might give you a somewhat difficult, but very important, commission. We have just intercepted a wireless from Takaro to Wa Sung, which hints that valuable papers are to be carried from the one to the other by a trusted scout—a traitorous Jap, who was born on American soil and has gone over to the enemy—Koku; you know him. I wish to get possession of those papers. In fact, I must have them, and as Koku is clever and familiar with the topography of the country, the task of relieving him of them will be no child's play. The

Aerial is useless for this sort of thing; Koku would see Hemenway miles off, and would laugh at him. We must meet him in his own way—on the ground—and you are the man to pit against him."

He paused, and his thoughts seemed to wander from the subject, while his fingers again closed slowly and pressed nail-marks into his palms. Suddenly he leaned forward and flashed into the scout's face a look that burned like live coals, and his clenched fist came down on the table with a crash.

"But by God, sir, I don't want to send you!" he cried.

Maxwell was puzzled. Why did he not? What could it be that was tempting this inexorable disciplinarian, this iron commander, this warrior who never flinched, to shrink from what he conceived to be wholly necessary? For tempted he was, as the younger man could see.

"Yet you must go," he resumed, in a tone of despair; "there is no other way."

Still the scout was in the dark. He could not even guess what troubled his superior officer. He sat expectantly, awaiting a further revelation as to how he was concerned, but apparently the General was through and had nothing more to say.

"Would you mind telling me," he at length asked, "why you would not send me?"

The answer came in a hoarse whisper —"I need you to find Evelyn. She is missing."

The paper-knife, with which Maxwell had been toying, fell clattering to the floor, and his breath caught with an audible sound. The blood fled from his cheeks and left them ghastly—then rushed back with a crimson flow as he felt the keen eyes of the old soldier upon him. The shock of those words had surprised him into a betrayal of feelings that only one besides himself had hitherto known.

"She has been missing since morning," continued the General. "She passed beyond the picket-lines—though I warned her not to—in search of wildflowers. And she has not returned."

At the mention of flowers Maxwell unconsciously dropped his gaze to his bosom, whence arose a pleasing fragrance. The General's daughter had pinned the rose there. That was an incident of only a few hours before—just prior to her going outside the lines, no doubt. He was coming into camp from a three days' spying on the Coolie brigade of the Chinese allies when he met her, and at parting she had given him the rose along with a more sacred token of her affection. He had gone to his bunk with the flavor of her presence still about him, his thoughts on the time when he would meet her again. Now she was missing.

As a full realization of the fact blazed its way through his mind, he sprang to his feet.

"We must find her," he cried.

He would have rushed from the room without further words, but the General motioned him back to his chair.

"We have endeavored to locate her," said he. "Search squads were detailed to scour the hills as soon as we found that she was gone, and the aviators have circled the camp for miles out. But all to no purpose; not a trace of her has been discovered."

"And through it all I slept," groaned Maxwell.

"A man must have rest," returned the General.

"But it's my turn now," and once more the scout got to his feet. But the General stopped him again.

"Those papers, Maxwell. You must get them."

"And leave your daughter to her fate? You know—you have seen—that no man will put forth the effort to find her that I will."

The struggle was soul-racking, but brief; something held the General as true to his plan as the needle is true to the pole.

"I know," he answered. "I have seen. And if I should follow my own desires I would say go, go quickly, and heaven crown your going with success. I believe success would attend your effort, for the instinct of love would guide you unerringly to her place of concealment. If only I could let you go!

"But I cannot—must not, for if I am not mistaken, the moment we obtain possession of those papers we will have

turned the tide of this war, which so far has gone against us. You understand me, do you not? If we capture them, the key to the enemy's scheme of campaign is in our hands, and once I know their plans the merging of their forces will not be so easy. We'll frustrate their initial move, and cause them delays a year will scarcely overcome.

"On the other hand, if Koku carries the thing through without a slip, Takaro will unite his command with Wa Sung's and together they will force their way eastward and join Hashoo and Tang Le. Then a host such as has never been heard of in the annals of war will sweep eastward over Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, and on through the Alleghenies. Maku's fleet will sail round to Washington—it has already made the Panama canal passage and reduced New Orleans, you know—and stand out to sea as a bluff while those devilish aircrafts steal in and hurl their charges of lyddite. Takaro, Wa Sung and the others, with rich forage on every hand and a broken army to dispute with them the way, will close in from the land side. Can you imagine the outcome of such a siege?

"No, Maxwell, I am a father, and I love my daughter as well as any man ever loved his child, I think. But something withholds me from yielding to you; a soldier belongs to his country first, last and always. You must go for those papers."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then, sir, I shall have you thrown into the guard-house for disobeying orders," was the stern response.

Maxwell gazed long and searchingly into the veteran's face, and then turned away, lest he should see a strong man break.

The gathering shades of evening stretched their grotesque shapes across the trail, and the wolf sent down his night-call from the darkened heights above as the scout, mounted on a fleet-footed thoroughbred, wended his way through the foothills. Far to the south was the camp of Takaro, the commanding general of the Japanese army, who, with his air-trains, had unloaded his transports under cover of darkness, while Admiral Shiboka's men-of-war unmercifully shelled the nearest port as a blind. And nearer at hand, to the north and west, lay the yellow legions of Wa Sung, the Chinese ally, who had landed above Willapa harbor in a like manner, and from there pushed his way inland to his present position. From the first mentioned to the last, little Koku was to carry the papers on which hinged the fate of the invaded land—the drawings Takaro's engineers had carefully worked out to guide the two divisions across the continent.

This condition of affairs was the culmination of a long period of secret lust for power on the part of Japan, and a consequent careful preparation for its appeasement. She had worked early and late, and behind closed doors, so to speak, to get her army in shape; and she had studied with close attention the possibilities of aerial navigation.

She had also done some hard thinking while the rest of the world stood about like school boys at a circus, and with fingers pointed at China shouted, "The giant is awakening!" So, when the giant did awake, with much yawning and stretching and rubbing of the eyes, his little brown neighbor appeared at his breakfast table, and proved to him beyond question that his welfare and ultimate glory lay in joining hands with her in a world conquest.

Not slow to be persuaded, China had given an assent, and then Japan made known that she had mastered the problem of successfully applying aeronautics to the science of war. She had perfected dirigible balloons that would convey battalions of infantry, cavalry, and heavy artillery from ship to land with an ease nothing short of amazing. The wise men of China were well pleased with the revelation.

They were better pleased, however, when Japan had proven her assertions without a mishap. America had been chosen as the first country to feel the power of these united lands, principally because of her long stretches of defenseless coast. Congress had been liberal in its appropriations for harbor defense, but of what use were howitzers, scout-boats, plotting-boards, mines, searchlights and the rest, when the

enemy came in by the air-route at some obscure place? Man-flying had developed by leaps and bounds, and there had not been time to fortify all the thousand miles of country exposed to the sea. With no resistance whatever, Japan had dropped her own army, together with column upon column of Chinese troops inside our boundaries, and now the task of turning the tide and saving the country from greater humiliation rested on the shoulders of a lone horseman riding along the hills.

The horseman understood this, yet in the face of it—with a full knowledge of what it would mean to have Koku succeed—he wanted to go back. The girl he loved was lost, abducted; something had befallen and what that something was he anxiously longed to find out. In fancy he saw her wandering lonely and fearful through the long watches of the night, afraid to cry out for help lest the very sound of her voice should add to her terror. Then came the dread that she had encountered some dangerous wild thing of the unfrequented hills. He beheld her in the black bear's death embrace, her cheeks white and drawn with the outgoing of life, her eyes closed never more to open; he pictured her lying face downward, her fair shoulder bathed red with the stream that flowed from wounds made by sharp claws, while over her, snarling in savage exultation, stood the mountain lion. But these did not stir him so much as did that which came in their wake. It goaded him to frenzy to imagine the fate that might be hers should she fall into the hands of foraging Coolies.

He did not agree with the General. It was wrong to leave her to her own resources. He would find her, though in so doing he lost the opportunity of turning impending defeat into victory. Where would be the glory of achieving that on which he was bent if she did not return to share it with him? He would never forget—neither would the General—that in accomplishing it she had been lost. He was tempted, now that the camp was miles in the rear and the General too far off to reach him, to risk court martial, wheel his horse about, and take up the search.

The thought aroused his enthusiasm, and his mind leaped forward to the meeting, for he was sure of himself in quests of the kind.

However, he did not turn back. From a high hilltop he looked over the dark ravines to the lava desert beyond, where beautiful mirages danced before the eyes, and consuming thirst ravaged the body of the one so unfortunate as to find himself there without water; and when the sun dropped into the sea and left him to grope through thick blackness until the moon should come with its pale light to shine on his way, he was still riding with the thoroughbred's nose turned southward. Like the General, he could not quite bring himself to the decision, for when it seemed he had almost reached it, a voice within him rose up in opposition—a voice that he fought with set jaws, but could not down.

Thus in uncertainty he rode on until the insistent tugging of hunger reminded him that he had not eaten since morning, and knowing that, whether he went forward or backward, he would need all the bodily strength his system would hold in reserve, he dismounted and stumbled about in the darkness until he had an armful of dry twigs with which to start a fire.

With a blazing fagot he searched for an oasis of fresh grass for his horse, and having found it, he removed both saddle and bridle, and roped the animal to a tree. Then he returned to the fire, and on the end of a branch sharpened to receive it, he placed a slice of bacon, which he broiled. From out of the darkness came the sound of gurgling water, and following the lead of his hearing, he located a spring from which he filled his canteen, and brought enough to brew a can of coffee. This he swallowed at intervals between disappearing portions of biscuit and bacon.

The meal finished, he stretched himself on the turf and at once fell into sound slumber. Wakefulness or sleepiness came at his bidding; he had taught himself that. He lay wrapped for an hour in refreshing oblivion, while his mount munched grass and rested. Then he arose, and replacing the saddle and bridle, took to the trail again.

The moon was now climbing its path in the eastern sky, and its pale light, shed as through a milky veil, enabled him to travel with more certainty than in the earlier part of the night. Where no shadows fell he could see the trail drawn out like a winding thread in front of him, and the darkened places were easy of passage because of guiding beams that dropped through rifts in the branches.

Below him clumps of trees stood out black and ragged like splotches of ink on the landscape; above, huge projecting rocks hung spectral and threatening, as if ready to break from their moorings and rush with crushing force upon his head. The rustling leaves, disturbed by the soft night-wind, spread kaleidoscopic pictures about his horse's feet, and over all was an awesome, pervading stillness.

For five miles he followed the winding trail through deep gulches and up steep hillsides, never hurrying, yet making good time, and always on the alert to save the thoroughbred and keep him in prime condition for the long run before them. Koku would be astride the best horse the Japanese general could command, he knew quite well, and if their meeting resolved itself into a race, his mount must be a fit contender.

From a brush-lined stretch of valley he came out on an elevation that commanded a view of the surrounding lowlands, and glancing down he caught a glimpse of three moving objects as they flitted past a break in the timber line. They were going south.

He halted his horse and peered into the milky light. Something curious in their manner of moving—two seemed to be compelling the third to keep on—caused him to strain his eyes for a clearer view, but their passage from shadow to shadow was so fleeting that he could distinguish only the hazy outlines of their forms.

Clucking to his horse he moved on and made no effort to discover more, for only by traversing a circuitous route could he reach the point where they disappeared, and that would take him from his own course and waste time. Moreover, he felt no interest in their identity save the momentary interest the glimpse and their strange motions had aroused. His thoughts were again centering about Evelyn, and the longing of the evening before to go back and search for her was fighting anew for recognition.

He endeavored to throw it off and forget, but there was no escaping the insistent demand for a hearing, and as the horse added step after step to the brisk walk that rapidly ate up the trail, he suffered an agony of indecision. He realized that as the minutes ticked themselves into hours with inexorable precision he was being borne farther and farther from her whereabouts; and this meant that his chance of rescuing her was gradually lessening. If he was going to her succor he should no longer postpone it. But was he going? That was the question.

For an hour he struggled with it, to the exclusion of everything else, and at the end found himself no nearer the answer than he had been at first. The conclusion remained beyond his reach while he sat as a court hearing arguments, and seeing that nothing was to be gained by permitting it to sport with him long, he pulled the horse up shortly and made him stand quite still.

"Now," he said aloud, "this thing is going to be settled. Am I going for Evelyn, or am I going for Koku?"

The battle waged with heat and vigor before the decision came, but when it was over the question was answered.

"Ah, General," he breathed, "I understand you now. I know why you sent me in the face of a consuming desire not to. I could not go back—no, not at all. With thongs that I cannot break, I am bound to this thing that takes me from her."

Turning about so that he faced the north, he spread forth his hand. "May heaven watch over you, my dear one, until the service I owe my country is rendered," he uttered solemnly. "And now for Koku. Come, old fellow."

At the smart slap on his flank the thoroughbred sprang forward and galloped swiftly down the trail; and his rider set his eyes firmly toward the south, resolved that he would not suffer from self-condemnation for what he could not help.

With long, reaching strides which carried away to the rear rocks, hills, and gullies, and left only the stars twinkling afar to set him a pace, the horse covered the swiftly receding landscape. Like a phantom rider, the scout swept through the night, his body erect and ghostly, his head unbending, and no sound coming from his tightly closed lips to startle the almost tangible silence into echoes. He rode as a man holding in perspective one supreme object before which all others pale into nothingness. As he rounded bend and turn, ascended steep inclines and then sped down hill again, his eyes clung to the way before him like an engineer's to the track over which he must draw human life. He knew the danger of driving hard, but something impelled him not to halt.

He would make the place of meeting nearer the enemy's camp than his own, then if he failed he could show that he had tried—but he was not going to fail. He had sacrificed too much already to harbor that thought. And the General must have those papers.

The horse slowed up to get his wind, and Maxwell let him walk while his mind ran over what lay before him.

The beginning and ending was between himself and the Japanese messenger. He was pitted against a man skilled in the craftiness of scouting, a keen, alert, implacable foeman, a strategist hard to corner, who, once driven to bay, would fight to the last ditch before surrendering. Koku was gifted with almost superhuman powers of endurance, and Maxwell knew that as sure as daylight follows darkness he would make his way across the barrens intervening and report to Wa Sung, unless outguessed and overcome by himself. He felt a thrill as he sensed the strife—the thrill of a resourceful man in matching wits with another in no way his inferior.

At length the moon set, and the grayish tints of dawn came streaking the sky. Then the brighter beams of approaching sunlight stole up from behind the horizon and painted it a ruddy gold.

He galloped along the trail while the first flush of morning burst about him, frightening the squirrels out for food up the tree-trunks, to bark in impotent fury at his intrusion into their domain. Then the freshness of running water was wafted to his nostrils.

He came to the stream, and dismounting, let the horse drink its fill; then he gave it a careful rubbing-down and staked it out to a breakfast of grazing. His own hunger once more made itself known, and drawing a biscuit and some dried meat from the small sack he carried, he ate slowly, while he indulged in revery, and walked about to enliven his numbed limbs.

He wondered what had become of Evelyn. Was she still among the living? The pictures he had conjured of her perils had not lost vividness, but now they recurred with a saneness that enabled him to look at them without the poignant longing to take up the search for her. He knew that if she had a say she would bid him do as he was doing, for she was a soldier's child—and a woman. She would bear whatever befell her for the sake of the land she loved. But it was very hard to stand by and see her offered as a sacrifice. A wild rebellion at circumstances swept through him at the thought.

He quickly choked it down. He must not get back in the toils. The love of man for woman is mighty—how well he knew that!—but it is not the most potential force by which he is swayed. He was an American—the blood of Bunker Hill and Gettysburg flowed through his veins, and he must be—he *was* true to that blood. Yet she was lost; he could not forget it.

The sun had lapsed below the western skyline when next he halted. The span of half a state lay at his back—a distance he had traveled over rough mountain road since the day before. His mount was bearing up nicely under the strain, but the scout noted signs of fatigue, and, realizing the folly of pushing him to the limit, he unsaddled.

The time was not far distant when a keen lookout would have to be kept for Koku, and as the watching game might develop into a race of one or two days' duration, throughout which he would have to remain awake, Max-

well availed himself of the opportunity at hand for snatching a brief sleep. While the horse rested he lay with closed eyes, his head pillowed on his arm. Three hours' delay the stop cost him, and then he went forward again.

At midnight he was fifteen miles nearer Takaro's camp. If Koku had started soon after the flash of the wireless, and had covered ground since as fast as he had, the encounter could not be far away, for he had placed in the rear almost half the span separating them in the beginning. He reasoned that any moment might bring them face to face, for Koku was not one to waste time needlessly.

Four o'clock arrived, and yet no sounds of his foeman. For the last hour he had held his horse down to a stealthy walk, and kept his ears primed for the faintest sounds. Surely, he had thought, they would come together before daybreak. But he had heard nothing. If Koku was behind him he had passed far to the right—or had muffled the feet of his horse to smother the ring of its hoof-beats on the rocks!

He stopped abruptly. The thought changed the aspect of the situation. Suppose such was the case? It would be just like Koku, especially if he scented trouble for himself. The Jap was no boy at this sort of thing; Maxwell knew something of his forethought and resourcefulness. And as this was a most important commission it was not likely that he had left anything undone that would further his chance of executing it successfully.

The light was rapidly growing stronger. He could see scars in the earth from where he sat in the saddle. Closer inspection would enable him to distinguish fresh hoof-marks from those made a day or a week before. Kicking loose the stirrups he dropped to the ground, threw the rein over his arm, and commanding the horse to follow, struck out at right angles from the path he had been traversing.

A hundred yards from where he started he paused. He fell on his knees and carefully inspected an impression in the earth. Then he arose, and turning to his mount, addressed it as if it were human and could understand.

"Old boy," he said, "we've been outwitted. That round hole was made by a foot like your own, only it was covered with a cushioned boot. He's gained a lap on us by using it, but we'll make it up."

Still walking, he took to the trail of the little brown man with the papers of so great importance.

Koku was bearing toward the regions farther west. Evidently he figured that in so doing he was minimizing the possibility of detection, for men never passed through this waste land unless compelled to do so.

When the light became stronger, and he could see clearly from the saddle, Maxwell mounted. The horse sprang forward with a show of speed, but the scout pulled him up to a short gallop that he could maintain a long time without tiring. It was necessary to save him, and yet not be lax in the chase. The race was on, and only by exercising care and caution could he expect to offset the handicap his cunning adversary had placed upon him.

Twelve o'clock came. The sun beat down from a brassy sky, from the burning sand the heat arose in waving transparency. The thoroughbred, bathed in white foam, swung along steadily despite the heat, and when at three his rider sighted a horseman speeding across an open some four miles ahead, he responded nobly to the call for a swifter gait.

Dusk found the pursuer hot on the scent of the pursued. The tracks fleeing under his searching eyes were as fresh as when the hoof that made them lifted. For some reason Koku was losing ground, and Maxwell looked eagerly forward to the moment when he would overtake him.

Darkness found him a mile in the rear, and still pushing hard. It was only a question of minutes now—if nothing happened. But something did happen—something unexpected and of dire consequence. The horse went suddenly lame from a stone bruise, and from the telling leaps he had maintained throughout the latter stages of the run, relaxed into a limping walk. Maxwell dismounted and with his knife blade dug the small pebble from the frog of

his foot, but the animal had done his all; fagged muscles asserted their inability to perform further, and when he essayed to move he faltered—then quit.

The odds against the scout were greater than ever, for what could a man on foot hope to accomplish in the wake of a galloping horse? The effort was a farce, yet he must make the attempt. Those papers—he must not give up.

He walked briskly away in the direction of his quarry. One faint ray of hope yet shone: Koku might suffer a reverse similar to that which had befallen him.

The earth, which the night wind had not cooled, baked his feet. The perspiration poured through his garments and dripped from his face. He became thirsty, and then remembered that his canteen was empty. Yet he plodded on. He did not hasten when he came to stretches of easier walking, but took advantage of the chance to recover his wind. His trailing was like that of the timber wolf—grim, stubborn, and relentless.

The night was black. He repeatedly came in contact with brush that slashed his hands and face. Once he fell and struck his head against a rock. He arose, swore softly, and went on. Occasionally he bent down and examined the trail as best he could to see if he were still in the right course. It was always there; near midnight he discovered that the cushions had been removed from the horse's feet; the marks of calks and toes of iron shoes revealed themselves to his touch.

That might or might not be significant; but when he found where Koku had dismounted and trampled the earth, a hope that trouble was visiting his enemy also, sprang up in his bosom. And when sure—though darkness prevented measuring—that the hoof-prints leading from the place were straggling and unevenly spaced, a fresh vigor surged through him.

Yet he fought down the impulse to hurry.

Once more the moon climbed over the eastern mountains and shed its pale light around him. Under the faint glow the waste land through which he was passing stretched out ragged and wild to dim outlines in the distance. Up the hillsides the trees huddled in dark silence; nearer, the low brush squatted to the ground like brooding birds. Ahead he discerned a hulk of some sort that moved now and then as if it had life. It blocked the path he was following. Approaching warily, he found it to be a horse, and as he walked round its head and heard it groan from the exhaustion of hard driving, he knew why it was there without a rider.

From where it lay he wheeled with quickened pulse and took up the trail of a man's boots, leading north.

The light, though uncertain, enabled him to make better progress; he could see and avoid most of the twigs and briers that had tripped him and lashed his face in the earlier part of the night. The stones still bruised his feet, for the sharp corners they poked through the gravel could not always be missed, but he would not heed the pain they gave him. His eyes searched hungrily the openings in front.

At dawn he was hastening. His foeman had not yet come within range of his vision, yet he was not discouraged. It was a fight between man and man now, and though the Jap was a tough little fellow and hard to down, he would bring him to bay. His thin lips shut closely and his eyes glowed as he pushed on. The instinct of the hunt was upon him—the eagerness of the bloodhound to lunge at the quarry.

Broad day spread her robes about him, and then fell the hot, glaring rays of the sun. His breathing became labored, and he understood that his body was weakening; he felt the vague sensations of weariness stealing on. The muscles of his limbs seemed to be losing their tautness and taking on flaccidity. He was sore and hungry and —thirsty.

At ten o'clock the sand was like the ashes of a furnace. The heat of it blistered his feet through the thick leather of his shoes. And the parching had gone in from his lips to his throat. It was dry and cracked. A great longing to rest, if only for a moment, pleaded with him to listen, but he knew he dared not. With set jaws he plodded along—slowly, slowly, step after step, step after step.

The last half of the afternoon found him going with rapidly declining speed. And his efforts to gain by spurting where the traveling was good proved futile.

He felt as if he must give it up and acknowledge defeat, for each advancing movement was a painful drain on a system already sapped of strength. Everything was against him—the heat, the sharp rocks, the sand which let him in deep and then poured into his shoes to lacerate his blistered feet. And the beautiful lakes of water that played before him and ever receded at his approach goaded him to the brink of madness.

Water! He was dying for it. His tongue was swollen to twice its size and pushed out of his mouth, and the lining of his throat was overlaid with a thick coating of dust. His eyes were becoming bleared, and saw strange images.

Just before sundown a whiff of freshness blew over his head, and he knew that somewhere to his right—not very far away, the means of quenching his thirst awaited only the taking. The desire to rush for it almost mastered him, but he finally succeeded in fighting it off, though he had never before been through such a struggle. He remembered his mission, and the feeling that had carried him on when he longed to go back and search for the girl he loved—the feeling that had kept him to the trail when his horse failed him, now drove him on in the wake of Koku. Those papers—the General was at camp expecting him to bring them in. He must—he would succeed.

His mind began to play him capricious tricks. He saw things in queer shapes and poses. All he had ever known, it seemed, marched fantastically before the eye of memory. He recalled his boyhood days, and the thought flashed through his brain that all the hilarious play he had ever enjoyed, if concentrated, would not make him so tired as he was now. He wondered why he did not quit.

The query called forth a laugh—a foolish, mirthless laugh.

Darkness was again spreading her veil over the land. He staggered into a belt of trees, still following the trail he knew to be Koku's. He had ceased speculating as to when he would overtake the little iron man leading him on; it was simply a question of following until one or the other fell from the way. Perhaps he would never catch up.

Overtaxed strength, however, had not forgotten to visit the penalty on the pursued. As Maxwell pulled himself along with dogged pertinacity he suddenly came face to face with his antagonist.

Koku was leaning against a tree, his eyes bulging, his cheeks swollen. For an instant each stared at the other dully, and then each striving to prevent the other from drawing his weapon, they clenched.

Fighting weakly, but none the less vengefully, they staggered about, until both reeled and fell heavily to the ground. A few more blows, a clutching of already gasping throats with desperate fingers, and each lay quite still. Some minutes later Maxwell painfully arose; grasped in his hand was the package of papers sealed with the official seal of Takaro, representative of the Japanese government in America! Little Koku gazed up into the sky, his breath coming faintly.

The victory his, Maxwell's longing for water returned with overwhelming insistence. He turned to go back to where he had sniffed the dampness, but was suddenly checked by two men—looking in the darkness very much like Koku—who came tearing at him. He strove to beat them off, but they bore him down, and he felt himself being helplessly pinioned to the earth, when the sharp report of a pistol rang out, followed by another in quick succession. His assailants relaxed their holds and dropped away; very much amazed, he got to his feet and peered in the direction from which the shots had come. He saw a small, white hand grasping the pistol, and the next instant a tired face—more tired and hollow than his own, was pillowed on his shoulder, and a form that was very dear leaned passively against his own.

For a long time he held it close, and gazed down into the eyes upturned to his.

"They did me no harm," she answered to his unspoken question. "I was a prisoner of war—to be kept as a hostage. They were taking me to Takaro."

With a last look at the fallen brown men they left the scene, and Maxwell, knowing that she had saved his life as well as the precious papers he had struggled so hard to get, musingly thought that good fortune must have blinded him so that he could not recognize one of the three dark figures he had seen going south.

Fair in Love

By AGNES BOULTON

MATTIE had theories—a rather remarkable thing in a way, for Mattie was barely eighteen. But then, she was not a sweetly pretty girl like Pinkie, her cousin, who was the belle of Winston Street and the Circle. Not having been born to that physical state of perfection where one need never think for one's self, she often pondered over Life, and the Why and Wherefore of things.

Her principal theory, born of much pondering, was that if one wanted something very badly in this world, the only thing to do was to sit back and make one's self calm, because one was pretty sure not to get it. This she applied to herself, having culled it from much experience. Other people were very apt to get what you wanted, and not appreciate it at all.

Mattie had lived with her aunt for six years. Her aunt's husband, Mr. Hieffer, was a prosperous butcher of thrifty German ideas, who resented his wife's bringing the little orphan into his household. He compromised, however, by a strong insistence that Mattie should work for her board. Mattie did, too. She quite relegated herself, after six years, to a back place in everything.

Sometimes, when she was alone, she had fierce little outbreaks of rebellion. They came, usually, after she had seen Pinkie in her smart suit, and vast, resplendent hat, greeting some of her latest flames. There was no doubt of it, she was enviously jealous of her cousin. She would view herself in the glass, comparing her looks, point by point, with Pinkie's. Hair: dark brown, thick, but straight as a yardstick. (Pinkie's was curly, and very blonde.) Eyes and eyebrows: dark, too. (Pinkie's eyes were violet.) Nose: medium, with some freckles. (Mattie gained here, for Pinkie's was decidedly a pug.) Complexion: pale—At this point, Mattie was apt to get disgusted, and cease comparisons.

Among Pinkie's suitors were two who, as she herself very aptly put it, were "perticular serious." Each called every evening regularly, in dogged defiance of the other's presence, and heaped upon Pinkie's charming personality as many extravagant gifts as their pockets allowed. Not that she should be accused of flirting with them on this account. Frankly, she liked them both, without being able to decide if it were Joe Harris, who clerked at Bloomgarten's, or Tom Dennin, the young telephone lineman, whom she would prefer as her heart's dearest.

Every evening while Pinkie entertained the two serious ones in the parlor, Mattie would sit in the dining-room with her Aunt and Uncle Hieffer. Often, pretending to read, she would in

reality be listening to the voices from the next room trying to distinguish the different words and tones.

Occasionally Pinkie would invite her two friends in to have a Welsh rarebit, or a cup of cocoa before they left. These little treats were the looked-for pleasures in Mattie's life. Everyone would come into the dining-room. Mr. and Mrs. Heiffer, seated on either side of the stove, made many and arch jokes about the young men, and the attractiveness of their Pinkie, who always put on a trim little apron and concocted the refreshments. They were not hampered by a chafing-dish. The big kitchen stove, sending a red glow over the clean blue and white oilcloth of the floor, was amply convenient. Pinkie's chief assistant on these occasions was the alert Joe, who was always on hand with the cheese or butter as was needed.

Tom, who was large and solid, would stay in the dining-room talking to Pinkie's mother. Mattie used to watch him furtively from her seat on the other side of the table. Under the glow of the lamp-light she thought him very handsome. She had always admired black, wavy hair with blue eyes in men. Then too, she liked quiet men, she decided, when this quiet was combined with an assurance of strength. This was particularly emphatic with her when they had all been listening to some funny story of Joe's. Then again, shyly, her eyes would steal to where she could see Tom's rugged diffidence. At such times she felt that she quite hated Joe Harris. It wasn't fair—

Gradually, across Mattie's young consciousness, suddenly matured, came the conviction that she was in love with Tom. It was such a delicious feeling, timing itself to such a keen, trembling ecstasy, when she was in his presence, that she was content at first simply to feel its wondrous novelty. Then, dreaming along pleasantly, other impulses came to her. She wanted to touch him, to be with him always, to lay her hands on the swelling muscles of his neck, where they were brown and smooth from out-door exposure and hard work.

Once she had been in the kitchen finishing the dishes, and Pinkie had sent him from the parlor for a glass of water. He had asked Mattie for a tumbler, and spoken some shy commonplaces to her about the washing of dishes. She could see he was anxious to get back to Pinkie. Mattie, thankful for the dimness of the kitchen lamp, blushed and stammered incoherently. Thinking about it later, she was angry with herself, somehow, for not making more of that time he came to the kitchen. She vowed, then and there, that should another such chance come to her, she would not neglect to impress herself on Tom's mind.

One evening when Mattie was in the kitchen, Pinkie appeared at the door. Mattie, who had heard talk in the parlor, was surprised to see she wore her hat and jacket. Pinkie glanced around the kitchen a little nervously.

"Mattie,"—there was a strained indifference in her high, pretty voice—"Joe and me's going over to Gobles' to get some ice cream. We'll bring some home with us, an' when Tom comes, you tell him we'll be back in three-quarters of an hour."

"All right," said Mattie. Inwardly she was in a state of mentally terrorizing turmoil. Mr. and Mrs. Hieffer had gone to the theatre. When Pinkie and Joe went, she would be alone in the house. She would have to open the door for Tom, and give him Pinkie's message. She would have to entertain him for perhaps three-quarters of an hour!

The front door banged distantly, after Joe and Pinkie. Hurriedly she glanced at the clock. It was twenty minutes past seven. Tom usually came on the half hour. She experienced a sudden, flurried indecision, a veritable terror of expectation. Unconsciously her hand went to her hair. Would she have time to fix herself a little? There was a mirror, a small affair of wavy glass, on the wall. Mattie saw in this that the tie on her collar was crooked: she straightened it nervously. On the back of her hair was a big bow of black ribbon, and in taking it off to smooth her hair, she noticed how much older its absence made her look. It transformed her, somehow, from a girl to a young woman. She left it off, tucking it into the dresser drawer. There was nothing more she could do, and, with a little

sigh she stepped back from the mirror, and leaned against the kitchen table.

Waiting there in joyful terror for the ring of the door-bell, her mind went back, in queer, unreasoning circles, to scenes and incidents of her life. So many little opportunities she had let slip past that, had she taken even so slight an advantage of them, would have brought her nearer to the things she wanted. It was always the timid people that got left in the background!

Then, with a long, steady ring, Tom's own, the door-bell rang. Mattie stood a moment, trembling: she wanted to be able to control herself, to appear cool and self-possessed, as Pinkie did when she went to the door. She waited, still shaking, until the bell rang again. Then she went, turning the lamp in the parlor higher, as she passed through.

"Good evening, Mr. Dennin." She held the door carefully to one side as he entered. She saw, as he preceded her into the parlor, that he was dressed in his best suit. There was a question in his look as he glanced around the empty room. Finally his eyes rested on Mattie's slim figure, as she stood in the door.

"Pinkie out?" he asked.

"She went to,"—in her confusion Mattie stammered again—"to get some ice-cream with Joe: they'll be back soon, I guess."

She noticed that Tom remained standing, moving his cloth cap, uncomfortably, in his hands. A sudden recognition of her duties as a hostess came over her and she moved forward.

"Wont you sit down?" She pointed to the nearest chair. Tom sank into it. He felt, without being conscious of the fact, that there was something unusual in the air. He had seen very little of Mattie, and now in her presence he felt strangely confused. As for the girl, she was almost desperately calm. She knew she must interest him. Did not Beatrice Fairfax say that to interest, one must talk of things the other person is fond of? There were quite a list that he might be interested in—poles, electric wires, baseball—

She began:

"Oh, Mr. Dennin—"

Here, again, she paused; perhaps it would be better if she called him Tom. It would put things on a friendlier basis, anyhow. Then, in her moment's pause, she saw that he had looked up expectantly. There was a sudden, terrible dryness in the back of her throat. The silence was awful.

"Did you speak, Miss Trumble?" Tom articulated soberly. He sat leaning forward in his chair, the cloth cap still fumbled in his hands.

"I was only going to say did you see the ball game to-day," she concluded weakly. Why wasn't it possible for her to talk easily, as Pinkie did? But she wasn't going to give up. Again she started:

"Do you like your work, Mr. Dennin?" she asked. "I think it must be fine to be a lineman. They're so strong—" (Male minds must be flattered, according to Beatrice Fairfax.) "I don't know, there's something inspiring about them—I mean that they are so big, and sort of fine—not a bit like clerks and things. I always thought I'd like to be a telephone lineman. Somehow—"

Then a quick vision of herself in petticoats, climbing a pole on a wintry day, stopped her. Tom was looking hard at his cap.

"Oh, I don't know," he said. "It aint such an easy life. A feller gets so as he wants somethin' more than living around among a lot of men all his life. You get to feel as if you'd like a home—"

He stopped abruptly. Mattie, her hands tightened, waited for him to go on. He was beginning! She guessed they always began like that when they were going to like a girl. Then suddenly, she remembered that it was Pinkie, after all. He might say lots of nice things to her, but it was Pinkie he was connecting them with. If he only knew Pinkie as she did! Then her cheeks flushed a little. All's fair in love—!

"Yes," she said, "it must be awful lonesome for you, sometimes." She waited a scant second to give him time to answer, but, finding him silent, she went on quickly. "It means an awful lot for a man to have a home, an'—some one—"

Her voice dropped softly: for a moment she forgot herself. The parlor, with its red plush furniture, faded into

the grey of her inner consciousness: a feeling, a quivering vibration of world-old emotions, possessed her. Not in a visualized picture, not in a sense-recognizing view, but with some swift, subtle instinct, she felt what the realization of the words she had just spoken meant to her. "A little home—and Tom."

"Yes, it must be lonesome for you," she repeated, mechanically.

There was no need of answer to her words. The young man opposite her shifted his position awkwardly, letting his eyes rest for a moment on the gilt clock that hung over the mantel-piece. Watching him, her eyes wandered around the room in a vague quest for a suggestion that would hold him, bring his attention, for even one delicious moment, to her. Mattie felt her incompetence keenly. Somewhere in the back of her mind was the feeling that could she but get him to forget Pinkie, to hold only her before his attention, it would be an easier thing to interest him. The force of her own feeling, the brightness of it, the comfort, the hope—somehow, she knew it could not help but be transmitted to him.

The things he would want in his home would not be what Pinkie had to give to the man she married. The joy of her beauty once worn, the glamour of her presence gone through the intimacies of married life—she would not do, that was all. The curse of intuition was Mattie's: it was no use. His belief, so fatally fixed, in Pinkie's inward qualities, was the immovable thing she had to combat. He was fascinated, charmed, by a chimera of dainty frills, and soft flesh. And Mattie, woman-like, realized with all the depth of her lonely little soul, the uselessness of it all. She was a little fool!

Somehow, if you could have only for a short while, a piteous, glorious taste of things you wanted so badly—

And then, Mattie, sitting quietly, hopelessly, in the cushioned rocking-chair, the yellow lamp-light resting on her half averted back; seeing the parlor as she had always seen it, the gilt ornaments, the reflection of the half-open door in the mirror, the ornate postal album; seeing the young man opposite, the healthy tan of his cheek, the tiny red line around his neck from the chafing of his collar—seeing all these prosaic things of her life, she suddenly found them all submerged, lost, in the wonder of a sudden thought!

She moved slightly, holding herself, in the bubbling excitement of her plan, calm, with stiff muscles. Had Tom, so busily engrossed in the intricacies of the carpet-design, been watching her, he might have caught the rising flush of her face, the glow in her eye, the palpitating fear in her bosom.

A moment's happiness! The phrase had twisted itself fantastically through Mattie's little head. A little time of joy, forgetful of consequences! Just as she had utterly resigned herself to the hopelessness of winning Tom's fancy—putting it far into the realm of the impossible—so now, with feminine inconsistency, she allowed the other idea to possess her. Only a moment—

She glanced whimsically at the gilt clock. The moment, indeed, might be of twenty minutes' duration.

Then, like some insidious, dark demon, the thought of consequences recurred to her. Deliberately, defiantly, she put it aside.

There would be need of caution, need of skill, with, very likely, a slight reward that she dared hope. But she would have her sympathy to offer him; that seemed, in her loving, to be the dominant note—the desire to comfort him with her overflowing sympathy. Then too, she would be focused, were it for ever so short a time, in his undivided attention.

Opposite her, he was still studying the carpet and sometimes he, too, would glance up at the clock.

She leaned across from her chair to the table. There were some letters, a few papers there. She took an empty envelope, a scrap of torn white paper, and held it tightly in her clenched hand. Intuitively, she felt the need of a moment's action before speaking; the need of something to clutch and hold, in her nervous tension. She dug her nails deeply into the stiff paper.

"Tom!"

There was the sudden quality of unexpectedness in her voice; there was fear, indecision in it—and fear would

serve her purpose well. It was the first time in her life that she had ever called him other than Mr. Dennin. Startled, he looked up.

"Yes?" He could not keep the wonder from the honesty of his eyes.

Mattie clutched her paper even more tightly; there was no going back now.

"Did you say anything to me?" he repeated. Over the mantel the little gilt clock emphasized the silence. The girl looked at him with piteous eyes. She was really frightened now at her audacity. But somewhere in the back of her soul grew the conviction that she was playing the part with reality.

"I've got something to tell you—" She paused a moment. "Least I don't know as I ought to tell you, but I think you ought to know. An' she never said not to tell you, anyhow."

There was growing wonder in the face opposite her. He waited.

"But it don't seem fair, somehow, not to tell. I'd better, I think. I hope you aint going to take it badly."

"Has anything happened to Pinkie?" Mattie could see his fingers tighten with anxiety.

"Nothin' like you mean—But, you know to-night, when I said she an' Joe'd gone to get some cream—"

"Yes!" said the young man. This time he glanced quite openly at the clock. Also, Mattie noted, he was leaning far forward—leaning toward her.

"They didn't go to get ice-cream," she softly said. "They went to get married—around to the rectory."

There had been no falseness in the note of her acting. She felt that now, as she watched him. Vaguely, she had thought he would rise from his chair, grow white, as did the deceived lover in a play she once saw. Now, seeing him, she realized the conviction her voice had carried. He had bent forward to catch her words. For a moment after she had spoken them, he sat motionless, looking at her—and for the first time in her life, Mattie saw and understood how eyes, only eyes—eyes that obliterated the whole face—could show the depth of a man. They hurt her so in the piteousness of their appeal, that involuntarily she started forward. Then, very quietly, he straightened.

"Had—had they been thinking of it for long?" he asked dully.

"I—I don't think so—Pinkie had always liked him. I'm so awfully sorry. Maybe she wouldn't have done for you, anyway." Immediately she felt the unwisdom of her remark. Again fear, this time that he would not want her prodigal sympathy, gripped her.

"I guess you're right," he said, suddenly. "She always seemed to cotton to him most. She's too much of a lady to want a fellow like me that works out in the open with his hands. But I never could take to clerking. Anyhow," he added, "I don't know as he makes so much more than I do."

He lapsed into silence again. Mattie, leaning back in her chair, was conscious of a difference already in their relations. He had spoken to her in a dear confidence; there seemed a new, vague companionship between them. The awkwardness had gone from his manner. She rose swiftly and went softly to Tom's chair.

"Oh, Tom, I—I—" She put her hand gently across his big, rough one as it lay on the chair arm. Half unconsciously his own closed about it. It was her moment. A joy, so absolute that it confused, filled her heart. It transfigured the simplicity of her face, it kindled and glowed in her eyes like a tangible beauty. Love, in its great revelation, stunned her.

Then, she knew that she must tell him of her deceit.

Looking up, Tom caught the feeling, the exquisite womanliness of her face. Amazement deepened in his own: to even such as him, the look was unmistakable.

"Why, Mattie—" he said slowly. "Little girl, I never—" He stopped, but the grip of his hand tightened. Mattie glanced at the clock. She must tell him quickly; before they got back. Dimming the glory of her little face, the plain bitterness of her soul began to show. She wanted to cry, to sob out wildly in his arms.

Slowly, relentlessly, the gilded clock ticked. How she hated the sound of it! Then, amid the confusion of her thoughts, she realized that Tom was speaking.

"—it aint that I feel so bad on account of her marrying him. It's kin o' showed me that she aint all I thought. She can't have been. She was fooling me, that's all."

"No—no—" cried Mattie violently. "It wasn't that—"

"Now, you listen to me—" She thrilled and silenced under the command of his voice. "I aint going to tell you what it was, but Pinkie said things to me"—he hesitated—"said 'em to me last night, that no girl ought to say—unless she cared. She was foolin' me, that's all. But I don't want you to feel badly about it. I'd been thinking so much lately about a home—there was a little place out to Leeds—"

The tension of his hand tightened as he talked. Home-love, the want of a mate, was strong upon him. "I'd like to take you out next Sunday to see the place. I was thinkin'—"

Then, abruptly, Mattie's eyes deepened, widened, in anguish. The color faded miserably from her face. She had heard the front door opening.

She tried to speak, but her voice died away.

"They're coming," he said, grimly, without glancing at her.

Swiftly, she stepped back into the shadows by the sofa, feeling only a great weariness. After all, she could say that she had only been joking.

Tom was sitting so solidly in his chair. From the averted line of his chin she glimpsed the determination of his face. Ah, but her moment had been very sweet. She sank defiantly into a corner of the sofa. There was a peculiar feeling in her head. It seemed to her that she was far distant, as one who watches a play. Pinkie and Joe, entering and moving into the circle of the lamp-light, were strangely unreal figures. The strangeness appeared even to have communicated itself to their actions. Tom, leaning back silently in his chair, was the only thing that was quite natural. Pinkie was removing the large feathered hat she had worn. Carefully, she laid it on a chair. It seemed to Mattie that she took an eternity arranging it there.

Joe was turning the pages of a magazine on the table. He was saying something about the night being cold. And to Mattie, even his voice sounded strangely unfamiliar. She watched his hands slowly turning the pages, fascinated.

"Well," Pinkie's tone jarred oddly. "Aint anybody going to say anything? Didn't you miss me somethin' terrible, Tom?"

In spite of her words, the usual coquetry was absent from her voice. Always, her glance reverted to Joe's face. Mattie sat in sombre quiet on the sofa, waiting for Tom to speak, and end it all. Her eyes were smarting terribly. They hurt so that she closed them. If only some one would speak!

Then, suddenly, Pinkie began to laugh. She giggled loudly, nervously, across the table at Joe. Her cheeks were very bright; and she was laughing with little gulps of excitement that made her bosom rise and fall. And Mattie, starting up at the sound, saw that she was looking at Joe as if he were the only person in the room.

"What's the matter, Pinkie?" Mattie's voice caught, choking. "What's the matter with you?"

Pinkie's eyes left Joe reluctantly, and turned towards Tom and Mattie. Then they saw that she was holding one hand cautiously over the other. And they heard her laugh again, more softly this time.

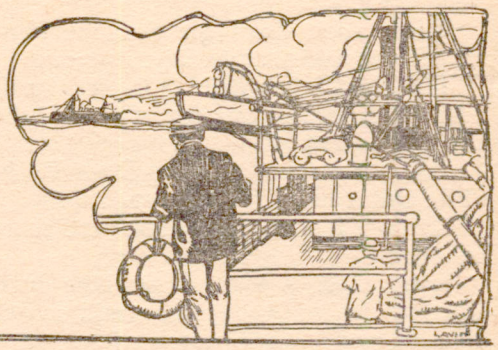
"Nothing much," she answered. "Only—only Joe an' me just got married—we went over to the rectory."

And very sweetly, with a sudden, new dignity, she held up her left hand, that they might see the gleaming little band on her third finger.

The Biters and the Bitten

By

RICHARD BARKER SHELTON



THE noon boat from the mainland came puffing up to Round Island, bumped up to the dock, and began discharging the island's allotment of freight and mail.

A single passenger stumbled down the narrow gang-plank and made his way over the splintered planking of the rickety old wharf past the groups of loungers—who perched on the rail and surveyed him with frank stares, for passengers to Round Island at that time of year were something very much in the nature of a curiosity.

Near the shoreward end of the wharf, a thin, clean-shaven young man slid from his perch and stepped up to the newcomer.

"Sheriff Jordan, aint yer?" he greeted the arrival.

"That's who," said the man addressed. "And you, I take it, are Silas Cobb."

"Guessed it fust time, sheriff," replied the other with a grin. "Got my letter of course?"

"That's what's brought me here. So you think you know where Jim Denny is?"

"Sure of it, sheriff. Course I aint never seen this Denny in my life and what's more I aint never had a chanct to git a squint at no photographs of him, neither. But if them descriptions on the circulars, offerin' a reward for his capture, is right, I can tell yer where yer man is right now."

"Well, where is he?" asked the sheriff flatly.

"Not so fast," the other chuckled. "There's a few things to be talked over a bit fust. Now supposin' I take yer to the place where this man is and he turns out to be the Jim Denny that's wanted for jail-breakin' and that there's the reward of five hundred dollars on for his re-capture—do I git that money?"

"Sure you do," said the sheriff.

"Don't have to make no split on it with you nor nobody else?"

"No, indeed."

"All right. If that's the case, I'll take yer to where he's hidin' right away."

"The sooner the better."

Cobb led the way from the wharf along the winding road that followed the island's water-front to a little landing-stage some few hundred feet to the left. Here he untied the painter of a trim little sloop and motioned the sheriff aboard. In a trice the sails were up, and with Cobb at the wheel, the little craft was standing away from Round Island's bleak granite ledges.

"So he isn't here on the island?" the sheriff asked.

Cobb shook his head. "Nope. But he's got about the slickest hidin'-place ever you thought of," he said. "It's over on Duck Rock, that little island over there ahead of us. I shouldn't never have seen him if one of my lobster-pots hadn't got adrift and beached there. This fellow was layin' up behind the rocks there, and I don't believe he ever suspected that I seen him. Tall feller, he was, thin as I be, and got red hair and a long scar acrost his left cheek."

"That's a pretty accurate picture of him," said the sheriff.

Mr. Cobb brought the little craft up into the wind as a heavy flaw laid her well over.

"How soon do I git the five hundred?" he asked anxiously.

The sheriff laughed. "Oh, let's wait and make sure of our man first. Maybe it's not him at all."

"What's a feller doin' on Duck Rock, if he aint a hidin'?" questioned Cobb.

"It does look sorter queer," the sheriff mused.

"And if it is him, about how soon did you say you thought I could collect that reward?" Cobb persisted.

Again the sheriff laughed. "It takes some time to put those things through. Lots of red tape to it, you know," he explained. "In a hurry for the money, are you?"

"I should like it jest as soon as I could git it."

The sheriff smiled covertly. "Say, I'll tell you what I'll do with you," said he. "I want to git the three o'clock boat from Round Island and go up to Centertown. I got business there that wont wait. If this feller over on the rock, there, proves to be Jim Denny and we git him, I'll let you take him over to the mainland. I'll have a couple of my deputies there at Bayport to meet you and take the prisoner into custody. I can send a telegram from the island, when we git back there, sayin' that you're comin' over with Jim Denny. And I'll tell 'em to have four hundred and fifty dollars with 'em to pay you. I'll settle it out of my own account, and then when the proper papers have gone through the usual course of red-tape, I'll collect the reward. Of course, that way I'll be makin' fifty dollars on yer, but if you're in a hurry for the money, that's the best plan I can think of."

"Say, that's all right. I'm satisfied," said Cobb.

"I'll swear you in a deputy, so you can take him over good and proper, in the custody of an officer of the law—see? Guess I better swear you in right now and you can help in takin' him, in case he shows any fight. Here, take off your hat and hold up your right hand and I'll administer the oath."

Cobb did as he was bidden, and the sheriff administered the oath, after which he reached into his pocket, pulled out a small nickel badge and pinned it to the other's ragged vest.

"There you are," said the sheriff, "—a full-fledged deputy of this county, sworn to obey the orders of your superiors and uphold the law. Got any weapon with you, in case you need one?"

Cobb reached forward and pulled open one of the cuddy doors, displaying a shot-gun resting on its brackets in the tiny cabin.

"All right," said the sheriff. "And you want me to telegraph over to those two fellows to have the four hundred and fifty with 'em to pass over to you when you deliver the prisoner to them—always provided, of course, that this chap over here is the Jim Denny we's after."

"That's what," said Cobb emphatically. "I'd ruther have the four hundred and fifty now than to have to wait any great spell for the whole five hundred."

"You can git some one on the island to go over with you, can't you?" questioned the sheriff.

"I can do it jest as well alone," said the frugal Cobb. "Once let any of them fellers on the island git wind of what I wanted 'em for and what I was gittin' out of this thing, and they'd bleed me somethin' fierce. Nope, I'll do it single-handed, if I'm goin' to do it at all. We can tie him up good and plenty so'st he wont make no trouble, and all I'll have to do will be to handle the sloop. That's the best way."

"Suit yourself about that," was the sheriff's reply. "It'll be your own look-out getting him over to Bayport."

They were drawing close to Duck Rock, a desolate looking little island, with a few drooping scrub pines growing half-heartedly in the interstices of its gray boulders. Cobb ran the little craft to the lee of the island, dropped his anchor, and he and the sheriff climbed into the tender, trailing astern.

Cobb took the oars and the sheriff drew his gun and cocked it in anticipation of any trouble. His eyes were fixed on the towering ledges just before them. But there was no sign of habitation on the bleak place; the sighing of the tide was the only sound to break the stillness.

"Bet he's gone," the sheriff said in a low voice, as the tender grounded on the one bit of sandy beach the island offered.

"Hold yer hosses," Cobb advised. "Like enough he's asleep somewheres, and if he is, I know the very place he'd choose for it."

He made fast the painter of the tender to a handy boulder, and followed by the sheriff, he cautiously crept along the shore, mounted a slope of the ledge and turned to the right.

A moment he crawled forward, crouching low; then straightening up, beckoned the sheriff to his side.

Just before them was an opening in the rocks, forming a little cave-like shelter, and there, stretched upon a rude pallet of dried grass and pineneedles, lay a tall man, with red hair and a livid scar across his cheek. The man's eyes were closed and his mouth wide open. He was fast asleep.

The sheriff clutched Cobb's arm as he whispered—"It's him, sure enough."

Then he stepped forward, cocking his gun and holding it in readiness. With the toe of his right foot he prodded the sleeping man.

"Don't try to make any trouble, Jim," he said slowly. "I've got you dead to rights!"

The man started up, sprang to his feet with a snarling oath, then noticed the menacing revolver in the sheriff's hands and put his own arms high above his head.

"Yep; you've got me," he said sullenly.

"Come out of there, and go ahead of me down to the beach," the sheriff commanded. Denny came out of his retreat, and with his hands still up, followed the footpath down to the beach where the tender lay.

"You can put down your hands," the sheriff said after he had been through all the pockets of the ragged clothes. "Cobb, take a length of that painter and make his hands fast behind him. That's right! Get into the tender, Jim."

"Who peached on me?" Denny demanded. "Was it that dub of a fisherman you've got with yer? Because, if it was, I'll git even with him, if it takes me a hundred years. S'elp me, I will!"

"Threats wont help you any, Jim," said the sheriff quietly. "Come along without any fuss and it will be easier for all of us, you included."

The tender was rowed out to the sloop. Once aboard her, Cobb and the sheriff, with a length of line from the halyards, bound their prisoner securely, hand and foot, and laid him in the cabin.

Then they ran for Round Island, and made it in less than an hour.

The sloop drew up to the little landing-stage; the sheriff stepped ashore and hurried up to the telegraph office in the one store the island boasted.

"I've sent the word I told you I would," said he. "You'd ought to make Bayport with this wind in three hours or so. You'll find the two deputies waiting for you at the wharf next the coal docks—the wharf where the steamers come in, you know. They'll have the money with them. Good luck to you, Deputy Cobb. Give 'em a receipt for the money, made out to me. So long, now. A good run to you."

Cobb shoved off the nose of the sloop and put his helm down. The big sail filled with a sharp report, and the little craft went heeling away towards the mainland.

Over in the west, filmy white clouds began to show themselves; the breeze freshened. In a half-hour the sea roughened and the sloop began to lay far over to the flaws.

Cobb brought her into the wind and shortened sail; but even then, the breeze was so much stiffer, that the spray came flying over her bows in drenching showers. Half way over to the mainland, he found it necessary to stop for a second reef, and then as the seas came swashing over her weather bow, flooding the little cockpit now and again, he banged shut the cuddy doors and drew the hatch of the tiny companionway, in order that his passenger might remain fairly dry.

The slopping of the vessel in the half-gale that was blowing, and the swish of the seas as they came rushing aft, drowned all other sounds. Cobb could not hear strange sounds coming from the little cabin—the rustlings, the bangings and the half-smothered grunts.

He was heading the sloop into a particularly vicious sea, when the cabin doors flew open with a bang, and Jim Denny, freed of the restraining ropes, and with a fish-gaff he had picked up in the cabin in his hands, sprang straight at him.

Cobb jumped from his seat, letting go the wheel. The sloop fell off, careened dangerously as a heavy sea struck her, and rolled in the trough of the sea.

At the same moment the fish-gaff came down on Cobb's head and he sank into the sloshing water of the cockpit with never a sound.

When he came to his senses, he was lying in the cabin, trussed up with a length of rope so skillfully, that, strive as he would, he could not move a muscle. His clothes were gone and in their place were Jim Denny's tattered garments. Moreover, that worthy, grinning delightedly to himself, sat at the wheel of the sloop arrayed in Cobb's clothes, and with the nickel star conspicuously displayed upon his coat-front.

The sloop was not jumping about now. She was running along smoothly. And by that the man in the cabin knew she had reached the sheltered waters of Bayport harbor. Indeed, a tug, going out with a string of coal barges, tooted them a hoarse salute on the siren, and Denny waved his right arm in answer.

Cobb strained desperately at his bonds, but only succeeded in cutting his flesh with the rope. Then he lifted his voice in a strident yell, whereupon Denny promptly dropped the wheel, hustled into the cabin, and whipped a handkerchief from his pocket.

"Sorry, old timer," he said, still grinning, "but for reasons that are pretty plain, we can't have none of that."

Quickly he stooped and lifted Cobb's head, and the latter found his mouth stuffed with a most effectual gag.

Up to the wharf where the steamers came in, Denny ran the little sloop. Cobb, helpless and shaken with wrath, heard him hail some one on the wharf. Presently came the sound of somebody jumping to the sloop's deck.

"You the two fellers sent down here to meet Silas Cobb?" Cobb heard Denny asking. "Well, I'm him, and I got that cuss for ye in the cabin, there. Huh? Four hundred and fifty comin' to me you say? Oh yes! Dead sure! Yep, I'll give you a receipt for it. Much obliged. Yep, I've counted it. Four hundred and fifty is right."

The cabin doors were yanked open. "There's yer man," said Denny. "He's a plumb bad one, I guess. Yelled and bawled so that I got tired of hearin' it and stuffed that gag in his mouth. Better keep it in till you git him up to the jail, unless you want him to give you the ear-ache. The way he bawls and bellers makes me think maybe he aint quite all there," he ended, tapping his own forehead significantly.

One of the deputies stooped and loosened the rope about the captive's ankles. Instantly Cobb, in his eagerness, began to struggle. The two laid hold of him and hustled him to the deck.

"Well, hang on to him good now you've got him this time," Denny chuckled. "Tell 'em when they get him back to the cooler there at Fossville, to watch him sharp. He's a bad one. Like enough he'll try to do another getaway."

With a wave of his hand he shoved off the sloop, and Cobb, half-pushed, half-dragged to the waiting carriage by his two guardians, saw the sloop go careening down the bay.

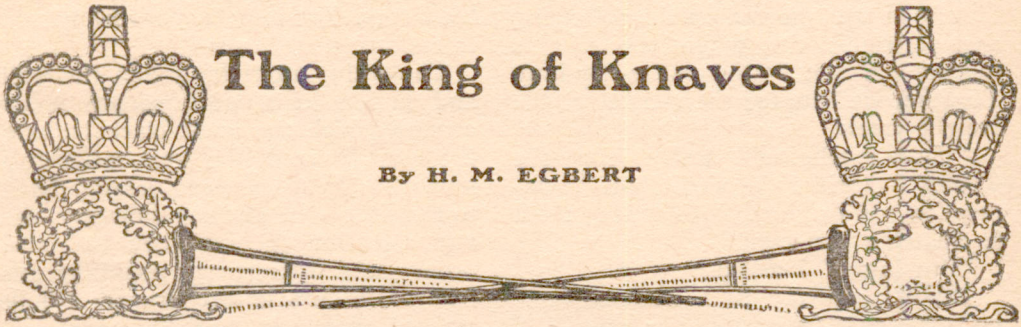
In the rotunda of the jail in Bayport the gag was removed, and in its train came a volume of most amazing language. By dint of much effort, Cobb convinced his captors that there was enough doubt in the case to warrant sending a telegram to Sheriff Jordan, whom, he assured them, might be reached by wire that night at Centertown.

The midnight train brought the sheriff to Bayport. Hurrying at once to the jail, he found Cobb huddled miserably on a couch in the deputy-warden's office.

Coldly he listened to Cobb's excited tale.

"Well, how about my four hundred and fifty dollars?" said Jordan when the tale was finished.

"I guess you'll have to charge it up on the same ledger with my sloop," said Cobb with a weak grin.



The King of Knaves

By H. M. EGBERT

HOW THE King of Knaves attempted to steal no less a thing than the war-chest of Germany—that huge treasure of gold coin which the Kaiser keeps in readiness to support a war—is narrated in this amazing tale. Nikolai's object was to restrain the Teuton's aggressiveness by hamstringing his sinews of war.

No. II—THE TREASURE OF SPANDAU

"WAR," said Nikolai to me, "is the greatest of all knaveries. It is made possible only by the tribute that the strong have exacted from the weak. So, by relieving the German Government of its funds, I shall be assisting the cause of humanity."

We were in Berlin. The Morocco affair had stirred all Europe, and war between the Teuton and the Gaul was believed to be imminent. All Berlin was aflame with enthusiasm. Nikolai, passing a patriotic procession, laughed scornfully.

"And this is the folly of these silly sheep of which the Government hopes to reap the advantage by an unpardonable attack on France," he said. "It would be a charity to prevent it."

"Prevent war?" I exclaimed.

Nikolai turned to me. "What makes war possible?" he asked.

"Money," I answered promptly.

"And the German Government's war fund is—"

"In the fortress of Spandau," I exclaimed, suddenly enlightened.

Everybody knows that after France had paid Germany a huge monetary indemnity in 1871, the Teutonic Government set aside a war fund of several million pounds in gold, which was immured in the recesses of the fortress of Spandau, nine miles from Berlin. And it was this sum that Nikolai contemplated raiding.

I confess the audacity of the scheme staggered me. Even knowing Nikolai as I did, the idea appeared to me incredible. Yet here was this one man calmly proposing to loot the treasures of the Kaiser, and those buried in the recesses of one of Germany's most powerful fortresses.

The evening papers were full of war news. Among other items we gleaned that the guns of Spandau were about to be dismounted and sent to the frontier, to help overawe the French Government. It was the policy of Germany to obtain her ends peacefully if possible. In consequence, the publication of these items, as calculated to terrorize France, was rather encouraged. The papers teemed with stories of the preparations for mobilization.

Among other things we read that a cargo of shrapnel shells was to be hurried to Spandau, and thence to be conveyed with the guns to a waste territory in Alsace, used by the Government for war manoeuvres on a large scale. Extensive firing practice, we learned, was to be carried on there, and, if the French

Government did not then come to terms, the mimic war would be converted into a reality.

Nikolai was morose on the following day. I think the magnitude of his scheme was now better realized by him. Together we haunted the vicinity of the freight yards.

"Those shells will arrive from the Krupp factories," he meditated. "Summers, it will be our task to convey them to Spandau in person."

"But how?" I asked.

Nikolai smiled. "In a bureaucracy," he answered, "everything is possible." And he made an appointment to meet me at the freight yards at seven o'clock that evening.

That was the hour at which the special train, bearing the load of shells, was due to arrive. Everything goes by clockwork in Germany, and punctually at seven o'clock the train entered the station, the great shells openly displayed in the cars. Upon the engine was a representative of the Krupp works.

Disguised as a mechanic, I waited, terrified lest at any moment some of the officers should inquire my business. But they were too much absorbed with the affair in hand. A tall officer in uniform, wearing crossed swords upon his shoulders, stepped forward among those waiting and displayed an order. I gasped; it was Nikolai himself.

He beckoned me and said, with assumed roughness:

"I want you, my man, to help unload this cargo at its destination." Then, turning to the officers assembled, he added:

"You see, gentlemen, it is the Emperor's special order. These shells must be run in to Spandau this evening or I cannot answer for the consequences."

They did not scrutinize the paper hard. They saw the signature of the Kaiser and saluted. Then, turning to the station agent, Nikolai commanded that the train be shunted to the private line which runs direct to the fortress.

Half an hour later the train was in motion. Nikolai and I rode upon the engine, our solitary companion being the driver, whose duty would be completed when he had taken the train to its destination. A brief run brought us within sight of the frowning fortress, a bastion strong enough to have defied centuries of time and all the artillery of any hostile army. Yet Nikolai had set himself to capture its treasures!

The train ran right within the walls and halted in a wide square inside, around which the great black hulks of the guns loomed like some prehistoric monsters. Soldiers were passing busily to and fro; none of them, however, paid any attention to us. They had their orders, and in Germany meddling with external affairs is discouraged. Nikolai stepped off and proceeded toward a little archway which led to the quarters of the commanding officer. Presently the two emerged together.

"Your Excellency," said Nikolai, "I have now fulfilled the Emperor's instructions. You yourself, doubtless, have received orders as to the disposition of these shells. I shall proceed to unload them, with the help of your men, and my mechanic here will examine each shell separately for any possible defects sustained in transit. He is the chief foreman of the ordnance branch of the Krupp factory."

The commanding officer acquiesced and, at his command, which was issued through several subordinates, files of soldiers, in fatigue dress, came swarming out of their barracks. Nikolai, standing in the center of the square, indicated that the shells were to be unloaded. The men fell to with a will. Each shell was an enormous burden for a single soldier, and soon the sweat was streaming down their faces. It was midnight before the last of the ammunition was safely stacked in the square.

Nikolai produced a small hammer from the pocket of his overcoat and handed it to me. "Tap the shells lightly," he whispered. "Some are defective—you understand? You are acquainted with their mechanism?"

I had not served to no purpose in the British Royal Artillery. I plied my task, calling to Nikolai frequently. The soldiers had withdrawn; the commanding officer, who stood watching us, showed signs of fatigue. After half an hour, while his yawns grew visibly longer, Nikolai spoke.

"Your Excellency," he said, "I re-

gret to say that my mechanic here finds quite a number of defective time-fuses. To remedy this will require several hours of hard work."

The commanding officer came over. He looked at the shells. "I see nothing wrong with them," he said, peering through his glasses.

"Perhaps not, sir," Nikolai rejoined, "and I have no doubt that at a pinch all would prove serviceable. Nevertheless, the Krupp factory feels a peculiar responsibility in this matter, and, with your leave, this fellow shall adjust the defective ones."

"As you please," replied the commanding officer shortly. "Captain Kuppenheim will superintend the matter." He turned toward his office to give the order. Nikolai, beckoning me, followed him.

The office was a small, well-furnished room connecting with the officer's quarters by a small passage-way, which cut it off from the rest of the house. He turned to his desk. Nikolai was close upon his heels. In an ante-room I saw an orderly dozing over a fire. Upon the desk was a bell. The officer bent over to press it.

And suddenly Nikolai's arms were round his throat, one hand pressed upon his mouth. The officer struggled valiantly, but he was perfectly helpless in Nikolai's grasp. Instantly I had improvised a gag and thrust it into his mouth; then, with lengths of cord which lay scattered around the apartment, we bound his limbs and trussed him like a fowl. We rolled him into a corner, where he lay glaring at us in an indescribably comical manner, utterly helpless. I looked into the ante-room. The orderly was snoring peacefully.

"That was the crux of the problem," said Nikolai. "Now all is plain sailing. It's lucky we found that cord."

The office was in confusion. Piles of papers and wrappings lay all about. In one corner was a screen. Nikolai placed it in front of the officer and motioned to me to step behind it.

"Hold your revolver to his head," he said. "The slightest sound or drumming of limbs and he dies." He said this in a tone loud enough to be perfectly understood by the helpless officer.

But then we were a little uncertain. It seemed incredible that we could remain there long undiscovered. Nikolai called to the orderly.

"Go to bed," he said. "We do not need you."

I had expected that the soldier would question this command from a stranger, but the German soldier is trained to implicit obedience to the word of a superior. He simply saluted and marched stiffly out of the door. Then, at Nikolai's word, I raised the officer, and together we carried him into the ante-room, where we deposited him upon the hearth before the fire, with a pillow beneath his head.

All this while my thoughts had been running on the gold. But Nikolai was not yet ready. He had to make doubly sure that his plans would not miscarry. He called after the retreating orderly. The man turned.

"Send Captain Kuppenheim here," he said.

Two minutes later the captain came running in, drew himself up, and saluted.

"Captain Kuppenheim," said Nikolai, returning the salute, "I have the honor to inform you that you will receive your orders from me." And he showed him a paper—Heaven knows how many of them Nikolai had forged, or how he had done so—bearing the subscription of the Kaiser. The captain looked at it and saluted again.

"You will tell off a half company of men to keep guard in the courtyard," said Nikolai, "while the shells are adjusted. They will be ready in half an hour and will form in column of fours, in fatigue uniform."

The captain saluted again. "That will do, Captain Kuppenheim," said Nikolai.

The captain retired stiffly. Then Nikolai turned to me. "We must find the keys," he whispered.

"Let us take another look at the general," I exclaimed. In truth, though he had been bound hand and foot, though he could make no outcry, I was astonished that he had not somehow managed to indicate his presence in some manner. It is difficult to deprive a man entirely of motion, be his bonds ever so strong.

We went into the ante-room. The general lay by the hearth just as we had placed him. Nikolai lifted his arm. It fell heavily. By the light of the fire I scrutinized his face. The eyes were half open, but there was no recognition in them.

"He is dead," said Nikolai solemnly.

It was true. He was an old man, and the shock had, doubtless, brought about a fatal stroke of apoplexy. Nikolai gazed at him a moment in silence. Then he raised his hand at the salute.

"Honor to a brave man, even though he be a servant of tyranny," he said. "It is as well for him perhaps." Then he turned away.

This unexpected denouement, while it could not add to the desperate condition of our undertaking, solved one of our most pressing difficulties. All danger from this source was now removed. Nikolai went back into the office and together we searched for the keys. And we found them. We found bunches of keys—keys of every kind. There must have been half a hundred when we gave up the search. But which was the key to the strong room?

"None of these," said Nikolai. "It will be in triplicate—and there will be a combination." He paused and looked at me sadly. "Summers," he said, "I had hoped to wring the secret from the dead man by threat of death. It was a desperate hope at best; now it is not even a hope. The secret of the combination was known to none but him, doubtless."

Suddenly I had an inspiration.

"The key will be upon his person!" I exclaimed.

Nikolai's hand descended softly upon my shoulder. "You are right, Summers," he said. "Come!"

It was repugnant to me to lay hands upon the dead man there by the fire. I felt guilty as a parricide as I reverently cut the bonds; as a robber of the dead when I turned out the contents of the pockets. There were letters there in feminine writing, money, papers, a hasty glimpse at which revealed their unimportance to us, and a great gleaming golden watch which, as I took it, opened in my hand and flashed out the time at me. But there was no key.

"Round his neck," said Nikolai.

And there we found it. It was a little golden key, alone, but of a peculiar fashion. I saw at once that, by pressing a spring upon the handle, it was convertible into either of two other kinds through an automatic movement of the wards. There were, then, three locks to be forced.

I felt elated; I could hardly restrain my joy. But Nikolai stood looking down at me gravely.

"That's no use, Summers," he said. "We need the combination."

I had forgotten that. Our partial success had only made our eventual failure the more humiliating. Still, we had found the key. Perhaps the combination might be written down.

"He was an old man," I said. "His memory might have been faulty. Would he have kept three sets of figures in his brain?"

And, even as the words left my lips, a coal popped in the fire, and a bright blaze sprang up and flickered on the gold watch. And on the edge of the inner case, by some miracle of observation, I saw three rows of figures minutely scratched.

"The combination!" I exclaimed.

There was little doubt. According to the German system, the lock was set by numbers instead of letters, and these could mean nothing else.

We stood there in exultation for a moment, until a noise without recalled us to ourselves. The soldiers were filing in the yard. Outside I could see Captain Kuppenheim and a sergeant marshaling them.

"Summers," said Nikolai, "our task is now an extremely simple one if your courage does not fail you. Remember that the German soldier is trained to one thing—implicit obedience. The most singular action will not be observed by him. He is trained as an automaton, nothing more.

"Our duty now is to procure the gold. I know the location of the strong room. We cannot hope to carry even a tenth part away; I trust, however, that we shall ultimately reap a rich reward from our enterprise. Follow me!"

We passed out boldly into the courtyard, Nikolai gravely returning the sa-

lute of the officer. He led me through a second archway, along a low passage which terminated in a barred door. Two sentries on duty stood at attention. Nikolai fitted the gold key to the lock. A moment's fumbling, and it opened, and we passed through. Looking back I saw that the sentries were still at attention.

The passage now turned off to the right abruptly, and a second door faced us. This was unguarded. It opened noiselessly, and we found ourselves in a huge, vaulted chamber of gloomy aspect, at the end of which a fire was burning. Two soldiers in uniform rose and saluted us. Nikolai passed between them and fitted the key to the door. One of the men detained him.

"Pardon, Excellency," he said. "None but His Excellency, General Faber, enters this chamber."

"Read that!" cried Nikolai sharply, whipping out a paper. Again I saw the Emperor's signature. I afterward learned that one paper had served on each of the three occasions.

"Well, can't you read?" snapped Nikolai, as the soldier still barred the way.

"No, Excellency," replied the man humbly.

"Fool! Do you know your Emperor's signature?"

"No, Excellency," the soldier answered. "No one but General Faber passes through this door. Those are his orders."

As Nikolai still made toward the door there came a clatter of steel, and simultaneously the two guards had snatched up their rifles and fitted bayonets to them. I laid my hand to my revolver; then I saw that Nikolai was still expostulating with the men.

"What are your exact orders, dolts?" he asked. And the men replied in chorus:

"It is forbidden that anyone except his Excellency, General Faber, passes through this door."

"Well said," cried Nikolai heartily, clapping the nearest man upon the back. "I was but testing you. I shall report your good conduct to our Emperor himself." The soldiers presented bayonets at the name. "And now, my men," he continued, handing the key to one of the guards, "do you take this and turn the lock until you see the number 975 appear—see, I will show you. Now turn it and enter."

The soldier took the key and opened the door obediently. As it swung back a blaze of electric light flooded the chamber. And I staggered back in astonishment. I saw astonishment upon Nikolai's face, astonishment upon the stolid countenances of the guards. For the vault beyond was heaped with shining coins.

There they lay, just as they had been flung in in 1871. But the sacks which had contained them had mouldered under the touch of time, and the floor was heaped ceiling high with gold pieces. They lay like flakes of golden grain, shining and scintillating in the electric glow.

"Enter, men, and gather two thousand pieces," said Nikolai. And the men obeyed him and staggered toward him, carrying the coins in pieces of rotting sackcloth.

"Close the door and remain on guard," said Nikolai. With our pockets filled and also bearing a precious cargo in our arms, we staggered out. At the second door, however, Nikolai halted.

"An officer may not carry a bundle," he said. "Summers, I must transfer this freight to you. Can you carry it?"

It was the heaviest burden I had carried in my life. I staggered through the passages, Nikolai beside me. At the outermost door he whispered his final instructions.

"Dump them in the freight cars," he whispered. "In the first car are tools. Unscrew the shells, pour out the shrapnel, and fill them. You understand? I shall be with you."

We passed out into the courtyard. The soldiers stood in columns of fours, but at a word from Nikolai, they withdrew and formed a hollow square at some distance from the cars. The night was moonless; our operations were hardly visible.

When I had deposited my burden in the car, Nikolai and I went back for more. Twenty times we made that journey, and every time the soldiers brought out the coins to us. And, at the twenty-first we had made scarcely an impres-

sion upon the shining hoard. Reluctantly Nikolai gave the final order to close the door.

Then all through the night I toiled, filling the shells. I lifted them into the cars one by one, unscrewed the projectiles, filled them with coins, and poured out the shrapnel, until, in place of the golden flood that had lapped my feet, there was a stream of leaden bullets. It was dawn before my task was done.

It was done at last. The shells were screwed fast; in the breaking light Nikolai and I looked into each other's haggard faces. And we read in each other's eyes that we had miserably failed.

For neither of us had estimated in any degree the magnitude of our task. We had not known how very few gold pieces prove the limit of a man's strength. We had removed forty thousand pieces of gold, worth, roughly, two hundred thousand dollars—two hundred thousand, when there remained ten million pieces behind!

With bleeding hands I descended from the cars. Nikolai called to the driver, who was dozing upon his engine. The cars were uncoupled. It seemed hours before we got up steam, while the day lighted, and I waited in an agony of apprehension. At last the engine was in readiness to move. We sprang aboard, the wheels revolved, and as the sun rose we passed through the fortress gates into the open country beyond. We had plundered Spandau; but where was our gain?

"That," said Nikolai, "remains for future gathering. When the shells burst upon the practice field in Alsace there will be good gold pieces sown among the weeds for our picking up." And he began to laugh.

It was a scheme hatched in the most fantastic brain that ever a sane man possessed. We had filled the shells with gold, that we might pick up the contents after the big guns had been fired at the practice targets on the waste ground! But the war scare blew over and Spandau's guns were never moved. Doubtless our gold-filled shells still repose in the arsenal at Spandau.

Brown's Heterogeneous Hatchery

By ELLIS PROCTOR HOLMES

BROWN stood on the station platform waiting for a train.

"A message for you, Ben, from the freight superintendent," said the operator.

Brown took the telegram and read:

> U-P. box-car, 1776, probably sidetracked between Deerfield and Boston. Contents, incubators. Setter & Hatch, St. Louis, consignees. Billed to Setter & Hatch, Poultry Show, Mechanics Building, Boston.
>
> Incubators are filled with eggs timed to hatch during week of show, which begins to-day.
>
> Find car, keep heated, and hurry to destination. Care for contents to the limit of your ability and wire this office freely for needed instructions.
>
> P. DELANO, *Sup. Freight.*"

"Now wouldn't that give you the chilblains!" exclaimed Brown, as he finished reading. "Chasing up and down the road, this weather, looking for a carload of incubators!

"What in Tophet do they have poultry shows in January for, anyhow?" he continued. "Here 'tis cold 'nough to freeze the pinfeathers off a Brahma

rooster, and they expect me to locate that bloomin' car and stay with it till it reaches Boston."

"What you kicking for? You're no Brahma rooster, Ben!" said the operator.

"You're jest right, I aint," replied Brown. "And I guess I aint likely to do any roostin', either, for a spell. I'll tell you one thing," he added, as he swung aboard the down train, "being a tracer for this railroad aint any snap."

As Brown had intimated, his position with the railroad may have been no sinecure, but he was the right man in the right place, notwithstanding. With his accustomed alertness he started out to run down car No. 1776 and found it, presently, on a side track opposite a brick-yard, a good quarter of a mile from the station at Kingston.

The brick-yard people had applied for an "empty," and the freight had evidently cut out the wrong car, and shunted it onto their track.

Brown lost no time in getting into the car and making an examination of its contents. There were twenty incubators, at least, and half-a-dozen brooders.

He could scarcely believe his ears, but he fancied he heard the peeping of chickens; peering in one of the incubators he saw several puffy little creatures emerging from the shell.

"By lightning!" he exclaimed, throwing off his overcoat, "they've begun to hatch! A dozen of 'em in sight and more coming every minute!"

He hurriedly read the directions affixed to an incubator and found that its thermometer did not register sufficient heat. Then he examined the lamps and saw that the oil was nearly consumed.

"This is a pretty mess," he grumbled. "Wonder how the super' thinks I'm going to keep this car heated, say nothing about 'tending to all these lamps!"

Brown stepped to the door and looked out. There was nobody in sight. Not stopping for his overcoat he jumped to the ground and made for the railroad station.

"Say, Macarty," he exclaimed, bursting in upon the agent. "I've found that bloomin' carload of incubators they're hatchin', and there'll be more'n a million chicks yippin' for feed before night."

"Well, look here, man, you've got to stop it," said Macarty.

"Stop it!" echoed Brown. "What the dickens do you mean by that?"

"Why didn't the consignee ship them chickens as aigs?" asked Macarty. "And by the same token aint the company liable for aigs, which be one-quarter the price of baby chicks?"

"Sure Mike, I never thought of that," said Brown.

"Well, now, you've *gotter* think wance in a while, if ye want to hold down your job," returned Macarty. "S'pose, now, them aigs hatch and the chickens die on your hands—what does the consignee do? Le' me tell ye:

" 'Good-mornin', Setter,' says Hatch, 'heard from that carload of incubators yet?'

" 'I have that,' says Hatch, lookin' glum. 'Found in a brick-yard and the aigs is chickens.'

" 'Be they livin' or dead?' says Setter, anxious-like.

" 'Dead,' says Hatch, heavin' a sigh. 'Frizen stiff—every one.'

" 'Hoo-ray!' says Setter, reachin' for a pen. 'We've got the railroad goin' and comin'. We'll put in a bill for loss on the aigs and soak 'em for damages on the chickens.'

"So it's me advice to ye, Brown, lave the cold air come in and stop them aigs right where they be, or turn on the heat and cook 'em good and hard."

"Guess I'll have to wire the super for instructions," said Brown. Then he wrote:

MR. P. DELANO, *Sup. Freight,*
Have located car 1776 at Kingston, one-fourth mile out on siding. Eggs are beginning to hatch. If I shut off the heat, railroad will be liable for spoiled eggs; if eggs hatch and chickens die wont we have to stand for chickens? What will I do? B. BROWN.

Brown sent in his message and then got busy. He loaded an old oil stove that Macarty had found for him, and a supply of oil onto a hand car; he procured some chicken feed and some rations for himself at a near-by grocery store; then he returned to his car. Here he set up his stove and put

in two solid hours filling and trimming the incubator lamps.

He dreaded a too close investigation of the incubators, but he could hear the chickens peeping all about him, and it reminded him that he must get back to the station for the superintendent's answer to his message.

As he left the car he was surprised to find a hard snowstorm in progress. Nearly an inch of snow had gathered since he entered the car. He hurried to the station.

"Here's your answer," said Macarty, handing the message to Brown as he entered.

B. BROWN.
Waiting at Kingston. Have wired Sec. of Agriculture to know if liable for eggs or chicks. Wait. P. DELANO.

"Well," said Brown, as he finished reading. "Guess I'll get back to the chicken coop. Will come up again later."

"Wait a minute—wait a minute, now," said Macarty. "I have anither wan."

"Well, why in Tophet didn't you hand it over before?" asked Brown.

"For the love of Mike—tell me how could I," Macarty exclaimed, "with the tail-end av it still on the wire. But here's the last word," he added, "and now ye have it."

Brown took it and read:

Secretary absent. His assistant reports that, considering our delay in delivering incubators, railroad may be held liable for chickens if eggs do not hatch. Therefore keep incubators running at any cost. P. DELANO.

"Well, what do ye think of that, now?" asked Macarty.

"I think I'm up against it—that's what I think," Brown replied. "As I asked the super', suppose they hatch and the chickens die on my hands—what's going to happen then?"

"It's as plain as the nose on my face," said Macarty. "Them Setter & Hatch fellers has got the railroad in the hole, whichever way it goes. Turn off the heat and ye're liable for sp'iled aigs; cook 'em too much and they'll soak ye for roast chicken; hatch 'em out and they'll charge ye for rint of the machines."

"Well, so long!" said Brown, starting for the door. "And mind, Macarty, don't you fail to have the night freight pick up my car—not on your life!"

"I will that!" replied Macarty.

Brown trudged back to his car through the fast gathering snow.

"Suppose, now, this storm makes the freight late," he soliloquized, "and they refuse to back in here and pull me out—great Scott! But there's Macarty! They wont get by Macarty."

He reached the car at last, and climbed aboard. The darkness fell quickly. He lighted up and began to take an inventory of his stock.

The first incubator that he opened contained sixty or seventy chicks—some too weak to stand, and others hopping about over empty shells—and eggs that had failed to hatch.

From incubator to incubator he moved, making notes and putting figures to paper as he went, until he had examined three-fourths of them. Then he sat down on a brooder, near his oil stove, and made a more systematic copy of his memoranda.

"Incubators one to seven," he wrote, "about five hundred chickens. Eight to thirteen, nothing doing; fourteen, seventy-six ducks; fifteen, nineteen turkeys and more on the way."

There was a box of advertising circulars and poultry journals near at hand, from which he selected a pamphlet, at random, and read it while he ate a lunch of crackers and cheese.

From his perusal of this poultry literature he learned (among other things) that chicks need not be fed until they are twenty-four hours old—which relieved his mind greatly—and that young turkeys, which were very fond of grasshoppers, should be prevented from getting their feet and legs wet.

Becoming sleepy after a time, he looked at his watch. It was nearly eleven o'clock. The storm was raging and he could hear the snow beating against the car as it swirled and drifted about it.

"Well, I'm in for it—blessed if I aint!" he said to himself. "The freight wont take me on to-night, that's dead sure! So here goes Brown—to roost with the biddies!"

The night, like all other nights, came to an end; while the storm, like other storms, seemed to increase with the light of the second day of its duration.

Brown prepared and ate a meager breakfast and then took up his task of caring for the chickens; first he transferred them to the brooders, and then fed and watered them to the best of his ability. The number of chickens had increased materially, but that of the ducks and turkeys remained about the same. Chickens, ducklings and turkeys shared and shared alike, one kind of feed being used for all.

These duties attended to, Brown started forth to brave the storm and the drifts, and arrived at the station puffing and blowing.

"Hello! Hello! Ye livin' picture!" shouted Macarty. "And now don't ye blame it onto me—the freight! They was four hours late and the conductor swore he'd not pull his own sick grandmother out o' that drift, and small blame to him, I say!"

"Sure! I'm not kicking!" said Brown. "Gimme a block of blanks, and don't talk. I've got to do some writing!"

At the end of ten minutes or so he handed his message to Macarty, who said as he took it:

"Go on, go on with ye! That mess of stuff! Le' me read it, ferninst." And making frequent comments as he proceeded, Marcarty read:

> MR. P. DELANO, *Sup. Freight.*
>
> Snowed-in at brick-yard. At last count had nine hundred chicks, eighty-two ducks, twenty-three turkeys and more coming. Send six cans of grasshoppers and rubber boots for the turkeys.
>
> There is one freak machine with padlocks and another one full of Easter eggs as big as muskmelons. Shall I pry off the padlocks or will you get keys from consignee? B. BROWN.

"Well now, friend Brown, I see yer finish!" exclaimed Macarty, as he finished reading. "Mark me wor-rds—if ye don't l'ave out the rubbie boots and grasshoppies, likewise them Easter aigs—ye're fired! The sup'rintindent 'll not stand for 'em—he couldn't see the joke!"

"Well, cut out the grasshoppers and rubber boots, then," said Brown. "But the Easter eggs aint any joke and you run 'em in with the rest."

Brown did not have dong to wait for the answer—which Macarty put to paper with many exclamations of surprise.

"Here ye are, me boy," he said, handing the message to Brown, "the old man himself is making jokes now." And Brown read:

> We are just in receipt of telegram from Setter & Hatch, giving particulars as to contents of incubators, eighteen of which contain eggs of the hen, duck, and turkey, as you have discovered.
>
> Of the other two incubators, which are of a different pattern and peculiar construction, the larger contains eighteen eggs of the ostrich which are very valuable. The contents of the locked one are serpents' eggs of several varieties, which, because of their novelty, were expected to create a sensation at the Poultry Show. As this incubator is securely fastened you have nothing to fear from the young serpents.
>
> We are now in communication with the Interstate Commerce Commission relative to the proper classification of this consignment, and rates for the same. Traffic is tied up, generally, by storm, but will send crew to clear track as soon as possible. P. DELANO, *Sup. of Freight.*

As Brown finished reading he looked up and saw Macarty staring at him, with a broad grin on his face.

"How about them sarpents an' ostriches?" he asked. "Is the super' jokin', or what?"

"Is he joking! I guess nit!" exclaimed Brown. "They're all there—the whole, bloomin' shootin' match! Chickens, turkeys, ostriches, dodoes, sea-serpents and canary birds.

"I'm running the managerie," he added, "and if you'll come down I'll give you a free ticket to the show."

Macarty declined with thanks, and Brown waded back to his charge. It was still snowing, but the weather had moderated somewhat. He went directly to the padlocked incubator and made sure that there was no chance for anything to escape from within.

There was an almost deafening chorus of peeping chickens and Brown threw in a supply of feed all around to keep them quiet. Then he cautiously pulled open the drawer of the ostrich incubator and grinned with delight as

he beheld some half dozen of them clear of the shell. They were as large as full-grown chickens, and no sooner was the drawer open than one of them made a peck at Brown's teeth and struck him on the lip.

"Great Cæsar's ghost!" he exclaimed, jumping back. "I'll wire the super' for a baseball mask and bat if I'm going to stay with this bunch of hummingbirds!"

"What'll I give 'em to eat?" he asked himself. "I'll ask ask the super'; there's no hurry. If a chicken can go twenty-four hours without eating, these fellows are big enough to go a week."

He transferred the ostriches to a large brooder, evidently intended for them, and spent the remainder of the day in attending to the various needs of his steadily increasing family.

In knocking about among the incubators he accidentally broke a glass panel in the "freak" incubator; this gave him no little uneasiness, but after a careful examination, getting neither sight nor sound of anything within it, he stuffed a rag into the aperture and dismissed the matter from his mind.

He had just made things ready for the night when there came a call from without.

Brown hurriedly opened the car door and beheld Macarty, waist deep in a drift.

"Hello! Come in, come in!" exclaimed Brown.

"Gimme yer hand and I will," said Macarty. "How be the happy family? Has the snakes swallered the doo-doos yet, or do the ostriches be after eatin' the snakes?"

"Nothing doing in snakes," Brown replied. "I'm mighty glad to see you, but didn't you know it's bed-time?"

"Sure, and I do that," replied Macarty. "'But it's lonesome he'll be,' I says to myself, 'and I'll go down and have a bit av a smoke-talk with 'im.'"

So they filled their pipes and smoked and smoked and refilled their pipes until at last, Macarty announced that he must be going.

"Oh, not yet," said Brown. "Drop down on my bunk there till the freight comes along."

Macarty yawned. "It do look good to me," he said, stretching himself out on a pile of excelsior and wrapping-paper in one corner of the car; in five minutes he was in the land of dreams.

Brown sat down, leaned against a packing case and dozed peacefully. Their lantern burned low, flickered and went out.

They had not slept long, when Brown was brought to a realizing sense of his surroundings by a sort of stage whisper from Macarty.

"Say, Brown, be ye awake?" he asked.

"Sure!" said Brown.

"Well, then, will ye tell me wan thing?" asked Macarty. "Did ye swipe the buttons off me vest?"

"Did I what!" exclaimed Brown, getting to his feet.

"Did ye—mother of Mike, there goes me collar-button!" exclaimed Macarty. "Strike a light! Strike a light! The doo-doos is loose and eatin' the shirt off me back!"

Brown tried to light the lantern but it wouldn't burn.

Macarty was executing a war dance and striking out right and left in the dark, calling upon the saints for protection from his unseen enemies.

All at once he let out a yell that chilled Brown to his marrow.

"Murder! Murder! Och, it's dead I am! For the love av Hiven, man, make a light!"

Brown grabbed a lamp from a brooder and hurried to Macarty. He was sitting on the floor, surrounded by half-a-dozen young ostriches who were eagerly looking him over for more buttons.

"Never mind the doo-doo birds," said Macarty. "I don't mind them, though 'tis thieves and robbers they be, but me pockets is full av *snakes!* Och!" he cried, grasping his leg just below the knee, "there's wan crawlin' up me trousers now, and anither wan under me vest," (making a grab for it) "an' he's got me—I feel the sharp tathe av 'im! It's dead I am an' no help fer it!"

"Forget it!" said Brown, as he took hold of Macarty and helped him to his feet. "Now shake yourself, old man."

Macarty did as directed, and sure enough, a young serpent a foot and a half in length dropped from him to the

floor. He threw off his coat and vest, found the second one and sank to the floor.

"It's him—the wan that bit me. I'll not live to see the light o' day," he groaned.

"Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Brown. "They're too young to bite. It's them brass points on your suspender buckle that you jabbed into yourself when you were jamming the snake."

"Niver," said Macarty. "I'll not take any chances—I'm a dead man! But there is a ray av hope," he added. "I have some snake-bite medicine in the left-hand corner av me desk, under a mess av dirty cotton waste for safe keepin'. Would ye mind gettin' it—fer the sake av the wife an' childer?"

"Sure I'll get it—give me your keys," said Brown, and he was off.

After what seemed a long time to poor Macarty, Brown returned with the "medicine." He drew the cork and said, as he handed the bottle to Macarty, "smells like whiskey."

Macarty eagerly grabbed the flask and took a long draught. "Sure it tastes as good as it smells!" he said.

"Better let me hold the bottle for you," said Brown.

"Jest a minute," said Macarty. "There was *two* snakes, remember; wan in me vest—he's soaked, and wan in me trousers—here's to 'im."

"Well, you've soaked the second one all right; now pass it over," said Brown.

"Jest a minute," said Macarty. "There was two snakes—two in me vest, here's wan—here's two;—an' two in me trousers, here's wan—here's two; an' four altogether—here's to 'em."

"You've got 'em all drowned by this time," said Brown, but Macarty didn't take the hint.

"There was four snakes in me vest—here's wan—two—t'ree—four; an' four snakes in me trousers—here's wan—two—t'ree—four—; and eight in the bunch—here's to 'em."

Brown reached for the flask and Macarty looked hurt.

"There was eight—doo-doo birdies in me vest—here's to 'em! An' eight snakes—"

Brown took the empty bottle from the nerveless hand of Macarty and covered him carefully with his overcoat.

"Well, friend Macarty," he said, "if you're not cured you're mighty well corned."

It was growing light as Brown left the car and hurried to the station. He sat down to the telegraph instrument and wired this message to the superintendent's office.

> Had terrible night. Macarty, agent here, came down to assist me. Snakes got out, bit Macarty and he's paralyzed. Send gang of chicken feeders and two or three snake charmers. Think Macarty will recover. B. BROWN.

Brown, hearing the whistle of a locomotive, hurried to the door and beheld a giant snow-plow approaching. In less than half an hour the side track was clear, and the belated night freight, that had followed the plow, had taken on Brown's car.

They helped Macarty out of the car and into his office and wound a wet towel about his head.

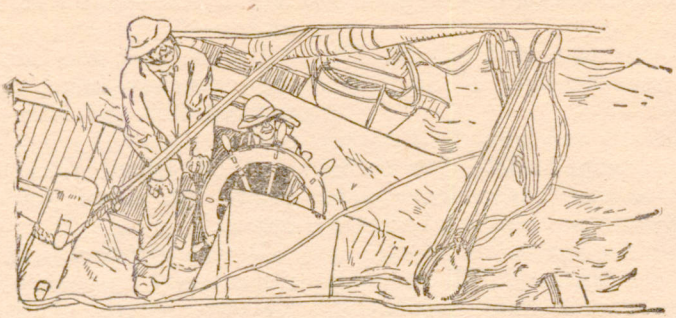
There was a call over the wire and Brown took the key.

> Have no fear concerning serpent bites. Read the message. These serpents are oviparous and, therefore, non-venomous. Must be a case of nerves with Macarty.
>
> Freight will pick up your car this morning. Accompany same to destination and report at this office on arrival.
>
> P. DELANO, *Sup. of Freight.*

"So long, Macarty," said Brown. "Don't forget to lay in a new lot of snake medicine."

Macarty pressed both hands to his throbbing temples as he groaned and replied:

"The poison av them snakes do be poundin' the brains out av me head, but I'ave it go with the super'—'twas a case av narves with Macarty."



Old Man Simms

By KINGSBURY SCOTT

OLD MAN SIMMS felt the burden of his sixty years more keenly as he left the office of the Crescent Towing Company after his interview with Colonel Fred Pfeffer, the corporation's general manager in Laketown. The interview had been far from satisfactory to Old Man Simms because it was his last play in this new game which he little understood, and he had failed. Therefore the hazy October day held little joy for him. He felt that the time had at last arrived when he must leave off his life of activity and loiter idly with the old men to dream of the times which had passed; and he did not regard this prospect with pleasure. Like every other active man he had long dreaded this day which had suddenly come upon him.

"We have enough tugs to handle our present business without the *Mary McGuire,*" Colonel Pfeffer had remarked decisively. "As our contract with you expires the first of November, I don't think we will renew it, Captain Simms. Like yourself, the tug is getting pretty old for our service, and I can see no advantage in renewing the contract."

Old Man Simms swallowed hard. He had not been prepared for any such turn of affairs and Colonel Pfeffer's announcement staggered him. He saw clearly enough the true meaning of the general manager's smooth remarks. The corporation considered the *Mary McGuire* and her master too old to hurt them should it again cast them adrift into open competition. For over ten years he had held a good contract with the company, which had gradually taken over the towing business of the harbors on the east coast of Lake Michigan.

"She's a good tug, Colonel Pfeffer. She's a good tug yet," protested Old Man Simms, when he had recovered his speech after the general manager's startling announcement. "Why, she's better than most of the new ones, right now. She's got more power and she's cleaner in the sea way than any tug in the Laketown fleet. Good Lord, man, I'd rather trust myself in her in a gale than any other craft that floats on Lake Michigan! She may be older than some of the others but she's been well kept up and she aint half done for yet."

"To be frank, Captain Simms," returned Pfeffer, "the Crescent company needs young, active men in the best tugs it can secure. As you know, the towing business isn't what it used to be. To make both ends meet we must operate fewer tugs, and they must be able to stand hard service and go the limit. After November first we will operate only our own tugs. There will be no more contract tugs in our service."

Old Man Simms sat with bowed head and without a word to say in reply until Colonel Pfeffer roused him from his unpleasant thoughts.

"I should think you would rather welcome the retiring age, Simms," he re-

narked, a great deal of the business crispness gone from his voice. "You have led a very busy life and during all of that time you must have put enough aside at least to make you comfortable for the rest of your days. When a man reaches sixty after such a life as yours has been, it seems to me that he deserves a rest. My dear captain, you are good for many hearty years of life. Why not spend them in ease and comfort, getting a little of the play and fun out of existence, which you heretofore missed?"

Old Man Simms gazed solemnly at the speaker for a moment.

"You don't understand what you're saying, do you?" he asked. "You may be able to study human nature from the business side, Colonel Pfeffer, but you can't look down into a man's soul. When you live to be as old as I am, and when you come to this same day in your life, you'll know why it hurts. Yes, sir, I've got a nice little home and a garden, a good wife and some grandchildren—and enough to live on. I'm all fixed shipshape ashore, but that aint it. When a man's spent thirty of his sixty years aboard of one craft. don't you suppose he has some feeling for her, eh? Well, my life's been spent in the pilot house of the old *Mary McGuire* down there in the harbor, and when I step out of that pilot house it'll be time for them to stow me away below. That's the long and short of it."

"You will operate independently then, Simms?" asked Colonel Pfeffer, raising his brow.

"What else can I do? I don't want to quit."

"Of course, in that case, we'll have to break you, Captain Simms. It's our only weapon against competition, you know. I would advise you to retire, though; I would advise you to listen to reason. The tug is too old to stand a ghost of a show against the steel fleet we will put on the job as soon as the war starts. Better retire and take it easy, Simms, while you can be comfortable."

"Not while the old tug holds together, Pfeffer. I think I'll keep steam on the *Mary McGuire* yet awhile."

The October sunset had reddened the flecked sky in the west and a fresh breeze had sprung up from the southwest when Old Man Simms reached the *Mary McGuire*. Andy McPherson, the engineer, sat on the broad bench in the pilot house with his knees clasped in his hands. His full, ruddy face was expressionless and his eyes were half closed, while his short pipe was clamped tightly between his teeth. As the captain entered, he roused himself without moving from his place on the bench and pulled slowly at his dead pipe.

"We're out of it, Andy," remarked Old Man Simms solemnly. "Pfeffer told me just now that he wasn't going to renew our contract after the first of the month, and that's next week you know."

"The devil!" growled Andy. "Thrown us down, eh? Why the old *Mary's* the best tug in the fleet. The rest of us may have outlived our usefulness, but they aint none of 'em any better than the *Mary McGuire*.

"He claims business is falling off and the company can't afford to use contract tugs now. Their own boats are going to handle all of the business from now on." explained the skipper.

Andy grunted an oath. "Falling off is it? The devil is trying to squeeze out a little more salary for himself by cutting down expenses. And a fine job he's making of it with the company's own tugs, and the kids that's sailing 'em. This afternoon's job ought to make his heart glad."

"What's happened now, Andy?" asked the skipper, briskly. "Nothing serious is it?"

"Nothing only the *Vulcan* and the *Kaiser* got mixed up with the tow barge *Virginus* outside and wound up by letting her strand on the bar about five hundred feet off the north pier. She's got fifty thousand bushels of grain aboard and she's on harder'n a wedge. Oh, it's them two young fellows that Pfeffer brought up from below when he put the *Vulcan* and the *Kaiser* in commission instead of giving the new tugs to some of the older fellows from the rest of the fleet."

"How in the world did they do it?" exclaimed the old man.

Andy cleared his throat and slowly lighted his pipe. "The *Virginus* showed up off here this afternoon about two

o'clock, flying signals for a tug. She's a big fellow, so the *Vulcan* and the *Kaiser* went out to her. There was a good big chunk of a swell running and both got a line to her. Seems the *Beattie* was towing her to Buffalo from Chicago along with another barge. They ran into a bad easterly blow on the other side of the lake and made for this shore, expecting to find good weather in the lee. But they'd hardly picked up this side when the sou'wester hit 'em last night and the *Virginus* cut loose from the rest of the tow. Her skipper aint much acquainted with this coast, and with the glass going down fast, he was anxious to get in somewhere out of the bad weather he knew was due, so he ran up a signal for a tug and wallowed around outside all day. When he hove in sight of the life saving station here the boys telephoned in and the *Vulcan* and the *Kaiser* started out after her. Well, as I said, they got a line to her and began pulling on her, but they didn't get far before they put her slam bang on the bar. There she stuck and there she is now, with the glass still going down. We're going to get a blow as sure as thunder!"

Captain Simms gazed meditatively up at the speckled sky. "T'wont be very pleasant out there before morning," he commented.

"And that aint the worst of it," continued Andy. "They've just taken out about sixty men to lighter her. Picked 'em up around town, poor devils! They're going to dump the grain overboard until she comes up enough to float her off and then the tug'll get her inside. They've hired at seventy cents an hour to work all night, but if the weather does what I think it's going to, they'll earn their money. Look at that glass! Did you ever see it fall like that? Look out there at that mackerel sky in the west, man! If that don't mean trouble for somebody before morning, my name aint Andy McPherson."

"The tugs'll stand by to-night," asserted Old Man Simms.

"Maybe, maybe!" replied McPherson dubiously. "But I wouldn't trust 'em if I was in trouble out there. A couple of greenhorns that would pile a barge up on the bar in broad daylight with only a little swell running wouldn't be much help to a fellow if he needed 'em."

II

Red Tom Fisher, fireman and deck crew of the *Mary McGuire,* slept on board as had been his custom for years. He smoked four pipes sitting on the dock before he went aboard to look after his fires for the night. Then he went into the pilot house, and taking a bundle of quilts out of the locker, he made his bed on the broad bench. This he had done every night since he had joined Old Man Simms and Andy McPherson as a member of the crew of the *Mary McGuire.* No matter how early the start the tug was scheduled to make in the morning, Red Tom always had the steam sizzling and the blower on when the rest of the ship's company came on board. "Man!" Andy often explained to the skipper. "I believe the fellow stays up all night to keep steam." Not so, however. Red Tom slept little but he slept hard.

To-night Tom turned in as usual, with his mind free and his conscience as clear as a babe's. At midnight he was awakened by the rattle of the windows in the pilot house, but he turned over and went to sleep again. Within an hour he was awakened again, disturbed by the motion of the tug at her moorings and the creak and groan of the lines which held her. The pilot house windows rattled more vigorously and the howl of the wind got on his nerves as he lay in his bunk. He could not coax sleep again.

Red Tom shivered as he swung his legs over the side of his bunk and reached for his trousers. Jerking on his jacket and pulling his hat over his eyes, the fireman crept along the leeward side of the cabin to the boiler-room companionway and let himself down carefully into the fire-hole. Breaking the banked fire under the boiler he heaped on more fresh fuel and then listened to the roar of the furnace. Slowly the gauge began to creep upward until at last the steam sizzed from the blower, and Red Tom closed his lips tightly in satisfaction.

Through the open hatchway he could hear the sound of voices wafted uncertainly by the gale. Only an occasional word was blown toward him and then the sound became an indistinct mumble in the scream of the wind. He clambered up to the deck once more, and by the faint glow of the mooring lights of the string of tugs astern of the *Mary McGuire* he could distinguish the figures of men fairly fighting their way along the pier, with their heads bent low that they might better bore into the wind. To his astonishment he noticed that the *Kaiser* and the *Vulcan* were at their moorings as usual.

"What's up?" he shouted as the figures came opposite him on the pier.

"The *Virginus* is in trouble, Tom!" called a voice which Tom could not recognize. "There's sixty or seventy men aboard of her and she's been sendin' up rockets for half an hour!"

"Heaven help 'em!" groaned Red Tom. "The wind's gone into the nor'-west and if she can stand this sea, she's a dandy."

Without further comment he closed the fire-hole hatch. Pulling his hat down more firmly, he bored off into the darkness after the men whose voices drifted to him occasionally on the gale.

At the beach he found a crowd of men huddled in the shelter of a pier house, and their eyes were straining through the darkness to catch the faint lights of the stranded *Virginus,* where they knew men, nearly fourscore of them, all told, were waiting anxiously for rescue. As he arrived, Captain Sanderson and his little crew of life savers plodded wearily through the sand to the pier.

"We can't reach her in the surf boat," announced the keeper to the men on the pier. "We nearly got her when the sea caught us and dumped us all in the lake. When the boat righted the breakers slammed us up on the beach. The surf boat's down there high and dry," he concluded, jerking his thumb toward the darkness to the south.

"They're goners!" groaned one man. "They're goners!"

"We aint goin' to give it up yet," the keeper informed him. "We'll launch the old English life boat and try it again. She's pretty heavy and I thought the surf boat would be easier to handle. The sea's too much for a light boat, though."

"Any volunteers wanted, Capum?" inquired one of the watchers. "My boy's out there and I want to do something."

"I can use about four in the big boat," answered the keeper, and almost instantly half a dozen men stepped forward. Keeper Sanderson picked the first volunteer and three others and started for the life saving station.

Fifteen minutes later the watchers on the pier heard the splash of the oars and the dim outline of the life boat shot past them on the long swells of the harbor, to disappear in the darkness in the direction of the roaring surf and the dim lights of the stranded *Virginus.*

Three times the English life boat and her crew of yellow-jacketed, strong-armed men, attempted to clear the harbor, and three times they were hurled back by the cataracts of water which rose to greet them. On the fourth try, the life savers succeeded in getting past the foaming harbor mouth, but the men were too exhausted to stand the strain longer and the resistless combers drove them back. They were swept helplessly within the harbor and into the beach combers, each man tugging desperately at his oar, until the great life boat was cast spitefully upon the beach. The tired men scrambled through the breakers and crept out upon the sand, some lying prone upon the beach in sheer exhaustion.

Red Tom, who had been watching it all, slipped quietly away and from the nearest telephone, he called up Old Man Simms and Andy McPherson. Then he stumbled back through the darkness to the *Mary McGuire.*

When Andy McPherson arrived, steam was hissing from the blower. "Man!" he exclaimed. "You've got a head of steam on, aint you? Here's the old man coming." Old Man Simms stumbled aboard, in the dim light of the breaking dawn, and listened to Red Tom's recital of the terrible night and the desperate attempts at rescue. "They're going to try it again at daylight," concluded the fireman.

The three started down the pier to-

gether and in the dull, grayish light of the drab dawn they could distinguish the outline of the stranded barge. The seas were breaking over her and the twisting white spray leaped high into the air.

"Lord pity 'em! The rigging's full of men!" exclaimed Old Man Simms.

Keeper Sanderson and his crew, refreshed by the short rest, trundled out the beach gun as the light grew stronger. Three times it banged and three times the thin, shot line hissed, whirling like a snake in the air, to fall far short of its target. With a sorrowful shake of his head the grizzled skipper turned to the gathering crowd about him and sighed deeply like a man who has suffered a crushing defeat.

"We've done all there is to do and it aint any use," he said solemnly.

With the coming of the dawn, the news had spread rapidly and the beach was soon lined with people. Women wringing their hands in despair and men with red, burning eyes, stared helplessly at the black dots hanging to the rigging of the doomed ship. Every person on the shore knew that those black dots, just visible in the early morning light, were men, men suffering from the exposure and hoping against hope that succor could reach them from their friends and their families ashore.

"What's your idea, now? Have you tried everything, Sanderson?" asked Old Man Simms.

The keeper shrugged his shoulders hopelessly. "There don't seem nothing left," he answered. "The boys are clean beat out. They've been at it since half past one this morning. But I'm ready to tackle it again and if I can get volunteers enough, maybe we can get the English life boat out of the surf over there on the beach. Then, if we can get her clear of the breakers, we'll try it again, though there aint one chance in a hundred of reachin' the poor devils out there!"

A dozen stalwart men sprang forward out of the group of sailors and fishermen and lumberjacks; Keeper Sanderson found men enough to man his boat in a moment. The men of his regular crew, he detailed to remain that they might be strong if he needed them later. The keeper and his volunteers walked resolutely to the beach, where the big surf boat was pounding in the surf. Strong men waded into the seething water and seized the gunwales of the bulky craft. With seas dashing in their faces, half a score bent their strength upon her and slowly forced her out until she ceased to strike the bottom. Then with a shout the volunteer crew sprang aboard, while the remainder held her steady in the breakers. Keeper Sanderson seized the sweep with both hands and at his command, the men in the water gave the life boat a mighty shove ahead into the rolling sea. Six heavy oars caught the water at the same time and the rescuers were off.

With the mighty strokes of the men at the oars, men who had been bred to the sea, the clumsy English life boat drew out of the white combers and headed for the doomed *Virginus*. A faint shout hurled over the water reached the ears of the struggling men in the life boat and they knew that the imperiled ones had witnessed their efforts to save them.

Captain Sanderson's crew pushed stubbornly on, fairly punching their way into the storm. Mighty arms swelled under the strain and muttered oaths of determination were hurled away on the wind. The eyes of the hundreds on the pier were following them, as they rose high on the crest of a monster sea or dropped completely out of sight in its hollows.

The multitude saw the white craft almost within reach of its goal, when the cheer, which was about to rise, died in the hundreds of throats and the great crowd gasped in alarm. In a flash a huge comber had caught the life boat, spinning it round like a cork, and then she was bottom up. When she righted herself, her intrepid crew clung to the safety lines, but she had lost her headway and the sea was sweeping her back toward the shore. Desperately as they might fight to regain the lost advantage, the mighty seas were not to be denied. By good luck, Keeper Sanderson managed to make the entrance of the harbor through the surf, and when the life boat reached her moorings, the white-faced men, dripping from their ducking, crawled wearily out upon the pier and

stood helplessly about, as though disgraced by their defeat.

Keeper Sanderson was beginning to show the effects of the strain, yet an unconquerable flame shone in his eyes; beaten in his battle with his sworn enemy, his fighting spirit still rebelled. Women, white-faced and shivering with fear, rushed upon him imploringly. One whose white hair was loose and flying in the wind, fell upon her knees at his feet and clutched at his dripping oilskins.

"Save them, Captain Sanderson!" she cried. "My two boys are aboard of her and they're all I've got in the world!"

"Bear up, Mrs. Trott," he said kindly. "I've said I'd do my best to bring 'em all in safe, and I will."

"She's breaking up! She's breaking up!" came the cry. Men groaned and turned away sick at heart; women ran in mad hysteria about the sand, some casting themselves down upon their knees and screaming to Heaven to intervene.

"Hold on! Hold on!" shouted Sanderson. "She aint going to pieces yet! But she's swung around a little on the bar. We've got to get to 'em quick now before she pounds 'em all to death. If only we had a tug here that could live in this sea! She could tow us out to wind'ard and then we'd reach the boys and bring 'em all in."

The group stared hopelessly because they knew well the harbor tugs were not fit for such a trial. It remained for Colonel Pfeffer, himself, to break the silence: "I'd gladly send one of our new tugs, Keeper," he said, authoritatively, "But it would be a useless risk. Nothing we have here could live in that sea."

"If the *Kaiser* and *Vulcan* had stayed by her last night, instead of running away and leaving the poor devils aboard, we wouldn't be needing a tug now," remarked the keeper bitterly.

Old Man Simms gazed stupidly at the Colonel, but his eyes soon wandered past him to the white faces of the women. Beside him, Red Tom was nervously champing a cud of tobacco and shifting about uneasily. Andy McPherson's big, dull face was turned toward the *Virginus*.

"I'll try it, Sanderson," said Old Man Simms quietly.

The crowd gasped, and Old Man Simms turned to Andy McPherson. "What do you say, Andy?" he asked.

"I say yes," shouted McPherson.

"How about it, Tom? Are you willing? I wouldn't order any man to go with me. He may not come back."

Red Tom emitted a nervous laugh, partly tangled with an oath. "What do you think I been crammin' the fuel into her since one o'clock this morning for? If it aint enough, I'll be there to give her some more!"

"You're not going to risk the old *Mary*, Simms?" protested Colonel Pfeffer. "Remember she's still under contract and subject to the orders of the Crescent Company."

"Hang the Crescent Company!" flung back Old Man Simms, as he started for his tug. "If the boys say go, I'm going!"

"God bless you!" screamed the white haired woman after him.

III

In less than twenty minutes the *Mary McGuire* steamed out toward the white foam at the harbor mouth, with the English life boat in tow. Six yellow-jacketed men with sou'westers buckled under their chins and life jackets wrapped around their waists, sat quietly in the life boat while the tireless Sanderson held the sweep at the stern. Old Man Simms grasped the helm of the *Mary McGuire* and stared straight ahead as though watching for an opening in the harbor breakers. Andy McPherson, his cob pipe clenched between his jaws, watched his engine with a grim smile while Red Tom sang in the stokehold below as he selected his fuel for the final test.

With a wild rush the little tug sprang into the breakers. A sheet of white spume leaped high over her and for an instant she was lost to view. Then she rose dripping at the bow and headed directly to the northward, burying herself time and again in the solid walls of water which swept down upon her. Each time the curtain of spray hid her from those on shore, but each time she

was seen to rise again, with her red bottom showing and the black smoke streaming low behind her.

Out to the windward of the *Virginus* she slowly came about, showing more of her red bottom as she rolled. Her funnel seemed to fairly dip water and the seas threatened every minute to turn the red bottom upward. A tiny jet of steam arose and then came the sound of the whistle. The men and women on the pier knew she had cast loose the life boat and the time for the great test had come. For a moment all eyes shifted from the imperiled *Virginus* to the operations to the windward.

It was a desperate plan, this daring scheme of Captain Sanderson's, so desperate that the old sailors ashore could not grasp his idea. But as he neared the *Virginus* they saw him holding well over under the bow of the stranded vessel. Just as Sanderson's boat grazed the stem of the wreck, a life saver in the forward end of the small craft arose in his seat and hurled a line on board of the *Virginus*. Several men seized it and made fast. Then as the life boat sped away before the gale, the man in the forward end paid out the line until a light hawser was on the way through the surf toward the wreck. When it was fast, the life savers dug the water desperately with their oars in an effort to stop the headway of their craft and work back toward the *Virginus*. Their gain was slow and heart-breaking, yet the hope in the hearts of the endangered ones was now high and the shore watchers with prayers on their lips gazed eagerly into the storm.

It was here that Captain Sanderson made his mistake. His struggles had made him over-anxious and he had set his heart upon snatching those human beings from death. Instead of carrying his line ashore and finishing with the breeches buoy, he attempted to take the crew off in the life boat. Perhaps he feared that the poor half-perished fellows could not muster strength enough to manipulate the buoy lines; perhaps he feared that the wave-pounded ship could not longer withstand the punishment of the waves. Whatever his thoughts, he attempted more than human power could accomplish.

Without an instant's warning, the line snapped and a groan of despair went up from the suffering ones as they saw the life boat whirl helplessly away from them in the sea. The men in the yellow jackets felt a sinking at their hearts as they struggled against the force which was driving them away, and every man of them knew their struggle and their hardship had been in vain.

IV

From the pilot house of the rolling *Mary McGuire* Old Man Simms had seen the failure, and although he uttered not a word, his old jaws closed with a snap. The tug was heading for the harbor then and had long since passed to the leeward of the *Virginus*. Running before the sea, she was foaming under the stern with every plunge and Andy was throttling her to save the racking as the screw raced. With the failure of the life savers, hope had died in the hearts of the watchers on the beach and they were transfixed with astonishment to see the *Mary McGuire* steam past the harbor without an attempt to make the entrance..

"He can't make it!" some one shouted. "He's going to beach her!"

But such a course was farthest from the thoughts of the old man in the pilot house of the *Mary McGuire*. Little by little he forced her wet nose to the westward. Great combers struck her heavily on the quarter, blow after blow, causing her to tremble like a frightened thing from stem to stern. The water smashed against her deck houses and rushed in torrents along her deck, but Old Man Simms held stubbornly to her helm until she was headed squarely into the sea again, boring her way to the windward.

"You can do it, old girl," muttered the skipper. "You've got to do it now! If it finishes us, we'll all go together and it wont be such a bad way, either—not such a bad way for a couple of old ones like us that have been together all these years."

It was a long battle, but with the black smoke belching from her rolling funnel, the little tug forced her way bit by bit into the seas which threatened

every minute to overwhelm her. Not a point did she vary from her course until the great black hull of the *Virginus* loomed up less than a hundred feet ahead.

Up under the lee of the stranded barg where the sea was somewhat deadened by the sodden hulk, Captain Simms suddenly threw down his helm, and like a magic toy, the little tug swung alongside. For the instant both boats were enveloped in a perfect cataract of solid sea. Then came a sharp quiver and a dull crash and the glass of the pilot house windows of the *Mary McGuire* flew into millions of bits. Old Man Simms instinctively closed his eyes as he felt the sting in his face. Blood oozed from a dozen cuts and his white beard gradually became streaked with crimson.

Hardly had the tug recovered from the first shock when the back suction of the sea threw her violently against the monster hull of the *Virginus* with a crunch and a grind that was sickening. Every timber in the audacious little craft trembled and groaned, and the port rail crumbled away into splinters under the contact.

"Man! That finished us!" exclaimed Andy, down in the steamy engine room. Then the two bells to back her clanged above his head and he added—"But it's the old man's tug, and he's sailed her long enough to know what she can do—unless he's gone daft."

But the old man up there in the pilot house, with the spray dashing through the broken windows, drenching and chilling his old body, was not daft. His mind was clear and his brain was working at high speed. He knew his tug and he had confidence in her. When the back wash had for the moment sealed her to the *Virginus,* he thrust his head out of the broken door of the pilot house, with his blood-smeared face turned anxiously up to the barge. He could see the white, drawn faces of the men on the wreck, their bright eyes peering eagerly down in unbelieving wonder at the daring little craft.

"Can you stand by to take a line?" shouted the captain of the tug.

"Aye, aye, sir!" sang a voice from the deck of the barge. "There's a few of us able to work. Let the line come!"

In answer to the skipper's call, Red Tom scrambled out of the stokehold and ran to the after deck. There he seized the heaving line and awaited his orders. Old Man Simms, with equal haste, made his way forward and picked up the end of a wet, tangled heaving line. In a moment he had straightened out the tangle and it was coiled in his hands.

"Heave away aft!" he called out, and both lines whizzed up over the side of the *Virginus.* A moment later the hawser went slipping up the black side and pulled taut.

"All fast?" asked Simms.

"All fast!" sang out a voice on board of the barge.

"Now get aboard of the tug before the sea swamps us!" ordered the old man.

Down from the rigging scrambled the half-perished ship's company of the *Virginus.* Arms and legs were stiffened by the hours of desperate clinging and exposure to the spray and the chill wind, but those who were too weak to move rapidly were carried along by their stronger shipmates. Others whose eagerness carried them only as far as the rail, fell helplessly to the deck of the tug as they attempted to leap, and their last bit of strength was exhausted in the effort. For nearly five minutes the men who had hoped and watched and prayed for rescue in the face of almost sure death fell over the side of their intended tomb to the low deck of the tug beneath. Every spot of shelter on the little *Mary McGuire* was crowded with men—men white-faced, but bright-eyed and thankful.

Captain Brainard, the master of the *Virginus,* alone remained on board of his ship to cast off the lines which bound the tug captive—and to be the last man to leave her. With an effort he cast off the forward hawser and ran aft; but before he could reach the line, the *Virginus* heeled over suddenly and her deck swayed and sagged.

"She's broken in two!" he cried.

"Jump!" came the hail from Old Man Simms. "She's letting go all over and she'll roll over on us in a minute!"

Brainard sprang upon the rail as the tug's bow swung away in the sea. The

after line which still held her to the wreck, groaned under the strain, and Brainard leaped down to the fan tail of the tug. At the same instant the heavy hawser snapped with a crack like the report of a rifle and the frayed ends rose high into the air. Like a freed animal released from its tether, the *Mary McGuire* sprang away, but not before Old Man Simms had seized the whistle cord and held it down for one long triumphant scream.

Far away in the gathering dusk of the short autumn afternoon, the old man could see the beach and the piers of the harbor, blackened by crowds of people. Above the roar of the storm, he caught the sound of their mighty cheer and the blood pounded through his weary old body with renewed vigor.

Racing like mad before the storm the *Mary McGuire* approached the harbor, impatiently shaking off the seas which broke over her. Willing volunteers helped Tom below, and the black smoke pouring from the funnels was driven out ahead of the flying tug. The onlookers held their breath with cheers on their lips as the little craft reached the maelstrom at the harbor mouth, but with a terrific plunge she shot into it. For the flash of an instant she was lost to view; then she burst through the wall of white spume and slipped into the calmer waters of the protected harbor.

Cheers which had been stifled burst forth with a mighty roar from the throats of the multitude and there was a rush for the pier as the *Mary McGuire* turned in at her old mooring place. Women dropped to their knees and voiced their prayers of thanksgiving. Others joined in the wild rush toward the tug and fought their way forward in frenzy that they might be the first to embrace their loved ones brought back from death through a miracle of the sea.

Once more Old Man Simms thrust his head from the broken door of the battered pilot house. His face was still pale and streaked with dried blood, but there was no expression of anxiety now. Instead, a grin of happiness had spread over the old man's worn countenance. Arms were stretched toward him and his name was on the hundreds of lips.

When he stepped ashore the human tidal wave enveloped him. Women wildly embraced him and smothered his withered old hands and his bloody face with kisses, and men pounded him on the back, with tears streaming down their faces, until he begged for mercy. Farther over on the wharf, Andy McPherson, black and grimy and steamy, with a look of alarm on his old Scotch face was fighting off the joy-mad crowd.

"Stand away, woman!" he roared. "I'm no soft headed lad that I want to be kissed to death. Gad! Do you want to crush the life out o' me? Hands off me, I say! I want to get home to my supper, d'ye hear? I'm hungry, I say!" Deep down in the darkness of his firehold, Red Tom was cowering in mortal fear that he, too, should be dragged forth to the slaughter.

When there was a lull in the excitement, Colonel Pfeffer, red faced and puffing under the strain, walked up to Old Man Simms and slapped him on the shoulder.

"Simms," he said impressively, "that was fine work you've done to-day. I wish you would come up to the office to-morrow and we'll fix up another contract. We've changed our mind about what I told you about yesterday, and anyhow, I can place you and your crew in a new tug in the spring."

"Hang the new tug!" thundered Old Man Simms. "The *Mary McGuire's* better to-day than anything you can build!"

Colonel Pfeffer's face reddened still more for an instant in sudden anger, but his heart softened as he looked hard into the white face and the heavy eyes of Old Man Simms.

"Confound it!" he cried. "You're an old bullhead, Simms, aint you? You'll show up at the office to-morrow to sign the contract and you can use the *Mary* or any other old tub that suits your fancy! You hear? You and McPherson and that red-headed fireman of yours can ride clean to Jericho in her if you want to! I don't believe you *could* sink her, Simms."

"We stood it pretty well for a couple of old cusses, didn't we, Pfeffer?" chuckled Old Man Simms.

Señorita Intrigue

By HAROLD C. BURR

CAPTAIN HERRERA lay prone on his stomach behind the fringe of high-plumed palms that belted the crescent shore. It wasn't a dignified posture for the usually resplendent young aide of the little red and blue army of Costa Vista. Also he wore the tatters of a *reconcentrado* of the lean old days before Spain had been driven home to Madrid—unkempt, canvas pantaloons and enveloping straw hat. But beneath the rags the man was tall for his race, his muscles knitted under his smooth olive skin in long, graceful, pliable ripples.

At frequent intervals he swept the range of the skyline where it came down to meet the sea. He began at the reefs directly in front of him, slowly bringing his glasses around until he looked northward up the coast. That was his sole occupation, for be it known that Captain Herrera was on special detail for *el presidente*. So far his vigil had been in vain. The ultramarine half-moon of the brooding ocean, spread out before him in the heat haze was without that blemish of man's making—a smoke smudge. That was what he was there to sight—the expected filibuster from the States.

While he waited, he speculated on that which had gone before. Lucky indeed for the cause of the republic that the half-witted boy had been taken to the dictator and pumped. He had divulged much that it had been good for loyal ears to hear. Parzona, the wine vender of the plaza, had been deep in the plot. It was he who had been selected by the revolutionists to wave the scarlet flag from the palm grove. It was to have been the signal to the crew of the *Nancy Hawkes* that the coast was clear. After that the steamer was to round to and get her contraband cargo into the brush. Two hundred stout hearts were to break open the boxes and arm themselves for a forced march on the capitol. A quick assault and all would have been over.

Well, it was a pretty scheme, but by the grace of the Virgin, it had miscarried! The traitor Parzona had been led tremblingly forth, blindfolded and shot against a limestone wall; his henchmen scattered as men are scattered at the mouth of a machine gun. Every rebel was fleeing for the border helter-skelter to save his own hide. And in loyal Captain Herrera's ragged pocket reposed Parzona's scarlet flag. He was on hand to signal the *Nancy Hawkes* on her arrival in the offing. Behind him was a squad of the dictator's haughty little troopers, clustered ferociously around a Gatling's breech, lazily smoking until *el capitan* sent back the word to fire. You see, there was a last crushing blow to administer to sedition. The arms and munitions of war on the way to aid the rebels must be captured. And to Herrera had fallen the lion's share of the honor.

The reflection of the sun on the hot beach glared back into the young officer's eyes and made him drowsy from watching a pot that wouldn't boil. He got up and strolled over to his men hidden behind coverts of rank, withered grass. One or two looked up and nodded indolently—democrats of the far

South. He went among them with a flow of strange words. They lazily saluted him, propped, comfortably negligée, against the wheels of the machine gun. But he was satisfied with his instructions and went back to patrolling the blank horizon at long range, yawning himself.

So the hours drifted by—inland the buzzing of insects; seaward the hot glare of tropic noon-day shimmered bright as burnished tin. Everywhere it was dazzling and still with the stillness of a world contracting, shriveling in a vast, invisible oven. Herrera kept in the shade and was grateful for it. He rolled cigarets, tobacco and paper of two shades of brown, and watched the shrunken lizards at work in the scorching sand. At intervals as before, he used the regulation field-glasses of the army.

Suddenly the slow arc-line his glasses drew from south to north hesitated, lingered overlong. There was something off there, up the coast, that held them. At first it was only a trailing, irregular speck, but it grew steadily larger, discernible to the naked eye. A steamer of some sort was hugging the shore at half speed. He heard his detachment behind him quicken to animation, begin to talk excitedly, felt that they were pointing up the coast. The *Nancy Hawkes* had been sighted.

When he could make out the rust on her steel flanks above the caked line of salt and the red-girt funnel, the captain stepped boldly out upon the sand and sauntered to the edge of the lapping tide. He extracted, without haste, Parzona's scarlet flag and waved it three times over his head with a peculiar snap of the wrist that showed it to the best advantage. The sun streamed through and through it redly, making bloody its folds. Before the man, capered its gloomy, distorted shadow. It went whipping around him like a sheet in the wind.

The signal given, he waited. The steamer was close abeam now. He saw the little jet of steam leave the whistle pipe and a second thereafter the shrill screech was borne in to him. He counted those whistles—once, twice, three times before they ceased. Whereat Captain Herrera of the standing army of Costa Vista felt his heart do a trip-hammer tattoo against his ribs. The signal had been returned; the trap hadn't been laid in vain.

But is wasn't to be sprung until after dark. That had been the plan from the first and the young officer deemed it unwise to alter anything at this late stage of the game. It might serve to arouse suspicion unnecessarily. So he retreated to the dead grass where his squad crouched and waited the coming of the small boat. The troopers ate their cold rations with the expectation that this was to be their last night in camp and patted the cool nozzle of the Gatling affectionately. That was the trump of the whole pack.

The *Nancy Hawkes* rode at anchor off the reefs. Her decks were devoid of all life, but there were signs of it. Up forward, sailormen's wash was hung to dry. But that was all. She lit no red and green lights at dusk. After it was quite dark Herrera heard the splash of a boat going overboard, the sound of oars—and the single blinking eye of a lantern crawled shoreward. The South American gave a last whisper to his men and received mumbled assurance. Then he crept back to the waters' edge to meet the delegation from the filibuster. That portion of the army of Costa Vista immediately under his command was to await his summons without betraying movement. All was in readiness to give the Yankee friends of traitors a rousing welcome. The dictator was a quite celebrated apothecary of the equator. He dispensed a very fine assortment of lead pills.

The single occupant of the approaching boat was rowing back toward him. In the uncertain glow of that moonless early evening, Herrera was able to make out the slicker and oiled sou'wester. It was misty and damp and the fog drizzle sparkled on the saffron coat and cap as the slim body bent to the oars with puny strokes. The wily skipper of the *Nancy Hawkes* had sent ashore a boy to reconnoitre.

Captain Herrera waded out into the tepid breakers and dragged the prow of the light skiff inland until its keel grated on the sand. The rower shipped

oars with a graceful backward-inward movement of the arms and turned to jump out. One look at the boy's face and the officer crowded down an oath of astonishment. Here was a slight complication butting into the scheme of things. He would have to reconstruct a bit. For the boy wasn't a boy at all—it was a girl!

Now the captain was unmarried though not unloved of women. Many a *señorita* had noted him passing from her lattice and from that cool shadow exchanged glances that meant much—and little. *El capitan* was athletic, white-teethed, dazzling with his amorous smile that curled so attractively behind his jet mustache. Such a one was made for love—to give as well as receive. But Herrera, in his twenty-ninth year, was heart-free.

And yet to-night he shook himself uneasily. What was there in this chit of a Yankee girl, caught red-handed at smuggling rifles into his country, to quicken his pulse electrically the instant he saw her for the first time in his life? At the initial touch of her soft fingers twisted into his, a vaguely sick sensation well nigh overcame him. Yet he had but helped her gallantly out of her boat. Something new came into his life with it, something went out—happiness in both instances. He had lost something with which he had always been content. And the new-found void ached and called to her, to the torment of his soul. He had to brush his hands across his eyes before he could see what she looked like.

Herrera saw a well-rounded chin, a petulant mouth with drooping corners, and a pair of steadfast eyes, dark and deep and tranquil as the ocean at night in time of calm—and not much else after he saw the eyes of her.

"I—I—father sent me to tell you the—the packages are all ready to be landed," she faltered. "He's down sick with the fever or he'd have come himself. I'm his daughter. I'm to take back word to him."

He twirled his mustache indulgently, in the throes of an absurd desire; he wanted to pat her on the back and tell her it was all right! Poor little *Señorita* Intrigue, she didn't know any harm—surely didn't mean any! Why, she had called the rifles the "packages." Again he shook himself and faced her resolutely, brusquely.

"You spoke of sickness aboard—fever?"

At that she came nearer to him yet. "Yes," she said, "father's sick. We'd have put in at Buenos Aires for medical aid, but for the quarantine. We couldn't afford to fly the yellow jack coming down. We had to keep an appointment, father said. He insisted that we steam ahead. But I'm dreadfully worried about him."

"Is it contagious, *señorita?*"

"Well, the ship's doctor's disinfected the quarters and wont let any of us near him excepting me. I've been nurse."

Captain Herrera felt that he had his suddenly aroused passions safely under control and forthwith he began to play his part. "The skipper is fortunate,"—taking off his woven thatch hat and bowing with chastened mockery. "But, *señorita,* you must bear messages to whoever has been left in command of the *Nancy Hawkes.* Tell him with the compliments of the country that he and his filibuster are confiscated as contrabands of war on the dictator's orders. The rebel who was to meet you here has been taken and shot; the plans of the insurgents are known; the insurgents themselves are flying to the four winds. It will do you no good to resist. No international law can protect you." He replaced his humble hat with another sad flourish. "You have the dubious honor of addressing Captain Herrera, aide to *el presidente.* My men are quartered yonder. If you weigh anchor a machine gun will blow you out of the water. Pardon, *señorita,* a thousand times. It is a soldier's duty."

The girl, frightened, had shrunk away from him toward her skiff. "Oh!" she gasped. "What are we—we prisoners for? My country—" She drew herself up proudly.

He laughed half-heartedly. "Your Uncle Sam—he is a great, big boy," he conceded. "But you, *señorita,* are meddlers. The charge will be smuggling rifles to the revolutionists. You—I can do nothing for you."

"Rifles!" she repeated after him, horrified, seizing on the word and clinging to it. "But—but—I don't know anything about rifles?"

"Ah, but it is pitiful!"—irrelevantly. "You'd better return aboard, *señorita,* with my orders. Your father—the crew will understand. But tell them to be discreet—for your sake."

She suffered him to lead her silently back to her boat. On the wooden bow seat the lantern still flickered dully. In its feeble rays he caught a better, clearer view of her face, sweetly troubled at the import of his news. He looked avidly. Yes, the wayward, headstrong expression was gone; in its place a puzzled look like that of a timid animal which has been hurt and can't fathom the attack.

"Adios," he whispered softly, pushing her off. "I will do what I can for you, *amiga mia.*"

She looked so lonely out there, drifting uncertainly, that with a bitter, smothered cry he turned and stumbled back to his little detachment. It was brutal of him—that pushing of her away from him at night, alone. But what could he do? He had told her it was a soldier's duty. There was nothing else to do—but what had he done.

But the *Nancy Hawkes* was infected. There was contagion aboard. Well, he would have to dispatch a messenger back to the city for orders. Meanwhile he would see that the filibuster remained snugly under the guns of Costa Vista. No doubt the dictator would send on the pest-house authorities to take charge.

He sent two men out on the sand spit, laden with dry wood, to build a huge bonfire and keep watch there, turn and turn about, during the night. The flames lighted up the sea in darting streaks of yellow, driving back the curtain of gloom beyond the *Nancy Hawkes.* The little steel coaster rode the shallow swells like some black ghost marked by the fire with phosphorescence. Not a light shone from her anywhere, along the portholes or above. She might well have been some grim ship of death itself.

Young Herrera roved restlessly about. Twice he laid himself down to sleep, but each time he got back to his feet and went to the palm fringe for another and last look at the dim length of the *Nancy Hawkes.* The last trip he stood there, brooding.

At last a lone twinkling spark of light starred the dingy old coaster amidships, lighted since he had last looked. It reminded him of *her* lantern. There was something pathetic about its feeble rays that appealed to him. It was like a beacon of dying hope from her to him, set there to guide him thither. With an impatient gesture he turned away in haste.

He went pottering around the steel snout of the Gatling, spoke to the alert soldiers on guard at the death-dealing crank. Then he went back to his spread blanket. For a long while he lay prone, staring up at the tropical stars that gemmed a blue-black heaven miles above him. And they blinked back at him friendly. He wondered if she were as lonely as was he. Ten minutes later, when the watch at the machine gun was being changed, he was gone.

Beyond the sand pit, up coast, he was wading into deep water, trousers rolled above his knees. He moved softly out, splashing not at all, and when he felt the cool water under his arm-pits he struck out for the *Nancy Hawkes* without an audible ripple. Sharks infest that southern sea, but he gave them no thought. He swam overhand, powerfully, low down in the water and well out of the radius of the illumining blaze that etched out the position of the captured bark from the States. For caution's sake he approached her from the far side.

At the anchor chains he swung out of the brine, water running off his garments in a deluge. He climbed over the bows like a cat on a feline tour of investigation, and made his way along the deserted deck, past rusty winches and heaps of rope, leaving behind him a moist trail of dripping water; amidships he paused, staring down into the gaping mouth of the lower deck, confused. He was a soldier of the land. That pit, black and ugly, separated forecastle from saloon, but he didn't know it. Up to him floated the odor of disinfectant, reminding him of the monastery.

hospital he had once been laid up in and of the sweet-faced, silent sisters. At a loss how to find her amid all these strange surroundings, he turned away from the iron ladder and—

She had been leaning on the rail, chin pensively bracketed in her hands. Recognition was instantaneous on his part. In a second he had her wrist captive, and she would have cried out but that he held her so tight she was forced to catch her breath in silent affright. What she saw when she looked in his eyes for explanation of his extraordinary conduct was what women pray for in the eyes of the man they love. It made her gasp and wrench loose herself from him for no other reason in the world except that she didn't want anything of the sort to happen. It was all too unreal, too impossible for a plain Yankee skipper's daughter to grasp offhand. First he must explain—well, many things. But he was already about that necessary business—violently, after the manner of the Latin in love.

She listened intently, a-quiver. He spoke half in Spanish, half in English; and English was the only language she understood—ordinarily. But she contrived to hear enough: he loved her, wished her to go to a priest and marry him. But not at the sacrifice of deserting her sick father. Ah, no, that was not *el capitan's* way! Together they would flee—on the *Nancy Hawkes*. For her he would turn traitor to his commission, to his beloved Costa Vista, to his blood—all for her. He had spiked the Gatling before starting. All they had to do was to steam away.

She twisted in the arms that had gathered her hungrily in. "No," she said decidedly, "not that. I wont have it—for me! It's too big a sacrifice for you to make—your home, your honor, your friends."

"I am willing,"—simply, sweepingly—"Why not you?"

"But you must be moon-struck! It can't be true, it can't be!"

"There is no moon."

"Well then, dear, wait, We'll be your prisoners in a day or two and after I'm released—" The look of horror was so patent on his face that she stopped abruptly, halted by a new fear.

"*Señorita!* can it be that you do not know, suspect? No one aboard this ship will go free. The same fate awaits all—a firing squad at daylight. But I speak baldly. Forgive me, *señorita.*"

She took it without flinching. "And you—if you're caught here with us?"

"Ah! but you are brave. What a wife for a soldier!" He shrugged for himself. "And for me you ask? Perhaps the same grave for both of us. Who knows?"

She rose at least an inch in stature, frantic at last. "Then go, go, go! Go back to your men, dear. It's better that one should live. Quick, they will miss you, trace you here! Go—if you love me!"

Captain Herrera didn't move. He stood by her silently, she wrapped in his arms, both at a deadlock.

Of a sudden a dark, skulking shape crawled over the side right beside them. It made no noise as it took the few steps separating them. Then he saw them and came over eagerly, swiftly. It was a man, a soldier from Herrera's detachment itself, soaked to his skin like his captain, breathing hard for his wind. He drew up before them and saluted. The girl held her breath in agonized suspense.

"Dispatches from *el presidente.*" In the light of a blind deck lamp he held out a red-sealed envelope. "It is dry. I kept it aloft and swam with the hand well out of the water."

Herrera, only angry at the interruption, had disengaged himself. "You followed me, fellow?" he demanded, scowling at his subordinate.

The soldier made a deprecating motion of the hand in partial denial. "The special messenger arrived soon after you left. The dispatch was important. I saw you leave the shore. Yes; I followed."

Herrera tore open the flap and read without more ado. The girl saw him tremble, saw that trembling communicated to the paper he held. And he was as white as the paper. The humble soldier who had caught him at treason was forgotten. He flushed, and turned to her a face that was alive with the joy of complete deliverance.

"Why, *señorita mia,* it's all right!"

he said, still dazed. "A terrible mistake has been made. The agents of the dictator have been ransacking poor Parzona's private mail. After all, he was but the secret agent for a rich syndicate of Yankee tobacco growers. The *Nancy Hawkes'* cargo consists simply of farming implements. They were to be landed secretly here and stored in the woods to fool the native planters. They resent all outside competition. But why didn't Parzona explain? Ah, poor, simple-hearted devil! It was his loyalty to his employers."

She was nestling close to him again, radiant—she who had never heard of Parzona. "Then father's done nothing criminal? Oh, I'm so glad! And he can go to a hospital and be treated? And I'm not a contraband of war any more?"

"Ah, *señorita mia,*" he whispered for her ears only, "never that—but always my dove of peace."

Neegan's Debt

By JOHN BARTON OXFORD

FAR out beyond the diving-raft Neegan stopped the swinging, overhand strokes, turned on his back, and, floating on the little swells which came rolling in from seaward, drifted lazily with the outgoing tide.

The August sun, beating down upon him, was decidedly comfortable after the chill water of his long swim from the shore. On the distant beach he caught the sound of the band, banging out a popular march in the pavilion, and the laughter and screams of the bathers who were content to tumble about in the surf close to the shore.

It was only when the sounds from the beach was growing decidedly faint that he swung about, and, remembering he had the tide against him on the swim back, began again those seemingly clumsy strokes, which nevertheless took him through the water at a speed many a more-finished swimmer might have envied.

For one brief moment he lifted his head and shook the water from his eyes to assure himself just where he was. The tide had carried him farther out than he had imagined. The diving-raft, bobbing up and down, was just a faint dot in the distance, and far beyond that the beach was a dull, white blur.

A long swim, truly, but Neegan was not in the least daunted by the fact that he had drifted rather farther out than he intended.

A strong swimmer and in the pink of condition, that long swim in would be merest play to him, and the fact that the tide was against him only added to the zest of it. He had taken many a longer swim than this and under much worse conditions. Chuckling to himself from the sheer joy of action, he struck out boldly, bobbing up and down with each swell like some particularly ungainly species of porpoise.

Out shot one sinewy arm, to be followed immediately by the other, and in towards the diving-raft Neegan pushed his way against the tide, grinning, and blowing and altogether satisfied with this exhilarating sort of exercise.

But just as he was nearing the raft and the sounds from the beach were becoming much plainer, a sudden, knife-like pain shot through his right leg. At once it spread to his other leg; then to his chest and his arms.

In all his experience in the water—

and Neegan had been swimming ever since he could remember—he had never before experienced the pangs of cramps. His face blanched. He shut his teeth, and by a sheer effort of will he worked his tortured arms and feebly kicked out with his aching legs in a sudden, panic-stricken effort to reach the raft. Once there he could rest and recover his strength, or, if need be, summon aid from the beach. But the pain became more acute. His whole body seemed to grow numb and paralyzed in a sudden and most terrifying manner.

He was aware, too, that with every muscle of his body tied in a knot he could make no headway, that the tide was setting him back, that the raft and the beach were receding from him rapidly.

He strove to turn upon his back and float until this sharper paroxysm should pass, but so bent was his body with the pain that he could not straighten himself out sufficiently to float, and the attempt to do so merely succeeded in sending him beneath the surface.

With that immersion came Neegan's first realization of his immediate peril. He came to the surface, blowing, half-choked and with his face white and twisted with pain. He raised his voice in a panic-stricken shout for help, but even as he shouted he realized how feeble was his voice and how small was the chance that it would carry to the beach. That there might be other swimmers near him seemed out of the question, for the bathers who ever ventured beyond the diving-raft were few indeed.

Again he went under the surface, and when, after a seemingly interminable space of time he once more came up to the air, his lungs seemed bursting and his sense of helplessness bred in him a terror he had never before felt in his life.

It is said that a drowning man sees the events of his life pass before him in swift review, but Bull Neegan, struggling there feebly in the water, experienced no such phenomenon. His only thought was a vague wonder as to how long it would be before he went under for the third and final time. He was still shouting at the top of his weakened lungs, but he was quite unaware that he did so. Through his numbed mind flashed but one thought—"How long'll it be? How long'll it be?" And the question kept repeating itself over and over endlessly, as if it were the only thing of any real importance in the world.

Then the pains shot through his racked body once more and he could feel himself going down for the last time. The water stung his nostrils, but with one last mighty effort he lifted his head and bellowed his protest against it all.

And then something swished in the water close beside him; there was a sound of labored breathing close by; a hand shot out, caught his chin and tilted back his head, at the same time supporting it so that he could get air.

"Steady pardner, steady!" said a voice in his ringing ears. "I got yuh, old hoss! Yuh've had a narrer squeak of it I guess, but we'll pull you out all right. Can yuh hear me?"

Feebly Neegan grunted an affirmation.

"All right, then," the other instructed. "Yuh aint in no panic now, are yuh? Yuh aint goin' to grab me and strangle me nor nothin' like that, are yuh, if I come closer to yuh?"

"Naw," Neegan sputtered. "Git me in to the beach. I got my head about me yet."

"Good for yuh, old timer. Put your hands on my shoulders. That's the stuff! Can yuh keep that grip? Will the cramps let yuh? Yuh can, hey? Good enough. Now we're off. We can't make the raft; the tide's too strong against us. I'll make a slant for the beach. If yuh've got any breath left when we git in closer, let out a yell or two and some one'll come out and pick us up. Keep yer head up as fur as yuh can. Now!"

Neegan's rescuer started shoreward with long, even strokes. In that brief moment he had been treading water beside the stricken man, Neegan had had a good look at the face. It was not an attractive face. It was sadly freckled and crowned with a mop of fiery hair; the blue eyes had a most ridiculous cast in them, but to Neegan it was the most beautiful face he had ever seen.

Shoreward they went steadily. The man was a wonderful swimmer, there was no doubt of that. Neegan, twisted

and racked with the pain as he was, noticed the clean-cut, powerful strokes, and the seemingly tireless manner with which they followed one another with never a halt or pause.

Steadily they approached the beach, at a long slant on account of the opposing tide. Now Neegan could plainly see the promenaders on the glistening sand.

He lifted his voice and sent out a mighty hail.

"That's the stuff, old top!" his rescuer encouraged. "Git 'em out here if you can. I'm beginnin' to wilt. Let 'em have one more."

Again Neegan shouted, and this time with good effect. Some one on the beach shaded his eyes and peered out at them. Instantly he was pointing excitedly in their direction and a crowd was collecting about him; then a boat was run down to the water and shot into the surf, and with two men doubled over the oars, came pulling towards them.

They were lifted from the water and hoisted into the boat which was pulled rapidly back to the beach where the excited crowd awaited it. And somehow on the way in, Neegan, for the first time in his life, fainted.

Neegan came back to consciousness in the office of the public bath-house. He was wrapped in blankets and some one was turning fiery liquid down his throat. Dazedly he sat up.

"Where is he? Where's the guy that hauled me in?" he demanded, looking anxiously about him.

"Aw, he got dressed and done a sneak, soon's the doc', here, said you'd be all right," a youth on the outskirts of the little crowd in the office explained. "I seen him hike it to the trolley about five minutes ago."

"Who was he? What's his name?"

"That's what we'd like to know ourselves," said the bath-house custodian. "No one seems to know him. Just some one that dropped down here for a dip, I imagine. Mighty lucky for you he happened along when he did."

"You're dead right there," said Neegan. Then he added aggrievedly, "He needn't 'a' hiked it off like that. I wanted a word with that feller. He might 'a' known I would."

It was an hour later, that Neegan, feeling himself once more, boarded the trolley for town.

"And if I ever meet that red-headed, cross-eyed rooster," he promised himself, "I'll let him know that I can do the right thing. He might 'a' waited there at the bath-house. 'Twasn't right to sneak off that way. Gee! It'd 'a' been me for the pansies if he hadn't come out to me just as he did. I aint goin' to forget it, neither."

Neegan had scarcely reached his room that night, when Timmy Daly came puffing up the three flights of stairs.

"Say," said Timmy, dropping into a chair and lighting one of his big, black cigars, "yuh gotter take on this Kid Flaherty, Bull. There aint no way out of it. Since he done up Mooney down to the Crescent Club the other night he's been hot on your trail. Says he's got a right to challenge yuh for the lightweight championship. These hot-air upstarts makes me sick. He aint got no more show with yuh than a fly with a elephant; but this manager of his has been hot after me, and to-day more to stop his gab than anything else, I took him on and arranged a go down to the Crescent between you and the Kid for the 24th. I got everything that's comin' to us out of it, yuh can bet. We cops three-quarters of the purse, win or lose. Yuh go into trainin' to-morrow—see? Do him up good and quick, like I know yuh can, and let it be an example to the others that's thinkin' of botherin' us. Yuh'd oughter fix that bloke inside of three rounds."

"I thought yuh warn't goin' to make no dates for me before December," Neegan complained.

"Well, yuh gotter do this job. There warn't no other way out of it," said Daly. "Besides we can use the coin, I guess."

"All right," Neegan agreed. "But nothin' else till December, Timmy—understand? I'll give this mutt his finish good and early. I aint partial to trainin' so soon again."

"Put him out quick and there wont be none of these other would-be champs after yuh," said Timmy. "Yuh hadn't oughter kick anyway, Bull. There aint

no one in your class, and if this dub wants to get bunged up for the sake of makin' a little coin for you, yuh aint puttin' up no holler, are yuh?"

"I aint crazy after any more coin just now," said Neegan. "I got enough for the present. Anyway, I could make all I want and easier on the stage, if I took up with the contracts that's been offered me. I'll do this feller, Timmy, but not another one till December."

"Do him up good and plenty, and yuh wont have to," Timmy chuckled.

Even though the sporting columns of the papers hinted in the following days that Kid Flaherty had very little chance with Bull Neegan in the forthcoming fight, Neegan trained at his camp just outside the city, quite as faithfully as if the world's championship, which he had recently won, were in the balance. Neegan never did things by halves, and the day of the fight at the Crescent Club found him in even better condition than he had displayed that evening six months before, when he had put an end to the ring career of Topper Kelley in six whirlwind rounds, and had heard the crowds on the benches yelling themselves hoarse over a new world's champion.

It was half-past seven, when Bull Neegan, followed by Timmy Daly and Andy Hall, his seconds, came out of his dressing-room at the Crescent Club's arena, marched down the aisle between the high tiers of seats and jumped nimbly into the ring, while the mighty roar which shook the smoky air told plainly where the sympathies of the two thousand-odd spectators were placed.

Already Kid Flaherty, the challenger for the title held by Neegan, was seated in his corner, receiving a few final words of instructions from his seconds.

The referee shouted a strident announcement through a megaphone to the noisy spectators; the gong sounded; the seconds hastily betook themselves outside the ropes. Neegan, smiling confidently advanced toward his opponent, his right glove extended for the prescribed shake of the hand.

And then Bull Neegan's sneering, confident expression suddenly changed, for the man standing before him had the same freckled face, the same red hair, the same curiously crossed eyes, that Neegan had beheld that unforgetable day at the beach.

"Yuh're a pretty good swimmer I hear, Mr. Flaherty," he said in a low voice as the other took his proffered glove.

Flaherty looked at him with no sign of recognition in his eyes.

"Huh? Who told yuh?" he grunted.

"A little bird," he chuckled, as he danced away from the mystified Flaherty and made a feint with his left.

Outside the ropes, Daly and Hall, kneeling by the ringside, watched the round with wonder and also with disgust.

"Say, what ails Bull?" said Hall. "That stiff aint in the same class wit' him. Look at the openin's he's givin' him and Bull aint takin' one of 'em."

Daly said nothing, but when the round was ended and Neegan was in his corner, he growled as he rubbed him down with the coarse towel: "Whyn't yuh eat 'im up, Bull? The mutt's jest handin' yuh out invite after invite to finish 'im."

"Any hurry, Timmy?" asked Neegan with a lazy smile.

"Dead sure there is," said Daly. "I put up a hundred plunks to-night that he'd never last four rounds wit' yuh."

Neegan straightened himself in his chair.

"I'm sorry for that, Timmy," said he.

"Sorry? Wit' that bloke goin' the way he is. Say—"

But just then the gong for the second round sounded and Neegan jumped to the center of the ring.

If the first round had been disheartening in its neglected chances, the second was positively ominous; for Neegan was sparring like an amateur. His guard was too high. All the spring and catlike quickness seemed gone from his footwork. Flaherty brought three ringing blows to the champion's face that raised groans from the onlookers.

Daly was gnawing his nails. Hall was muttering in bewildered fashion: "What ails Bull? Say, wot t'ell ails him?"

"Aw, yuh keep on playin' wit' fire," growled the disgusted Timmy in Neegan's corner at the close of the round,

"and yuh'll git somethin' bimeby that'll make yuh sit up and take notice. Wot yuh think yuh're doin' anyway—huh?"

"He's cleverer than you think for, Timmy," said Neegan quietly.

"That?" sneered Daly. "That clever? Say, wot's eatin' yuh, Bull? Yuh could put 'im to the sparklers wit' one good wallop and yuh know it. Wot's the game?"

"Watch and see," said Neegan in the same quiet voice, and advancing to the center of the ring to meet the flushed and confident Flaherty, he walked straight into a stiff left hook to the jaw which rocked back his head and sent him reeling against the ropes.

Then it happened in a breath. Flaherty sprang forward raining blow after blow on the dazed man at the ropes; and, while the few short-end betters among the spectators howled themselves hoarse and flung their hats wildly into the air at this ending for which they had not had the heart to hope, Neegan slowly sank to his knees and toppled face downwards to the mat, while the referee held back the eager Flaherty, and counted off the seconds.

"Eight—nine!" counted the referee, pushing Flaherty aside.

"Ten!"

There was a wild whoop. Flaherty's seconds jumped into the ring and hoisted him to their shoulders.

Neegan still lay prone upon the mat, the referee stooping over him.

"My God!" said Hall in a choked voice; but Daly, white-lipped, silent, stepped into the ring, lifted Neegan in his arms and bore him to the dressing-room.

In the stuffy little dressing-room, Neegan opened his eyes and smiled. Daly, still very white, stood looking at him with never a word.

"Timmy," said Neegan at length, "what'd you lose on this go besides the hundred you told me about?"

"Four hundred more I had up on yuh, yuh cussed stiff, at two to one odds," Daly snapped. "Say, what in—"

"Wait a minute, Timmy," Neegan interruped him. "Did Andy have anything up?"

Daly shook his head.

Neegan reached for his faultless coat hanging from a peg on the wall. From the inner pocket he drew a check-book and a fountain-pen.

"Here's a check for five hundred, Timmy," he said, extending the bit of paper. "I don't want you to lose anything by it. Yuh see, I owed that Flaherty a debt. I didn't know it till I saw him in the ring. I paid him, Timmy—well, you saw how."

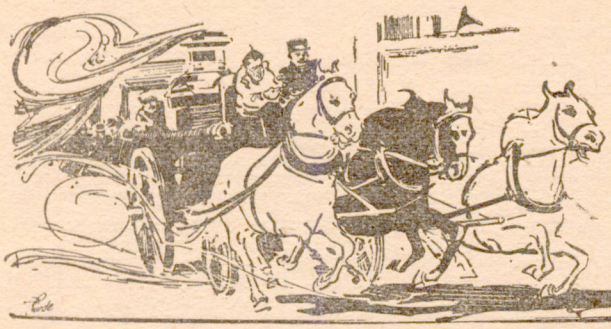
"It must 'a' been a mighty big debt, Bull. What was it?"

Neegan bowed his head for a moment and seemed lost in thought.

At last he looked up. "Aw, what's the use. It's all over now. Maybe yuh wouldn't look at it like I do, Timmy. Just grab the check and let it go at that."

THE STOLEN SUBMARINE

WHEN NIKOLAI, the "King of Knaves," undertakes to capture a German submarine which had been secretly mapping the English coast fortifications, there ensues a strange and desperate struggle down there in the depths of the sea. How Nikolai succeeded, failed, and then at last succeeded again, constitutes one of the most vividly exciting tales of this notable series. Yet it is only one of the twenty-odd stories which will make the May BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE one of the finest collections of short fiction ever issued.



Holly of "Big Nine"

By FRANK X. FINNEGAN

HOW HOLLY left his own wedding feast and, attired in silk hat and evening dress, joined his comrades in giving battle to the flames which had attacked a down-town theatre, is vividly narrated in this story. A daring rescue fittingly crowns the sequence of notable exploits which have been described in this series.

No. VI—A WEDDING FEAST DELAYED

FIRE MARSHAL DOYLE sat at the lower end of the table in his somber old dining-room and beamed upon the noisiest, merriest party that had gathered around the board in the twenty-five years since he had proudly led Mrs. Doyle into her new home. The wedding supper of his daughter and Ned Holly was on, and from the opposite end of the table Marguerite and her new husband smiled back at the grizzled old fire fighter every time their eyes met. On either side of them were Doyles and Hollys to the second and third degrees of consanguinity, political intimates of the chief and old cronies who had served their time in the department long before, but who had hobbled out of their retirement to see Marguerite Doyle wedded to the popular young lieutenant. That Holly had a notable list of rescues and deeds of daring to his credit and upon state occasions wore one of the medals of honor awarded by the city, was taken quite as a matter of course by those old veterans—that was all in the day's work. But the fact that he had saved the life of Chief Doyle when "the old man" was drowning in the darkness at a lumber yard fire six months before, had won for the lieutenant their deathless affection just as surely as it had opened Doyle's eyes to the important fact that Holly would be a son-in-law worth having.

The supper had gone gaily on to its conclusion with the usual bantering of the bride and groom, the chief had raised his glass in response to a dozen congratulations and the smiling bridegroom had as persistently covered his glass with his hand when the wine was poured, before the Marshal was moved to a burst of eloquence. Those sitting nearest the old man could see it working within him for some minutes before it manifested itself to the others and they were sure that a speech could not long be withheld. He grew strangely silent and serious amid the laughter and raillery that flew around the table and gave absent-minded answers to the questions of his neighbors. From time to time he sighed heavily as though he had something on his mind that struggled for utterance and at last he rose and tapped the table with a salt-cellar for attention.

"My friends," he began, "I suppose it is expected of me to say a few words on this occasion."

"You?" interrupted Tom Carroll, an old-time battalion chief under Doyle,

"what do we want to hear from you for? You're not getting married. Let's make Holly talk."

"Yes, it will be Holly's last chance," suggested Marguerite's cousin Jack. "After this, his wife will do the talking."

The old chief waited smilingly until they were through. His temper, usually irascible and uncertain, was as placid as a May morning and he had no disposition to mar the festivities by even a frown toward his disturbers.

"As I was saying when these children made a noise," he went on, "I have a word or two that might be considered fitting on the occasion of my daughter's marriage; and if you will give me half a chance, I'll say it now."

"Get your father his trumpet," suggested Capt. McDermott, the commanding officer of "Big Nine," turning to the bride. Marguerite, smiling happily and with her hand nestling in Holly's big grasp under the shelter of the table, shook her head warningly and the fire marshal went bravely on as though he had not heard the ribald remark.

"There was a time, and not so long ago," he said, "when I would have considered any man crazy who told me that my daughter would ever marry a fireman during my lifetime. When she was a little child, playing around my knees during the few happy hours I was able to spend with my family and away from the engine house, I didn't think so much about it—all that seemed a long way off in the future. But as she began to grow toward womanhood and I thought of the long, weary nights that her mother spent alone here—not knowing whether I would come home on a stretcher or in a hearse—listening to the taps of that 'joker' up there over the door that told her where we were going and when we got back to quarters—when I thought of all this, I said to myself that I would never let my girl in for such a life."

"That was before you met Holly," interrupted the irreverent Cousin Jack, and a thunder of hands and glasses on the table sounded an endorsement of the sentiment that made Holly blush furiously when a score of smiling faces turned toward him.

"Oh, say!" he protested, "don't make it quite so strong!"

But he returned the delighted little pressure of his bride's hand tenderly and a warm glow of pleasure swept over him that brought tears of happiness to his eyes.

"Yes, that was before I met Holly," admitted Chief Doyle. "And I am here to say that I was all wrong. In my selfish thought for her future happiness, I forgot to take her own desires in the matter into consideration and to realize that my plan would never work out for her happiness in case she happened to fall in love with a fireman. And then *she* met Holly," he added with a laugh.

"That's all," shouted Cousin Jack. "We know the rest!"

"And ever since that happened," went on the smiling old marshal, "I have been gradually coming to my senses and discovering things. I used to have an idea that I was too old to learn, but I found out that was wrong. I have learned a lot. And one of the things I found out was that love laughs at fire marshals just as quickly as it laughs at locksmiths—and I am glad of it!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the irrepressible cousin and the applause went around the table, Holly and Marguerite adding their mite smilingly. Chief Doyle took up his glass and started to propose a toast to the bride and groom.

"And now I will ask you to join—" he began, when there was a tinkling interruption from above his head that checked his words instantly and drew all eyes to the "joker" gong on the wall upon which an alarm of fire was striking in—the sleepless little instrument which had haunted the fire marshal's dreams for many years and had brought him out of bed at all hours of the night to dash away in the wake of the flying apparatus.

He stopped with glass upraised and counted the swift strokes of the hammer on the little gong, while a hush fell upon the wedding party.

"1034—that's a theatre box!" he said tersely, pushing his chair back from the table while Capt. McDermott and Lieutenant Holly also rose hurriedly. They had no need of the chief's information

that the alarm had been turned in from a theatre—every alarm box number beginning with "10" meant a theatre and brought a chill of apprehension to the firemen as they listened to it strike in. Already Chief Doyle's driver, who had been lounging in another room, was at the door with the marshal's white rubber coat over his arm, ready to help "the old man" into it and dash away. Captain McDermott slipped into the hallway for his coat and Holly instinctively began to move toward the door.

"You're not going, are you?" asked Marguerite reproachfully as she laid her hand on the arm of her new husband.

"Why—I—I don't know just what to do," stammered Holly, "I didn't think for a moment about—about where I was."

"Forgot his own wedding day!" laughed the chief, sliding into his big coat while the supper party broke up in confusion. "It's coming to you sooner than I expected, little girl," he added, patting the bride's cheek affectionately. "No, you needn't come, Ned! You're on a furlough for your wedding—we'll take care of this without you."

Holly turned to his bride with a shame-faced smile.

"It was stupid of me to forget," he said, "but it really was natural to jump when I heard that gong."

"I'm used to it," smiled Marguerite. "I've been raised on that 'joker,' you know. But I didn't expect it to jingle among my wedding bells."

Doyle and McDermott were at the door ready for the dash to the fire in the chief's rig and they turned for a final word to Holly.

"You just forget about this alarm," ordered the marshal, "it may be a flivver and if it is we'll be back in a few minutes."

"I wont need you, Ned," said the captain cheerfully.

"A long life and a merry one to both of you—good-by," and he hastened away after the "old man."

When they were gone and the guests began noisy preparations for departure, Holly and Marguerite stood in the parlor smilingly receiving the final congratulations and good wishes, but the lieutenant's thoughts were far away and he responded somewhat absently to some of the expressions of good will. He was thinking of the fire where lives might be in danger—women and children perhaps penned up in a theatre balcony or crushed in a narrow stairway; of "Big Nine" whirling into position in the front rank of the battle, of the puffing engines and rattling trucks joining in the fray one by one. For the first time in more than two years he had not been with "Big Nine" to respond to the alarm and notwithstanding that it was his wedding day, he felt almost like a deserter.

"They may need me," was the idea that kept recurring to him. "Something may happen—I might be of some use, and here I am, dawdling in a parlor!"

His pre-occupation was not lost upon the new Mrs. Holly and when the crowd had dwindled to a scant half-dozen, including an aunt who acted as housekeeper for the chief and was foster-mother to the bride, she demanded an explanation, though she more than half guessed the truth.

"Ned, you're as uneasy as a hen on a hot stove!" she exclaimed when they were alone for a moment. "What is it? Are you worrying about that fire?"

He looked down at her tenderly though he felt a guilty flush mounting to his face.

"Not worrying, dear," he said. "But, of course, I have been thinking of it. If a second alarm comes in, I think I ought to go."

She pouted just a moment and then with a quick smile pulled his head down and planted a kiss on his cheek.

"Go ahead, then, if you think you should," she said. "If I'm to be a fireman's wife, this is the day for me to start in!"

"That's the brave girl!" murmured Holly patting her head gently. "I'll call up and see how it's going."

On the department telephone in the library he called the central fire alarm office and after a few moments' conversation, turned to Marguerite with a shade of anxiety on his face.

"It's the Thespian," he said, and the operator says your father has just sounded a second alarm. It looks bad."

As he spoke, the "joker" suddenly broke in upon them with its insistent note, sounding "2-11—1034" and telling its tale of a spread of the fire or a new threat of its strength in some direction.

"I'm afraid it's up to me," said Holley, lingering with his arm around his wife's waist. "You think I ought to go, don't you?"

She put both her hands into his and looked into his eyes without a tremor.

"Ned, I am a fireman's daughter," she said, "and all my life I have lived with the tinkle of that fiendish little 'joker' up there in my ears and with the shadow of death or disaster hanging over me while my father was answering its call. I know what a 2-11 means—I know what a fireman's idea of duty is. Go, sweetheart, and God guard you!"

She flung her arms around his neck suddenly, drew his face close to hers and kissed him. Then, before he could catch her, she had fled away from him and rushed up the stairs. For an instant he thought of running after her, fearing she was hurt by his insistence upon responding to the call of duty. But he reflected that the parting was as she had wished it and instead he turned briskly to the chattering group in the dining-room.

"I am going to the fire," he announced curtly. "A second alarm has struck in and I'm afraid 'Big Nine' may need all the help it can get."

"What? In your wedding suit?" demanded Cousin Jack. And amid a hubbub of queries and comments to which he vouchsafed no reply, Holly hurriedly donned his coat and hat—the latter a silk tile that had graced the wedding ceremony a few hours before—and hastened to the street. At the corner he sprang on a trolley car bound for the center of the city and felt a thrill of satisfaction as it hurried him toward the fire. His duty lay in that direction though his heart had been left behind with his tearful little bride.

When the car arrived within a few squares of the burning theatre it was stopped by a long blockade of cars, wagons and other vehicles held up by the fire lines that had been thrown out by the police, and Holly, hastening toward the center of the great crowd of spectators, heard vagrant rumors passing from lip to lip that that there had been a great loss of life—that many persons in the audience had been trapped in their seats and suffocated by smoke and gas—that the floors had fallen in and buried a whole company of firemen. With every word carried to him by the restless, excited onlookers, the impatient lieutenant was more eager to reach his company; a score of spectators, uncomfortably crowded together as they were, took occasion to resent the vigorous plowing through the crowd of the sturdy young man in silk hat and frock coat who jabbed them with merciless elbows. But Holly forged steadily ahead until he reached the line of policemen battling to keep the crowd back. His gala attire was no passport to the smoke-filled space beyond—where firemen were dashing hurriedly to and fro and writhing lines of hose lay in great pools of water among the clustered apparatus of the department—but by a fortunate chance he had worn his official badge at the wedding for good luck and he was quickly passed through the fire line.

The throbbing of the powerful engines, the shrieks of the saucy little whistles that called for more coal and the shouts of the blackened firemen as they carried on the battle according to a well-organized plan that looked like hopeless confusion to the spectators, were all music to Holly's ears as he moved ahead looking anxiously for his own company. Once more he was in his element, ready to fight the stubborn fire to its last spark, to clamber up a scaling ladder or crawl into a basement under tons of blazing rubbish if a life depended upon it. He was startled by a voice shouting in his ear as he paused for an instant to look up at the burning theatre.

"Hello, Ned. Where did you get that lid?" it asked.

He turned to find the grimy face of "Jim" Doody, the pipeman, smiling into his own. For the first time he remembered the incongruous attire in which he was seeking to join the fire-fighters and hastily removed the silk hat.

"This is my wedding night, Jim," he grinned. "Didn't you remember? That's

why I'm all togged up. Where's Nine? I'm going to work."

"We're right over here," said Doody, "and we'll be mighty glad to have you. This thing is getting away from us, Ned. The old man is around in the alley somewhere and the whole inside of that place is going. I don't think all the people are out of there, either."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Holly, quickening his pace to a run. "We'll have to see about that in a hurry. I'll get some duds off the truck over here. Tell McDermott I'm here, will you?"

Doody plunged into the smoke in front of the theatre, from every window of which smoke and flames were pouring, while the lieutenant, climbing on the running-board of "Big Nine's" truck, hastily stripped off his wedding garments, stowed the high hat under the seat and arrayed himself in rubber boots and coat, helmet and belt from the extra equipment on the truck. Roxy, the fox terrier pet of the engine company, welcomed him with joyous yelps and swarmed all over him affectionately while he was donning the outfit, for Holly was the dog's chosen companion in the loafing hours at the engine house and it was Holly that had taught Roxy half a dozen clever tricks.

"All right, old boy," he murmured to the wriggling little terrier, "we're going to beat it, Roxy. You stay here and watch my nice new hat, eh? That's the eye, Rox. Good-by, old fellow!" And with a final pat for his little friend he jumped down and sought the thickest of the fight.

The fire, originating in a defective electric lamp used behind the scenes for a spot-light, had been burning nearly a half hour by that time and had spread to every part of the great building, licking up the scenery almost in a breath, flashing across the tawdry hangings of the boxes to the auditorium and rioting among the plush-covered seats of the balcony and the wooden benches of the gallery. From a dozen exits the audience had rushed and tumbled into the streets and alleys at either side of the playhouse, falling down the stairways and fire-escapes and giving tongue to their terror at the first hint of danger, while the performers in the musical comedy that was being presented had fled to safety through a huge doorway opening into an alley through the rear wall of the theatre. There had been broken legs, cracked heads and bruised faces in plenty before the mad dash to the open air was over, but Chief Doyle, taking a hurried survey of the blazing interior as soon as he arrived, had satisfied himself that everyone was out of the building and no lives had been lost. Therefore he had centered the energies of ten engine companies and the men of half a dozen trucks on the task of confining the fire to the theatre building and stamping it out within those blackened walls.

Holly found Captain McDermott, wet to the skin and nursing a bruised eye, in front of the theatre entrance glowering up at the windows through which two stand-pipes were pouring floods of water.

"What in Sam Hill did you come for?" demanded the captain when the bridegroom reported to him. "We could have handled this all right, Ned. You shouldn't have done it."

"Somebody was telling me that there are supposed to be some people still in there," said Holly, ignoring the comment. "Where's the company?"

"Right inside those big doors," yelled McDermott into his ear. "We've had two leads from the lobby here since we got here. I don't think anybody is left in the building—though I heard that, too, just a few minutes ago. The old man told me everybody was out and I haven't been in the building at all."

Holly looked up at the forbidding front of the theatre and at the toiling firemen inside the swinging doors holding the heavy leads of hose on the blazing interior. On the fire-escape platform that extended beneath the emergency exits on the alley side of the building, another company of fire fighters was at work and along the edge of the roof of a skyscraper office-building beside the theatre could be seen the glimmering lanterns of a daring squad who were pouring streams through the skylights and air vents in the roof of the theatre upon the stubborn blaze that leaped and sprang from every opening where a momentary advantage was

offered. Engines were puffing at every corner for three blocks in each direction from the building and the men of their companies were swarming up long ladders with new reïnforcements of hose for the attack or pushing their way through the smoke into the smaller doorways and passages of the theatre with flaring nozzles that beat the fire back steadily.

In the whole scheme of the battle hastily mapped out by Chief Doyle and valiantly undertaken by his officers and men, there seemed to be no place for the lieutenant who had arrived on the field after the charge had been sounded. He felt strangely out of the action as he stood beside his captain in the makeshift garb of a pipeman that he had hurriedly borrowed from the truck.

"I think I'll go in and take a look through the balconies," he said suddenly. "There may be somebody up there."

Captain McDermott looked at him anxiously.

"Oh, I wouldn't do that," he said. "It's a cinch there's nobody in there, Ned. Everybody had a chance to get out and there are plenty of exits, you know. Those galleries are likely to go down any minute now," he added suggestively.

"I'm going in just the same," Holly declared. "I'm not going to stand here like a lamp-post and look on. Somebody may have fallen in a hallway or on the stairs—the galleries haven't been searched, have they?"

"Well, if you're going you'd better take an axe and a rope with you," McDermott advised. "It must be hell up there by this time and you're likely to get caught in some corner if the stairs or the balconies go down. I think the roof is going in before long."

"All right," said Holly briskly as he turned back toward the truck to obtain the implements. "I'm going to have a try at it."

With the axe in his belt and a long coil of rope over his shoulder he plunged into the smoke of the main entrance a minute later, located the stairway to the balcony, and started up. Half a dozen voices, those of the men of his company working in the lobby, followed him with shouts of warning, but he waved his hand to them cheerily and kept on climbing.

"That balcony is going down, Ned!" yelled "Spud" Miller, taking a few steps in pursuit of the lieutenant. "Don't take a chance up there! These stairways wont hold much longer!"

"I've got a hunch," Holly called back through the wreathing smoke that was fast swallowing him up. "I think somebody's up there. If it falls in, I can jump."

The next moment he was gone into the blazing interior, holding his gloved hands over his face to protect it in some measure from the heat and occasional bursts of flame that darted at him from the passageways.

Holly had been gone for more than ten minutes and the stairways over which he had climbed to the upper regions of the doomed building were a mass of blazing ruins when Captain McDermott, standing in front of the theatre anxiously watching the progress of the battle, heard the tinkle of breaking glass far above him, and looking quickly toward the roof saw a fire axe thrust through a small square window so high in the wall that it was almost under the eaves and had until then escaped his observation. In the glare of the electric lights with which the busy thoroughfare was thickly studded he saw the flash of the axe blade as it ripped and tore the window sash from the opening. Then it was withdrawn and the next instant a helmet appeared and he knew that Holly was looking down and measuring the distance to the street.The sight electrified the captain into strenuous action. Either the lieutenant had found a fire victim in the upper gallery or he was himself trapped there by the falling of the stairways and was seeking escape.

"Get a ladder up there to that window!" he roared, rushing toward a group of firemen who were starting up a twenty-foot ladder with a lead of hose to one of the office windows on the second floor of the building. "Drop that where it is! Quick now, boys! Ned Holly's up there under the roof!"

The hurried action of the firemen as they abandoned the task they had begun and rushed to the hook-and-ladder truck

for a longer ladder, the sharp commands of Captain McDermott and the excited yells of a policeman who discovered Holly's presence in the little window opening, attracted the attention of the great crowd of spectators that pressed against the fire lines; a shout went up that some one was being rescued from the gallery. Hundreds of faces were turned toward the little black square in the wall from which the glass and window frame had come crashing down and Chief Doyle, hustling around from the alley just as the long ladder was being raised, found the attention of a score of firemen centered upon that spot.

"What is it?" he demanded of McDermott.

"I don't know yet," said the captain, "but Holly went up to look through the galleries a quarter of an hour ago and he just knocked out that little window up there and looked down, so I'm sending a ladder up to him."

"Holly?" ejaculated the fire marshal. "What the dickens is *he* doing here? I told him to stay out of this!"

"I know you did—but you couldn't hold him after that second alarm went in," McDermott shouted above the puffing and throbbing of the engines. "There comes something now," he added pointing upward.

The ladder had been raised near the curb and was being dropped slowly forward toward the building when out of the little window a dark object was thrust that began to descend carefully at the end of a rope. It dangled against the wall and then slowly dropped inch by inch toward the spot where the ladder was about to strike the wall.

"It's a man!" shouted a hundred voices and then a hush fell upon the crowd as the ladder settled into place and Pipeman Jim Doody scrambled nimbly upward.

As the body came into plainer view in the electric light it was apparent from its size that it was a boy of about twelve years, the rope looped under his arms and his head hanging on his right shoulder. Steadily it was lowered while Doody clambered to meet it and when it had reached the ladder and a blackened face surmounted by a helmet was thrust through the window to see how far it had gone, a great cheer went up from the crowd that drowned the noise of the engines.

"He took a rope to use in an emergency," shouted McDermott into the ear of the chief—who watched the proceedings anxiously. "He'll probably let himself down now."

"He'd better hurry," observed Doyle grimly, just as Pipeman Doody clasped the swinging little body and unfastened the rope.

"All right, Ned!" he called to the eager watcher up above. "I've got him. Fasten your rope up there and slide down. You can make it easy!"

As Holly disappeared into the window from which great clouds of smoke were belching, Doody hurried down the ladder with the unconscious lad slung over his shoulder and was relieved of his burden by the fire marshal himself as he stepped to the street. Doyle made a hasty examination of the white-faced boy and turned to McDermott with just a trace of a smile of joy on his features.

"He's alive," he said brusquely. "Better get him to the ambulance surgeons in a hurry."

Doody and one of his eager fellows hurried toward the ambulance with the inert form between them—the news spreading from lip to lip in the excited crowd that the lad was still alive—and Chief Doyle looked anxiously up at the window for his son-in-law's appearance on the rope which drifted idly in the wind. Suddenly there was a dull boom like a muffled explosion from within the building; the members of "Big Nine," warned by crackling timbers, came rushing out from their position in the lobby; and the roof fell in, carrying with it the gallery, the balcony and the daring fireman who had risked his life to save that of the boy over whom the surgeons were working. The auditorium of the theatre was a mass of tangled, blackened and blazing ruins—timbers, roof, flooring and seats piled fifteen feet high on the ground floor, which miraculously sustained their weight. Somewhere in the wreckage was Ned Holly, dead or dying!

For a moment Chief Doyle, veteran of scores of disasters, was staggered. That one of his men had been carried

down in the wreck was enough of a blow, but that it should be Holly, with his little bride waiting and praying for him at home—Holly, who was to have been the prop of his old age, the son that had never been vouchsafed him! He covered his eyes with his shaking hand for an instant and then the voice of Anderson, the battalion chief, brought him back to himself.

"We've got to get Ned out of there in a hurry, chief!" shouted his assistant, "and it will be a hell of a job!"

"Get all those streams right on that stuff!" Doyle yelled, waving his lantern fiercely toward the smoldering pile of ruins that blocked the doorway. "I'm going in after him myself—send everybody in that isn't handling a hose!"

He set down the lantern and moved toward the theatre entrance while a dozen firemen with pikes and axes swarmed up behind him. The situation looked hopeless. The timbers were piled in such an inextricable mass that a man could not force his way through them except by crawling upon his hands and knees; to find the spot where Holly lay in that immense area, covered by the tangled beams and floors and rigid rows of seats that had plunged into a hodge-podge of wood and metal, might take hours of search under such conditions. To remove the débris was a herculean task that would plainly occupy a force of laborers for a week or more, yet the eager firemen were already making a futile attack upon the heap, pulling out charred and blazing sticks with their pikes and trying to make an entrance large enough for a searching party to begin work.

McDermott turned to the chief with tears streaming down his cheeks.

"We can't do it, chief," he groaned. "Poor Ned is gone!"

"Gone the devil!" roared Doyle, seizing a pike pole from the nearest fireman and attacking the débris with wild energy. "I wont quit until I find him."

The firemen looked at one another hopelessly, stunned by their own helplessness. Ready and eager to rescue Holly in the face of death if need be, they were balked by the physical proportions of the task that would require days of labor for its accomplishment. Suddenly "Jim" Doody startled the frantic little group with a yell of joy.

"I've got it!" he cried. "We'll find him, chief! Roxy will do it!"

"Roxy?" echoed Doyle, turning on him wildly. "What are you talking about? Are you crazy?"

"Here's the idea," Doody yelled, dancing in his eagerness. "The dog can scramble around in and out, under and over those timbers where we couldn't go and besides, he can go straight to where Ned is lying—don't you see, chief? Roxy can smell him and find him, like he was hunting a rabbit! He can see in the dark—he'll find Ned, all right!"

Doody's enthusiasm was becoming infectious and Doyle, Anderson and McDermott clustered about him eagerly, though they did not yet understand his plan; meanwhile the firemen continued to attack the pile of débris on which ten great streams were playing and from which most of the fire had disappeared, though great clouds of smoke still poured from it.

"Well, suppose Roxy does find him," demanded McDermott eagerly, "do you expect the dog to drag him out of there by the collar? Talk sense, Doody!"

"Why can't we fasten a light cord to Roxy's collar," exclaimed Doody, "that we can pay out as he goes in there. Then if Ned is alive and able to crawl he can find his way out by following the rope. If he doesn't come out we might follow the rope somehow—anyway, we would have a trail to where he is instead of skirmishing all over that pile of stuff."

"I see! I see!" shouted the chief in a frenzy of excitement. "There's a chance, anyhow! Hurry up, boys! We may get him out all right yet!"

Doody had the fox terrier in his arms before Doyle had ceased speaking and was fastening a long rope to the collar which Holly himself had purchased and which he had ornamented with a silver name-plate for his little pet. Carrying the dog to the doorway where the worried fire fighters were eagerly awaiting the start of the precious experiment, he pointed Roxy's nose toward the blackened mass of ruins and spoke to the terrier coaxingly.

"Go find Ned," he said encouragingly,

a speech with which the dog was familiar through its frequent use at the engine house when the firemen sent him up-stairs looking for his master. "Ned's in there, Roxy! Go find him, boy!"

Roxy turned a questioning gaze on Doody for an instant, peered into the unpleasant depths that he was asked to penetrate and lifted one paw delicately from the pool of cold water into which it had slipped. Evidently the carefully tended dog did not relish the task, but Doody, patting his head encouragingly, renewed his coaxing.

"Go on, Roxy," he urged. "Go find Ned. Get him, boy! Get Ned!"

Suddenly the idea seemed to penetrate the terrier's brain and with a little bark of defiance, he sprang into a little opening that led into the labyrinth of wreckage and then, with the cord trailing behind him, moved into the darkness and disappeared.

They heard a muffled bark from time to time as they stood there watching the slender rope slowly slip away into the little tunnel as Doody nervously paid it out from the coil. Then came silence and an agony of waiting and watching while the streams roared and splashed upon the débris and the engines noisily shrieked for coal as they sent up their mighty columns of sparks. McDermott found himself standing with a comforting hand on the shoulder of the chief as they stood staring at the slender rope and straining their ears for some welcome sound from the death pit in front of them. And then the rope stopped moving.

"He's got him!" exclaimed Doody impulsively.

"Don't say that!" groaned Doyle. "Roxy may be coming out alone."

Doody dropped on his knees and tried to peer into the opening through which the cord trailed away. Anderson watched his face for a sign of hope and at last when the tense nerves of the men seemed about to snap, the big, eager pipeman with his face close to the wet mass of ruins, gave a shout of joy.

"I see something bright!" he yelled. "I see Roxy's eyes! He's coming out!"

"What else do you see?" demanded Doyle. "Are you sure it isn't a spark from the fire, Jim? For God's sake, don't guess at things!"

Doody did not answer. He seemed not to have heard, for he dropped upon his abdomen and began to work his way into the little opening with his arms stretched before him. He had seen what he had prayed and hoped against hope he would see there in the darkness; and when he had worked his body as far forward as he could without a struggle, his fingers clutched the bruised and grasping fingers of Ned Holly, crawling feebly but steadfastly along the line of the slender rope that Roxy had brought to him where he lay, stunned and bruised but protected from the mass of the timbers by their chance crossing above him. Roxy, barking with delight, scrambled past Doody and capered about the frenzied firemen while "Big Jim" tenderly drew Holly out of the little tunnel, gathered him into his brawny arms and laid him at the feet of the chief.

"Are you all right, Ned?" demanded Doyle dropping on the ground beside the battered lieutenant.

"All right, I guess," whispered Holly, "but it was a narrow squeak. I was crawling the wrong way when Roxy got me and I would have been drowned in a little while."

The chief heaved a sigh of relief and McDermott began carefully examining Holly for broken bones while he murmured his congratulations.

"Well, we'd better get you home, I guess," said Doyle, "—you and your dog. Your wife doesn't like to have you out so late."

The Unseen Hand

By J. A. TIFFANY

JUST as I was about to examine the curious engraving on the handle of the revolver that Dennison had passed to me with the caution that it was loaded, Sinclair mentioned the name of the girl about whom he had been talking.

For a moment I sat still, almost stunned. The blood rushed to my face, the hand that held the gun trembled. In spite of my agitation, I realized that the room was still as death. I distinctly heard the ticking of my watch.

Raising my head, I found Sinclair regarding me with a look that conveyed a challenge—a challenge insolent as it was incomprehensible. Dennison was looking at me, too, with an expression of grave concern. My cousin, Fred Dexter, had risen, and stood, an unrolled cigaret in his hands, his lips parted, apparently, to voice a protest. With a gesture enjoining silence on Dexter, and speaking quietly as I could, I said to Sinclair:

"I am well acquainted with the lady you name, and what you have said is not true. I want you to retract it."

"Retract?" Sinclair repeated, with a sneer. "I retract nothing. I repeat it."

"You are a liar!" I said, advancing a step towards him. "Retract!"

"Liar yourself!" Sinclair retorted. "I re-affirm every word of what I have said."

"Retract, you blackguard!" I shouted, going forward another step and pointing the revolver at him.

"Gentlemen!" Dennison cried. "Sinclair, you had no right to tell that story, even if it were true. Withdraw."

"Dick, put that gun down!" Dexter exclaimed. "Sinclair was wrong. He'll admit that in a minute—or he's no friend of mine. Take it back, Sinclair."

"I take back nothing," was Sinclair's dogged reply. "This man, who is a stranger to me, has called me a liar; and, even though you are his cousin, you are my host. You ought not to countenance him in insulting me."

"You are a scoundrel," I said, "and unless you withdraw what you said, I'll shoot you. One—two—three—"

A flash and the vicious bark of the revolver; a groan, a thud, a cloud of smoke; Dennison bending over an inanimate form, and Dexter's arm around me, drawing me, pulling me away from the scene— that is all I remember, until some minutes later. Then my torpid brain resumed its activity—activity intensified; my senses became alert to external impressions; my mind alive to the horror of my situation.

At a forty-mile gait, Dexter's car was whirling me away from the camp to the city. I saw the lights ahead; and other lights—strange, lurid flashes—danced before my eyes.

"Did I kill him, Fred?" I asked in a voice that sounded strange, even to myself—hollow, sepulchral.

"I guess you did, Dick," Dexter answered. "If he's dead, it's only what he deserves. But it's too bad that you should have ruined your future through such a scoundrel."

"You are taking me to the city so I can give myself up?" I asked.

"Give yourself up!" Dexter exclaimed. "Well, I guess not. It's too bad that Dennison was there. If I had been the only witness, we could have fixed things, all right. I'd have sworn that it was an accident. But I'm going to get you out of it, some way. I was just trying to figure it out as we came along. We're getting near the city. Turn up your coat-collar and pull your cap down over your eyes, so that nobody will recognize you."

I did as he directed me, crouched down and back into the cushions, and relapsed into somber reverie. Neither of us spoke again, until we reached Dexter's office.

As I stepped out of the car, he took my arm, hustling me up the steps of the old-fashioned two-story building to which he still clung, despite the attractions of modern office accommodations, opened the street-door with his pass-key and pushed me ahead of him into the hall.

"Wait there, until I make a light," he said, as he strode past me.

A moment later, through a door to the left, came a stream of yellow light.

"Come in, Dick," said Dexter.

As I entered the office he was drawing the shades. When he turned to me, his face was grave; yet even more noticeable than its gravity was the resolution that showed in the tight-drawn lips, the friendliness and courage that shone from his eyes. His air was that of a man called upon to face a difficult, tragic situation, yet, withal, a man with the will and the capacity to master it.

My faculties seemed benumbed; the idea that I was a murderer had not yet made itself at home in my mind. In my murky mental confusion I could only lean upon my cousin, as a child and a woman lean upon the strong man whom they trust.

"I have a plan," said Fred. "But first, let us find out Sinclair's actual condition. Perhaps, after all, it isn't so serious as I feared when we left the camp."

"What are you going to do?" I asked in alarm, seeing him reach for the telephone.

"Call up Dennison," he answered, and immediately gave Central the number—"Westwood, 235."

"But if the operator should be inquisitive, and listen, you will give me away," I objected.

"Oh, no!" Dexter answered, with a faint smile. "I'll choose my words. Hello! That you Dennison? This is Fred. How's everything?—Where did it lodge?—Uncertain?—You have everything necessary.—Yes.—I'll tell people where you are.—You'll be in Boston for the next few days.—I'll see you in the morning, before you start.—If you want anything, call me up, at my rooms.—You'll know definitely by morning! Good-by."

Hanging up the receiver, Dexter turned to me and said:

"The bullet was deflected by a rib, and entered the breast on the right side. Dennison doesn't think it will prove fatal, but he can't use the probe to-night. He wont be able to express a positive opinion until morning. I'll run out there, early, and see what I can do to induce Dennison to accept my version of the affair. I think, perhaps, for your sake, the best thing that could happen would be the worst."

"How?" I asked.

"I mean that if Sinclair gets better, probably he will want to make things unpleasant for you; whereas, if he doesn't get better, Dennison, knowing the provocation you had, and realizing that there's nothing to be gained by your suffering, might consent to accepting and corroborating such a statement of the facts as I should prepare. However, until we know how things will go, your best plan is to keep out of sight. You will be expected in Chicago about midnight to-morrow. By that time, we shall know what course to adopt. If it becomes necessary for you to drop out of sight, I'll see that you have time enough to get away. Probably, nobody but Dennison, Sinclair and I know that you came on here from New York to-night.

"Upstairs, I have a couple of rooms that I used in my bachelor days, and which I haven't dismantled. You might stay there for a week, or a month, without anyone suspecting your presence—unless Dennison should feel called upon to give you away. But you'll be safe enough there, anyway, for one night. Come along. I'll show you the way."

To avoid attracting attention from the street, we went upstairs in the dark, Dexter holding my arm. Opening a door at the head of the stairs, he closed the inside blinds and also drew the shades. Then, he made a light, revealing a den, comfortably furnished, but coated thickly with dust.

"You can sleep on the lounge, if you prefer it to the bed in the other room," he said. "I guess there are night-shirts in the chiffonier, and changes of linen. Your baggage is out at the camp, but I'll bring it to you in the morning. You may smoke here, but be careful not to let any light be seen from your windows and keep your door locked. My clerks get here at nine o'clock in the morning but I'll see you an hour before that. Is there anything else I can do for you, Dick?"

"Nothing, thank you, Fred," I answered. "I wish I knew how to thank you for all this; but my mind is in a whirl, old man; I can't think—yet. But there'll be lots of time for thinking, by and by."

"Don't do it, Dick," Dexter advised, as he took my hand with a strong, virile, friendly grip. "Try not to think, at all. Try to sleep. To-morrow, perhaps, we shall be able to laugh at our fears. Good-night."

Left alone, I tried to forget the scene at Dexter's camp, but every detail of it stood out with vivid clearness, very horrible, very real and yet unreal. The events had seemed to follow one another with logical, remorseless, seemingly-inevitable sequence. Being a contemptible hound, perhaps, it was natural for Sinclair to defame a woman; natural for me to shoot him. But, looking back, it almost seemed as if the whole thing had been predestined—that a malignant Fate had drawn me into this terrible situation to crush my ambitions, maim my genius, blast my future. Vaguely, illogically, perhaps, I felt that, spontaneous as the tragedy had been, an unseen hand, inspired by a prescient mind, had guided and directed both Sinclair and myself to our doom.

The long, sleepless night wore itself out; morning came, and at eight o'clock Dexter appeared.

"Well?" I asked.

"Sinclair will live," he answered.

"That's good!" I exclaimed, inexpressibly relieved by the news.

"No; it's bad," Dexter declared.

"How?" I inquired.

"If he had died, you would have been all right," Dexter explained. "Dennison would have substantiated any story upon which you and I might have agreed. As it is, Sinclair is vindicative. His one anxiety is to get well, so that he can prosecute you. Of course, in his condition, Dennison and I couldn't argue with him. We had to agree with him—humor him.

"But, after all, I don't think you have much to fear. Soon as Sinclair is well enough, Dennison and I will give him to understand that if he makes a move against you, we will both go on the stand, and relate every word of the story he told—which provoked you to shoot him."

"No," I said. "You wont do that."

"Why?" Dexter demanded.

"Why!" I echoed. "You propose to sow broadcast over the world the vile story for which I shot Sinclair when he told it in the privacy of your cabin? No one who knows the lady would believe it, but the mere publicity would crush her, kill her."

"But it's the only way we can save you," Dexter protested.

"Then I don't want to be saved," I assured him. "How long will it be before Sinclair is well?"

"Two weeks, perhaps—or, maybe longer. But there's always the danger of his getting out of bed and telephoning to the police, even before his wound is healed."

"The only thing for me, then, is flight. That's the only way to save the lady's name."

"Where will you go?" Dexter asked.

"I don't know," I answered. "I can't think. Think for me, Fred. Get me away."

"How much money have you?"

"My entire fortune consists of six hundred dollars—the price of my last picture—'The Whaler's Farewell'—which took the prize at the salon."

"You must paint to live; and if you paint, you will be traced by your pictures."

"No," I answered. "I can disguise my style—draw unaccustomed subjects, use unfamiliar pigments."

"And dwarf your genius, kill your prospects, sacrifice the fame you've won. It's too bad! You can't go to England or Europe. South Africa or Australia would be almost as dangerous. China and Japan are out of the question. It seems to me, Dick, that the only place in the world for you is New Zealand. There's very little intercourse between that country and America. The climate's good, the population is English, or English speaking, and it's a prosperous state. You might make a decent living there."

"That's the place," I agreed. "I'll go to Wellington."

"All right; but it's time for me to go. My people will be getting around soon. I stopped in at a restaurant just now and got you something to eat—enough to last until evening. Good-by—until six o'clock."

"I can't stand this solitude for long, Fred," I said. "Wouldn't it be possible for me to get away this morning—to take train for San Francisco or Vancouver, and ship for New Zealand by way of Yokohama?"

"No," Dexter replied. "But I'll try and get you off to-night."

At eleven o'clock that night I boarded the train for Montreal, and bade good-by to Dexter. As he left me, he pressed an envelope into my hand, with instructions that I should not open it until I had crossed the Canadian border. There, I found the contents of the envelope were five bills for a hundred dollars each. The blood rushed to my face and I felt a choking sense of shame that Dexter should have made me the object of his bounty; but quickly my anger vanished, giving place to a grateful recognition of the feeling which had prompted the act, of the delicacy with which it had been performed. A little note was with the bills. It read:

> DEAR DICK—Don't be angry at this. Some day, if you like, you can pay me back. But there's no telling what you may need, going to the other end of the world. Don't forget to write to me every week; and be assured that you will have letters from me with equal regularity. I hope events may shape themselves so that you can return before long and take the position in America, among your own people, to which your industry, genius and integrity entitle you.
>
> Sincerely,
> FRED DEXTER.

Equally encouraging, loyal and affectionate were a score or more of letters that I received from Dexter after my arrival in New Zealand.

In the second of them, he informed me that Sinclair was on his feet again, and that, having learned I had left the country, he had professed himself satisfied to let matters rest.

"But," Dexter added, "he has not forgiven you, by any means. He vows that, if ever you return to America, he will bring you to trial."

For a few days after my arrival in Wellington, I stayed at the Victoria Hotel, and spent my time in rides and rambles about the city and suburbs.

While duly impressed with the civic enterprise and physical progress and prosperity manifested in the public parks and buildings, the business streets and residental sections of the capital, I was not greatly encouraged in my aspirations by the Colonial appreciation of art evidenced in the collections of pictures in the museum and other public buildings.

In one or two art stores, I saw creditable paintings on exhibition, offered for sale at prices that were distinctly disheartening. I figured that I might sink the greater part of my slender capital in the fitting up of a studio, and before long be reduced to the necessity of auctioning off my belongings in order to pay my board-bill.

Originally, it had been my youthful success in black-and-white which had led me into the field of oils. Now, with a view to testing my chances of making a living and at the same time conserving and augmenting my small reserve fund, I made the rounds of the newspaper offices of the city, seeking employment as caricaturist or illustrator.

I began at the wrong end—with the smaller journals; and from them I received not even the pretense of encouragement; but, in Dan Seaton, the bluff proprietor of the *Wellington Argus*, I found a sympathetic listener.

"We're not millionaires; and we don't run much to illustrations," he said; "but I think it wouldn't hurt the *Argus* to infuse a little of the American spirit into it. If you want to come in, and are willing to make drawings to order, instead of sketching the things that please your fancy, I'll give you a trial, for a week. I don't promise to use any of your stuff—maybe, I wont—but, at the end of a week, I'll let you know whether we want to keep you or not."

The week went by without any of my "stuff" appearing in the *Argus;* but, instead of giving me the *congé*, Seaton professed himself well satisfied and said, if I liked to stay, he'd give me five pounds a week. I stayed.

They were a lot of good, bright, live fellows whom I met on the staff of the *Argus,* and before I had been on the paper three weeks, I went to live with the city editor, an Englishman, named Godfrey Carr, whom I had found especially congenial.

There were moments—in the exaltation of creative work, in the hustle of a rush picture of a Government function or a city demonstration, in the pleasant *camaraderie* of the half-hour after the last form had gone down, in the quiet evenings with Carr and his little family—moments in which I forgot the old life and its aspirations, forgot the near-tragedy which had made shipwreck of my plans and prospects—remembered only the new friends whom I had found, the kindly faces around me, the fresh interests forcing themselves upon me, in spite of my morbid habit of self-absorption.

But at night, alone in my room, that scene at Fred Dexter's camp would reenact itself.

"You lie—Retract!" The pictures start, the memory-film unrolls, and the vivid drama closes with the crack of a pistol, a stifled groan, the thud of Sinclair's body on the floor.

Again I wonder at the blind malignity of Fate—I peer into the mental darkness, straining my eyes to catch the outline of that Unseen Hand, guiding, directing the events that drove me into exile, made me a wanderer, an outlaw.

Some comfort I found in Dexter's weekly letters; and yet I often wondered if it had not been best that he should forget his promise to write. But for his friendly, sympathetic words, recalling all that I had lost, in time, perhaps, I might have grown to feel that Wellington was home; that the life that I was leading was the one for which I had been preparing, fitting myself all along. I might have found forgetfulness, contentment, mingled with pride and ambition in my work.

Some eight months after my arrival in Wellington, as I was sitting one evening on the veranda with Carr, lazily watching the glow of the setting sun that turned the waters of the bay into a sheet of polished gold, Godfrey took from his pocket a newspaper, and handed it me, pointing to a picture.

"An extraordinary accidental likeness," was his comment.

The picture was my own portrait, printed in the *New York Herald.* Whatever Carr's opinion might have been, the flush that overspread my face before I had succeeded in covering it with the paper, must have made him suspect that "Jack Burgess" was not my real name.

The portrait, labeled "The Late Richard Borden," was used to illustrate a story that set my brain in a whirl.

The article stated that Richard Borden, the Chicago artist who had disappeared mysteriously while on his way from New York to Chicago on the night of his return from Europe, had been found, on the melting of the snows, at Cartwell, an out-of-the-way point in the Adirondacks. The body, according to the paper, had been discovered by a half-breed Indian guide, named Carl Shuk; and for two days the identity of the remains had been matter of futile conjecture, until the question was set at rest by the arrival of Frederick Dexter, a lawyer of Port John, Long Island, who positively identified the body as that of his missing cousin, Richard Borden.

"By this discovery," *The Herald* continued, "is settled the question of the disposition of the estate of the late Francis Borden, the South African millionaire, who died on July 18th of last year, leaving his entire property to his

nephew Richard Borden, or, in case of his death, to Frederick Dexter, son of the testator's sister. Mr. Dexter, therefore, will inherit all the Borden millions, made in the Kimberly mines."

For a few moments I sat groping in mental darkness, unable to read the revelation aright. Carr's eyes met mine inquiringly; I stammered something inarticulate. In the midst of my perturbation I became conscious of a cold breeze springing up from the bay. The sun dropped suddenly into the sea; and as I looked at the darkening sky a flash of forked lightning zigzagged before my eyes, taking the shape of a human hand. My fevered fancy traced in it a resemblance to Dexter's hand—long and sinewy, with the little finger curiously crooked. At last, the Unseen Hand, which had been troubling me for months, had become visible.

And yet, I was afraid to trust my own hasty judgment. Everything seemed plain to me now; but, before acting on my suspicions, I determined to tell Carr the whole story of the occurrence which had led to my precipitate flight from America.

"It seems clear enough," said Carr, when I had finished. "You left Southampton for New York on July 15 of last year. Your uncle died on the 18th—while you were at sea. The report of his death and a summary of his will were cabled to London and thence to New York. Dexter saw in you the only obstacle between himself and an immense fortune.

"He planned this stag-party at a lonely spot on Long Island; arranged with Dr. Dennison to be his guest and accomplice; coached the fellow Sinclair in the story he was to tell about a lady of your acquaintance; and at the moment Sinclair was about to reach the climax by the declaration of the lady's name, Dexter unostentatiously handed you a revolver, drawing your attention to some curious engraving on the handle. He knew what you would do with the revolver."

"But it is inconceivable that Sinclair should have hazarded his life for the sake of sharing in Dexter's spoils," I objected.

"Hazarded his life!" Carr echoed, with a smile, "My dear boy, you fired nothing but a blank cartridge. Sinclair fell, of course; and Dennison, by prearrangement, sprang to his side, while Dexter whisked you out of the cabin and hustled you into his motor-car."

"Yes; but afterwards? Dexter insisted on my staying, and offered to go on the stand in my defence."

"He had planned carefully, and he knew perfectly well that you never would consent to the lady's name being dragged into court," was Carr's reply.

Seven weeks later, Frederick Dexter, Dr. Dennison, and Philip Sinclair, responding to an urgent telephone call from ex-Judge Anderson, were shown into his private office, where I sat concealed by a screen.

"Gentlemen," Mr. Anderson began, "I salute you as a triumvirate of the greatest scoundrels in the Empire State. You saw three plain-clothes men, waiting in my outer office? Here are three warrants for your arrest, which those men are ready to execute. Mr. Sinclair—on the night of July 22, last year, at a cabin on the shore of Clearwater Lake, you were dangerously wounded by a bullet, fired by my client, Richard Borden, with intent to kill. Show me the scar, on your right breast left by that bullet, Mr. Sinclair! If you can, I will destroy these warrants and cause the arrest of your assailant!"

"I will show that scar at the proper time and in the proper place," Sinclair snarled.

"Very well," Mr. Anderson replied. "Mr. Dexter—you have not yet succeeded in obtaining possession of your uncle's fortune. And you never will. You have a wife and child. For their sake, Mr. Borden is inclined to be merciful. You, Dennison, and you, Sinclair, are unmarried. You will leave the United States within twenty-four hours, never to return, except on peril of arrest. All that we shall require of you, Dexter, is good behavior for the future. If you make a false step of any kind, this warrant will be enforced. Before any of you leave my office, all will sign a full confession of your conspiracy to drive Mr. Borden out of the country and to seize his estate by force and

fraud. I hope I have made myself clear. Do you sign?"

"I will sign nothing," was Dexter's reply. "You have absolutely no proof of anything you have alleged. If Sinclair and Dennison for some purpose of their own pretended Sinclair was wounded—that is not criminal. I believed he was shot. The only criminal act that I committed was in aiding Borden to escape after he had committed a felony in discharging a pistol at Sinclair. I saw a man's body in the Adirondacks, and believing him to be my cousin, identified him as Borden; but that is not criminal."

"You knew that Borden was alive in New Zealand. You were in correspondence with him," Anderson retorted. "You can't wriggle. What do you do?"

"I sign," said Dexter feebly.

"And you, gentlemen?"

"Yes," said Dennison and Sinclair together.

"Remember," said Anderson, as they walked towards the door, "the two of you have only twenty-four hours in which to get out of the country. You will be shadowed. If you overstay your time by one minute, you will be arrested."

I had kept in concealment, for the reason that I could not trust myself to meet these men face to face. As soon as they were gone, I came out from behind the screen.

"That was the best way," said Anderson. "There's no question of their guilt. But they could have set up quite an ingenious, elaborate defence. If they had succeeded in securing separate trials, the three of them might have slipped through our hands. As it is, they'll find their punishment hard enough to bear."

A Tempest in a Trunk

By GUY C. BAKER

Author of "THE JORKEN JEWELS," etc.

FOR the twentieth time the slightly-built, blue-eyed man pulled out his watch, glanced at it mechanically without marking the time, and then slipped it back into his pocket. For the dozenth time he jerked abruptly to his feet, started determinedly to enter the hotel, paused at the entrance, turned slowly back, and clasping his hands nervously behind him, reluctantly returned to his seat. For the dozenth time he pulled forth a thumb-worn railroad folder, ran his bony forefinger down a certain column until he came to the time of departure of a certain train, then, sighing deeply, put it aside and once more picked up his paper.

There is no more delightful spot in Washington on a summer's morning than upon the cool and charmingly shaded porch of the Hotel Shoreham. Yet to one who has foregone the companionship of his beloved books for two long months, and who has, for weeks, been hungering just to crawl into a certain familiar house-jacket, stick his toes into a certain pair of old house-slippers, throw himself into the seductive folds of a friendly old chair, and feast once more upon the intimate objects of a certain commodious den, even the Shoreham loses its attractiveness.

It is therefore not to be wondered at that this quaint, whimsical man should be impatient at the slowness with which the time passed for the departure of the train that was to carry him back home.

Finally, his face lighting up with boyish pleasure, he arose and, starting once more for the hotel entrance, murmured:

"Thank goodness, *that's* over! It is time to go to the station at last!"

At that moment one of the white-liveried call-boys appeared in the doorway and, coming face to face with the frail, fidgety man, stopped short, and bowing deferentially, said:

"A 'phone call for you, Mr. Watts."

A look of puzzled inquiry came into the man's face and muttering disjointedly—"Who under the sun—I haven't time to gabble over the telephone—who do you suppose—I wont let *any*one make me miss that train—just my bloomin' luck—" he hurried across the lobby towards the telephone booths.

Entering the booth and taking down the receiver with petulant haste, he jerked out with a note of challenge in his voice:

"Well?"

A low, good natured laugh came over the wire. "I recognize the dulcet voice. Don't be cross, Wattsie, old boy, for I am making the proper salaam at this end and—"

"Cut out the jolly and tell me what you want—I'm in a hurry."

Again the mollifying laugh. It was Hardy—First Assistant to the Attorney General. He was sending Mr. Nelson Hildergar—Secretary of the Continental Express Company—over to the hotel. Hildergar had an important matter to take up with Watts—upon Hardy's recommendation. The government was also interested in the matter, and of course Hardy made it plain that he allowed no room for doubt that Watts would accede to the request that Hildergar would make.

Watts listened in silence and with increasing exasperation. He was, however, providentially equipped with a safety thermostat that, boiler-like, allowed the escape of excessive steam pressure at the danger mark.

"Stop—stop, Hardy! Wait, I tell you! I wont—I can't do it—no sir-ree! I am going—"

That infectious laugh again, a click, and Watts was impotently expostulating a dead wire; Hardy had "hung up."

Watts glared helplessly at the instrument for a moment, then slamming the receiver back on the hook, he thrust his hands savagely into his pockets and stalked out of the booth. He was wildly turning over in his mind some means of precipitate flight when he was once more politely approached by a bell-boy, and apprised that Mr. Hildergar was awaiting over in the alcove. That boy received no tip.

Hildergar was one of those lithe, gray-haired, close-cropped-mustached fellows, whose keen, gray eyes wimble right through you, and before whose masterful personality you at once submissively capitulate.

He arose smilingly with outstretched hand before Watts reached him. "Ah, Mr. Watts—glad to meet you. Would have recognized you among a thousand—Hardy is a master at graphic description."

Watts failed to become enthusiastic. "You are Mr. Hildergar I presume. Well, I am sorry, but I wont have time to—"

"Oh yes you will—you simply must *take* time. Suppose you find us a quiet—"

There was a commingling of entreaty, belligerency and surrender in his voice as Watts interrupted. "No, no—it is useless. I am sorry—you see I must catch this train—haven't been home for two whole months. Confound it, Hardy shouldn't have asked me—"

But Hildergar was a tactician. There at once ensued a merry conflict in which determined importunity warred with dogged disinclination. Importunity won.

Then, his face mirroring his satisfaction at the gratifying outcome of the preliminaries, Hildergar produced a big, black cigar, and extending it towards the pale, nervous Watts, suggested—"Now suppose we find a quiet room that we may talk this matter over where we will be exempt from molestation."

Watts received the cigar with the demeanor of conferring a favor by accepting it, truculently put it in his mouth without lighting and, manifestly determined not to become conciliated to the enforced change in his plans, snapped out—"No stuffy, shut-in room for me. We will find a bench up here in McPherson square—it's only a step."

Accordingly, a few minutes later, comfortably ensconced in a shady nook

in that charming little garden-park that is flanked on the one hand by the Department of Justice and on the other by the somber, painfully unadorned McLean "home," and from which one may catch glimpses of white through the shrubbery surrounding the Executive Mansion, Hildergar briefly recited his trouble.

"Hardy informs me that you have had some experience in 'trust busting' and as one of the big 'octopods' is mixed up in this case, you will understand the difficulties to be encountered beforehand.

"The National Pharmaceutical Company, owning the patents of and controlling the output of all the costly and indispensable drugs, has been rapidly reaching out until it has become one of the most pernicious and powerful combinations in restraint of trade. It has its principal offices at Cincinnati.

"Some months since, S. A. Stevens of Cincinnati, the owner of one of the largest independent wholesale drug houses in the country, was forced into bankruptcy because he could not secure the common drugs demanded by his trade unless he would join this 'association.'

"Stevens thereupon sued the officers of the National Pharmaceutical Company for damages, and while his recovery was but nominal, yet he was successful in accomplishing one thing of momentous consequence. During the trial he craftily seized, by legal process, a trunk full of papers, documents, exhibits, etc., belonging to the Company, which conclusively established an ironclad confederation for the purpose of an unlawful restraint of trade. It was a trunkful of contemptuous disregard for the Sherman anti-trust law.

"Unheralded, an agent of the government attended the hearings of that case, and upon the revelations there made, the Attorney General decided to institute proceedings to dissolve the company.

"A man from the office of the Attorney General at once proceeded to Cincinnati and prevailed upon Stevens to turn over that trunk—bulging with incriminating evidence—to the government.

"Accordingly Stevens prepared the trunk for the journey and started it for Washington by express. He had taken the trunk out to his country home at Borden, which is thirty miles out of the city. Our agent there received the trunk and forwarded it to Washington via Maids, Chester and Cincinnati.

"Somewhere en route that trunk disappeared. It seems certain that its disappearance was not accidental, because it was a 'consummation devoutly to be wished' by certain persons to the tune of a cool million. The *coup* was most cleverly executed, and we are determined to know whether or not any employee of our company was a hired accomplice to the theft.

"The government already has several secret-service men at work on the case. But independently of that, the Express Company, for obvious reasons, is determined to leave nothing undone in their effort to solve the matter."

For a moment Hildergar sat looking at the ground in thought, questioning himself as to whether there were any details omitted from his narrative.

Watts rose suddenly to his feet, his face a study in gloomy reproach, and thrusting his hands deep in his pockets, he paced slowly back and forth for a moment before he finally stopped abruptly in front of Hildergar.

"A trunk!" he exclaimed. "A measley, musty, rattle-trap of a trunk! Me—hounded, corralled, lassoed, thrown, branded, kicked in the ribs, and shunted off to hunt for a trunk! Of all—"

"But my dear sir—" pleaded Hildergar, rising with growing alarm.

"I tell you that I dont *like* it! It is so deucedly puerile! I—I—" Breaking off abruptly, he sighed and stood silent for a moment; then, an incongruously infectious smile illumining his thin, pale, face, he added—"Oh, well, those rascals have boosted the price of liver-pills so dinged high that, demmem, a poor man must either have a leather liver or die. I guess that I owe the sacrifice to humanity. Send the necessary papers over to my hotel appointing me traveling-auditor. Liver-pills ought to be within reach of—"

The balance of the sentence was lost to Hildergar, as Watts unceremoniously

disappeared behind the shrubbery towards the Shoreham.

Excepting, of course, Pittsburg, Watts knew of no place he disliked so heartily as Cincinnati. The nerve-jarring noise of unwieldly trucks lumbering heavily over cobble-stoned streets, the mucky, illy-cared-for gutters, the muggy, smoke-filled air, all combined to depress him exceedingly.

It was this antipathy that impelled him, in order to be as far removed from "it" as possible, to avoid the conspicuously located main dining-room on the occasion of his first luncheon at the Sinton, and to wander downstairs and back into the quiet coolness of the grill-room, there to search out the most secluded nook of that retreat of artistic arches.

After the softly-moving waiter had removed the dishes, Watts sat for a long time leaning back in his chair, his blue eyes heedlessly scanning the faces about him, an unlighted cigar protruding grimly from his firmly-set mouth.

His thoughts were of a trunk—a common, wooden-ribbed, metal-cornered trunk. Where should he begin his search for it? With no distinguishing characteristics, this trunk was to be sought over a distance of six hundred miles. A trunk is such a commonplace, ambiguous, unnoticeable thing. If it were a question of a priceless gem, an art treasure, valuable securities, or even a long-eared donkey, the problem would have had possibilities. But a trunk! No chance to enlist a helping interest by an appeal to sentiment or romance in that!

That afternoon Watts journeyed out to Borden where, as a traveling-auditor of the Express Company, he called on the man whom the drug combine had made a bankrupt, and who had forwarded the trunk.

Stevens was a tall, slow speaking, serious-turned fellow to whom the disappearance of the confiscated papers was a distinct calamity. His chagrin over their loss was only exceeded by his wish to recover them. He was exceedingly hostile and bitter towards the Pharmaceutical Company, yet he was frank enough to express his conviction that the company was not responsible for their loss. The company knew nothing about the shipment, and granting that they had had an inkling thereof, how could they have secured possession of such an unwieldly package without detection?

"What then, is your theory?" inquired Watts curiously.

"My theory is a conviction," was the other's gloomy paradox. "The government has detailed secret-service men on this matter, but it is not a matter for sleuths. The ordinary express-company tracing system is all that is necessary. The trunk was not stolen—merely lost. You see, Cincinnati was having one of its floods at that time, and the trunk was most likely mis-sent from there as a result of the concomitant confusion and disorganization of traffic facilities."

Watts next presented his credentials at the local express office. He found the agent to be a bright young fellow anxious to please the "traveling-auditor."

The agent distinctly recalled having received and forwarded the much-sought trunk. He further explained that all express from that point to Cincinnati must be transferred twice—at Maids and Chester—and that at points of transference the agents are required to make a record of all such packages. The shipping number of the trunk was 1101.

At Maids Watts ascertained that on the day in question the trunk was duly received and forwarded to Chester. At Chester Watts encountered an obstacle. Calling for the agent's shipping register, he turned to the record of the express that should have arrived on the train on which the Maids' agent forwarded the trunk. The record *showed nothing at all!*

The inquiring glance that Watts directed towards the agent encountered a look fraught with guilt and apprehension. Then, his voice trembling with anxiety, the agent admitted that, on that particular night, he had missed making that particular train; that the express agent on the train from Maids had unloaded the express onto the platform truck, where it had remained until the Cincinnati train came along and picked it up; that that accounted for the silent register.

The "traveling-auditor" did not linger

to hear the agent's fervent petition to overlook his dereliction, but hastened back to the city.

Going to the express-office, he at once asked for the record of receipts from Chester on the train in question. He was informed that while the flood conditions at that time made accuracy impossible, they had no record of having received package 1101 at that nor any other time, and that they believed the record to be correct.

Returning to his hotel, Watts ran across the secret-service men assigned on the case; they stated that they were convinced that the trunk had simply been lost, and that its disappearance was certainly not attributable to any duplicity. They were returning to Washington that night.

That evening Watts found a comfortable seat in the splendid, marble-domed lobby and, serenely blowing whiffs of imaginary smoke upwards from his unlighted cigar, turned the affair over in his mind from "a to izzard."

His heedless eyes lazily followed the ceaseless eddies of men and women who drifted in and out, some aimlessly, others hurriedly. Without marking the fact, his gaze encountered a postman collecting mail from the mail-box at the desk. Watts noted that the postman dropped something and stooped to pick it up—it was a letter—a letter! Ah! that was it—a letter!

With a jerk, the frail, blue-eyed man was on his feet, his jaw-muscles twitching, his eyes shining. Briskly crossing to the writing-room, he dashed off a letter, directed it to Howard Hardy, Assistant to the Attorney General, Washington, sealed it, and summoning a bell-boy, directed him to see that it was mailed at once.

The following afternoon he returned to Borden, at once called upon Stevens, and confidently informed the dethroned dealer in drugs that he had hit upon a ruse that, harmless in itself, would quickly disclose whether the Pharmaceutical Company actually had any knowledge of the missing trunk.

Stevens was instantly all interest.

"And what was the ruse?"

Watts smiled complacently. "A letter was written and mailed to you this morning from Washington by the Attorney General expressing his gratification that duplicates had been made, that the duplicates would serve as well as the originals, and that you should forward the duplicates to Washington at once."

"I don't quite grasp your point," declared Stevens, a look of puzzled inquiry crossing his face.

Watts smiled knowingly. "You see the letter will be enclosed in the wrong envelope—by mistake of course—and directed to The Pharmaceutical Company!"

For a moment Stevens stared at Watts in speechless amazement, then, an angry flush mounting his cheeks, his lips pale, his eyes flashing, he electrified the Chicagoan by blurting forth—"You've played thunder, that's what *you* have done! You've got me into a devil of a mess! What authority had you to use my name in the matter? I'll not tolerate such confounded officiousness! I'll—"

Like a flash all was clear. It was not the result of any subtle reasoning, nor of any fine-spun theories, nor of any long drawn out deduction, but merely the outgrowth of that remarkable gift of instantaneous intuition that had so often guided this little man to success where others had failed.

Like a rapier's gleam Watts broke in—"Then you have not given up the originals?"

"No! I—" He stopped short, pale, his face a study in the mingled fear, surprise and defiance of an entrapped animal.

"Then you will deliver them to *me!*" smoothly asserted Watts, his affable mien somehow at variance with the ring of firmness in his voice.

"I'll see you in—"

"Come, come, Stevens—keep your head, demmit, keep your head."

"But—but they *belong* to *me*—do you understand. They are my property!" declared the other, his voice pitched high and loud.

"Why, then, did you offer them to the government?"

"That is *my* business," snapped Stevens belligerently.

"Uh-huh, y-e-s, that's so," mused

Watts softly. Then, in the same quiet, imperturbable voice (Carson would have sat up and taken notice had he heard that tone) he added—"You are aware that you are being shadowed day and night by secret-service men?"

"Sure—and I don't care a rap, either! I have done nothing for which those hounds can molest me!"

The guileless smile and soft blue eyes faded away. Pale and stern, his eyes flashing an unnatural light, Watts leaned forward and, his voice vibrant with condemnation, exclaimed:

"Haven't you? Let me tell you something, my dear sir! The Pharmaceutical Company are, as you must agree, law breakers and amenable to the Federal criminal statutes. The evidence establishing their guilt which you turned over to the government *was* in your possession. It passed into the government's possession the moment you delivered the trunk to the carrier! Then you *stole* it back from the government! Do you understand the significance of that act? That made you a *particeps criminis*—a party to a crime. *Now* do you care a rap? Do you understand now why the secret-service men have been kept after you?"

Slowly the angry flush faded from the face of Stevens, leaving chalky whiteness, as he stared at Watts in silence, his lips apart, a frightened look springing to his eyes. Tremulously he fumbled behind him for a chair and slowly sank down into it.

Motionless, Watts watched the cringing and beseeching repentant, and recognized from experience the propitious moment. Quietly pulling up a chair, he slid down into it as he said gently.

"It will be all right, Stevens—tell me about it."

He did. He told how he had agreed to hand the documents over to the government in the utmost good faith. How, thirty minutes after delivering the trunk to the express company, he had received an offer from the Pharmaceutical Company of fifty thousand dollars for the trunk of papers, and how he had concluded to recover the trunk and secure that money.

Being familiar with the two points of transfer, and realizing that it would have to be at one of these points that he intercepted the trunk if at all, he secured an automobile and burned the pike for Maids—the trunk was gone! He chased on to Chester—the trunk was on the platform. The rest was easy.

Then came a hitch in his deal with the company—they insisted on paying him with stock of the concern, but he did not want stock and had been holding out for cash.

Then, the line about his mouth fading into a sickly smile, he concluded:

"And we were still quibbling, when you came along and queered the whole thing—you see, after that letter business, I never could have squared myself with that bunch."

For an interval the two men sat silent. Then, the good-natured smile and the guileless, blue eyes returning, Watts inquired:

"And where is the trunk?"

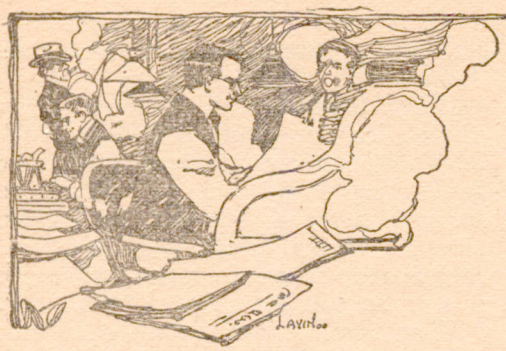
"Up in the attic."

Then, his voice low and gentle but charged with undeniable firmness, he said:

"I will just take it with me."

He did.

The following morning when Howard Hardy, First Assistant to the Attorney General, crossed the threshold of his office on the second floor back of the Department of Justice on K Street, he stopped suddenly in speechless surprise. In complacent possession of the middle of the floor, his blue eyes a-kindle with droll good-humor, calmly watching make-believe spirals of smoke ascend from his unlighted cigar, was Watts—serenely sitting upon a much-battered trunk.



His Day Off

By
NALBRO BARTLEY

"THAT makes it seventy cents a man," said Little Mac, as he put his cover on the typewriter. "Isn't that a little steep?"

"Man's only married once," growled the telegraph editor.

"Yes, or graduates from medical college, when he's been reading proof every night for four years and we're all stuck for a set of medical instruments—or else has twins—or a kid that—"

"Don't get peevish, Probs, because you can't marry an heiress and devote yourself to writing *the* American play. What have you got to say about it, Pater Pete?"

"Nothing," said Pater briefly.

"You're sore," said the staff simultaneously. "You're dead sore, Pater Pete, because we forgot all about you when you were married and you never quite had the nerve to remind us of your anniversaries."

Pater Pete's face expanded into a grin, as he handed a dingy dollar bill over to the nearest police reporter with a request to hustle along the change.

The police reporter fished nervously in his pockets for the thirty cents, finally tapped the news editor on the shoulder apologetically, who, in turn, hailed a copy boy, extorted the change and handed it along the line.

"There," said Pater Pete, the dean of the staff, "and may Nix live long and prosper."

"Here's to Nix's life sentence," said the proof-reader, as he splashed a gob of purple ink on Sammy Finn's cheek.

"Here's to Mrs. Nix, the Queen of the International Order of East Side Waltzers, The Model *Hausfrau,* The Star of Sauerkraut Makers and The Champion Ice Cream Cone Eater—long life to Mrs. Nix and all the little—"

"What shall we get them?" interrupted the News Editor, yawning.

"That's the question," answered the city editor.

"If we had our pig farm," said the news editor to the star reporter, "we could give them an electric runabout and never notice it in our monthly account." The dream of the news editor's life was to be the proud owner of a pig farm. The star reporter had long ago shown him the wheres and whyfores of such a venture and had figured out with wonderful velocity the ridiculous price of feeding the said animals and the profit of selling the same. Together, they conjured up an ideal bungalow with outdoor sleeping verandas, log fireplaces, mission furniture, a complete library and private news service, pool room and buffet, electric lighting and steam heat, a piano-player and numerous little necessaries of an average stock farm.

The staff showed signs of uneasiness when the pig farm was mentioned. In order to switch the subject gracefully, the sporting editor proposed a chafing dish.

"Nonsense," said the managing editor, with rising irritation. "Why Nix wouldn't know whether to use it for collar buttons or shaving. You want something useful—" The managing editor had vivid recollections of an awful, many colored, near-oriental vase, which

graced his own table of wedding gifts and which, to his dying day, he held up against the memory of the news editor and the city editor, who, he declared, conspired against him.

"How would a carpet sweeper do?" asked one of the reporters.

"The idea!" said the proof-reader scornfully. "You want something ornamental—like—a clock."

"Nix has saved cigaret coupons until he has five hundred with which he can procure a grandfather's affair that goes for eighty-two and a half days without winding."

"Get something in silver," added the telegraph editor.

A roar of laughter met the timid suggestion. "Why his *frau*-to-be has saved soap wrappers and grabbed off a wild rose near-silver set, sixty pieces *and* a pie knife. She started saving them the day she and Nix began 'going together' —the day of the Labor picnic. Coming shadows—"

"Coming beers," said the city editor with a grin. "I tell you what to do. Each one write some article on a piece of paper and then shuffle 'em in a hat. Three of us draw and paste the said slips on the bulletin board. Then we can have a free-for-all fight as to which one wins. Sammy, jump lively and rip up the paper. Now for the New Thought."

A pause came over the city room with its familiar clang of telephone bells and typewriters. The paper had gone to sleep an hour ago—the customary game of Red Dog or poker was forgotten, for Nix, promoter of East Side dances and a favorite printer, was about to take unto himself a wife. The staff had risen to the occasion and were going to remind him they had not forgotten the red lettered cards announcing the event, which had been so carefully tucked into every available desk.

On the bottom of the card was scrawled—"There will be a quarter of beer. Come, no matter how late. She knows what newspaper men are." Which unconscious sarcasm made the staff sit up in indignation and give an appreciative chuckle.

The slips were placed in the sporting editor's hat, shuffled by the various staff members and finally drawn by the city editor, the telegraph editor and a police reporter. The news editor stood, brush in hand, and pasted them to the bulletin board.

The following articles were proposed:

Carving set—with horn handles.

Plug hat and cane.

Rocking chair—lots of plush.

The staff looked at each other to discover who were the guilty persons and then the news editor, with the air of a missionary society president, called for opinions.

"What geek said a plug hat?" asked the managing editor, the thoughts of the vase still rankling.

"Aw g'wan, lots of guys are glad to get 'em," retorted little Sammy Finn with rising color.

"Certainly they are," championed the sporting editor, "and it's a foolish mutt that doesn't know it, too."

The managing editor bowed his apology and the debate continued. "They've probably got a premium carving set with toothpick mottoes or something of the sort," said the star reporter. "Now myself—I think a rocking-chair would be the thing."

"Always did admire your handwriting, Probs," said the city editor generously. "Well, let's put it to vote. Plug hat, cane, carving-set or rocking-chair —all kindly shout the favored article." A chorus of indistinct syllables and gentle oaths was born upon the air.

The parliamentary proceedings of the office were neglected, while the thoughts of cheese sandwiches at the Waldorf Lunch, smothered lamb chops at The Dekin, and clam chowder and chop suey at various other resorts, made the question one to be settled without delay.

"Oh thunder," said the city editor, who had not had time for dinner, "the rocking-chair goes."

"Let it go," said the man who had to keep dog watch. "Collect the funds and have Pater Pete select it."

Pater Pete tried to shrink from responsibility.

"I'd come in with a bar-room chair, if you sent me," said the star reporter. "Pater Pete, it's your duty as a man and fellow-citizen to select this article."

Pater Pete bowed his thanks. "Where's the coin?" he asked.

Hands went into pockets, into each other's pockets and a heap of money was laid on the table. Every man counted it to be sure no mistake was made. "There is ten dollars and a half; I guess we could get more if we wanted to go into the composing-room," said the managing editor.

"They have a beautiful lithograph called 'Childhood at Play'—it is a naked cherub pulling a cat's tail as hard as it can. It is framed in extra bright gilt and is to be sent out in the morning," announced the telegraph editor, reaching for his hat and coat. The managing editor asked him if he was going to eat and, presently, they left the office together.

"Get a bright plush one," said the news editor, preparing to follow them, while the other staff members departed one by one, giving final injunctions as to the size, color, strength and durability of the gift.

Pater Pete put the money in an envelope and tucked it in his inside pocket. He locked up his typewriter and turned out his light.

"Going to lunch?" asked the city editor, as he went out.

"Not to-night," said Pater Pete.

"Which shows how changed a man's disposition is when he is married," said the city editor, racing down the steps. "I can remember twenty years ago, when Pater Pete was the bravest of the brave."

He caught up to the news editor, who was heading towards the nearest lunch room. "It's a shame he never had a wedding present," he added. "What made us forget?"

"Combination of things; presidential year, the big boss was in Europe, your eyes were bad, Johnny Buck had just died and that put us all in babyland for a while. Anyway, Pater Pete was so darned quiet about it. I never really knew it was pulled off until afterwards."

"Foolish to make a fuss about weddings," piped up Little Mac, who was trying to keep step with the other two. Little Mac had run away, at the age of twenty, with a blonde some years his senior, and had been, figuratively speaking, across his mamma's lap ever since.

Meanwhile Pater Pete put on his shabby overcoat and started home. The telegraph editor and the managing editor were sitting tête-à-tête over two steaming bowls of chop suey.

"Pater Pete is getting old," said the telegraph editor. "How long has he been on the paper?"

"Um—on it before Johnny Buck died and I went to England. Must be twenty-one years this fall. You know he started in the composing-room and worked his way up. Wrote a string of catchy verses and they got to the city editor. He sent for Pete and gave him a job on society, writing up teas and doing missionary meetings. Imagine him? But he made good and then did police—best man we ever had on police. Then he was turned loose on federal and city hall and marine and railroads. After that he was stuck with religious stuff, revivals, special sermons and that sort of dope. Turned out hot stuff along those lines and was a cracker-jack at covering conventions. The G. A. R. tales were the best I ever read. Beat the Associated Press hollow. Did a dock strike story that worked wonders for us and never had a come-back in the way of wrong tips. Used to send him out on a dull day to cover the hotels and he could yank more stuff out of a register than the rest of us could in a week.

"Lord, how time goes—it doesn't seem but yesterday that a timid, young-looking fellow was saying to me, 'I'd like a chance at politics, sir; I've made some friends in the first ward and they told me they would give me a beat now and then.' And when he got the chance, he never had an opportunity to do any kind of other work. Best man for politics going. When McKinley was shot, he was standing in the doorway of the Temple of Music and instead of waiting to watch the mob, he made a dash for the nearest 'phone booth, got the office, gave the news and *cut* the wires. When the *Signal's* man came tearing in ten minutes later, he couldn't raise Central. Before he could fight his way across the exposition grounds, we

had the paper in type and beat the record for the town. Had an extra on the streets one-half hour before another sheet turned a hair. That *was* Pater Pete." The managing editor's chop suey was getting cold.

"Why past tense?" asked the telegraph editor, who was new on the paper. "Isn't he the best man still?"

The managing editor shook his head. "Not exactly," he said in muffled tones. "Times change and Pater's day is over. When a thing like the North Pole fracas or a big political convention heaves into sight, we would like to put Pater Pete on the trail, but he isn't equal to it."

The managing editor devoted himself to the chop suey and the telegraph editor grew absent-minded and ordered a pot of black tea. "It seems tough—on a good and faithful servant," he drawled.

"Exactly," answered the other. "He's like a child for his day off; never goes any place that I hear of; never bothers for free press seats like the rest of the bunch. Wonder what his home is like."

"Plush—a front door that never sees active use, a wood stove in the kitchen and a photograph album trimmed with gilt."

"The trouble is," said the managing editor, calling for the check, "that Pater Pete doesn't realize his limitations. He wouldn't know what to do, if he did. That's the turning-point in any man's life, Buff, when he realizes his limitations. We all have 'em, but it takes some of us a long time to find them out. When a newspaper man finds that he has reached his limit as such, it is time for him to stop drawing on us for his meal ticket. All at once, they strike hard bottom and find out that there is no more original hot air forthcoming and that they ought to be selling dry goods instead of writing a funny column, or keeping books in place of editing copy. After they discover this—they either take to a drug or go into politics. Here's the Pater—the man all the boys borrow from, the man who always goes home to breakfast and who searches the stores for bargain neckties.

"He knows mighty well he does better carving a pot roast at home than offering a toast at a staff breakfast, and he's ace high on spanking the kids, while he fails at getting a popular actress to tell her scandals. Any man who remembers that we didn't give him a wedding present for twenty years, ought never be a newspaper reporter. Here, sport, keep the chink," and the managing editor and the telegraph editor left the café.

Pater Pete was walking home—it was a three-mile jaunt, but the night was mild and he liked to think things out as he strode along, undisturbed by the usual traffic. Pater Pete owned the little frame cottage, he had money in mining stock and a hot water heater. He was going to have his little girls have music lessons and his boys would work their way through college, if they were so inclined. After the children were settled, he would sell the house and move into the suburbs, where he might be able to succeed in some sort of mail order business. Then he could stay at home all the time.

To-morrow was his day off. Pater Pete forgot the irritation caused by sending Probs to do the mass meeting and of hearing some one remark that he looked pretty shabby to represent the paper at the big manufacturers' luncheon. He would get up early to see the children before they went to school. He would help his wife clear the table and put away the dishes and then he would fix the side door hinge and pack away the screens for winter.

He would have time to see that the awning was properly rolled up and there was that loose board in the fence. The dozen chickens must be fed and the Sunday dinner planned. Pater Pete would preside at the noonday dinner, when the four children would be at home. He would say, as other men in the block had a chance to say every day in the week—"How did school go?"

He would climb up on the roof to see if it needed repairing and he would go down in the cellar and see the fall preserves his wife had been telling about. Pater Pete liked to count the preserves; he would stand in his faded red smoking-jacket and say over and over again, "Two dozen bottles of cat-

sup, three dozen jars peaches, strawberries and raspberries, large quart of quince honey, two of apricots—some mixed pickles and, upon my word, Anna has put up some huckleberries." He would forget the boys in the office who would gather about the city room table to hear the city editor describe the new club plunge or listen to the sporting editor tell about Jeffries' latest girl.

That was all swept away—as if it mattered that three big fires had broken out, or the city hall policies uprooted, or a dozen titled guests were visiting town—Pater Pete was in the cellar of his own house, a happy man, telling on his fingers, in child fashion, of the preserves his Anna had put up!

In the afternoon he would talk with his wife, telling her the petty office gossip. He would help her with supper and frolic with the children and ask them what page they were at in their different books. The supper would be a long, lingering affair. There would be many laughs and jokes with each other. But the best part was yet to come—putting the youngsters to sleep. Pater Pete's eyes grew moist as he thought of this part of his inner life, the life he kept hidden from the boys.

The dean of the staff would sit in the rickety rocking-chair and listen to their prayers. He was almost jealous as to who should give them the last pat and admonition to "sleep tight." Pater Pete had waited many years before the babies came.

That was Pater Pete's day off—his life at home.

He did not wake his wife that night with the usual questions about the children. He had an almost jealous interest in their lives; sometimes he felt so crowded out of them.

It was after breakfast the next morning, after the dishes had been washed and put away, that he told his wife he wanted her to go down town with him.

"But Pete," she said, "this is your day off."

"Yes, I know," said Pater Pete, "but this is a special occasion, Anna. I want to buy a wedding present. Something that you think is nice. I would rather it be a rocking-chair."

His wife looked at him a moment. "A wedding present?" she asked, "for who?"

"One of the boys," said Pater Pete. "I was selected to buy it."

His wife looked at him again, shrewdly, with the suggestion of a happy smile. So Pete had not forgotten their anniversary which was drawing near—and the office had remembered it, too.

"I'll be ready in a moment," she said quickly.

On the street car, she asked him how much they could spend.

"Ten dollars and a half," he said briefly. He felt that it should have been his ten dollars and a half instead of Nix's—Anna had always felt the slight. She never wanted to meet the managing editor.

From store to store, they pushed their way. Counter after counter, department after department was searched before Mrs. Pete was satisfied. "This is the very thing," she said, halting before a low, comfortable willow rocker. It had pockets in the sides for magazines or sewing and was stained a dark green. There was a head-rest and a foot-stool attached.

"How much?" they asked.

"Sixteen dollars was the original price," said the wooden faced clerk, "but as this is anniversary week, it is marked down to ten-fifty."

"We'll take it," said Mrs. Pete eagerly.

"Are you sure—" began her husband, knowing how Nix's tendencies would run to plush.

But she was giving the address to the clerk and had taken the money out of the envelope.

They took the next car home, Pater Pete having begrudged the time for the errand. It was just as they were walking up the steps that his wife asked him if he thought it would be as comfortable as their old one.

"What difference does that make?" he asked.

"Why, every difference," she replied impatiently. "When do you think it will be out?"

"Out where?"

"Why, here."

"Did I forget to give you the address—" he began, feeling in his pocket for the slip.

"Forget—don't you think I know where my own house is," she laughed back at him. She had taken off her hat and was lighting the grate. The wind gave her a girlish color and there was a happy look in her eyes.

"Your house—"

"Teaser!—Even if it did take the staff twenty years to remember our wedding day, we don't care. The present, the original present would have been all worn out by now, anyway, I think it was dear of the boys to remember our anniversary now—when there are so many new ones. You must tell me what made them ever think of it. As if I didn't guess from the very start that you were the boy the present was for!"

Pater Pete's head whirled. Then he managed to smile and tell her it had all come so suddenly, that he really didn't know who was responsible for it. That it was more than bully of the staff and that he never expected it.

He kissed her tenderly and told her he had to go down to the corner to see a man about an extra Sunday story. He put on his hat and strode up the street. He had used the boys' money—and he couldn't afford to make good. Pater Pete had seen county and city officials sent up for stealing funds; he had watched their faces when the charge was read to them in the cold, unemotional words of the law. The look of realization which would leap into play when the accusation was made, had haunted him. And he could see, now for the first time, how such thefts might easily come about—even if it had taken only a green willow rocker to prove it.

To tell his wife was impossible. Pater Pete would have stolen before he would disturb her childlike happiness. Ten dollars and a half—Pater Pete received only a reporter's salary. The house payment was due and insurance and his clothes were—

He took a car down town. He would go to the managing editor and tell him he had lost the money. Pride forbade him saying that he let his wife buy a present which the staff had forgotten to buy twenty years ago.

The managing editor looked over his glasses when Pater Pete entered. "Got hooked on the color of the plush?" he asked.

"I've spent the money," said Pater Pete nervously. "I've spent the office money—it isn't much—but it's gone. You'll have to take it out of my envelope and give me an advance. I've got to get the chair and I'm sorry—"

"Who gave you the wrong tip?" said the managing editor, scanning a western comic supplement. "You never struck me as that sort of ass."

"I spent it," said Pater Pete doggedly.

The managing editor made a memorandum on a slip of paper. "Take this to Brayton's and get any chair in the house—it'll be charged to me."

Pater Pete snatched the paper and hurried. He knew that to linger was to lose. The managing editor had an artistic temperament.

The city editor came in a few minutes afterwards and asked for five minutes time. "Go as far as you like," said the managing editor. "I'm the only up-to-date confessional around these diggings. "Inwardly," he added—"Bet he's found out old Pete."

"You'll say I'm an awful fool," said the city editor, "but two of the boys and myself saw Pete and his wife buying a chair for Nix. Don't remember the kind, only his wife acted like a kid over it. Seemed as tickled as a six year old. You know it seems a shame, we never gave old Pete a wedding present. What do you say to docking the boys again and making him a present of another ten-fifty to do as he pleases with. We can write a card with 'Better late than never' on it and put it on his desk."

The managing editor sighed wearily. He put his hand in his pocket and extracted seventy cents. "You are decent at times," he said dryly.

"S-o—Peter didn't make it clear to her!" deduced the managing editor as the door closed.

"Pater reported for work to-night," said the city editor to the managing editor three hours later. "Suppose he wants to save every cent he can."

"Put the cash on his desk."

Pater Pete's wife was putting the mended socks in one pocket of the new chair and the darning material in the other. She had concocted a red tidy for the back and her dark hair showed to good effect. "The boys do appreciate him," she said, with a contented smile.

Pater Pete came into the office late. "Lot of stockyard news," he reported.

"Slam it out," was the answer. Then the office waited breathlessly while he opened his desk.

No one spoke or moved, the towering figure of the managing editor crowding the door. Pater Pete smothered a sob and a swear and turned inquiringly. "You—*mean*—" he began.

The managing editor came into the limelight. "We decided it was time to wake up to the fact that you were going to have some sort of a wedding anniversary within the next twelve months—and we wanted to do the right thing. We didn't want to cherish the thought that a linotype man gets a rocking-chair just because he gets married. Far be it from such; we want you to memorize the following sentiment. That when the dean of the staff has successfully raised a family and has emerged from the sea of matrimony in as peaceful a state of mind as yours, we think we ought to do the valentine act all over again." The managing editor crossed over to the hesitating figure and muttered savagely—"Make a speech, you fool—it's all right if you don't give yourself away—you're so blamed honest!"

The Watch of Fate

By PAUL H. HARRIS

ACROSS the bleak hills surrounding Fort Robinson, Nebraska, Troop A of the Twenty-first Cavalry, was taking a practice march—a peculiar method of "rookey" torture devised as a filler in for those times when the gallant troopers were not busy drilling, doing guard duty, pitching oats, having pay-days or getting over the same. As an exercise it was highly hardening and offered many unexcelled chances for the contemplation of the beauties of nature as they did not exist, in the surrounding topographical bumps which made the vicinity a dusty little Bad Lands.

Trooper 59, one Bowman, shifted his seat resignedly and dug his left spur in a certain tender spot on the flank of the highly strung charger which he so gracefully bestrode—with the prompt result that "Windy" delivered two well directed kicks at the "rookey's" horse alongside of him, an unpleasant, upheaving operation which cost the embryo warrior a very disagreeable moment, for it was quite a drop to the bottom of the dusty cañon along which they were crawling.

"Oh, excuse me," murmured "Bones," as he rolled another time-killer. "I forgot about my beloved mount's one touchy point; he don't like to be dug in the flank at all; he sure don't."

The recruit looked over at the long-legged trooper with the perverted sense of humor.

"It would have been real funny to see me go rolling down the side of this little hill, wouldn't it?" he inquired. "It's too bad I wasn't on a festive animal like that thoroughbred of yours. By the way, old timer, why don't you let up on me for a while? If I fight you I'll have to fight every old man in the troop. I never speak unless I am spoken to; never butt in where angels fear to

tread. I am not now and never have been fresh; why don't you give me an even break and let me alone to see what kind of a soldier I'll make?"

"Bones" gazed at the recruit thoughtfully.

"Well, I had never thought of that. You see, this is an old soldier troop for fair and we're not crazy about this new blood which has been thrown in our midst. Some of it is pretty lumpy work; why that guy from Indiana who came in on the same train with you washes his own socks and has written home to four of his brothers to come on out and join; the water's fine; he never ate better in his life."

"I am not to blame for the washings of my brother," sadly responded McKay. "Try that let up game and see if I don't come through square."

Ahead of them the line wobbled dustily through the clouds of alkali; here and there was a nose all swollen from the work of the peculiar little germ which fastens upon the unacclimated proboscis with such amusing effect in contour. The whole troop was a sad, white, thirsty line; and to add indignity, a new Second Lieutenant had only let them take what he considered the proportionate ration of water in their canteens, and they passed stream after stream which only mocked them with its poisonous rippling, for to drink of that Bad Lands water meant a whole lot of stomach ache for the man or horse concerned.

Bowman began croaking mournfully; his musical memory of the bar-room ditty he had applauded so vociferously in Omaha was bad, but the muscularity of his vocal technique was undoubted.

Gee, but this is a lonesome town;
Nothing to do but to hang around;
No one here who knows me;
No one here who owes me.
The best you get is a frappé frown,
Gee, but this is a lonesome town.

The dismal chant was squelched by the squad corporal before the air could bear this new burden longer.

Recruit McKay laughed softly; memory of that trick back in the hills lingered.

"You'll excuse me, Oh most righteous and olden warrior, but I just have to say this: I think you've got a voice like a peacock which has been crossed in love; that raucous torturing of yours would not be tolerated in a round house; it sure listens punk to me."

"Bones" swung sideways in his saddle and gazed at the rookey in astonishment. This was revolt, pure and simple. He glared balefully at the man beside him, speechless.

"Sa-a-y, rookey, are you trying to commit suicide?" he finally drawled. "Well, well! Where shall we ship the remains?"

He said it tauntingly, but his eyes were gleaming with anger, for not only was an old soldier being insulted by a mere upstart of a patriot, but Bowman was secretly fond of his undoubtedly awful vocal accomplishments.

McKay returned his look without wavering; he judged rightly that he was in for it; his look was an unmistakable challenge.

The troop floundered along in miserable, July grumbling; here and there a horse stumbled and was pulled up with a parch-mouthed curse; even the Lieutenant at their head was calling down maledictions upon the man who invented practice marches.

Gradually they got down into the flat country; an occasional sheep herder's ranch bobbed by them; the bugler blew "Trot, march" and within ten minutes they were in the place picked out for noon-day rest.

McKay, sore of body, calm of mind, climbed stiffly down from his horse. After the kitchen had been erected, wood cut and water brought, the recruit found time to stroll over to where Bowman was the center of a group to whom he was relating something of evident interest.

They fell back wonderingly when he approached.

"Mr. High Private Bowman," he announced steadily. "I just want to repeat here and now that I think your voice is rotten; alongside of it the beating of tom-toms sounds like Schubert's Serenade; you may be quite a soldier, but God knows you can't sing."

Not a man among them had ever heard a recruit declare war in just this

manner before. Declaration of this sort against the organized forces of old soldierdom were beautifully infrequent; the way in which McKay turned on the man who had been making his life a misery shocked their traditions most wonderfully.

"Bones" didn't hesitate a moment; he jumped for the recruit with the light in his eyes which was there when he was breaking a bad horse.

There was nothing pretty about the fight; each man had the one primal idea of mashing in the countenance of the other; and each succeeded in no small measure.

Bowman was the taller of the two, but McKay's descriptive list bore after the word "Nationality" the mystic answer "Irish." He was a mild mannered, good natured boy enough, but he was one of the crying kind, whose hot tears plow down their cheeks while arms flay buzzingly.

Bowman realized in a moment that he was up against a game, good, little man who would fight to the last drop; he sidestepped the vicious jabs of the Irishman as skillfully as he could, but two or three of the blows which went home brought him the dreadful information that McKay could hit like the kick of an army mule. Not that Bowman wasn't game himself; far from it, but there was something awe-inspiring in the way the boy wept and slashed. Bowman swung viciously, uppercut as well as the gymnasium instructor himself could have done; he was making a supreme effort to uphold the dignity of the old soldiers and his own reputation, for he had never been whipped in the troop. The men crowded around them in breathless excitement, forming a cordon which no non-commissioned officer could elbow through; it was the best fight of the year.

Suddenly Bowman thought he saw his looked-for opening, feinted and led with all his might for the tempting chin. The next thing the lanky warrior knew somebody was bathing his nose with a wet towel, while somebody else was announcing in a far-off voice that he could consider himself under arrest.

Bowman raised himself weakly and ran an inquiring hand over his slightly frayed pulchritude; his dazed eyes gradually cleared.

"Some scrapper, that kid," he mumbled reminiscently. "He can sure go some! I guess I am crazy with the heat for tackling that bow-legged buzz saw. Good-by old corporal's chevrons; Bowman is pinched again."

McKay, also under the ban, was down at the picket line saddling his horse when the wobbly Mr. Bowman hove alongside. The old soldier looked the youngster over with amused resignation, his smile broadening as he contemplated the southern exposure of the recruit's forehead, which was blue from one of the unblocked line drives of the lanky one.

McKay looked up calmly and was good enough not to smile at his opponent's forlornly mauled appearance.

The mind of "Bones" was a peculiar one; it was working in its peculiar way now. No one would have ever thought it possible that he should do what he now offered as his atonement. He had a pretty rough exterior; he was known to have been circus performer, cowpuncher and gambler; in fact, he was now one of the great blue coated because of a hasty trigger in Butte's best known faro joint.

As he stepped over and placed his hand on the boy's shoulder, there was no embarrassment in his manner, but only simple admiration and undefiled tribute.

"You're a good scrapper, kid," he slowly announced, "and I'm for you strong, see? We can fight it out again if you say so, but I believe you're on the dead, so I'll offer this." He stuck out his hand.

McKay grinned and shook the proferred paw.

The new West Point Second Lieutenant happened to be standing near when this tableau was enacted and immediately made himself "aces" with A troop. "I guess we'll take off that arrest from these boys," he announced gruffly to his First Sergeant. "They've been pretty well punished as it is."

"Well, whaddye think of the shavetail?" blankly inquired Bowman. "I do believe he's human after all."

"He sure is," assented McKay heart-

ily. "I believe we are going to find him very satisfactory!"

After that the two became acknowledged, shoulder to shoulder "bunkies." McKay became Bowman's caretaker when the older man endeavored to parch an all consuming thirst which ran the entire length of a very generous neck; many a night did he carefully steer him through the mazes of guard house, corral and parade ground, repressing the tall one's inordinate desire to burst into song, stowing him away safely in his bunk, caring for him like a brother, willing to fight the man who cast aspersion upon the one who had been the making of him in the troop—for such the fight had proved. Now that he was acknowledged to be "game" and had whipped the former troop champion, few were willing to take fistic issue with him, but there was no cause for that, as McKay's victory had not made him "chesty" in the least. He was a mild, inoffensive citizen when not too mightily crossed—a very staunch young man indeed. And this fact was presently realized by the Powers that Be, for after he had been in the troop only a short six months, they made him a corporal.

The troop was doing "bunk fatigue" one hot July day when the troop clerk entered from the first sergeant's office, spreading news which shortly had the quarters in a gladsome uproar. Troop A had been ordered to the Philippines! The happy period of wild excitement which followed during the next two weeks was in the nature of a celebration which no one can understand who has not been stationed in an isolated Army post for two long years. The packing of the troop's belongings was a hotly confused task, quickly performed by more than willing hands; at last the whole muddle was settled, the troop train puffed up the rusty track, horses were loaded, the whole "outfit" was off with a hurrah.

Five days it took them to reach Seattle; they found it to be a wonderfully alluring place. For two weeks their camp was filled with visitors, newly arriving troops, hurrying to and fro of Quartermaster's clerks, worried individuals trying to keep order in the camp's chaos of baggage. And then, greatest of all deeds, came the two whole months' pay at one fell swoop.

Bowman lost no time in getting into his most spick and span uniform; Seattle was to be his while he lasted. McKay obediently scrambled into his Sunday best and the two fared forth. There is no need here to chronicle the great doings of "The Fighting First" that followed; suffice it to say that they turned 50,000 whole dollars loose in the city within the next four days; there was nothing as popular as a soldier in the town of the totem pole.

Finally the day of sailing arrived; every troop office had the mystic little sign tacked on the tent pole announcing to all the revellers that their dream of joy was o'er. Bands played, merchants lined Fourth Avenue and showered largess upon the departing soldiers. It was a very triumphal march.

Down at the docks McKay hurriedly got his belongings together where they would be ready with the rest of the troop's baggage and looked around hopefully for Bowman. He had not noticed him riding down with the rest of the troop, but thought perhaps he had gone with the Quartermaster's wagons. Inquiry showed that no one had seen him since that morning at five o'clock. McKay had other things to do, but took a long chance and loped away from the scene of turmoil in search of his recreant bunkie. The first place he headed for was the best chance he could have taken, for up in the "Continental Club," a gambling house well known to every soldier in the regiment, he found Bowman. He was standing off in a corner arguing with a flashy young man who was evidently trying very hard to persuade him against his will.

"I can't do it, I tell you," remonstrated Bowman thickly, as he stuffed some gold pieces in his pocket. "I beat this game all right and I know we could make a fortune in the Klondike with you dealing, but I gotta go to the Philippines—understand?"

Before the other could answer McKay had Bowman by the arm. "Come on, you," he growled. "Boat's leaving in ten minutes."

With the strange workings of a slight-

ly tipsy mind, Bowman whirled on him angrily, his mind made up by this interference.

"Aw go to h—" he snarled. "I guess I'm old enough to take care of myself."

"Well, take that then," snapped McKay, swinging his fist to the other's jaw with a thorough suddenness which had a very collapsing effect upon the bold young blade. He toppled over into the other's arms with a foolish grin on his face; the gambler who had been talking to him drew back hastily; he knew better than to interfere further in a soldier's affair in a house where the Twenty-first was so popular.

McKay never forgot that horrible trip down to the water front. He was in a part of town where there were no cabs or street cars; his burden was a senseless, inert mass. He tried to revive him, but more forces were working than the stiff blow he had delivered. Down through the alleys he staggered, panting and tugging. Within five minutes they would be adjudged deserters from the Army. Over by the curbing, the desperate young man saw a driverless wagon. Without hesitating a moment he bundled "Bones" in, jumped on the seat and whipped up. Helter-skelter the crazy rig and frightened horse went careening for the transport dock; when within three blocks he heard the boat's warning whistle. An astonished Twenty-First Cavalry leaned over the rail and saw McKay jump from his seat, drag out the spineless Mr. Bowman, make one dash for the gang-plank—which was about to be drawn aboard—and flop over the lower deck with his burden.

The populace wildly yipped, sweethearts wept and waved handkerchiefs at the soldiers .they were "going to write to every day;" water front whistles blew good-by; bells clanged in the engine room, the *Garonne* was off for Uncle Sam's newest possessions.

The First was stationed at Rosario, in the province of Cavite, right off the beach where the old *Maria Christina* stuck her mournful stacks of rust to the sky in memory of Dewey Day. The province was considered one of the best places to get promoted or disgraced in of the whole Philippines and the First was certainly a crowd of "carpet baggers" when it came to the underbrush, underhand fighting methods of the native Filipinos. Troop A was particularly on edge, for three of their men had strolled too far from the outposts one night and had been promptly obliterated from the face of the earth, so there was no doubt of the immediateness of their danger. The rest of the regiment had been moved to Bingayen, which was regimental headquarters, and A had a nice little hotbed to protect all by itself.

Bowman was restlessly pacing back and forth on his outpost one night about a month after the troop's arrival when he heard stealthy, sneaking swishing in the tall grass beyond him. He paused and listened, with carbine thrown ready. Everything had been very quiet that night; this was the first sound of any moment which he had heard. Surely they must be bold to come so carelessly on the outpost as this; it must be a whole gang of the bare-legged *insurrectos* who would dare to make this much noise, for they were woodsmen born, one and all. He held his breath for an interminable length of time, but the bushes did not move and he heard no more noise from that direction. As a matter of caution he stood still in his tracks for the better part of half an hour, waiting nervously for what the tropical night might bring forth. His surroundings did not tend to revive his courage for this particular outpost was anything but sanitary or sane. He had to pick his way among fallen tree stumps, jump from solid patch to solid patch in the swampy bog. His heavy leather leggings were supposed to protect his legs against the snakes, but unlike most westerners, "Bones" had a particular horror of these night-striking, slimy devils. One crawled lazily past him now and he shrank back silently; the moonlight shining through a rift of the trees on the snake's back revealed a reptile of most disturbing dimensions. Gradually Bowman relaxed more; perhaps it was only imagination after all; there had been nothing to be alarmed at, a foolish breeze had stirred the bush and his soul. He gazed up at the tops of the near-by cocoanut palms and wondered idly whether it was true that

the natives made many pot shots from their branches. Far off to his right a *"malo noche"* bird was emitting a peculiar scream-like, almost human wail; it was unlike anything ever under this sun, a most weird. A singing lizard gradually, disturbing the night with its strong-lunged vocalizing; down past the palms. the waves beat on the shore from some far-off China-sea typhoon which was making itself felt for a thousand leagues or more. He passed his arm in front of his eyes and rubbed his sleeve across his forehead; he felt queer on this most queer night; things were not quite in plumb.

Suddenly the bushes directly in front of him parted with a loud banging; Bowman thought he saw many human forms charging down upon him, the noise of their attack was most rattling to the off-edge soldier. His carbine came to his shoulder, rang out once and then the chamber jammed. "Corporal of the guard number one," he yelled at the top of his husky voice, and ignominiously beat an unordered retreat.

The camp was thrown into an uproar in a moment, for everybody was living very much on the *qui vive* during these days of war and rumors of war; out the men poured in response to the shots of the guard. And when the common fire and charge had been centered on the originally infected spot occupied by the redoubtable "Bones," it was discovered that the doughty knight had blazed away point blank at a herd of baby caribao, who had been disturbed in their feeding and were seeking other climes and menus! The tale of how a troop challenged the caribao and dispersed their barn-yard enemy after a fierce onslaught resounded in later days throughout all the Islands and great was their shame. But that was neither here nor there, for the obvious fact remained that Bowman himself immediately after firing his warning and fleeing for the company of his brother troopers had apparently dropped from the ken of man.

Squads returned after searching fruitlessly for the misguided Bowman, McKay questioning them all most uselessly, for the fact was very patent that no Bowman had been seen when he greeted each dejected faced squad corporal in turn. It was McKay's night in charge of the guard, for he was a Sergeant now and a most successful one; he hesitated before asking to be given six men with whom to go in search of his lost bunkie, but when the last forlorn hope had draggled into camp, he sought out the Lieutenant and asked for relief from guard duty and permission to hunt for Bowman. This was reluctantly given and he hurriedly gathered together six men whom he knew would "stick." First they went to the outpost where all the disgraceful confusion had started, and made a thorough search of the scene of "The Fourth Battle of Bull Run," but no trace of Bowman or any of his soldier fittings could be found. McKay resolved that if his friend was to be found that night, it must be done quickly, his own opinion being that Bowman's firing had drawn down upon him some native outpost just aching for such a chance. He nodded to his men and dived into the underbrush headed for the known territory of Felizardo de Campo, the most dreaded *insurrecto* General then doing business in the Pearl of the Pacific.

They trudged and slopped through the underbrush and occasional paths as noiselessly as they could, but always kept up a gait which assured them of success if what McKay thought likely proved true.

He stopped them in a patch of moonlight while he pulled out Bowman's watch and looked at it; he wanted to see what kind of time they were making and whether it would be better to keep up the forlorn chase or take a chance on finding their man in the nearest native village. The watch, which he had grabbed hurriedly from Bowman's cot in the guardhouse when he found that his own was misplaced, showed him that there was still a chance to run Bowman and his capturers down, for it was only eleven o'clock and the natives would now be more likely to try for de Campo's headquarters with their prize.

They now entered a heavily timbered growth which forced them to trail along in Indian file; McKay, in his eagerness, got half a hundred yards out in front of the rest. Then silently and swiftly, just

as he was emerging into a little clearing, a clubbed carbine descended on the back of his neck from the bushes near by. Without warning, his senses were taken from him; so quickly was he hauled into the darkness by the two natives who had stepped aside to let the bungling *Americano* walk into their net, that the men behind him still judged he was out in front and went stumbling on and out of range into the night.

When McKay awoke he was lying on a corn-husk bed in the middle of a squeaky floored, bamboo room; the first sound which greeted his ears was the grunting of pigs underneath the house. Gradually his curiosity rose above the headache; he twisted his arms and legs, crooked his fingers, and sat up. It was still early dawn, but he could make out his surroundings with painful ease, for there could be no doubt about the fact that he was in an *insurrecto* calaboose—in durance vile, disgraced, captured by pigmies. There was another huddled mass of humanity over in the corner of the room which was emitting very American snores and McKay investigated. As he crawled closer his wildest hopes were realized, for it was none other than the curled-up legs and other portions of anatomy constituting his own beloved bunkie, one Mr. Alexander J. Bowman, late of Dyed Horse, Montana, also of the Twenty-First U. S. Cavalry.

He settled down upon his heels and gazed at the cause of his present dilemma with gloating satisfaction; everything would be all right now, he felt sure, for hadn't they always managed to pull out of scrapes together? A great joy filled him; it was indeed sweet music, this snoring which had been the abomination of those who had to sleep near "Bones" in quarters. Finally he woke the other man up.

Bowman came erect with a jerk.

"Well, how in the name of Mike did we get here? Been paid again?"

"Nope," grinned McKay. "Been captured again."

And then they fell upon their memories and extracted enough information finally to lead up to the all-absorbing fact that they were now imprisoned and that in a right sturdily built jail; a wide awake guard was on duty outside the door, with a nice, shiny, captured Krag Jorgen[illegible] reposing gracefully in the holl[illegible] his right arm.

"[illegible] whit abashed; he wa[illegible] McKay that everythin[illegible]ld turn [illegible]t all right. That mor[illegible]me rice and very decent coffee [illegible] shoved through the door to them; at noon they had native wine and dried fish—and also a visit from none other than Mr. Felizardo de Campo, a most resplendent General. They looked him over with as much interest as he regarded them and both agreed that he was a rather foxy appearing little proposition. That afternoon they found an old *monte* deck in the room and played an outlandish game of freakily hybrid seven up, interspersed with divers fruitless appearing attempts at escape; the fact that the guard wouldn't come inside to feed them being sufficient proof that there was no hope of getting out by the approved knockout route.

That night when the guard changed they were given the surprise of their young lives.

"Hey, señor," whispered the new guard, speaking with rapid earnestness in his broken English. "I catchem here the tick-tick which this man with the *fuego* hair have got last night. My sister—her!" He pointed to the tin-type reposing in the front case of the watch—the likeness of a very comely young lady indeed. He paused for explanations.

McKay rose to the situation at once and replied in "pigeon" English:

"Me got three more weeks soldier, savvy? When no more soldier me marry your sister, go catchem *casa* Manila. Fine business, you savvy? Me much love her."

The guard looked around apprehensively and placed his finger over his lips.

"My sister much lub you; she talkem me."

He paused, debating some momentous question most seriously. Finally his resolve was made.

He unlocked the door and pulled a handkerchief from his pocket.

"Makem look all same big fight here—*mucho combate,* savvy? Good luck;

you talkem my sister me good fellow, eh?"

"You bet your sweet goo-goo life," responded McKay, as he made another twist around the apparently half strangled guard. Together they trussed him up in a businesslike manner, took possession of his revolver, carbine and cartridges, pressed his hand gratefully and slunk out into the murkiness of the late night. Up through a corner of the camp they skirted and when they had reached the edge came suddenly upon a big tent set off conspicuously from the rest.

"Bones" looked at his partner and smiled; the same thought had crossed their minds simultaneously. With them to think was to act, no matter how harebrained the project; they promptly wiggled carefully under the side of the tent farthest from the guard pacing down the camp line. Things inside were about as happily fixed for them as possible. One laid upon the recumbent General while the other quickly trussed him up; in two minutes they were carrying a struggling piner for his country's freedom out into the unfeeling world, peopled some few miles distant with unfeeling *Americanos* who threw hapless *insurrectos* into ungodly political jails.

They struggled through the bad country for two solid hours before permitting themselves to rest, and their first act was to make sure of their bearings.

"Say," puffed McKay, "how did that nigger's picture get into your watch?"

"Good looker, aint she? Put it in there to make the Colonel's biscuit shooter jealous when I went back to Manila next time; swiped it out of a native photographer's display case."

"Ugh," grunted McKay unbelievingly, and they resumed their way.

"You hurry up, for God's sake," remarked the General finally.

"Why?" inquired both.

"I am doggoned glad to be captured," replied this educated terror. "My knowledge of Americans leads me to believe that they appreciate talent. I'm going to take the oath of allegiance and become a Provincial Governor."

"Well, whaddye know about that?" wheezed the tired Mr. Bowman. "Why didn't you telephone us?"

They reached camp the next morning at daylight and to say that their troop commander was overjoyed to get two of his best men and one of the worst *insurrectos* back at one turn of the wheel would be putting it mildly.

The General had told him a great tale of how the two brave lads had sneaked into his very headquarters at night, overpowered the guard and kidnapped him, Felizardo de Campo, doughty one of old, now good Indian.

The Lieutenant made the wires sing to Manila that morning and called the two boys in to show them their names mentioned in official dispatches for bravery.

The "shavetail" then leaned back in his chair and smiled quietly.

"Now boys, tell me how this really happened; the telegrams have gone." He shoved over the necessary memory reviver and McKay told the whole yarn in accurate detail, the General having been brought in to hear the tale of how his capture had been managed.

"Very fine, Señores," answered that worthy after they had all finished laughing over this latest prank of the Jade. "But I came pretty near telling you not to gouge that gag into my mouth so hard, because I heard you when you were slipping under the tent. That old-fashioned watch of yours ticked so loud it woke me up."

"Bones" looked at the General inquiringly.

"Privately, I think you're lying," he said, "but you have to grant that it is some watch."

"It certainly is, Señor Bones; let us drink to the health of its maker."

And they did, military regulations regarding association of privates and officers, prisoners and captors, being lowered in deference to the watch of Fate.

Further Adventures of a Diplomatic Free Lance

By CLARENCE HERBERT NEW

ALTHOUGH the Diplomatic Free Lance has been ennobled under the title of Lord Trevor of Dartmoor, his adventurous spirit is by no means subdued by his new dignities; his further exploits are fully as exciting as the previous ones. The adventure described below—an encounter with the secret police of Berlin—is one of the most fascinating and mysterious of all these episodes.

No. I—WHEN THE FOX STOLE THE BAIT

THE long block on the *Wilhelmstrasse* in Berlin—between *Unter den Linden* and the *Wilhelm-Platz*—may be properly called the exact center of the city—socially, politically and geographically. Looking south from *Unter den Linden,* the Brandenburg Gate and the *Tiergarten* are at one's right elbow. No. 70—the first building on *Wilhelmstrasse*—is the British Embassy. Beyond it, are the Palace of Prince George of Prussia—the residence of the Minister of the Household—the Imperial Home Office, where the *Bundesrat* meets—three different Ministries—the Foreign Office—and the Imperial Chancellery, formerly Prince Bismarck's Palace, in which the "Treaty of Berlin" was signed in 1878; all of these buildings have a west view over the *Tiergarten* from their rear windows. Opposite Bismarck's Palace, is the *Wilhelm-Platz,* at the southeast corner of which is the Hotel Kaiserhof.

This much of description is necessary to emphasize the fact that the political nerve system of the German Empire radiates in every direction from the above-mentioned long block on the *Wilhelmstrasse*—in which it closely resembles a short and narrow street of one block only, between Whitehall and St. James's Park in London.

The *Auswärtiges Amt,* or Foreign Office, *Wilhelmstrasse* 76, was Bismarck's residence from 1862 until he moved next door in 1878 and made the front salon of his reconstructed palace famous by a settlement of the Eastern Question which remains in force to this day—and there are chambers in "No. 76" which years of custom have sequestrated for certain uses that are not commented upon by the newspapers or even known to the citizens of Berlin. There is, for instance, an upper room at the rear of the building—panelled in dark oak and looking out upon the gardens through a couple of heavily curtained windows—where the Chan-

cellor sometimes confers with a man known as Colonel Pfaff—where this same Colonel Pfaff spends most of his hours in Berlin giving minute instructions to a certain Baron Grosserhaupt, and a hundred others like him who shall be nameless—the keen, relentless secret agents of the Prussian Government. Each man speaks many languages or dialects, fluently—and in the course of a year, he may enter the building as a representative type of any European, Asiatic, or American nation. Sometimes, he enters by the front door on the *Wilhelmstrasse*—sometimes, by a small rear door from the gardens. Once inside, he gravitates by imperceptible degrees—if there are those in the halls whom he suspects of undue interest in his movements—to this upper room at the back. And if Colonel Pfaff is away—as frequently happens—the man receives instructions from a confidential secretary of the Foreign Minister. It may be admitted, also, that a number of exceptionally brilliant women visit this room upon one pretext or another—and in it whisper communications that produce far-reaching results.

There was an afternoon in 1910—a dull, rainy afternoon, when the wind swept in fierce gusts over the bedraggled trees in the Garten and drove miniature torrents against the window-panes—when Colonel Pfaff talked in guarded tones across the table with a man whom the Foreign Minister knew as Hauptmann von Obermueller. Pfaff knew him as the son of a renegade Stettiner who married and settled in Ireland—but the man had proven himself invaluable in diplomatic affairs, and was at the Colonel's mercy by reason of a crime for which punishment had yet to be exacted. Putting it in the Government argot, well understood in the *Wilhelmstrasse,* Obermueller lived *"unter die Richterstuhl"*—and had too wholesome a respect for the long arm of the *"Auswärtiges Amt,"* to attempt anything like crooked play.

"Hauptmann—you were in Valdenburg, three years ago, during the betrothal fête of the Grand Duke. And you thought you discovered, in a party of guests at one of the hotels, the Duke's English fiancée—incognito. You reported this to a certain Bavarian Major whom you believed to be our special agent having charge of the Valdenburg affair. He sent you off in a motor-car to keep the party under observation in a city at some distance—a place for which you saw them leave in the train. But they never appeared there. You knew of, or surmised—at the time—a plan to have the Grand Duke abducted—and impersonated by a cousin who marvelously resembled him. And you doubtless remember that it was the Grand Duke's *cousin* who disappeared instead of himself. The whole affair was so infernally mixed up that I've never been able to figure it out to this day. We learned that a dead man lay among the trees in the Palace Gardens all that night—but we never succeeded in tracing the body. The Bavarian Major disappeared—absolutely. I've always thought *he* was that dead man. But things have occurred since then which appear to have about them certain resemblances—and I'm beginning to wonder if he could have been working against our interests. You spoke to him on the street, after he left a house in which there had been a conference—do you think you'd recognize the man, if you ever saw him again?"

"Probably not, Herr Colonel. It was a dark night, if you remember, and the narrow side streets were not illuminated. The man's voice was natural enough—yet I doubt if I could positively identify it. There was a marked Bavarian accent—of that I am positive—and some of the expressions he used were those of South Germany."

"That is exactly what impressed *me,* before I'd talked with him five minutes—and it is one of my reasons for believing the man died faithfully in our service. But *if* he was faithful, it leaves the affair more of a mystery than ever. That English marriage was a most deplorable thing, from our point of view. Already, there are two healthy boys—and they're being raised in England—not Valdenburg. However—that affair was but one of several. I think the mysterious torpedoing of our Baltic Fleet by a submarine at the Kiel manoeuvres, some two years ago, was the beginning of them. Then—Grand

Duke Hermann was miraculously picked up in mid-ocean when there was a high sea running—enough to drown a good swimmer in five minutes. And when he went overboard, there wasn't a ship in sight. The Carnstadt Alliance was the most amazing twist of circumstances I ever knew—the tables were too completely turned to admit a theory of chance or accident. And to cap the climax—after other mysterious occurrences—we find a decided coolness among the five smaller nations of Northern Europe on the proposition to revive the Holy Roman Empire—a coolness, where we anticipated considerable interest. The preliminary work had been carefully done, and well received. I believe your knowledge of Diplomatic Agents throughout the world is more complete than any other living man's, Obermueller—I've been amazed at it, because my own experience has been a long and varied one. You're familiar with the main points of all the affairs I've mentioned. Now—what man can you think of who possesses the keen wit—the finesse—the knowledge of European politics—and the Krupp-steel nerve to render him a possibility in such a game?"

Obermueller got out of his chair—walked over to look through the window at the sodden turf and shrubbery—took a couple of turns about the room—methodically filled and lighted a long porcelain bowled German pipe—and sat down again.

"*Himmel!*—I can think of no individual man! This one has the nerve and technical experience for the Kiel affair—but his pride in mechanics would surely have betrayed him. That one has been intimate with two or three who might have carried out the Valdenburg plan—but not without leaving some trace. Another is a walking cyclopaedia on Continental genealogy—*she* might have conceived the political chess problem that worked itself out in the Carnstadt Alliance, but I can't believe she could have influenced royal personages to act as cat's-paws in the way they did. That's really where the resemblance lies in all these affairs. It's the mystery—the total absence of any clue—which makes them similar. But—I doubt very much if any one person is responsible for all of them."

"Hmph! It looks that way, Hauptmann. Yet unless we manage to *get* some clue before long—some indication as to whom we must watch—I shall have to put cyanide in my Laubenheimer; and you, my friend, will stand up before a firing-squad. We are in a service where resignation is out of the question. We know too much—you and I—to be permitted to resign. In the service we stay—and we accomplish things, too—or else, pouf!—We join the 'harmless majority'—that is all!"

"You think the situation as bad as that, eh? I knew there was dissatisfaction 'higher up'—but I thought your record and mine entitled us to some consideration."

"*Some!*—Oh, *der teufel*—yess! But how long will it last when matters go from bad to worse? How many of the Kaiser's secret plans must go up in the air before he considers us deadwood? Put belladonna in your eyes, my friend—or you wont last so long—eh?"

"Well—I've been keeping certain theories to myself because I don't wish to bank upon them too much. But I've a few men watching a mansion on the Tiergartenstrasse, and I'm looking for developments at any moment. It's a case where the 'master-mind' should interest itself if there *is* one. Who knows? Perhaps we may net our bogey-man before we get through."

"Good! Excellent! I hope you will—for your sake and mine. But Hauptmann—be sure you make no mistakes! False accusations are not only fatal, they are ridiculous—which is worse. Well, well—I need say no more. It is approaching a point where it is our lives against those of our mysterious adversaries, whoever they are. Good luck, Hauptmann—good luck. But I think I would try the belladonna, just the same—metaphorically speaking."

Earlier in the week, there had been an arrival at the Hotel Kaiserhof—diagonally across the *Wilhelm-Platz*—who attracted some attention when the evening newspapers came out with his picture and personal history.

This personage was accompanied by

a private secretary and two Afghan servants—and had been lodged in a luxurious suite of rooms at the southwest corner of the hotel, overlooking the *Kaiserhofstrasse*. His name did not appear upon the hotel register—but it was known throughout the building soon after his arrival that he was George Llangolen Trevor, First Viscount Dartmoor. When the evening papers appeared, some of the Berliner social leaders reserved tables at the Kaiserhof in the hope of seeing one of the most famous aviators in Europe—a man whose name was a synonym for reckless daring in all out-door sports. The *Abendpost* credited him with more than this—referring to his social popularity, his acquaintance with numerous sovereigns and statesmen in spite of a known dislike for political life, and a princely fortune which made him one of the wealthiest men in European private life. In appearance (the *Abendpost* further said) he was decidedly pleasing. A man in the early forties, with the build and carriage of an athlete—or of a swordsman, which conveyed more to the Continental mind—with cleanly-shaven face, square chin, patrician nose and handsome, magnetic eyes. His manner was commented upon as that of a London clubman, with certain eccentricities of speech. As a linguist, the *Abendpost* smoothed over the question with the apology that Lord Dartmoor had never devoted much time to the acquiring of Continental tongues, and that—his ludicrous blunders in French and German being quite evidently the result of ignorance—courteous allowance should be made. Obviously, the editor had no suspicion that His Lordship could read the article without a dictionary.

Before most of the Berliners had finished their dinners, chauffeurs, footmen and messengers began leaving invitations at the hotel Bureau for His Lordship—and before ten o'clock, when the offices closed, the pneumatic-tube system delivered several more from residents who had been his guests in England or aboard his yacht, the *Ranee Sylvia*—and remembered his many courtesies with a lively sense of indebtedness.

It must not be supposed, however, that a city of three and a half millions (including suburbs) had its seven million eyes fixed upon a single individual in one of its hotels, or even that he was the most important guest at the Kaiserhof. As a matter of fact, two Royal Princes and a stray Duke occupied suites above or below him. And to the casual Berliner who noticed the blurred half-tone in his evening paper, Lord Trevor's arrival in town meant just about as much as a notice that Bryan or Taft was stopping at the Auditorium would mean to the average Chicagoan. There were in the city perhaps twenty or thirty people who knew him well, and were anxious to extend their hospitality. There were a thousand or so to whom his name was familiar, to whom accounts of his doings were of passing interest, but who, excepting a few of the lion-hunting society class, wouldn't have gone two blocks out of their way to look at him. Aside from opera or theatre favorites, that is really the status of most people who are in the limelight. It may jar the *amour-propre* of such few of them as happen to read this statement, but it's cold fact, nevertheless. And when it comes to us other individuals *not* in the limelight, the interest of the general public in our doings, our lives and ambitions—such as they are—may be figured out correspondingly.

His Lordship's secretary put in a busy evening acknowledging the invitations and declining those for the next few days—according to his instructions. In his lounging-room, Lord Trevor sat over the remains of his dinner, reading for the fourth time a letter which had been the immediate cause of his visit to Berlin:

THE BRISTOL—*Unter den Linden*

MY DEAR GEORGE:

Doubtless you will be surprised to hear from me in this place—which you know I dislike most heartily. It's all because of the mess in which Kenderby left his affairs. I've not seen you since his death, but I'm quite sure you've heard of it—went smash in his new car on the Corniche Road, above Monaco, you know. I believe the woman escaped with a broken limb and a lot of bruises, but Kenderby rolled down the mountain with the car—found in a most shock-

ing condition, they told me. Well,—poor Ken, was not unimpressible, as you know, and a Madame Grünwald—a singer at the Opera, here—managed to obtain an influence over him—when he was in liquor, I suppose. At all events, she obtained from him a property transfer which, if it holds, will take from me everything but Kenderby Towers, and the Devon estate. My solicitors tell me such a conveyance is illegal according to British law, and that it cannot hold—but the German barristers to whom they referred me, here, express some doubts as to the illegality. If you've nothing particular on hand at present, I believe your acquaintance in Berlin would enable you to get hold of some one who could settle the matter for me without dragging it through the courts—a most unpleasant mess for a woman. If I hadn't this beastly affair on my hands, I might spend a week here to advantage, possibly. There's a rumor that certain notes are to be exchanged with two other nations concerning the status of the Netherlands—and I'd give much to see them. So would certain friends of mine in London, I fancy. But I forgot that such matters are all Greek to you. Do run over if you can—and help me out.

As ever,

VIOLET TREMAIN KENDERBY.

Tuesday.

Some ten years before, the Honorable Violet Tremaine was a breezy, tennis-playing, hard-riding Diana in the Madras Presidency, where her father held an important official position—and she was secretly very much in love with a young Deputy Commissioner, the last of his immediate family, with nothing in the world but his salary. She would have eloped with him on that, but he wouldn't accept the sacrifice—and she afterward married Lord Kenderby, a man nearly twice her age and objectionable in other ways. Subsequently, the Deputy Commissioner died of enteric in Mysore, but the fact was never known. With him at the time was a man so nearly his double that—believing some relationship to exist between them—the young baronet described minutely his affairs and his personal history. The stranger took up his life where the dead man left it—returning to England as Sir George Trevor, and purchasing back the estates which had been gambled out of the family. Lady Kenderby—returning from India to her Devonshire estate—found him living upon the adjoining property and, never suspecting that he was other than her girlhood lover, revived the old intimacy as far as conventionality permitted.

She was openly a "political"—that is, she posed as being deeply interested in diplomatic affairs, and because members of the corps took her pose as mere affectation, she frequently picked up hints which the Foreign Office was very glad to obtain. Sir George Trevor had been anything but a "political"—openly. His distaste for matters savoring of public life or diplomacy was so well known as to be a standing joke, and his subsequent peerage was supposed to have been conferred upon him in recognition of his experiments and discoveries in aviation, as much as anything. There were five or six men in England, however, who knew that he'd rendered, under the rose, diplomatic services of such importance to the Crown that it was difficult to estimate their far-reaching effects—and predicted for him a Marquisate or a Dukedom, if he lived.

When Lady Kenderby's note reached him at the Reform Club in London, his only thought was to run over and assist in straightening out her affairs, but as he was crossing the Channel, the hint at the end of her letter stuck in his mind. If it were possible for anyone outside of the *Auswärtiges Amt* to obtain a glimpse of the documents referred to—supposing them to exist—he knew that he could use them in a way undreamed of by diplomatic agents of lesser caliber.

Shortly before nine o'clock, he called at the Bristol and sent up his card. Lady "Vi'" was so glad to see him that, had he kissed her, she would have taken it as a matter of course. It was barely five months since Lord Kenderby's death, but they had been estranged for several years, and her freedom was so much of a relief that she hardly cared to make conventional pretenses. On Trevor's part, however, there was a deference and conservatism which pleased her immensely—and piqued her as well. He knew himself for quite another man from the one she had loved as a girl—*she* considered him the *same man*. In her ripe maturity—she was barely thirty-four—she appealed to him more than any other woman he'd ever known.

Had she been a mere girl with little wordly experience and greater need of a husband's care in protecting her from the unpleasant things of life, the risks Trevor constantly ran would have prevented his drifting into an attachment, but her taste for intrigue, and the finesse she often displayed, attracted him as much as her undeniable personal beauty.

It didn't take her long to put him in possession of the facts concerning Lord Kenderby's crowning folly—and while he did not offer any definite suggestions, he thought the matter could be settled quietly. What drew his attention far more—though he gave no sign of it—was the information contained in a few careless words of hers, apropos of a commonplace occurrence. By the merest chance, her sensitive ears had caught a few remarks from an adjoining box at the opera—and in them, although she didn't suspect it, lay the immediate key to a diplomatic opportunity. The wealthy and obese Graf von Schimmerling had remarked, between wheezes, that he was expecting a visit upon the following Saturday afternoon from the Herr Doktor Liffenstauffen, at his mansion on *Tiergartenstrasse,* over near the Zoölogical gardens—and the only reason she remembered it was because she considered Doktor Liffenstauffen the rudest man she'd ever met. When he was presented to her one evening in London, she had jokingly expressed a belief in her own genius for diplomacy—and the rough-mannered Danziger had laughed—guffawed.

To Lord Trevor, however, the name "Liffenstauffen" implied something more than the professional German brusqueness. He knew him as a physician of reputation in pulmonary diseases—*who had not practiced for several years and rarely permitted himself to be consulted.* It was supposed that he passed his time in writing learned treatises upon various forms of disease, and that he was a very busy man at it. But Trevor knew him for a confidential emissary of the German government—a man frequently used to handle private memoranda destined for other Monarchs. The Graf von Schimmerling came of an old Brandenburg family who had not considered it derogatory to engage in trade—and having amassed a fortune as a brewer, he was living at his ease upon the proceeds in the ultra-fashionable quarter of Berlin. Secretly, he was a government stool-pigeon, and had rendered valuable service as such. So, if the Herr Doktor was going to visit the Graf von Schimmerling on Saturday—a visit of sufficient importance to be pre-arranged—it was not unlikely that documents which other governments would give much to see might be upon the person of one or the other. Saturday was but three days away; and the *Graf,* like some other fat men, was enthusiastic on aviation—a devotée whom Trevor had met upon more than one occasion and whom, he thought, might be induced to purchase one of his patented aeroplanes. This was more than sufficient excuse for a call upon Schemmerling—in fact, the Viscount had reason to believe he would be received with open arms.

Before saying good-night to Lady Kenderby, he obtained from her a minute description of the "Madame Grünwald" who claimed so large a slice of the Kenderby estates—and barely suppressed his surprise when she told him of an intimacy between the Diva and Doktor Liffenstauffen. This gave him an impression that "Madame G." was something of an *intrigante*—and, if such were the case, she might prove dangerous to approach.

Returning to the Kaiserhof, Lord Trevor sat down in his lounging-room for a final cigar—while he went over in mind the possibilities offered by a call upon the *Graf.* Presently, he called his faithful Afghan—who was pressing a suit of clothes in the bath-room.

"Abdool! Come here a moment, will you? Abdool—we came here as thou knowest, to assist the Ranée Kenderby. No thought had we of other matters—but to-night it appears there be happenings we should know of, and I fancy I shall have need of thy father's son—aye, thou and Sabub-Ali. I go, upon the third day—seest thou—to the house of one who may trap me before I come out again. Thou must be at the place before I come—thou and Sabub-Ali—

the one before the house, and the other behind, in the gardens, if so be it he may do so." Abandoning the vernacular as he became more absorbed in his plans, he continued in short, crisp sentences: "I've no reason to suppose I shall run into a net—no reason at all. Just going to pay a social call and talk bi-planes with a man who'll buy one as soon as he gets his nerve up. But something's going to happen in that house on Saturday. Don't know what it is, or how I shall get hold of it, but I mean to, somehow. Well, suppose I'm caught meddling, or in a compromising situation? Least they'll do will be to arrest me—wont be with the city police, either. Secret-service agents in plain clothes, more likely. And they wont keep me there; they'll take me away to some isolated government building, probably—some place where I might stay for twenty years before anyone'd think of looking for me, there. Well—you two must be near the house, but with no appearance of watching it. If you see me taken out under guard, you will go at once to Prince Karl, of Carnstadt. I know he's in Berlin—has an apartment in *Unter den Linden,* somewhere. Speak to him privately—tell him just what happened to me. Tell him to ask for a private interview with the Kaiser—at once. His memory is an excellent one, and I don't think he's forgotten what happened in Paris during the inundation. That's about all; it will be sufficient, I think. Give Sabub-Ali his instructions, and bring my pajamas."

Had any of His Lordship's numerous acquaintances been listening, they would have failed to recognize either voice or manner—Trevor having created for himself a marked individuality, full of mannerisms, which proved a most effective disguise. In public, he spoke with a lazy, good-natured drawl—often a bit satirical. He affected a manner of absolute ease and leisure in whatever situation he found himself. He admitted that he found politics a deuced bore—and though he spoke many languages with a purity of accent which made them a linguistic treat for those who listened, not more than half a dozen people in the world suspected it. In public, his attempts at foreign languages were so ludicrous as to be a feature in his Continental reputation. The statement has been made that his carriage was that of a swordsman, and he was certainly one of the most superb horsemen in Europe—but as one met him, day by day, he did not entirely give these impressions.

He arrived at the Schimmerling mansion in *Tiergartenstrasse,* on Saturday, in a handsome motor-car—and was admitted by a stolid-faced butler who reminded him of some one he'd seen before under different circumstances. Trevor gave no sign of this, however. With a monocle screwed under his right eye-brow, and a rather vacant expression, he followed the man into a large drawing-room at the right of the hall.

When the fellow left the room with his card, His Lordship lazily seated himself, and removed one glove, his keen eyes darting about the room in a quiet search for anything of unusual appearance. And they presently found it. Peeping out from under an edge of the Bokhara rug, near a tall cloisonné vase, was the corner of a white envelope—just the merest little tip of white—so tiny that not one person in a hundred would have noticed it. Lord Trevor was a man who firmly believed in the daily newspaper—preferably, the *Times*—and the many uses to which it could be put. Behind one's paper in a hotel lobby or upon a park bench, for instance, one obtained a masked view of the passers-by through the mere expedient of making a peep-hole with one's pencil. Then again, scraps of newspaper—torn into conventional sizes and shapes—were frequently useful in a number of ways; one never could tell. So he was seldom without a copy of the last edition.

Carelessly tapping one shoe with the crook of his walking-stick, it was mere aimless diversion to flop it over until it caught and lifted the edge of the rug—quite by accident, yet sufficiently to show the size of the underlying envelope and reveal the fact that it bore no address. He was seldom without a small assortment of envelopes in his pocket. Selecting a large one of like shape and size, he filled it with newspaper, folded inside a blank white sheet. Then he yawned, lazily—glancing at the

hall doors and those opening into a study at the rear. No one appeared to be in sight, though he could hear footsteps upon an upper floor, as if the butler were returning. To put the other envelope in his pocket was a risk he was altogether too shrewd to run—if overcome by numbers in a compromising situation, he was certain to be searched. Another glance fell on the solidly filled book-shelves which covered the rear wall of the drawing-room to the height of one's head, and he sauntered down the room—deftly changing, as he went, the dummy envelope for the one under the rug. The echoing footstep was descending the stairs by this time. There were less than twenty seconds in which he could act with any degree of safety. But in that time, he took from one of the lower shelves a book which had no appearance of having been disturbed for years—slipped the envelope in behind the row—carefully replaced the book—and was seated again in his chair before the butler reentered the room.

The fellow's manner was stupidly phlegmatic, and anything but cordial—yet to so close an observer as Lord Trevor, a shifting glance or two betrayed him for a man of very different temperament than he seemed. His German was surly and guttural, but there was deference enough in it as he explained that Von Schimmerling would be down shortly, and that he wished the gentleman to wait for him in the study at the rear of the drawing-room.

This was not altogether a surprising request; other callers might be expected, possibly ladies, whom the *Graf* did not care to introduce promiscuously, but for some instinctive reason, it put Trevor instantly upon his guard. And when the butler closed the folding-doors behind him, he glanced searchingly about the study. It was furnished in Flemish oak and stamped leather, with a large fire-place at one side—a lounging-room which reflected its owner's tastes and seemed to be used for business purposes, at times. There were excellent cigars and tobacco upon the table, with telephones, reference-books and directories—while against the wall near one of the rear windows, there was a massive, old-fashioned desk which had been quite apparently locked, and just as evidently opened with a short chisel which lay upon the carpet. A few papers were scattered upon the floor—several of the pigeon-holes had been hastily emptied and the door of a steel document-vault, fitted in under them, had been forced with the chisel.

To realize exactly what had taken place in the study was a matter of seconds only with Trevor—before he'd taken three steps beyond the doors—and prompt decision came a second later. That study was about the last place in Berlin where he cared to be found by the master of the house.

Placing his ear against the folding-doors, he caught the sound of light footsteps—pausing a moment near the chair he'd first occupied in the drawing-room, and then hurrying out into the hall. Trying the doors, he found them locked, as he supposed—and was about to pick up the chisel when a recollection of his boyhood stopped him for the moment. Folding-doors may not always stop when they are pulled their full width from their pocket in the bulkhead—sometimes the mechanism which holds them becomes loosened, and drops off. In which case, one pushes both doors over to one side—leaving an open space *behind* them. This particular set were heavy, and worked stiffly from disuse, but he found little difficulty in shoving them over to the further side, and passing into the drawing-room—after which he softly restored them to their original position, glancing under the rug as he walked over to a chair. *The dummy envelope had disappeared.*

Trevor had suspected the butler from the first glance at his face, but hadn't troubled himself to recollect where he'd seen the fellow. In the light of this discovery, however, he seemed worth a little concentrated thought—and, presently, his identity flashed through the Viscount's mind. There had been a certain afternoon in Paris, at a rendezvous known as the *"Petit Cercle des Diplomats,"* when a Mr. Raymond Carter—Charge d'Affaires at the American Embassy—had silently pointed out to him a man whom he subsequently described as the Jonkheer van Ruyswijk,

a secret agent of the Netherlands government. This man had worn a short moustache at the time, but the shape of his face, his chin and eyes, were unmistakable if one had ever observed them closely. Evidently, he'd been employed by Von Schimmerling for some time, as butler, and had been watching for just such a chance as seemed to have occurred. Considering the risk he must have run, Trevor began to feel some respect for the man.

"By Jove! I'm almost sorry I changed that envelope. Van Ruyswijk isn't among the higher class of Government Agents, but he's risking his life here in the hope of finding out how far Belgium and France approve of the Kaiser's appetite for Holland. And now all his work has gone for nothing, though he probably doesn't know it yet. Hmph! I'll see that Queen Wilhelmina has a chance to read those documents if they're what I suspect—and the Scandinavian Cabinets, too. Well, let's see, now? His best play is to accuse *me* of burglarizing that desk in the other room, and escape after they've arrested me—reckon that's about what I'd do in his place. Because there *must* be men from the *Auswärtiges Amt* watching this house—if Doktor Liffenstauffen was here this afternoon—and they wouldn't let him pass unless they were pretty sure they had their man, first. Eh? Listen, by Jove!—That's exactly what Van Ruyswijk is at—now. Oh, well—it'll be a nuisance. I s'pose I'll have to go without my bath for one morning. But I reckon that's about all."

The excited voice of the butler—talking in subdued tones with the master of the house—could be heard as they came down the stairs.

"I showed Milord into the drawing-room, Excellency—and when I returned to say that you would be down immediately, he was standing by the folding doors, looking into the study. A few moments later, as I passed through the hall, I heard a smashing kind of a noise in the study. When I looked into the drawing-room, it was empty, and the folding-doors were closed."

Trevor could hear muttered curses, and rapid footsteps going down the hall to the study door, which had been locked on the outside. When it was opened, and the *Graf* caught sight of his desk, the cursing increased—then it died away in amazement. The room was empty and the folding-doors securely locked, just as the butler had left them. In about three seconds, a short, fat Count of the German Empire—apoplectic with rage, and followed by a servant who began to feel a halter around his neck—raced around through the hall into the drawing-room, where he found the Viscount seated in a comfortable chair—eyeing him calmly through a highly polished monocle.

"You—you—you s-s-scoundrel! You—you—*verdammte räuber!* You—you—*Ach, Gott!* I—you—"

"Eh? I beg pardon. Are you the Graf von Schimmerling, may I awsk? Eh? Why, yes—'pon honor I believe you are—never forget a face, you know. But, fawncy! Most extr'ord'n'ry way of meetin' a gentleman when he calls upon you, don't you know! Are you ill?"

"Ill! *Ach, Himmel!* You—you, Sir—you send up the card of Milord Trevor—the famous aviator—"

"Er, yes—I believe so. We've met before, you know—several times. I called this awfternoon to see if you'd like to have us construct a bi-plane for you—but you appear to be not quite yourself, *Graf*. Pawssibly I'd best call at some more convenient time—eh, what?"

"Sir—look you—look me in the eye! Have you been in my private study, back there—breaking open my desk and and—and—and raising the devil—or have you not?"

"Fawncy! Why should I do that, if I may awsk? You're ill, man—you're really quite ill! You should 'phone for a physician, or a chemist, at once!"

Trevor's assured manner stupefied the *Graf*. Cooling down a trifle, he recognized the Viscount—and such a charge against a man of his standing appeared to be absurd. But as he was floundering between apologies, resentment and absolute terror at the realization of what he'd lost, the room was suddenly filled with men in street clothes who didn't know Lord Trevor from a wooden Indian, but had been watching the doors closely enough to

be positive that none but His Lordship and the butler had entered the drawing-room or study within the past hour. Where they had been concealed was a mystery, even to the butler, who had by no means discovered all the secrets of the house—but it was evident they had no suspicions of *him*. The man was known to have been in the house for some time—the Viscount, less than an hour, during which time the study desk had been forced and a State document abstracted. They were smiling a bit to themselves at the thought of how neatly he'd been trapped—but their eyes were cold and business-like over the revolvers which covered him.

Von Schimmerling was convinced that a most deplorable blunder had been committed, but the secret-service men paid no attention to his protestations. Beyond a quiet remark that his arrest would be regretted before another twenty-four hours had passed, and that he should depend upon the *Graf* to inform the British Ambassador, Lord Trevor apparently resigned himself to the inevitable. He was tempted to give the butler a whispered tip, when the man brought his hat—suggesting that he cross the Russian frontier and make for Odessa—but the risk was too great. One hesitates about trusting his life to a stranger of unproved loyalty. In a few moments, a limousine rolled up to the curb and His Lordship was escorted to it with men at either side of him. The curtains were drawn—but having the map of Berlin impressed photographically upon his mind, he was reasonably sure they traversed the *Leipzigerstrasse* from end to end—passed the *Spittel-Markt Untergrund* Station—and turned down the *Köpenickerstrasse* until they came to a short block ending at the *Spree*—near which stood a massive granite building that had the appearance of a brewery or storage-warehouse, there being no window-openings in the exterior walls. Inside, however—when a steel gate admitted them, through an arched passage, to a central court—the place had more the appearance of a private hotel, with office, lifts, electric-lights and a telephone system which connected with every corridor, but not with the sleeping-rooms.

Trevor was taken to a small room where a man having the appearance of a general out of uniform coldly glanced him over and spoke of Bertillon measurements. He paused, however, when His Lordship remarked—without raising his voice or betraying the least anxiety:

"I rawther fawncy you'd best wait until to-morrow night before you take any liberties, my good man." (The official became apoplectic at this condescension.) "If you've *not* made a mistake, to-morrow will awnswer your purpose as well as this evening—I sha'wn't run away, you know. But I am Viscount Trevor, of Dartmoor, in England—and our Ambassador has been informed of my arrest before this. If you insist upon proceeding as you suggest, I can assure you, positively, that every man concerned in this outrage will be degraded and heavily punished by the Emperor. However—do as you like. Take my measurements, and you'll never take those of another man."

One of the agents who had arrested him silently handed the official the documents and card-case taken from His Lordship's pockets. As he glanced over them, a troubled expression came into his face.

"Take this man up to 'Floor D' and lodge him comfortably, Schmidt. You are at liberty to use the reading-room for men and women until midnight, Sir—and you may smoke in your own apartment if you wish. We are not unnecessarily severe in doubtful cases—but I warn you, we're not to be trifled with. Our sentries have orders to shoot without question anyone who attempts to escape. We have no connection with the city police. You are detained here by the Imperial Government, but you will find it has a merciless arm if you have committed a state offense. I may say—as a suggestion to you—that I once had two guests who have been confined in one of the East Prussia castles for over thirty years. The proof against them was circumstantial—not sufficiently conclusive to execute them—but their friends have considered them dead for half a lifetime."

The reading-room, shared by men and women prisoners, was a novelty in His

Lordship's experience—but the whole establishment differed from any prison he'd ever heard of, and the Governor's suggestion was all the more sinister, for that reason.

There was but one other person in the reading-room when he entered it—a woman of striking appearance and evident culture, but one who betrayed the gravest of apprehensions by her extreme nervousness. Evidently, she had been given to understand there were charges against her of the most serious nature and her imagination was rapidly driving her into hysteria. At first glance, her appearance struck him as familiar—as if he'd seen her face more than once and should be able to recall it. He ran over in mind the people he *knew*—the people he'd seen in public life or on the stage—the photographs displayed in shop windows and—he stopped at the photographs. He was positive he'd seen one of this identical woman only that morning—in fact, had made a point of seeing one. There had been an object.

"I beg pardon, Madame, but—may I awsk if you're not the diva, Madame Grünwald?"

She looked up at him suspiciously—but his expression was blandly disarming. Surely, this man—so unmistakably English at every point—could not be dangerous to her. It was even possible that he might be a fellow-prisoner—though he certainly had no such appearance.

"I suppose it would be useless to deny it—in Berlin, at least. There are too many photographs in the shop windows, even if one never attends the opera."

There was, even in her apprehension, a note of pride in a talent which had filled opera-houses in all the great cities of the Continent, night after night. For a second or two, it gave to her face an expression that vaguely stirred his memory. Once before—somewhere—he'd seen a woman with such an expression—the look of one who, lending herself to certain actions by force of circumstances, follows an ideal which seems to justify them. He studied her face—the color of eyes and hair, the shape of lips and chin—in a level, searching glance which thrilled her with a spasm of fear. What he knew of her, she couldn't guess, but she had an impression of foreboding terror.

"Er—by the way, Madame—do you mind if I light a cigar? Permit me to offer you a cigaret—I think you'll find the quality agreeable." He opened and passed across the table a gun-metal case upon which a tiny coronet was beautifully enameled. With a sigh of partial relief, she was daintily picking out a long Turkish cigaret to quiet her nerves, when a sudden thought made her cheeks whiten perceptibly.

"*Ach, Gott*—it is not permitted! *Das rauchen in dieses raumen verboten ist!* I do not dare! They would place me in solitary confinement for the offense!"

"Nons'nse, Madame. Lay the blame on me if you like—say I forced you to smoke! The rules and regulations of this place aren't of the slightest consequ'nce to me—my being here at all is an outrage which some one'll regret very shortly, and I'll smoke all over the place if I like—until they stop me by force, at all events. I've something to awsk you, and I prefer talkin' comfortably over a good cigar, if you've no personal objection."

She looked at him in amazement. It couldn't be possible that the man realized where he was—or how absolutely powerless. Something in his *sang-foid*—his ease of manner in such grim surroundings—stirred her blood, and braced her like a dash of cold water. He would see that she also had nerve—of a sort. Placing a cigaret between her lips and lighting it from the match he was holding, she leaned her elbows upon the table and nodded for him to proceed. Her beauty was of a different type from that of Lady "Vi' "—but it was evident that Lord Kenderby's taste had been anything but crude.

"Er—have you any idea, Madame, as to why you were brought to this place? One doesn't usually associate a diva with surroundings of this sort—there's rawther a lack of harmony in them, I should fawncy. Eh—what?"

"Would you mind telling me of what interest it is to you that I do not harmonize with my surroundings, as you so expressively put it—if you are really a fellow-prisoner?"

"Oh, not in the least. You see in *my*

case, a most egregious blunder has been made—a blunder which is quite sure to be discovered very shortly, and that'll demand most handsome apologies. Now—suppose I feel disposed to accept your release from this place as evidence of sincerity in those apologies—eh?"

"*Mein Gott*—if—if you only *could!* But no—it is impossible, even if you are speaking the truth—of which I have no guarantee but the word of an utter stranger!"

"Er—quite so. But isn't it worth trying? Really, you know, I'm ashamed of myself for not acting disinterestedly as one should, but I'm thinkin' of drivin' a sort of bargain for your liberty. Rotten bad taste, of course—an' I hope you'll come to overlook it in the end. But if I'm to help you, I must know something of my ground—I must know what cause you suspect for your being here—*in a political Bastille?*"

"Why—I don't believe I really know. One of the men who has been most attentive to me is the Herr Doktor Liffenstauffen. I've received him occasionally in my dressing-rooms at the opera. He was there Monday night during the entr'acte, and left very early to keep an engagement. When I came off the stage at the finale, my rooms were occupied by three men who claimed to have found certain documents in the portmanteau my *bonne* was packing. When I finished dressing they put me in a limousine, with the curtains drawn, and brought me to this place. Unless the *Herr Doktor*—or another gentleman who called before him—dropped the papers, I cannot imagine how they came to be in my room. I remember the portmanteau stood, partly open, just at the end of a divan upon which they both sat." Trevor gave her one smiling glance in which she read a clever surmise as to how much of this statement was true—and how much, partial truth.

"Very good. You know better than I whether they'll trip you upon other points. If there are none of importance, you'd best stick to that statement—absolutely. And you needn't shield the *Herr Doktor*. Chances are, he deliberately got you into the mess—though I haven't the pleasure of his acquaintance. You think it's safe to stand upon that statement—and to have me back you—do you? Very good. Then, if you are cleared of this accusation, you know of nothing else upon which they could hold you? Quite sure? Excellent. Now, Madame, I'll awsk your indulgence while I describe a curious experience I had in Paris, not so very long ago." She looked the surprise she felt; her eyes challenged him with a coquetry that was fascinating.

"It was at the time of the floods—the inundation, don't you know. I was runnin' down to Chartres one evening, in my car, with a couple of friends—an' just as we topped a rawther steep hill, something interfered with the sparks. We pushed the car back among the bushes to be out of the way in case anyone else came along. Presently we saw another car—an' doused our lamps to avoid makin' the other chauffeur swerve on the steep descent. T'other machine came up—an' blew out a tire, in front of us. Two women and some men got out to watch the chauffeur put on a new one—and they *talked,* thinkin' no one could hear them. It seems there was a certain Monarch who thought a lot of the younger woman—not in a questionable way, you know—admired her personality. It had been hinted to him that she was in danger—in Paris—an' his adventurous disposition made a visit to the flooded city an extra inducement. He was comin' even then—incog. An' those scoundrelly men were plannin' to abduct him—either to kill him outright and throw his body down an *oubliette,* or to so disfigure him that recognition would be impossible. A sort of political conspiracy, as we understood it—and both women, though seemingly against their will, had assisted in luring him to Paris. Well, we communicated with the police, of course; I believe they released him from some house in the submerged quarter in the nick of time. In fact, the Prefect told me later, that it was a very near thing. Now—er—suppose the Governm'nt people here in Berlin should get a hint that one of those women had been in the city for some time—actually in their power? What do you suppose would happen to

her? Eh? All the European monarchs stand together on that sort of thing, you know. A person who'd made such an attempt against one of them would be quite promptly handed over by any Governm'nt that caught her, even though—as I thought at the time—she failed to realize what the plan really was, until too late."

Every vestige of color had receded from the diva's face. The cigaret had dropped from her trembling fingers and was burning into the polished wood of the table. Her voice was a whisper.

"Who—who *are* you!"

"As I've told you—one of the men who overheard enough of the plot to stop it. All the faces were quite distinct in the light of the motor-lamps an' the circumstances would naturally fix them upon one's memory."

"What—what do you propose to do?"

"Why—er—forget the matter, I suppose. Unless the woman should give me further reason for remembering it and —er—protecting myself, don't you know. Some reason too serious to be overlooked or forgotten."

"Mein Gott! Are there really men who act so considerately. Women have just reason for doubting it—at times. You said you were not disinterested—that you would drive a bargain for my release? What is it?"

"Why—it's rawther a delicate matter, you know. But—pardon me—not in the sense you fear. I believe you knew Lord Kenderby quite well, before he was killed—accepted rawther marked attentions from him, don't you know. Attentions, presents—all sorts of things. Deeds to some of his estates, an' all that. What? Precisely. Well—you know —accordin' to British law, it would be quite impossible to inherit under such documents, even if you could prove Lord Kenderby to have been of sound mind when he gave them—which I fawncy might be diffic'lt. All you could possibly do would be to force Lady Kenderby into some kind of a compromise settlement to keep the matter out of the newspapers. Now—you see —Lady 'Vi' ' is an old friend of mine—an' I've advised her against that sort of thing. I'd pay something out of my own pocket rawther than see her mulcted at any such game—but it's quite unnecessary. Your salary at the opera is large enough to make you very comfortable, an' you're in your prime—you'll suffer no real privation in giving up those deeds."

"Is that all you wish me to do—merely give up those trumpery papers!"

"Oh, I say now! Trumpery! They represent nearly two hundred thousan' p'und, you know."

"Possibly. But I never thought I could realize that on them—not even in my dreams. And you assure me that I couldn't. My liberty is worth a million times more than anything they represent to me—I think you fail to realize what sort of a place we're both in, my friend. You may find it a rather grim joke."

"Oh pawssibly—but I fawncy not. Here are writing materials; just scribble off a renunciation, which I will dictate, of all claims whatsoever against the estate of Lord Kenderby, deceased, or against Lady Violet Kenderby, his widow—and sign it. Then witness it with another signature which I'll also dictate."

"The name of the woman you described in your Paris adventure? Not if I die for it!"

"Oh, very well—come to think of it, I wouldn't if I were you. Just sign it as Madame Grünwald of the Berlin *Opernhaus*. When you leave this place, you'll be shadowed by the police for some time —and you'll not be able to leave the Empire without assistance. But I'll see that you get away to Paris, if you wish —awfter the documents are in my possession, you know—lest you forget. Er —pardon me—rawther bad taste, that —what? Hullo? Wonder what all the commotion is about, down below? Listen! Lot of talkin' in the court. By Jove! There are some chaps comin' up in the lift—I wonder—?"

In about two minutes, half a dozen uniformed officials stepped from the elevator and came into the reading room, where Lord Trevor was calmly seated by the table—lighting a fresh cigar as he looked around at them. With the party, was a tall man whose brilliant uniform was concealed by a grey top-coat, and whose Fedora hat was pulled

down over his eyes. This and the turned-up collar made it difficult to see much of his face—but the ends of a carefully-trained mustache were visible above the rim of his coat-collar. Glancing at Lord Trevor, he gave a brief nod to the official in charge of the party—who, placing his military helmet under one arm, stepped forward and bowed very courteously.

"My Lord—His Imperial Majesty, the Kaiser, wishes me to express his most sincere apologies for the indignity to which you have been subjected, and to ask that you will do him the honor to accompany us back to the *'Schloss'* for a late supper. The British Ambassador has been also invited." (The Viscount smiled.)

"Great pleasure, I assure you. Pleasant evening all round, don't you know. Er—novelty, and all that. Odd experience—society of a beautiful artiste for an hour or two—invitation to sup with the best raconteur in the Empire. Really, you know—I mustn't complain. *Au revoir, Madame.*"

At the same moment, two sober-faced men were sitting in the mysterious upper room at the *Auswärtiges Amt,* in the dark—looking out at the electric lights in the *Tiergarten.* Both were, for once, too nervous to smoke.

"Hauptmann—that was the most colossal blunder of your life! Had there been time to get there before him, I should have broken the speed law—but Tiflitch said he was in the office with half a dozen of his personal suite when I telephoned. *Man—man—why* didn't you tell me, hours ago, what you'd done!"

"Do you believe the statements of every man you arrest, Herr Colonel?"

"No—no, of course I don't! But you had no suspicion of this particular man before he entered the house—you'd never even thought of him as a possibility. Worst of all, you left the bait in the trap, in spite of Schimmerling's objections—*and the bait is gone!*"

"Gone where? Who got it? The man who calls himself 'Lord Trevor' was searched before leaving the house—nothing was found on him. The folding-doors between drawing-room and study were locked fast—and my agents know he didn't come out into the hall or attempt to force those doors. If I hadn't left the *bait* as you call it, in Schimmerling's desk, nobody would have attempted to get it. Somebody *did* get it—*and that somebody is the man we're both after—the man responsible for all our failures,* I believe! But a cholera-germ couldn't have gotten through the net I had around that house! Who is he, Colonel? Who *is* he!"

Pfaff gave a weary sigh.

"Schimmerling's butler, I suppose."

"What! Impossible! How the devil—"

"Your men hadn't been out of the house twenty minutes when the fellow went to Von Schimmerling with a telegram from his sister in Hanover—said his mother wasn't expected to live, and hurried off to the railway station. That was four hours ago. I've telegraphed all the frontier stations, giving his description—but it's impossible to put a cordon around the Empire or to watch every person arriving in cities like Dresden, Leipsic, Munich, Stuttgart—particularly, if they arrive on foot—in a motor-car—in a boat. Besides, he would have ample time to change his appearance in the coupé, between stations. It's easy enough to shadow a man when you keep in touch with him, but *four hours*—pouf!" Pfaff's gesture was expressive.

"Suppose the two were confederates? Your Viscount might have concealed the documents in the drawing-room?"

"You are not complimentary, Hauptmann—not complimentary at all! I put one of your men through a rigid examination. He said Lord Trevor could only have placed an object under the rug—in the vases—behind a mantel-clock or the pictures upon the wall nearest him—or under the seats of three chairs. Well, Schimmerling has examined every place—and has eaten no dinner. The *Graf* has no appetite this evening—he was almost crying when he asked what might be done with *him.* The only thing which saves *my* skin is the fact that you acted without consulting me. His Majesty and Lord Trevor you know are personal friends—Trevor's on his way to dine with him, now. I've been his guest in Devonshire, and

he's the last man in the world to mix in politics. How about *you*, my friend—where do *you* stand?" A grayness crept into Obermueller's face as he picked up hat, gloves and stick—then shook hands with Colonel Pfaff.

"Morituri te salutamus."

Next morning, the Herr Captain Obermueller was found in his apartments near the *Hansa-Platz*, beyond the *Tiergarten*—with a gaping bullet-hole in his temple.

The same afternoon, Lord Trevor called upon the Graf von Schimmerling—just to show there was no hard feeling—and sold him a bi-plane. And two weeks later, the Premier of the Netherlands read with much interest a document concerning the secret attitude of France and Belgium toward Germany's aspirations in the Land of Dikes—a pleasure for which he was indebted to the British Foreign Office. Several months later, his Government reconsidered its decision to erect impregnable fortifications at Flushing. As the proposition was a part of Germany's scheme for the eventual control of the North Sea and Baltic, Germany is still wondering just where she slipped a cog.

The Whistling Whang

By ANNIE HINRICHSEN

HE WAS elected a member of the legislature because his district was morally weary of politicians.

For years the politics of Norse County had been a narrative of partisan battles, grafting office holders and statewide corruption. Finally, when each of the two leading parties nominated a man notorious for his legislative financial ability, there was produced a revulsion of political sentiment which was expressed by a plurality vote for an independent candidate.

At the foot of a rocky hill stood a small, substantial frame house. It had been painted a clear crimson. The windows and doors were glistening white. The roof was deep blue and dotted over it were large white stars. Above the roof waved an American flag.

Within this house dwelt Moses Mapes, known through Norse County as the Whistling Whang.

The day he decided to be a candidate for the legislature he climbed the rocky hill behind his house and to the top of a tall, straight, pine tree from which he had removed every branch, he raised a large flag. When the wind caught and extended it, he touched a match to a cannon at the base of the tree, removed his old army hat and stood with bowed head until the last reverberation had died away in the valley. Then he drew down the flag, cleaned the cannon and returned to his house.

"I do this," he informed a leader of the independent faction of the county, who sat on the crimson porch waiting for him, "every time somethin' important happens. I did this when Lincoln died. I did it the day I finished paying for my land. I did it when my son was born and when—and when the little chap died. He died in my arms. I laid him down, kissed his mother and went up the hill. When you see the big flag and hear the gun you can know that a little more history has been added to the life of Moses Mapes."

Suddenly the old man rose. For a moment he stood drawn to his full height. From his lips came a long, screaming

whistle, one steady, piercing note. Then the great, gaunt body bent forward. The whistle became a medley of many notes. His feet shifted over the floor in a slow, dancing movement. They moved faster until the man's body was swaying and turning with an irregular, jigging motion. The whistling grew greater in volume and formed into snatches of songs, popular airs, old army tunes, lullabys, hymns and the calls of many birds.

The whistle and the dance ceased. Moses Mapes sat down in a chair near his caller.

"I've just had an inspiration," he explained.

"Is that what you call it?" laughed his visitor.

The old man turned a pair of steady, dark blue eyes toward him. "Some men," he drawled, "get their inspirations from whiskey or tobacco or a woman's smile. I get mine—in my own way."

"Will you tell me what this inspiration was?" suggested the visitor.

The Whistling Whang waved his arm toward the valley. A mile away lay the county seat, a busy, little city. Beyond it the railroad cut a chasm through the hills.

"I was thinkin' how nice it would be to have a big sign nailed up over there above the track just this side o' where it comes through Sloane Mountain; a sign which would read 'Hurrah for our Nation and Our State. Welcome to Norse City.' I thought maybe I could get the legislature to ordain that such a sign should be placed at the entrance of every town. They'd teach patriotism."

II

A few days before the legislature assembled, the Honorable Joseph Green called upon Moses Mapes.

Mr. Green was a well dressed, perfectly groomed man of fifty. His broad, square face was expressionless, except on occasions when expressions were useful; then they came, ready made and appropriate. His manner was one of dignified deference.

He found the Norse County legislator in a meagerly furnished, little room in a cheap boarding-house near the capitol.

"I am an old member, Mr. Mapes. I have been in the legislature for twenty years. I feel toward newcomers as a host toward his guests and I make a special effort to welcome them."

The Whistling Whang smiled a slow, timid child's smile. "And you've come to see me?" he asked. "Come to welcome an old codger from the back woods who don't even belong to a regular party? I'm pleased, real pleased. I guess legislators is kind men."

"You are one of us now."

"I've felt sort o' strange and lonesome. I went over to the state house as soon as I came and looked at all the sacred things—flags and guns and such like—in Memorial Hall. Saw the flag my regiment carried at Gettysburg. Cried a little over that and said a hymn we used to sing over our comrades when we had to leave 'em behind. Then I went in and told the governor I was ready to go to work and for him to set me at a job o' lawmakin'. He was real kind and nice and said he'd give me lots of work to do."

"You were elected as an independent candidate, Mr. Mapes. Have you formed any alliances with either party?"

"No, I aint. I don't know much about legislatin' and I thought I'd let the governor choose for me and tell me what to do. He'd know best, bein' governor of the greatest commonwealth on earth and representin' right and justice."

Mr. Green's white lids drooped over his eyes. "You are right," he commended. "The governor is the proper person to consult. Take his advice. Will you walk with me over to the Baird Hotel? The members are there and I want you to meet them."

"I'm pleased, real pleased. It's mighty lonesome not knowin' anybody."

The lobby of the hotel was crowded with laughing, talking men. Each newcomer was hailed joyfully by his friends, escorted to the desk by half a dozen men, assisted in the act of signing his name on the register and carried back into the crowd.

Several men turned to look at Joseph Green and the man with him.

Mr. Green led Mr. Mapes to the group nearest the door. "Boys," he announced, "here is a new member, Mr. Moses Mapes of Norse County."

A dozen hands were extended. A dozen men assured him that the legislature as a whole and its members as individuals were honored and delighted to receive him.

With his slow, timid child's smile, the Whistling Whang received their greetings. "It makes a man real happy to be treated so kind," he answered. "I thank you—"

Suddenly he straightened to his full height. From his lips came the long, screaming whistle. The voices and laughter ended abruptly. Every man in the lobby turned toward the sound. The old man's body bent and began to shake. The whistle became a medley.

The men crowded about the swaying figure. The only sounds in the lobby were the piercing notes and the shuffle of the dancer's feet on the marble floor.

The whistling grew louder and the twisting, turning jig grew swifter. The arms alternately waved in circles and jerked extended above his head.

As suddenly as it had begun the whistle and the dance ceased. Moses Mapes stood looking slightly bewildered at the silent, wondering men.

"I was having an inspiration," he enlightened them. "That's the way I have 'em. This inspiration was to pass a bill puttin' up a big sign over the state house front door: 'Hurrah for Our Nation and Our State. Welcome to the Legislature.'"

A young member began to clap. "Hooray," he shouted. "Hooray for Mose."

A tumult of shouts broke from the crowd.

The Whistling Whang's eyes rested on the expressionless face of Mr. Green and he smiled his slow, timid smile. "The boys seemed real pleased at my suggestion about the sign, didn't they? They're nice boys."

The Whistling Whang received from Governor Halford the information that the guidance of Mr. Joseph Green would lead him to beneficial and meritorious legislation. The information and the guidance he accepted without question. The governor was omniscient. The vote of Moses Mapes was recorded in favor of all bills advocated by the administration machine.

A few weeks after the assembling of the legislature, Moses Mapes introduced his fist bill.

With two inspirations, many laudatory references to the founders of the state, a reverent tribute to the governor and a long and earnest prayer for the welfare of the legislature, the Whistling Whang placed before his colleagues a bill compelling the erection of patriotic and hospitable signs at the main approaches of all cities and towns of the state.

Thereafter the Whistling Whang was the most talked of and written about member of the General Assembly.

The newspapers blazoned his eccentricities. Some of them ridiculed him as a clown, a harmless idiot, a freak of politics. Others characterized him as a hermit who had dwelt all his years in a cave with an ideal of patriotism as his only companion, a companion which he had brought to the Assembly in order to secure for it special legislation.

The galleries of the House were packed with spectators eager to see the Whistling Whang and his inspirations. Legislators, newspaper correspondents and state house employees continually pointed out to inquiring strangers a great, gaunt, old man who walked with a firm, slow stride, answered timidly when spoken to and always removed his hat when he entered the state house grounds.

Governor Halford was serving the last months of his first term as chief executive. He was a candidate for renomination. Several other prominent politicians were candidates for his office.

A convention of delegates is controlled by certain influences; the strongest influence nominates the candidates. In the approaching state convention the most powerful force would be the Day Coal Company, the owners of the largest coal mines in the state.

Two months before the date set for the state convention a member of the legislature rose in his place in the House.

"Mr. Speaker."

"Mr. Alden."

"Mr. Speaker, I have placed in the hands of the clerk of the House, for introduction, a bill to restrict wholesale maiming and murdering in the coal mines of this state. I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the clerk be instructed to read this bill."

The Speaker's hand tightened on the gavel. He looked down at the man on the floor. The legislator's eyes met his in a mocking smile.

"The clerk will read the bill," announced the Speaker.

The clerk at his desk beside the speaker's was fumbling with some papers. "House Bill 121," he droned. "A bill compelling all coal mining companies to install in each mine operated by them the following appliances for the prevention of accidents." Then followed a list of the appliances.

As the clerk read, Mr. Joseph Green left his seat and drifted slowly toward the door and out of the Assembly Hall. He strolled to the elevator, rode down one story and sauntered leisurely along the wide marble corridor to a door above whose massive oak framework were great gold letters which formed the word "Governor."

IV

Moses Mapes had lingered late one afternoon among the revered relics in Memorial Hall. To leave the building he had to pass the Assembly room.

The doors were closed. From behind them came laughter and loud voices. The Whistling Whang opened a door. Near the entrance in the rear of the room where he stood, the shadows were deep.

At the speaker's desk, gavel in hand, stood the representative of a metropolitan paper. At the clerk's desk was another newspaper man. In the circle of seats near the speaker's platform were a score of young legislators and newspaper correspondents.

"I wish it distinctly understood," the man at the speaker's desk was declaiming, "that I, by the grace of our august governor, am ruler of this noble, high-minded, pure souled gang of thieves known as the House of Representatives. And at the direction of his royal greatness, our chief executive, I command you immaculate scalawags to proceed at once to such legislation as is desired by the most worthy and eminent ruler of our state.

"Many kings are ruled by their barons; our king is owned by one of his. Therefore, all legislation must be of a nature pleasing to the Day Coal Company. Therefore, by the power vested in me as Speaker of this House, I command you to get busy and beat that vile and dangerous mine bill introduced by a narrow-souled, ill-mannered person who has the stupidity and the incorruptibility to consider the lives of a few hundred miners of greater importance than the dollars of an octopus-natured corporation."

"Hang the villain who dares to annoy our governor's corporation," yelled a newspaper man who sat in the seat of a prominent administration henchman. "Boil him in oil. Rend his not-for-sale soul into shreds and scatter the fragments broadcast through the land as a warning to all honest legislators."

"Aye. Aye," roared a dozen voices. "Hear. Hear."

The speaker pounded on his desk. "Don't you legislators know," he demanded, "that in this well organized body of boodlers only certain men—those working out the will of his excellency—have the right to speak on this floor? Honorable Joseph Green, chairman of the committee on mines, the chair recognizes your desire to vociferate a bunch of untruths concerning the loathsome, unpalatable measure which is at present disturbing the serenity of the pure and innocuous coal corporation. Lie merrily and freely. That is your duty."

A young man rose in Joseph Green's seat. "Mr. Speaker—Members of the House. I desire to say a few words concerning this bill which for several weeks has received our most serious and careful consideration. Step by step we have pondered this bill. As the honorable public knows, I never act hastily. I have learned that a quiet, decorous

manner is an excellent disguise for a crafty, bribe-giving, bribe-taking nature such as I possess. Hence, when I wish to perpetrate on the public an especially dastardly piece of legislative jugglery, I increase my slowness and decorousness of manner. I move as slowly as any other well fed mule in the employ of the coal corporation. I kick only in the dark and I never harm anything except honest legislation.

"Gentlemen: having pondered this bill in our committee we pronounce it an invention of a weak, archaic, out of date and out of style intellect. It would precipitate one of the most startling and hideous calamities which it is possible for the human intelligence to conceive. It would—pause, breathless, while I disclose its full horror—it would impose upon the Day Coal Company hundreds of thousands of dollars' expense. Consider this prodigious tragedy.

"But because the public is interested in this bill and because certain suspicious minded newspapers have intimated that all is not honest in the House of Thieves and in the committee on Mines, an explanation of the committee's attitude toward this bill has been prepared. To-morrow I shall deliver in the House a long, tedious speech full of confusing technicalities. It's for the benefit of the public and the press. It's a good line of dope. The governor and the president of the Day Coal Company helped me write it."

Through the room rang a shrill, shrieking whistle. A fair haired, boyish looking young man sprang upon a desk. In his teeth he held a policeman's whistle.

The mock legislators greeted him with howls of joy. For an instant he stood rigidly on the desk, both arms raised stiffly above his head. Then he broke into a furious jig. The whistle screamed steadily.

With a quick, awkward jerk he stopped his jig. The whistle dropped from his lips.

"Feller members," he whined, "I've had an inspiration—a real nice inspiration. It's an inspiration to kill this naughty, bad bill. Let's do it, feller members. We'd ought to, 'cause the governor wants us to and Mr. Green wants us to and we'd ought to do just what they tells us. They say it's wrong to pass such a bill. It aint patriotic. It aint accordin' to what the nation's great patriots lived and died for. And we mustn't never do nothin' that aint patriotic and accordin' to the rules of the flag and the land of the free. Now let's us nice, pious, legislatin' fellers vote against this bill. And when we've voted it down let's pass a real noble bill puttin' up a grand sign-board at the entrance of the Day coal mines, readin' 'Hurrah for Governor Halford and Joseph Green. Welcome to our depths.'"

"Mr. Governor!" Moses Mapes was standing before the governor's desk. "Mr. Governor, a crowd of boys is playin' legislature upstairs like kids play school. But they're sayin' some things that look like they might be a little bit true."

"What are they saying?"

"They say, your honor, that you are against the mine bill for reasons o' your own."

"And what if I am?"

"And that Mr. Green and I are helpin' you."

"Well, aren't you?"

"Your Excellency, it's every man's duty to carry out the wishes of the governor of the state. The governor stands for patriotism. He's the idea of all that's right in law and order made into a man and put into the executive chair. He's a figurehead, sir, standin' for noble thoughts."

"I am gratified that you think so," said the governor formally.

"Mr. Governor, I'm an old man. I've lived all my life in a little red, white and blue house at the foot of a hill. I have not mingled much with men. I've lived with spirits and thoughts. I've built men out of ideas and with these men I've lived. Mr. Governor, would you mind explainin' to me this talk about a coal company bein' the boss of the embodied spirit of state patriotism?"

The Governor's fingers beat an impatient tattoo on the papers before him. His cigar twitched between his lips with the nervous clenching of his teeth upon it.

"This bill"—his voice was sharp with unconcealed irritation—"is a sand-bagging measure introduced by unscrupulous legislators for the purpose of making trouble for the Day Coal Company. The bill has a good sound. The people like such a bill. But they do not understand—"

"Mr. Governor, would you mind lookin' at me while you talk?"

The Governor raised his eyes. The Whistling Whang's face was only a few feet from him. It was a strange, unfamiliar face. The large lips were set in a grim line. Beneath them protruded a broad, hard chin. Dark, keen eyes were searching the Governor's face. In them was an amazement, a revelation and an impregnable determination.

The Governor's fingers stiffened on the papers before him.

"Would you mind, Mr. Governor," said the grim lips gently, "would you mind tellin' me the truth about this bill and about yourself?"

"I've told you—" began the Governor.

"If this bill passes," interrupted the drawling voice, "will you veto it?"

"That is my intention."

"Will you veto it because the coal company commands you to?"

"I shall veto it because I think it a—"

"Mr. Governor, please don't let an embodied spirit of patriotism tell a lie; I'd hate to hear it. Do you have to veto it or lose the help of the coal company at the state convention?"

The Governor pushed back his chair and rose to his feet. He was a small, sparely built man, thin chested and slightly stooped.

"A half-witted clown, the laughing-stock of the legislature, cannot question—"

"Maybe I'm all that, Governor, but I'm a man and I'll say what I think to you and to everybody. To-morrow this bill will be read in the House and voted on. If it passes—"

"It must not pass."

"It shall."

"I shall veto it."

"You will not. You can't. Mr. Governor, listen to me." He took a step toward the Governor and laid his huge, knotted hands on the slender shoulders of the chief executive. "There never was but one perfect man on earth. He died on the Cross. But ideas can be perfect. They can be true and loyal. They're greater than man with his little earthly glories—greater than life, or death. They make eternity. The man who rules a state must be such an idea. You're somethin' beyond a man, Governor. The man of you"—he shook the Governor gently—"is only a little shell. The spirit you stand for is a part of the everlastin' Good. Governor, if you do not veto that bill, will the coal crowd throw you out of the state convention?"

The Governor's eyes met his squarely. "Yes," he said quietly. "They would throw me out."

"That's your only reason for fightin' it, aint it, Governor?"

"The only reason."

"I'm a member of the legislature. I stand for an idea too, and I intend to do the work of an idea by passin' that bill. It's right that it should pass and we ideas in the legislature are goin' to pass it. And the idea in the governor's chair, your honor, is goin' to live up to bein' an idea. That bill's goin' to be passed in such a way that you just naturally wont be able to veto it. You'll find that this little frail shell of a man—you—will act patriotic and stay patriotic like a governor should."

V

"Mr. Speaker."

"The chair recognizes Mr. Joseph Green."

"Mr. Speaker, Members of the House of Representatives. The clerk has just read to you a bill which for some time has engaged your attention. To the committee on mines, to which this bill was referred after its introduction, the bill has been of special interest. We have given it the most searching investigation. I shall tell you frankly that we did not wish it to leave our committee and reappear in the House. We regarded it as so iniquitous a measure that we tried to kill it in the committee. But popular clamor for it was so great

that we allowed it to come back to the House for general discussion. It has now come up for your vote, the final test of its merits. Gentlemen, I pray your kind attention while I explain—"

"Mr. Speaker."

The Whistling Whang was standing in the aisle near the center of the House. "Mr. Speaker."

"Mr. Green has the floor."

"He hasn't the whole floor, Mr. Speaker. There's room for me too."

"An inspiration! Whoop it up with an inspiration," yelled a young member. "Let all the job men of the coal crowd perform at once. Oily Green and the Whistling Whang—"

"Silence." The speaker's gavel crashed on the desk.

"Mr. Speaker, I intend to talk about this bill. I am a member of the committee on mines. Mr. Green, will you sit down?"

The eyes of Mr. Green and the speaker met. In the speaker's eyes was interrogation. In Mr. Green's, an amused surprise. He nodded almost imperceptibly to the speaker and dropped into his seat.

"This bill," began Moses Mapes, "is the noblest measure ever introduced in this House." His voice was low, but his words rang clearly through the hall. The confusion of passing feet, moving chairs, slamming desk drawers suddenly ceased. "A man who votes against it does so because he has a soul as black as the deepest pit of the mines whose money pays him for his vileness."

The silence was absolute. Two hundred speechless, motionless, astounded men stared at the man in the aisle.

"When this bill came to the committee on mines, Mr. Green said that Mr. Day, president of the Day Coal Company, had asked for its defeat. Everybody laughed and said we'd have to kill it. Mr. Green said—"

"Mr. Speaker." Mr. Green was on his feet. "Mr. Mapes is out of order. I call for—"

"Shut up," bellowed a huge-muscled, bull-voiced Irishman. "Ye're afraid the old man will tell the truth about ye and yer committee. Go on, old Whistler. Ye've got the floor and ye'll keep it."

The speaker raised his gavel. A hundred men were on their feet shouting for recognition.

"The Whistling Whang! Whistle! Whistle! A new tune! Let the old man talk!" thundered from all parts of the room.

The steady pounding of the speaker's gavel made no sound in the Bedlam.

Moses Mapes, his arms folded across his broad chest, stood quietly in the aisle.

"Mr. Speaker," the voice drawled slowly. "Mr. Speaker!"

The shouting ceased.

"You needn't pound that gavel so hard. You've always told me that as long as I was talkin' in the interests of the Governor I could have the floor."

There was a cheer of laughter from House and galleries.

"Mr. Green said that the public wouldn't stand for our killin' the bill in the committee, that we'd have to let it out and defeat it on the floor of the House. Then he took me off by ourselves and explained that the bill was a bad one, aimed at the liberties of honest business men. I thought I was doin' my duty when I worked against it.

"Last night I got a hunch that everything was wrong and rotten; that the coal company was buyin' up souls to beat a bill that was as good and pure as a breath from God's Heaven. I didn't ask Mr. Green any questions—havin' made up my mind that he's a liar and no decent person—but I asked the other members of the committee what they got for disapprovin' the bill. They said they got a thousand apiece for committee disapproval and would get another thousand when the bill was beaten. They said Mr. Green gets ten thousand for his work. They asked me what I got and I said I'd got a new inspiration.

"I pried around some more, and a legislator who's always worked with the coal gang told me that the coal company had enough votes, lackin' ten, to beat the bill. So ten fellers was promised five hundred dollars apiece to vote against it. Now, Mr. Speaker, if you will tell the clerk to call the roll of votes on this bill, we'll listen to the announce-

ments of the men who will get five hundred dollars each for votin' against this bill."

The gentle, drawling voice dropped each word into an amazed, pregnant silence. The only movement in the great room was at the reporters' table. The newspaper men were writing rapidly.

The Speaker's hands gripped the edges of his desk. His lips moved stiffly, but even in the silence no word was heard. Mechanically he reached for his gavel and raised it.

A surprised murmur stayed his hand. Every eye in the room was fixed on a point behind him. He turned his head and the gavel dropped from his hand and fell to the floor.

A door behind the speaker's desk had opened and a man had come into the room.

Governor Halford walked to the edge of the platform. "Members of the legislature,"—he spoke rapidly as if he feared interruption, " the unwritten law of the General Assembly permits the Governor to speak on the floor of the House only in an hour of urgent need, in a crisis where life and death, or honor or shame, fight for mastery. The hour and the crisis are here—the vote on the mine bill.

"I ask you to pass it. Pass it by every vote in the House. Let each man of you search his soul, find his ideal of patriotism and legislative honor, and according to this ideal, cast his vote. Not one of you can vote against it."

He turned his back toward the Assembly, walked through the door by which he had come and closed it behind him.

Ten minutes later the cheers which announced the successful unanimous vote on the mine bill reached every part of the state house. They floated up to the dome, they drifted into each department and for hours their echoes remained in the ears of the man in the governor's office.

Two days later the legislature adjourned.

The train which carried Moses Mapes to Norse City stopped at a point where the railroad cut through Sloane Mountain, a quarte of a mile from the town. A man from Norse City who had boarded the train several miles down the line came to Moses Mapes.

"Will you come to the platform, Mr. Mapes," he asked. "There's something out here for you to see."

As the legislator reached the platform of the car a band struck up the national anthem. A thousand voices took up the song.

The old man caught the arm of the man beside him. He was trembling and the tears were running down his cheeks.

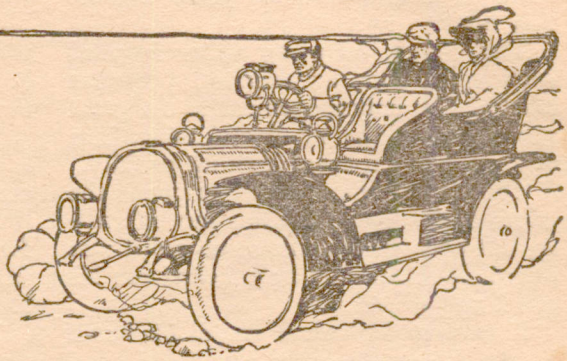
"For me?" he questioned. "Is it for me? I don't deserve it. I don't—"

"You passed the coal bill; you made some history in the state legislature."

"But I lied to do it. No, not exactly lied. I had to tell something that would scare every feller in the House from votin' against the bill. So I went to my room by myself and I told myself, 'Moses Mapes, ten fellers have been bribed to vote against that bill.' Then when I got up and said in the House that a legislator who'd always run with the coal gang had said this I wasn't lyin'. I lied when I told it to myself alone in my own room. I didn't know they had been. But I had to have somethin' to tell that would make every man in the House afraid to vote against it for fear o' bein' thought one 'o the ten. Look. Look. That big arch—just for me—all red, white and blue. 'Hurrah for Moses Mapes. Welcome Home.' That's to tell me they like me even if I couldn't get the legislature to pass my bill about signs. Isn't it glorious? 'Hurrah for Moses Mapes. Welcome Home.' "

That night Moses Mapes climbed the hill behind his house. To the top of the pine tree he raised the American flag. The evening breeze spread it wide. Across the valley rumbled the boom of the cannon. With bowed head the Whistling Whang stood beside the old gun beneath the flag until the last echo had murmured into the silence.

The Trial Spin



By EARL HENNESSY

PHIL WENDELL realized that tact was to be employed in announcing his afternoon's purchase. He knew he could expect but little open support from his wife and that his mother's opposition would be direct and uncompromising. Therefore, he waited till the evening meal had progressed to a point where warmth and geniality were at their height ere he ventured to bring up the subject with the elaborately affected carelessness of internal apprehension.

"Oh, by the way!" he exclaimed abruptly. "Was looking over a number of automobiles to-day. Next year's model! Brand new cars; just out of the factory two weeks. And really, you'd be surprised at the bang-up machine you could buy for eighteen hundred dollars!"

Mrs. Wendell, a fragile, doll-like little woman, looked up sharply, then carefully placed her knife and fork on each side of her plate.

"Phil, you know very well you can't afford an automobile." Her tone was pathetically reproachful, even aggrieved. "You know you are in no position for such a luxury. I'm surprised you show an interest in these things. As for buying a banged-up machine for eighteen hundred dollars—"

"Not banged-up—bang-up—swell, up-to-date!" corrected Phil, realizing that slang was a mistake. "Now listen, Mother! I'll explain to you the various salient points, and if you don't agree with me that it's a cracker-jack of a dead bargain, I'll—I'll throw up both hands." He leaned forward and thrust one elbow on the table, thus to enumerate on his fingers the various glaring advantages offered by the machine in question.

"First, it runs like a rubber ball. Second, there's a perfect adjustment of parts. Third, no noise—no suspicion of noise! Fourth—But what's the use; I could run on indefinitely. Really, I'll bet when I run her up to the curb—"

"Front curb!" It was not only his mother, but his wife who echoed this announcement with galvanic incredulity.

There was a pause. Phil colored, then smiled weakly. "Oh, shucks!" he said.

"Phil—" began the mother.

The young man held up one hand.

"Not a word—entirely guilty!" he admitted, with an embarrassed grin. "Bought it this afternoon—money already paid over—car to be delivered next week." He paused and seemed to experience some difficulty in continuing. "Of course I'm sorry if everybody's not agreeable but it's a corker—a corker!" He paused again, and this time something in his mother's face gave him the cue to an inspiration.

"And listen, Mother! You're not to contribute one cent, not a cent, toward the—what did he call it?—oh, yes, maintenance upkeep. No, sir, nor one cent to repairs! You're just to ride and enjoy yourself. Honestly, within a week I'll bet you'll be an enthusiastic motorist. Now don't say anything rash or uncomplimentary. I know you're a little disappointed, but pause a moment till your better judgment wins control."

Mrs. Wendell ignored the mantle of boyish levity in which her son invested his remarks.

"I'll say this, Phil Wendell," she announced in calm, even tones. "Don't ever ask me to ride in any automobile. If you want to get yourself into trouble, go ahead. I'm a back number I know, and have queer, old-fashioned notions, but Mrs. Bradley's broken arm and that accident to her little girl happen to be quite enough for me. You bought this thing against my wishes. I will avoid commenting on the delicate question as to whether you can afford it or not. But I'll say this: Don't ever say I didn't warn you when you bring misfortune to some poor, unsuspecting, innocent victim!"

"Not a word!" agreed Phil, and congratulated himself on getting off so easy.

The next week the automobile arrived. It was a modest little car of the latest torpedo design, graceful as to lines and holding four persons. It carried the affluent fifth tire, and was painted an unpretentious black. The color Phil had selected out of a sort of filial deference to his mother's quieter tastes. He hoped it might have an effect toward alleviating the unrelenting opposition with which she viewed his purchase. He hoped in vain.

A week was spent by the intrepid and enthusiastic automobilist in learning the vagaries and whims of the newly-acquired toy. On these excursions no one accompanied him save a representative of the automobile company, whose duty it seemed was the continual taking of his life in his hands. At the end of six days Phil was pronounced by the automobile expert a capable and efficient driver. He was now ready for passengers.

"Laura," he said to his wife, as on a glorious Sunday morning the machine stood resplendent and glistening before the door, "I'll take you first. We'll go once round the park—as a sort of preliminary workout. I want to find out if I'm in form, and if nothing happens and everything runs smooth we'll come back and get Mother."

They completed a circuit of the park in a little under three-quarters of an hour; for an initial performance it was rather a creditable one. Nothing happened and everything ran as smooth as an undertakers' convention. But as they returned and attempted to carry out the second part of their program, they encountered a proposition comparable only to the Rock of Gibralter. Persuasion, argument, entreaty, promises—nothing would alter the fixed decision of Mrs. Wendell.

"Please don't attempt to argue the question," declared the resolute old lady. "You and Laura can ride as much as you want. If it gives you enjoyment, pray ride, but don't ask me, to whom a ride in an automobile would be nothing but a penance. I don't want to stand in the way of anyone's enjoying himself, but I must look out for my own comfort. Furthermore, it's my opinion there is a decided element of danger, and that you are both unnecessarily risking your lives. But that's your affair. However, please don't ask me to risk mine."

There was no hope in further argument. Mrs. Wendell, though invariably gentle in speech and kindly in manner, remained as unmovable as though she bellowed forth protests and flew into a wild rage at mere mention of the subject. She was, moreover, impregnable to all cajoleries; voicings of regret and disappointment were as futile in their impressions as the whisperings of an idle wind. And so all through September and well into the quiet brown days of October, Phil and Laura were forced to enjoy their rides alone; and they took many delightful little trips out into the country. But always they were conscious of a presence lost, of a pang of regret, an ever-increasing disappointment.

"If I could only get Mother to come once, to take just one trip with us out into this wonderful, quiet country, I'd bet she'd come always!" Thus spoke Phil Wendell, driving home late one Sunday afternoon accompanied by his wife. He turned to the red-cheeked, demure little woman who sat beside him.

"Laura, you talk to her to-night. You can generally do more with her than I. Suppose you tell her that her continued refusals have so depressed me that you're worried about my—my being sick, or something like that."

The slender, girlish figure at his side laughed outright.

"Why, Phil, you're the picture of health!"

"Well, say I don't sleep well nights. Say I'm gloomy and morose, and a prey to brooding, self-accusing thoughts. I'm not overweight; have me lose ten pounds or so. Make up a good, strong, convincing yarn and get it off with the soft pedal. It's our only chance."

A mischievous twinkle danced in the grave brown eyes.

"I'm not good at fibbing, but I'll try."

"Sure! Dish up something strong! There's a possibility we might win out."

That night the old lady listened in rapt attention to the profound and wistful narrative which her daughter-in-law unfolded. She was more or less surprised naturally, though not incredulous. She, too, had never reason to suppose that Laura could cultivate the prevaricating art to such a finished degree. And, listening, she became convinced that her son was just ridiculous enough to permit his health to become affected by her unchanging attitude. Wherefore, as a fond and loving mother, she rejoiced inwardly, and took the same as a very great compliment. And also, being warm-hearted and devoted, she yielded to the tentative plan her daughter-in-law proposed and agreed that on the following Sunday she would accompany the joyous couple on a trial spin out into the country.

The great day at length dawned crisp and clear. Phil was jubilant with confidence, and it was with a mixture of assurance and unconcern that he received a report from the manager of the garage that the machine had been thoroughly overhauled and that every part had been found in perfect working order.

"Mother, you and Laura sit in the back seat," directed the triumphant arch-conspirator as, accompanied by her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Wendell stood silent and expectant beside the throbbing machine. "I'll drive, and Laura can point out to you the places of interest. We'll go to Rock Falls, forty miles, take dinner at that quaint little hotel and come back by the river route. It's a perfect day, and the trip will be great!"

Indeed, it was an ideal day—considering the time of year—cloudless and without the least wind. The sun beamed down gloriously, with just a suspicion of warmth. In rushing through the atmoshere, however, the faint chill of late Fall crimsoned and brought a tingling sharpness to the cheeks. Also, one was conscious of the keen, bracing air in one's lungs. The day was one invariably adjudged perfect for touring purposes, yet toward the close of the journey one was further impressed with the lateness of the season by the fact of a dull, icy numbness gripping one's feet.

A little after noon the picturesque small-town hotel was reached and an old-fashioned boiled dinner, deliciously cooked by the wife of the proprietor of the place, dispelled the gnawing hunger with which all alighted from the machine. Not a mishap marred the joyous splendor of the trip. The engine, unusual in such crises, behaved exceptionally well. Phil and Laura, gay-spirited and optimistic, besieged with questions their imperturbable and taciturn guest. They were loud-voiced and flushed with success, and eagerly demanded the older woman's opinion of the adventure so far.

"Wait till we get home," declared Mrs. Wendell with Missourian conservatism. "We're only half through, and I'm not going to venture any opinion till the trip is thoroughly over. No one can tell how they will eventually like a half-completed work. I don't know what the return trip will develop, and until I do, I'll not express any opinion."

Thus the homeward journey was started, and it developed for one thing a more even road, which, Mrs. Wendell noted, caused Phil to drive the machine at a more accelerated pace. Furthermore, she noted the air was decidedly more chill than on the morning run and that traveling north, with the sun to one's back, was strangely less cheerful and attractive somehow than traveling south. Yet withal, she was fairly comfortable and took a grave, appreciative interest in the passing scenery. Once she asked how fast they were going.

About half-way home, as they were speeding along a narrow stretch of level

road, a great red touring-car, coming up from behind, careened down into a ditch, opened its muffler and shot up ahead of them at a speed of fifty miles an hour. Phil started in hopeless pursuit, much as an outraged little dog chases a flying, dust-scattering trolley-car, only to see the car swallowed up in its own dust. At the next town they came across the big machine grimly taking gasoline at a so-called garage. It deigned not to notice them, but twenty minutes later, it duplicated its performance of the narrow road, this time tooting its horn derisively as it passed.

The stout-hearted, undiscouraged little car kept on and at length reached the city limits. Mrs. Wendell, who had been sitting quiet for some time, spoke of a dull heaviness on her chest, a vague oppression, which, she said, had been increasing in power with the passing of every minute of the past half-hour. Both Phil and Laura grew at once questioning, and then sat silent. The machine was headed directly home. As the house was reached and the party mounted the front steps, Mrs. Wendell was seized with a violent and alarming coughing-spell. She admitted she felt far from well, and, once indoors, Laura insisted upon taking her temperature. The thermometer registered 101 degrees.

The family doctor was at once telephoned for and arrived within the half-hour. Meantime Mrs. Wendell had taken to her bed, thoroughly miserable and sick and exhausted. A brief examination by the suave, kindly doctor was all that was needed to convince him that there was just a possibility of warding off a bad case of pneumonia. Phil and Laura received this news with numb despair, weak with the horror of the wretched trick Fate had played them.

By noon of the next day Mrs. Wendell's condition was critical. Pneumonia, acute pneumonia, rushing and pitiless, had set in. In view of the advanced age of the patient, it was apparent the doctors sought to avoid direct questionings, and only gave expression to a brief, "There is a chance," when no other answer would satisfy. One immaculate, impressive, low-speaking specialist suggested—"More a matter of hope than of anything else." His fee was fifty dollars, and he came only as a personal favor to the Wendell's family physician.

The two persons to whom the unexpectedness of the whole thing came with a double significance, horrible and maddening, paced up and down different parts of the house, white-faced and silent. Both were broken with grief and remorse. Neither associated with the other the chief burden of blame or guilt, each viewing the other through the wonderful charity of a great love and sorrow. It was obvious that both wished to avoid sympathy, and that their utmost desire was to be left alone. Only occasionally did a passion for speech, for a swift outpouring of words, assert itself.

"If she only gets well," declared Phil, trampling under foot the self-control which kept hidden and in check the grim torment of his sufferings—"if she only gets well, I'll never look at an automobile again! Never! Never! She said buying that machine would bring nothing but trouble and misfortune! She was right; what else has it brought? I was a fool and a wretch. I was worse! But the very first day she starts to get well, back it goes! Yes, sir, back it goes! And she will get well! She will! She will!"

Of course it is a question whether the effect of her son's words had the slightest bearing on the matter, and incidentally, a question for others to determine, but it is a fact that three days later Mrs. Wendell successfully passed the crisis of her disease and started on the long, long road to recovery. Phil was alternately incoherent with joy and silently reverential with thanksgiving. He beamed, shook hands, listened attentively to a funny story, and thanked the doctors with tears in his eyes. Nor did he forget to call up the automobile company. His instructions were clear and to the point. The machine was to be called for that day, and put up for an immediate sale.

Three days later Laura was beckoned into the library by her husband. The family doctor had just departed.

"This afternoon," said Phil, "I told Dr. Leonard for the first time the circumstances of our terrible ride that day. I did this in order to ask him how about telling Mother that I had sold the machine. He said for the present I had better not, as you can never tell what effect or reaction a thing like that will bring about. It would be better he said, to postpone the matter for about two weeks, when, whatever the effect will be, the danger of a relapse would be so slight as to be hardly worth considering."

Three weeks later Mrs. Wendell was sitting in a huge Morris chair by the low, broad window of her room. She was looking out on the morning sun, as it bathed in a kindly warmth her lifeless and deserted garden. Her son and daughter-in-law sat beside her.

"It must be wonderful out in the country to-day," murmured the feeble convalescent. Her soft eyes sought the far horizon. "It must be something like the morning we took that ride."

Phil glanced sharply toward his wife, who nodded.

"Mother," he said, his voice heavy with feeling, "Laura and I have never been able to tell you how we felt about that day. I don't know as we ever could—ever could adequately express our sorrow and regret. You were right, as you always are, and I should never have bought that machine. But the very first day you started to get well—and I knew all along you were going to get well—I sent it back and sold it!"

Mrs. Wendell looked around. Her eyes were wide with interest. "Sold the machine?" she asked in a surprised tone.

"Two weeks ago!"

There was a short, profound silence. "That's too bad," she said.

"What!"

"That's too bad," repeated the soft-voiced convalescent. "I don't know when I enjoyed such an experience—that is, such an experience as that morning ride! Of course it's true I caught cold coming home, but that"—she shook her head gravely—"can scarcely happen again." A slow smile crept into her eyes and her voice took on a more normal ring.

"Phil, I want you to get me one—one for next spring. I think perhaps I should enjoy it. But it must be a big one—a great, big one that can shoot down into a ditch, and make a loud noise, and go fifty miles an hour! And, Phil," she added, as her auditors, weak and cold, stared fearsomely at her, "let's have it painted—red!"

The Kidnapper

By VIRGINIA DUPUY HOLTON

I BEG your pardon, but will you let me see the bill that man gave you?"

The young man who spoke had reason to believe that the girl, who sat opposite him in the train, and whose charming simplicity had completely engrossed him during the last hour's travel, had been duped by the ordinary train thief asking for change and returning a counterfeit bill.

The girl colored as if startled at being addressed so suddenly and unceremoniously as she murmured "Certainly," and fished out the bill—apparently the only one she had—from an old fashioned and shabbily worn pocket book.

"It's just as I thought!" exclaimed the young man. "Just a minute!" and with one bound he flew toward the car door, bill in hand.

Elsa Stevens wondered what it was all about. That she was minus the major portion of her money, she was aware, but somehow she had an abiding faith that the young man, whose eyes she had several times encountered upon her, would return with at least a plausible explanation. She only hoped he would again appear before she had to get off at the next station. If the truth were known, she wanted to see the very good looking young man even more than her money.

The train whistled its approach to her destination, and still he came not. She could not—would not—believe he had meant to rob her of the five dollars. No one with eyes so frankly honest and pleasing could be a thief! Besides, everything about him indicated prosperity. His traveling bag had faded labels upon it here and there, with the names of foreign cities on them. His silk lined overcoat was thrown across the seat and a handsome umbrella laid on it.

Still he did not come, and when the train slowed down to stop at Wilburton, Elsa rose to leave the car.

With an irritating sense of disappointment and still wondering over her experience, together with the loss of her money, she took her suitcase from the brakeman and started down the platform with the young woman who had met her with joyous effusion.

Breathlessly the young man overtook her just in time to hand her a five dollar bill. As he boarded the moving train he called:

"That man gave you a counterfeit but we succeeded in making him pay up."

"Oh, thank you—so much," Elsa answered impulsively. A smile which Allen Harrington thought altogether glorious, accompanied her words, and he recklessly stood on the step, even daring to raise his hat in farewell as the train moved rapidly away.

Elsa Stevens did not at the moment realize how giddily happy she was because the young man in whom she believed had made good. She became excitedly animated as she walked along with the girl whom she was to visit for a few days. But somehow she did not feel like confiding the incident just then even to Madge Martin, her dearest friend. She wished to reserve further sweet musings until she was again alone. For it was an event in the monotonous routine of Elsa's life, living as she did on a farm two miles out of the village of Appledore.

She hummed a gay little tune as she unpacked her simple sprigged muslin dress, her white dimity with the pink ribbons, and her two gingham morning dresses, and hung them in the closet of the little guest room in the Martin's home. How different was this young man from the country swains she had known! And how musical his voice! Thus her thoughts ran in happy reflection with never a misgiving that her little romance was ended.

But Allen Harrington, with his masculine foresight, sat glumly in the train, experiencing a poignant realization that he had no clue whatever by which to find this girl who had so quickly entered his life and as swiftly gone from it. He had come in from the smoker and found her in the seat opposite his own, so that he had no idea at what station she had boarded the train and they had passed many during his absence. But happy thought! He knew where she had left the train, and he cheered up a bit with a smile as he said to himself—"I owe Wilburton a visit which I will pay very soon."

When he again found his way to the smoker to continue his dreams with the magic aid of smoke incense, he reflected: "I'll keep this counterfeit bill as a souvenir. It was the means of our introduction—such as it was," and he drew the bill from his pocket with a half caressing touch. "What would she do, I wonder, if she knew I hadn't caught him, and had given her five!" He imagined the flash of those dark eyes; they were softly beautiful, but equally capable, he felt sure, of expressing indignation, should their depths be stirred!

As he sat pondering over the renewal of his acquaintance with her, he told himself it would be seven whole days before he could again return to Wilburton.

For Allen Harrington, the wealthy young aviator who pursued the art of

flying as a fad, and who had spent a small fortune in perfecting his own machine, was on his way to an Aviation Meet. His biplane had been sent ahead of him.

Always interested in machinery, he had, during his college years, run his own motor car, and found his recreation tinkering about its mechanism. Then during the summer months at the sea shore, he became a familiar figure in his green motor boat—racing and doing stunts, others trying unsuccessfully to follow his lead. But these grew trivial and unsatisfactory, and when the aeroplane became a reality, Harrington, after a trip of inspection abroad, where he made ascensions and noted experiments, set about in serious endeavor to perfect a machine embodying his own ideas. Another trip to Europe was necessary the following season; he then witnessed a meet representing every form of airship. Intrepid and daring of nature, this form of sport furnished a diversity of occupation which at once satisfied his lively energy.

Only by the rarest chance, Harrington reflected, as he sat framing a girl's face with each ring of smoke he sent upward, had he taken this little jerkwater train. He had missed his connections and had found by using this local, he could reach his destination in time for a full night's rest before launching his machine the following day. How fortunate, he thought, that he had taken this train—and yet, if he should never again find her—he would be immeasurably worse off for the experience. For never before had the heart of the young sportsman been so deeply aroused. He would return to Wilburton immediately after the exhibition, and remain until he should again catch sight of her and learn her name at least. With that clue, the resourceful young man doubted not his ability to secure the proper presentation.

During the following week, his return to Wilburton occupied as much room in his thoughts as the aviation antics or the sight of his name placarded over the city and the newspaper accounts of his feats. His car made the record for sustained height and took a prize for perfect landing. After modestly receiving the congratulations of his fellow flyers at a banquet the closing day, he left with a quickened spirit of anticipation over reaching the suddenly interesting village of Wilburton.

Jerry Drake, the sleepy driver of the sleepy horses which drew the rickety depot wagon from the station to the Wilburton House, roused himself somewhat over his "dude" passenger, as he described him later at the livery stable.

For ten days Allen Harrington, the habitué of metropolitan clubs and hotels, endured the squeaky-springed, hard-mattressed bed at the inadequate little hotel, passing his days walking about the town or driving fruitlessly and hopelessly, in search of the girl whose naïve charm he could not forget.

He was simply unaware of the commotion caused by his presence in the village. Maids and matrons wondered and talked, then talked and wondered, but to no end. When questioned by a chance acquaintance he made, he represented himself as inspecting the country about with a view to loaning some money on the farm lands of that vicinity.

Unfortunately Harrington did not catch sight of Madge Martin, whom he would at once have recognized as the friend who met the girl he sought at the train. But Madge saw him on two different occasions and immediately wrote Elsa, who had gone home but a few days before Harrington arrived.

"What do you think!" she wrote. "The young man who stood on the train steps and tipped his hat to you that day is here! What do you suppose his business can be here! I can't find out from anybody. If I should later, I'll let you know. My, but he's handsome, Elsa, and to think you really had an adventure with him!"

For Elsa had, during her visit, told the importunate Madge something of the service the young man had rendered her, but she had reserved all of the details as to the side glances which had met in tangled depths.

Elsa's pulse quickened and a guilty flush overspread her face as she read the letter. So he was really in Wilburton! How near he seemed—and yet how far! Why had she come home so soon—

Madge had begged her to stay, but she had been punctilious as to the date of her return. She read and re-read the letter—each little detail of information concerning him had taken on a vivid interest, which had grown with her as it had with him, since the day of their adventure.

Finally, in desperation, Allen Harrington left Wilburton, after tactful but futile inquiries. His attempts to gain intelligence concerning her were necessarily restricted, lest he should cast reflection upon her in a scandal-loving community such as the small villages were apt to be. The only thing left him was to throw himself body and soul into his work and try to forget the big dark eyes which held him with such taunting sweetness!

The result was that his feats with the biplane became more and more daringly successful, until he decided to enter a competitive race over a hundred and fifty mile stretch from the metropolis of the State to the Capital. The prize was to be $10,000 for the quickest time made between the two points in one day's flight. There proved to be five to enter—all professionals except himself. The purse was offered by the leading metropolitan newspapers, who had liberally advertised the flight.

On the day of the aerial race, the country along the railroad running to the State Capital, was lined with people to view the spectacular feat. A special train whose car-tops were covered with white canvas, accompanied them to point out the way for the human birds.

Allen Harrington, with his machine —his only love in life since losing the girl who had so attracted him—entered the race with all the fire of enthusiasm left in him. As the multitude cheered, he donned his driving cap and coat, and took his seat in the machine. The propeller blades began to whirr and from the grass the intricate monster of wire and canvas moved away as gracefully as any bird. A volume of voices and a sea of fluttering handkerchiefs waved him farewell. Higher and higher he rose with the ease of a winged thing, the aluminum propellers gleaming in the sun-bathed air.

The wind was head-on, and one to be reckoned with. He continued his flight for two hours and a half with a short lead upon the others. Suddenly he realized that his carburetor was not working as it should, and that a landing would be necessary in order to adjust it. He sighted a meadow a short distance ahead and there he alighted without one false flutter of his white propeller wings. He dropped quite near a farm house in case he should need assistance of any kind.

Slightly numbed from the tension of steering with both feet and hands, he slid out of his seat to the ground. After a moment's exercise to stimulate his circulation, he bent over his machine, for not a moment's time was to be lost. He must win that race and already two machines could be seen in the sky coming toward him!

He had scarcely started his work when a feminine voice which betrayed its excitement, called:

"Anything we can do for you?"

He must take time to politely nod his acknowledgment of the kindness. He turned toward the farm house where the voice came from, and was on the point of calling—"Nothing, thanks!" when he looked and saw—not a hundred yards from him—the girl of his dreams! The words rested unuttered upon his lips. Forgetful of all else—race, fame, purse and even his machine—he strode toward her.

She too had that moment recognized him. "You!" she cried, as he came nearer.

"Yes—thank God I've found you!" He imprisoned both her hands in his own. The moment was too supreme for any cognizance of convention. But one thought held their minds. They were there—alone—in the open where all was right and sincere, even the manifestation of their feelings.

For one long moment neither spoke, except with the eyes. But in that deep glance all was told, for, naturally and sacredly, Allen Harrington folded the little girl before him to his breast as if afraid she would again be taken from him.

"If you knew how I have longed for you!" he said. When he released her,

her face glowed as crimson as the apples on the trees near them, but her eyes were shining with happiness as if no thought of the irregularity of their action had crossed her mind. To her it was all simple and natural, except that he should be driving this wonderful machine.

"Could anything be more God-given than you are to me? I have been guided straight from the heavens to you, and you are mine," he said. "Now come with me while I finish fixing my carburetor. I will not let you out of my sight again you see, for fear of losing you." Suddenly the practical side of their dilemma came to him. He must be on his way again in a few minutes! Then, as if by sudden inspiration he said—"I'm going to take you with me!"

"What!" she exclaimed laughingly.

By this time they were both beside the aeroplane.

"Yes, you will sit right on that seat beside me. If you will not go, I'll give up the race and stay right here." Allen Harrington meant what he said. The purse he did not need, and while he did want the excitement and success, he wanted this girl far more.

"But mother and father!" she protested. "They are in the village on top of the Court House, waiting to see you go through Appledore. There is no one at home."

"Couldn't you leave a note for them," he suggested, looking up from his work into her shining eyes.

"Perhaps—I could do that," she faltered.

"I feel like a kidnapper," the young aviator declared, "but you must come with me!" Their strange bethrothal was consecrated by a tender kiss and then Elsa turned and fled to the house.

She reappeared a few minutes later with her hair peeping out from under the closely drawn veil, like a halo of burnished gold in the sunlight. A long coat enveloped her petite figure.

"It's all so wonderful and sudden!" she said.

"Yes, dear—but finding you has been so drearily long that the average would be a very respectable speed." They both laughed. "Now I'm ready, I believe. One man is ahead of me up there."

"Oh, isn't this a mad thing to do!" she exclaimed, as if just beginning to realize the notoriety it would cause.

"Our getting married is as sane as anything could be," he argued. "We've loved each other all of this time. Of course this kidnapping method of mine might be called sensational and I'm more than willing, if that offends you, to chuck this race if you say the word. Naturally though, when a fellow has lived in the newspapers as much as I have, a little more or less doesn't count, but I don't want you to worry over it."

"I wouldn't have you give up your race for anything," she said contritely. "And besides, I want to be kidnapped, if that is what you call it."

"You're a game little girl!" And he drew her once more to him in a close embrace before helping her into the seat beside his.

Little gurgles of delight escaped her as they slipped away and up until underneath them, all mapped out, she could see a panorama of green grass, brown earth and clumps of dotted trees.

"How fascinating!" she cried.

"Do you like it?" His tone was pure delight, even with a competitor in sight ahead of him.

"Hold on now, for I'm going to speed up a bit for a while. I want to overhaul that fellow."

"I'm ready!" she whispered back.

He threw his engine wide open and literally shot through the air.

"Are you all right?" he asked, solicitous of her even while keyed to the top tension in driving.

"All right!" she echoed.

Harrington found his engine had sensed even the slight additional weight of the slim young body beside him, and he found it necessary to drive the harder to make the required speed. But with a sympathy born of having created the parts himself, he knew just where he could get a response and worked the levers accordingly.

"How we are gaining on him!" the girl cried excitedly.

They did not speak again for some time, listening to the steady whirr of the motor, and hearing the cheers from below as they passed over the heads of spectators.

"There's no one behind us," she finally said, after a glance backward.

"Then that leaves only the two of us unless the others have landed for fuel and come up again."

Thus they flew along, the strong wind currents bringing a glowing color to the girl's cheeks while her eyes burned like living coals from the twofold excitement of her strange bethrothal and the aerial flight. In her note she had told her mother the amazing circumstances briefly. Long before, she had confided to her the experience she had on the train, and she knew her mother would trust her in her love affairs, but the trip by aeroplane might unnerve her. In the midst of these reflections, which were more of a dream, her companion sighted the dome of the State Capitol.

"There she is!" he exclaimed. "We have about an even chance at the goal."

Ahead of them the white-topped train ran as their guide. On and on they sped, Harrington driving his engine at maximum speed and whispering love messages to the girl so close that he could feel her almost clinging to him.

When the outskirts of the town were reached, they had gained enough upon the other machine to make a landing ahead of him. The American flag waved upon the dome near them and the crowds cheered. The whistles blew and the bells rang their arrival.

Harrington sighted the fair grounds where he was to alight, and with a tender word of warning, "Hold tight while I make the landing," he swooped down and, guiding his mechanical wings to a mathematical nicety, settled to earth, smiling and happy.

The crowd, amazed at the unadvertised companion, cheered the louder. A reporter asked who the young lady was, and Harrington answered:

"Why, didn't you know I was bringing my sister with me?"

Flushed and agitated, the girl stepped from her seat, while the young aviator, after a few words of business with a newspaper representative, called for a cab. "We must get away from this crowd. It's too much." A few minutes later, they were safely and snugly settled in a cab. "We'll hire an auto to take us to the nearest town and we can be married there," he said. "It is out of the question here where the crowd would follow us."

"Why not drive back home? Appledore is less than forty miles. I would like that better," the girl urged.

"We can," the young man admitted. He tried to keep the disappointment from his voice, but he could not.

"To-morrow, dear—" she promised. "To-day has had so much, you know."

"You've heard the little verse, 'Thy will—' "

"Yes," she admitted with a smile.

"If we ever get in a back seat out in the country, I know what I'll do," with an ardent pressure of her hand.

"The other feller's jest landed!" The auto driver told them as they transferred themselves to a touring car.

"Poor fellow!" the girl sighed.

"Yes, I'm sorry for him," Harrington admitted, but he did not tell her at that moment that he intended giving at least part of the purse to the one he had beaten. He had won enough of a prize in winning her.

The speedometer ticked off the miles as they sped through the country toward Appledore. As dusk gathered the young man whispered.

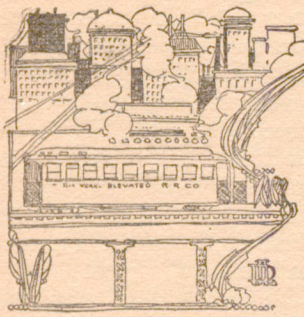
"It's growing dark. I guess we have absorbed all the light within us—we are so radiantly happy." In his arms, the girl only breathed a sigh of contentment for answer.

After a long silence.

"By the way, what name am I to give on the license?"

"Elsa Stevens. And that reminds me," she returned, "What's the name of my kidnapper?"

"Allen Harrington," he replied promptly, and they both laughed.



Required by Contract

By
FREDERICK B. LINTON

EASELTON scrutinized the balance sheet of the Specialty Manufacturing Company, of which he was treasurer, and the faint suggestion of a frown appeared between his brows.

With the gesture of a man dismissing a perplexing problem, he lit a cigar, swung around in his revolving chair, and lazily watched a thin, wiry man at a desk on the other side of the office attacking a stack of papers like a half-starved dog snapping into a leg of mutton. Mr. James Johnson, president of the Specialty Manufacturing Company, was at work.

Johnson turned quickly and met his gaze. "I tell you," he said, "there is a fortune in Watson's automobile gear attachment."

"Much good that does us," replied Easelton, leaning back in his chair and yawning.

"It excels all others so far that if the public knew its merits every automobile manufacturer in the country would be forced to use it."

"Too bad that Watson has no business ability to make it go. He makes great inventions but never gets any money for them. He is a mighty fine fellow, too. I like him." Easelton threw his leg over the corner of his desk, disregarding the protesting screech of the revolving chair under his two hundred pounds.

"Yes, he is a genius. I like him, too —but I wish we had his patent." Johnson's black eyes danced and his slender fingers closed involuntarily as visions of wealth floated through his mind.

"You were talking with Watson yesterday; he didn't offer to give it to you, did he?" asked Easelton, laughing.

Johnson's eyes narrowed. He took up a document from his desk.

"No," he said, "but he has about consented to lease us the exclusive use of it for two years. He will be here soon to give his final decision."

"What good will it do us to have it for two years?"

Johnson lowered his voice in reply:

"This contract is *apparently* for two years. See that clause—we can renew it indefinitely. You would never see it, if it were not pointed out to you. Watson will never see it; he is as unsuspicious as a child. I intend to get his signature before he has time to submit the contract to a lawyer."

"You are going to steal it from him?" Easelton brought his feet to the floor and sat upright.

"No," replied Johnson with a grin, "We will pay him this." He wrote some figures on a slip of paper, thrust it under Easelton's eyes, and then tore it into scraps.

"But that is robbery," protested Easelton, "if we get the patent for its life. That is only a fair price for two years. I am getting tired of these beastly tricks of yours. We shall get caught some day."

"My tricks? Mine only? You always protest, then acquiesce, and never fail to come in for your share of the profits. I never hear you protest about the profit, Easelton."

Easelton sighed and shook his head. At that moment he heard a firm step in the hall.

"There comes Watson now," said Johnson. "Keep quiet and let me work him."

Watson beamed good nature. Easelton looked at the erect, vigorous form, the frank, open countenance, the keen but kindly eye, and felt the magnetic influence of a strong personality. He wished that he had made a greater effort to deter Johnson, but hushed the thought with the reflection that he had already made himself quite tired in his remonstrance, and a man of his size should not overtax himself on a warm day.

"I came to talk about leasing you the exclusive right to make my gear attachment for two years," said Watson in a cheery voice.

"Mr. Easelton doubts if it will pay us to lease it for so short a time," said Johnson, motioning Watson to a chair. "After thinking it over, I have concluded that it's a risky investment."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Watson with marked disappointment.

"You have not made it pay, have you?"

"No, but I never make anything pay."

"We might take the risk for a smaller investment."

"I need the full amount for a specific purpose," said Watson, rising. "Another firm has made me an offer; I will see them."

Easelton caught a quick look of alarm from Johnson.

"Wait a moment," said Easelton, coming to Johnson's rescue. "If you need the money so urgently, we might do this as an accommodation."

"If you put it that way," said Johnson, "I will not further object."

"Thank you, gentlemen," said Watson. "I do not want to be too hasty, but I need this money at once. How soon can the matter be closed?"

Easelton ignored the wink Johnson gave him, and made a dissenting gesture by which he hoped to convey to Johnson that he had already done more than he intended, and he would not make another move to forward the nefarious scheme. No, indeed! It was a dirty business, and he was tired.

Johnson grinned and turned to Watson.

"That is a large amount for us to raise at once," he said, "but if you come in at this time to-morrow, we shall have the money and the contract ready."

"I shall be here. Good day, gentlemen."

The next morning Easelton sat at his desk puffing calmly at a cigar. He was resting after the exertion of the day before in raising the money necessary to close the deal with Watson. He tried not to see Johnson, who was rapidly running through a bunch of papers at his desk; the sight of so much activity gave him an unpleasant sensation.

When Watson arrived, Johnson handed him the contract. Watson took it up and went over it carefully. Once he paused and a puzzled look crept into his eyes, then they cleared, and he finished the reading. Without a word he took a pen and signed the contract. Johnson gave him a certified check for the amount agreed upon.

"I need the money to complete a new invention," said Watson, confidingly. "I have to make a series of experiments which will take about two years. That is why I limited the lease to two years. I shall want this gear attachment back when my new invention is finished."

As soon as Watson left, Johnson congratulated Easelton, and Easelton congratulated Johnson. Together they went out and took drinks on the prospect of their good fortune.

They were exceedingly busy during the next few days, installing new machinery, starting an advertising campaign, organizing a sales force, and covering up cracks in their credit. These arduous days were very trying to Easelton, but they had staked everything on the gear attachment, and activity was not more wearisome than idle contemplation of failure. He was buoyed up by the hope of easier days to come, for he had caught Johnson's belief that the gear attachment was the best on the market. If they could pull through the first six months, success was assured.

"What a fool Watson was not to see through our scheme," said Johnson, one day in the office. "I suppose there will

be a fight when he finds us out; but we are safe, for this contract will hold against anything he can do."

Easelton shrugged his shoulders. "Watson is not as big a fool as you think. It is up to you to settle with him. This is your scheme, not mine. I am tired—"

He was interrupted by the hurried entrance of Watson. The inventor's face was flushed, his tie was awry, a bunch of papers protruded from his pocket. There was a strange glitter in his eye. Johnson sat up erect and alert. Easelton sidled to the door.

"I must buy your lease on my gear attachment at once," exclaimed Watson. "How much will terminate the lease to-day?"

"What's the matter!" asked Johnson, sparring for time.

"I will pay you back the money you gave me plus your expenses to date, and your estimated profits for two years," persisted Watson.

"We can't do that," said Johnson. "Can we, Easelton?"

'No," said Easelton weakly, with his hand on the door knob. "I didn't think, Watson, that you would squeal on a contract."

"Gentlemen, I propose to pay you anything within reason that you could have made in profits. Name your price." Watson ran his fingers through his hair, and gave a pull at his tie.

"We expect to make two millions," answered Johnson angrily.

"Two millions in two years? Impossible!" exclaimed Watson.

"Don't talk like a fool," cried Johnson, no longer able to restrain himself. "We have your patent cinched for good."

"What?" Watson was stirred by the tone and manner before he understood the full significance of the words.

"I say we permanently own your patent, and you know it. Furthermore we are going to keep it." Johnson stood up and shook his fist at Watson.

A flush mounted to Watson's forehead. Without saying a word he gazed at Johnson until that gentleman's defiant attitude vanished. His eyes fell and for the first time in his unsavory business career, he looked as though he was ashamed of playing a sharp trick that promised big profit. Then Watson turned to Easelton, who was so frightened he was not sure whether he saw a twinkle in Watson's eye or not, but he felt a sincere desire to sink through the floor. As no feasible method of accomplishing this came into his perturbed mind, he backed into the hall where in safety he could watch developments.

When Watson spoke, there was a pained expression about his eyes, but his voice was calm and well controlled.

"No," he said. "I did not know that you had tricked me."

"Then why did you come here to buy us out?" sneered Johnson.

"I have completed my new invention."

"Well?"

"My invention is a new gear attachment. It is much superior to the one I sold to you. It is simpler and can be made for half the cost. As soon as the new one is put on the market, you cannot sell one of the old style at any price."

"We are ruined!" gasped Johnson.

Easelton staggered into the room and dropped limply into a chair.

"When I leased you the gear attachment," continued Watson, "I did not expect to have my new one completed for two years, but by a lucky stroke I discovered the solution to a problem which I thought would require a long series of experiments. I came to-day to buy back the old one in order to save you from the loss my good fortune would otherwise bring you. But I see things differently now."

"Don't ruin us," gasped Johnson, grasping at a straw. "Give us what we paid you plus our expenses to date. Our estimated profits be hanged!"

Easelton turned his eyes to Watson beseechingly. The thought of the heart-rending exertion to which the hope of gain had lured him, bringing no profit, made him speechless. Heavens! He would never toil again!

The inventor smiled blandly and walked to the door. Then he turned and his eyes flashed fire. His voice rang out with decision:

"Good-day, gentlemen. We will let the contract stand."

Look before you lease

The old adage, "look before you leap" now reads, "look before you lease." A poorly heated building is no renting (or sales) bargain at any price—because no house is really worth living in without plenty of clean, healthful, invigorating warmth. That is why

AMERICAN RADIATORS & IDEAL BOILERS

are proving in many thousands of buildings, of all classes, in America and Europe, to be the greatest boon of the century in utmost betterment of living conditions, as well as in *reducing the cost of living.*

IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators bring *freedom* from the back-breaking work, ash-dust and poisonous coal-gases which attend the use of old-style heating devices. At the same time, an outfit of IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators will prove to be a dividend-paying investment to you—far better than bonds at 6%—as in a few years the outfit saves enough in coal and cleaning, time and temper, no rusting or repairs, to quickly repay the original cost. Any owner, architect or real estate agent will tell you that IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators will attract and hold best tenants at 10% to 15% higher rental; or assist to sell the property quicker, at full price paid for the outfit.

A No. 3015 IDEAL Boiler and 175 ft. of 38-in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing the owner $125, were used to heat this cottage.

A No. 3-22 IDEAL Boiler and 400 ft. of 38-in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing the owner $215, were used to heat this cottage.

At these prices the goods can be bought of any reputable, competent Fitter. This did not include cost of labor, pipe, valves, freight, etc., which installation is extra and varies according to climatic and other conditions.

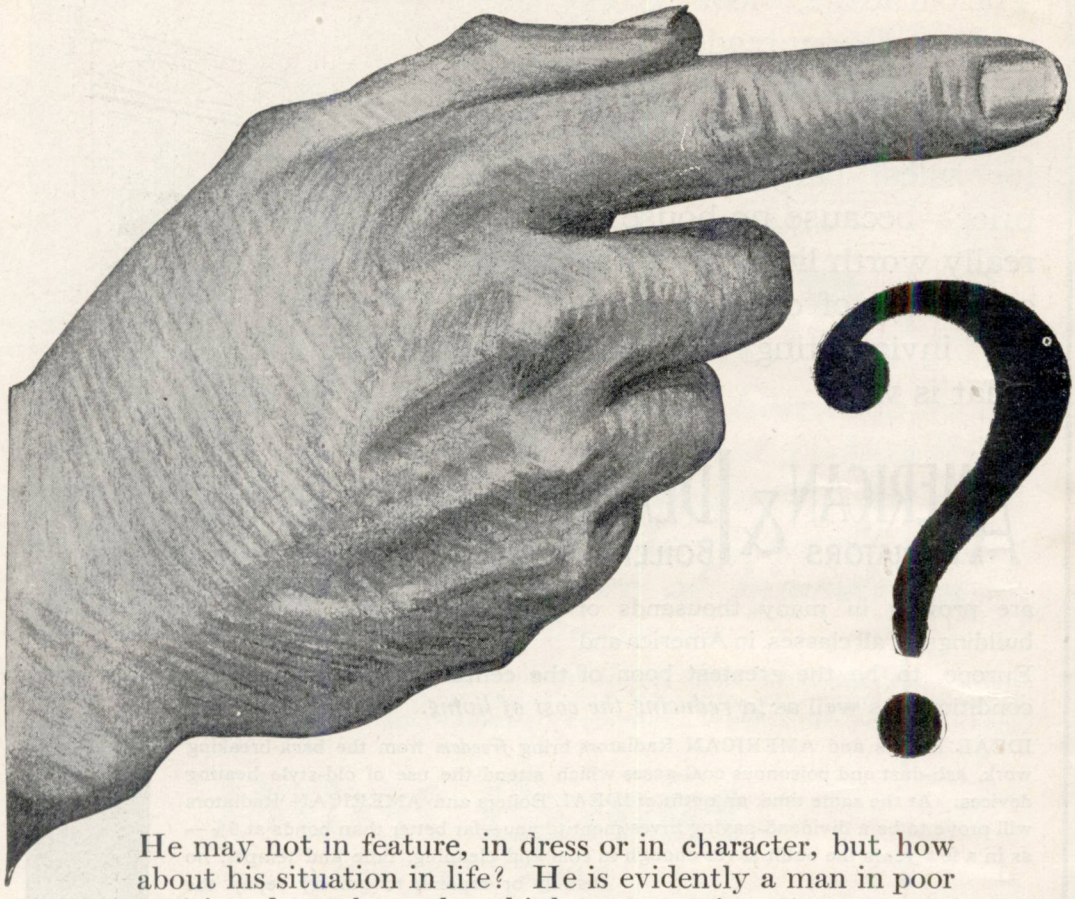
Whether landlord, tenant, or intending builder, whether your building is OLD or new, FARM or city, it will pay you well to LOOK INTO the merits of IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators. Tell us of the building you wish to heat. Our information and catalog (free) put you under no obligation to buy. Prices are now most favorable. Write today.

Public Showrooms in all large cities

AMERICAN RADIATOR COMPANY

Write to Dept. A32 Chicago

Does That Man Resemble You



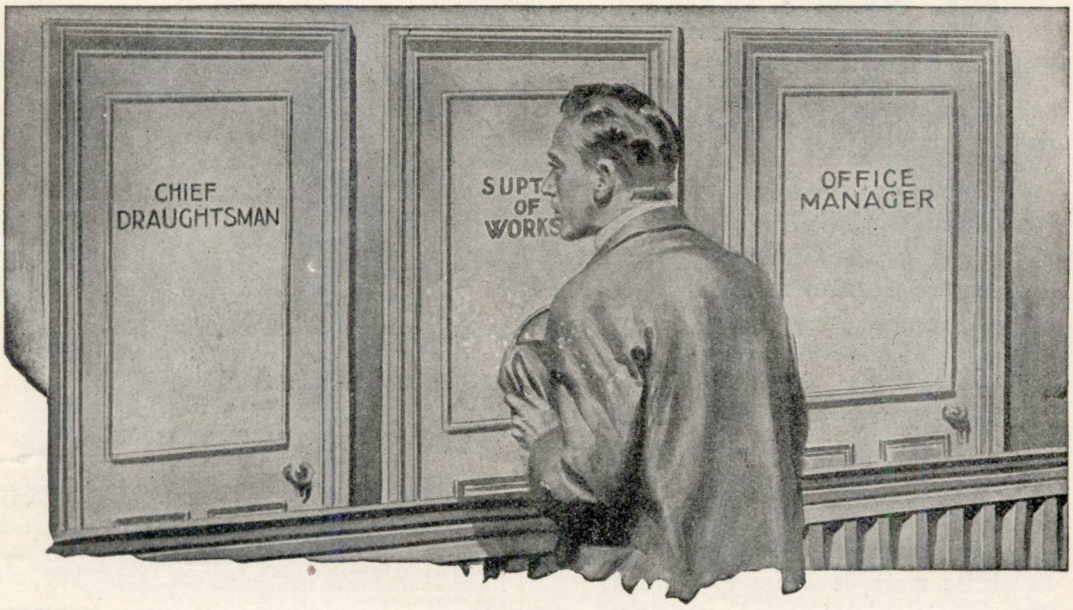
He may not in feature, in dress or in character, but how about his situation in life? He is evidently a man in poor position, but who seeks a higher occupation.

How can he enter the RIGHT door? Certainly not by influence—bluff—nor anything but actual training.

To secure this kind of training to-day, it is not necessary for a man to spend years of apprenticeship or college grinding. He can, on the other hand, without the expenditure of much money or the loss of time, qualify himself right at home, and at his present work, for the position he most desires.

On the opposite page is the story of just one man—out of many thousands — who has proved that all this is possible. Be sure to read it.

How He Entered The Door



At the time of enrolling in the Surveying and Mapping Course, I was doing odd jobs at electrical repairing and office work. At present, I am employed by the city of Corunna to inspect the installation of a new waterworks system. I have to inspect every piece of work before it is accepted by the city, and, in fact, have supervision of everything the contractor does. *My income now is about five times what it was when I began the study of my course.*

V. W. ROYCE, Corunna, Mich.

Regardless of where you live, what you do, or to what position you aspire, this man does resemble you, simply because he succeeded as you can succeed.

If you want to know how this can be accomplished, without regard to how much money you earn, where you live, or what you do, mark this coupon and mail it to-day. It will place you under no obligation of any kind, but will bring to you from the International Correspondence Schools the same kind of help that it did to other discouraged men.

International Correspondence Schools,
Box 866, SCRANTON, PA.
Please explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position, trade or profession before which I have marked **X.**

Automobile Running	Civil Service	
Mine Superintendent	Architect	Spanish
Mine Foreman	Chemist	French
Plumbing, Steam Fitting	Gas Engines	German
Concrete Construction	Banking	Italian
Civil Engineer	Building Contractor	
Textile Manufacturing	Architectural Draftsman	
Stationary Engineer	Industrial Designing	
Telephone Expert	Commercial Illustrating	
Mechanical Engineer	Window Trimming	
Mechanical Draftsman	Show Card Writing	
Electrical Engineer	Advertising Man	
Electric Lighting Supt.	Stenographer	
Electric Wireman	Bookkeeper	

Name_____

Present Occupation_____

Street and No._____

City_____ State_____

In Selecting a Toilet Soap

Why not procure one possessing delicate emollient properties sufficient to allay minor irritations, remove redness and roughness, prevent pore clogging, soften and soothe sensitive conditions, and promote skin and scalp health generally? Such a soap, combined with the purest of saponaceous ingredients and most fragrant and refreshing of flower odors, is Cuticura Soap. It costs but a little more, it wears to a wafer, and gives comfort and satisfaction every moment of its use in the toilet, bath and nursery. No other soap has done so much for poor complexions, red, rough hands, and dry, thin and falling hair. It has done even more for skin-tortured and disfigured infants, children and adults, when assisted by Cuticura Ointment. As a *toilet soap* for preserving and purifying the complexion, hands and hair, and as a *skin soap* for dissipating irritating and unsightly conditions of the skin, Cuticura Soap has no rivals worth mentioning. Its sale is greater than the world's product of other skin soaps combined. It is sold wherever civilization has penetrated, with depots in all world centers.

For the thirty-two page Cuticura Booklet, a guide to the best care of the skin and hair, address Potter Drug & Chemical Corporation, 133 Columbus Ave., Boston, U. S. A.

Every Thin Woman

Can have a Superb Figure without Paying a Penny

Every woman wants a full, round bust, a symmetrical figure and shapely limbs. So no woman who reads this generous offer should, in fairness to herself, fail to respond to it.

All you have to do is to write, saying, "Send me your free treatment and illustrated booklet."

By return mail we will send you, without a penny of cost, a sufficient quantity of Dr. Whitney's Nerve and Flesh Builder, to give you the additional flesh that will add immeasurably to your style and attractiveness.

No matter whether your slimness is the result of sickness or inheritance, Dr. Whitney's Nerve and Flesh Builder will promptly build up and beautify your figure.

It acts directly on the fat-producing cells and fills out the hollow places. It will enlarge your bust measurement from 2 to 6 inches. And being a purely vegetable compound it cannot possibly do you any harm. Instead, it actually benefits the health.

"Treatment No. 1" is a general system flesh builder for both men and women. "Treatment No. 8" is for giving development to the bust. Please say which treatment you prefer. Only one can be had.

Please bear in mind that this offer may be withdrawn at any moment. So do not delay. Write to **The C. L. Jones Co., 163D Friend Bldg., Elmira, N. Y.**

FRECKLES

It is Easy to Remove Them

For years I tried every known remedy without success. Skin specialists and doctors said I would take them to the grave. I fooled them all.

I cured myself by a simple discovery. I will send you the prescription free if you will write for it. It took off my freckles and the freckles of thousands of others. It will remove yours. It will clear the worst complexion. Write today.

Address Mrs. E. C. White, P. O. Box 44, Dept. No. 25A. Buffalo, N. Y.

Good-Bye to Superfluous Hair

A Lady Will Send Free to Any Sufferer the Secret Which Cured Her.

A well-known lady asks us to announce that she will tell free to any reader of this magazine how to secure permanent relief from all traces of superfluous hair by the same means that destroyed hers after every other known remedy had failed. She states that the means used is harmless, simple and painless, and makes the electric needle entirely unnecessary. She will send, entirely free, full particulars to enable any other sufferer to achieve the same happy results, privately at home: All she asks is a 2 cent stamp for reply. Address,

Mrs. Caroline Osgood

934 L. A. Custom House Street, Providence, R. I.

Clean and Fluffy again

Not until you have a shampoo with Canthrox will you know the supreme satisfaction that accompanies perfect shampooing. Its rich, abundant lather leaves the scalp immaculately clean and the hair delightfully fresh, fluffy and easy to do up.

Canthrox Shampoo

is different from ordinary shampoos. It is easy to prepare, agreeableto use, and dries quickly and evenly—with never a streak of uneven color in the hair.

Canthrox removes dust, excessive oil and dandruff — allays itching — and leaves the scalp sweet, clean, pliant and healthy—in just that condition most encouraging to the growth of beautiful hair.

50c for 15 Shampoos

Trial Offer: We have such confidence that Canthrox will please you that upon receipt of your name and address, and a 2-cent stamp to pay postage, we will send you sufficient Canthrox for a shampoo, so that you can try it at our expense.

H. S. PETERSON & CO.

263 Kinzie Street **Chicago, Illinois**

If asked for, Canthrox shampoos are given in many first-class Hair Dressing and Shampoo Parlors.

WRITE TO THIS WOMAN

IF YOU WANT TO STOP A MAN FROM DRINK

She Saved Her Husband, Her Brother, and Several of Her Neighbors and Prompted by Her Restored Happiness, She Generously Offers to Tell You of the Simple, Inexpensive Remedy that She So Successfully Used.

For over 20 years the husband of Mrs. Margaret Anderson was a hard drinker, but nine years ago, by using a simple remedy, she stopped his drinking entirely. He has not touched a drop since.

MRS. MARGARET ANDERSON

She Will Tell You How to Stop a Man From Drin

The remedy can be given secretly, so there is no publicity of your private affairs. She wants every man or woman who has drunkenness in their home to write to her so she can tell them just what remedy she used. Hundreds have freed their homes from drink by using the information she gave them, but there are still hundreds of others who need and should have it, so we earnestly advise every one of our readers who has a dear one who drinks, to drop her a line today.

The proofs of the hundreds of really remarkable results are too strong to be doubted or denied. Yet she makes no charge for her help, (she asks for no money and accepts none) so there is no reason why you should not write her at once. She only requests that you are personally interested in saving one who drinks. Send your letter with confidence to her home. Here is her address:

Mrs. Margaret Anderson,
315 Home Avenue, Hillburn, New York

Note: Write your full name and address plainly—do not delay.

NO MORE FAT FOLKS

Double Chins Quickly Removed

If the advice of Mae Edna Wilder is followed there will be no more fat folks in a short time. She took off thirty pounds of superfluous flesh in less than six weeks, and removed her double chin in two weeks, by a treatment of her own discovery and she generously offers to tell any one about it who is sufficiently interested to write her. By her method there is nothing to take internally, no face straps or body bandages to be worn, no exercise or dieting, just a simple, harmless home treatment that you can use in your own rooms without the knowledge of your most intimate friends, and as if by magic your fat rapidly disappears without inconvenience to you of any kind. She has written a book intensely interesting to fleshy people, and she will give away ten thousand copies absolutely free. The book tells all about her wonderful treatment, and she sends with it sworn affidavits to back up her claims. It costs you nothing to find out about this treatment, and if you have a large bust, large hips, large abdomen, a double chin or superfluous flesh on any part of the body and wish to get rid of it quickly, write her at once for a copy of the free book before the present edition is exhausted, and you will be agreeably surprised and pleased with what she sends you. Her address is

Mae Edna Wilder, Suite 8R Rochester, N. Y.

IF YOU DON'T WANT GRAY HAIR FREE BOOK

WRITE FOR THIS

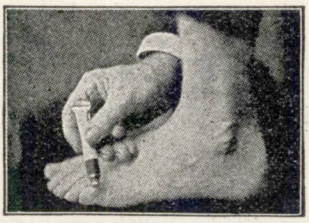
We will send you an illustrated book on the Care of the Hair. It tells how easily you can restore your hair to any shade by simply combing it with the Ideal Hair Dyeing Comb which puts lustre, life and beauty into dull, faded hair. Nothing can be compared with it. *It certainly is worth a postal.*

H. D. COMB CO., Dept. J, 118 E. 28th St., New York

GRUBE'S METHOD

For Complete Eradication of

TOE CORNS,
SOLE CORNS,
BUNIONS,
CALLOUSES,
SOFT CORNS,
HEEL CORNS.



Kills the Seed.

Leaves Smooth Skin.

After 3 Minutes No Pain!

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.

ANY DRUGGIST can supply it (if he wants to), or sent direct, **25 cents.**

When Properly Applied, Gives Relief in 3 Minutes.

EXCELSIOR CHEMICAL CO., 3100 State Street, Chicago.

Famous Beauty Book Absolutely Free

Wrinkles Vanish Over Night. Form Develops Quickly. No More Fat Folks

Famous Ten Thousand Dollar Beauty Prize Winner Gives Free Her Beauty Methods to All Our Readers

All of our readers may secure this book by writing at once to the address below. It tells the famous beauty secrets and will convince the most skeptical, and will show anyone how to attain a face and form divine.

The latest work of this marvelous beauty expert explains how many women, by natural, harmless methods, may develop their figures and bust to a fullness without use of harmful massage or poisonous pills—shows how any woman may remove all wrinkles from her face quickly and look twenty years younger—shows how any woman may make her eyelashes and eyebrows long and thick, by another method, you may destroy forever the embarrassment of superfluous hair. It shows how to remove blackheads, pimples and freckles, warts and moles, how to remove dark circles from under the eyes, how to build up sunken cheeks and make the complexion soft, pink and pretty like that of a young girl's, how to take off fat where it shows, to restore grey hair to its natural color and to stop it from falling, and how painful, perspiring feet may be cured. No poisonous drugs nor harmful massage, nor tireful exercises, but simple, harmless natural methods.

It is simply astonishing the hundreds of women who write in regarding the wonderful quick results from these various treatments.

Mrs. J. R. Davis, of Illinois, says: "My wrinkles were very deep and of long standing and I was astonished after using only two applications of your wrinkle treatment, to see them disappear entirely."

Mrs. H. S. Wells writes in and says: "I am 50 years old. My wrinkles were very deep. I was startled the next morning to see my face. The changed appearance was wonderful. I looked 30 years younger. Your wrinkle treatment is certainly quick and remarkable."

Mrs. Jennie Lee, of Indiana, writes: "Your external treatment for reducing fat quickly is marvelous. I lost eighty pounds in four weeks."

Catherine Call, of New York, writes in and says: "Your wrinkle and blackhead treatment cleared my face of blemishes and gave me a beautiful skin in just a few nights."

And so they run. Countless letters from delighted women, who are beautifying their faces and forms by these separate, new, remarkable treatments, the same as Della Carson is sending out to thousands of women throughout the land.

You will be astonished to learn for the first time of new, quick methods of feminine beauty, as told in these pages. This wonderful book is being given away free to our readers. It shows how this great beauty won the $10,000.00 beauty prize after beautifying her face and figure by this remarkable method. Be not content until you have improved your face and figure by these simple, harmless, quick methods.

Della Carson, $10,000 Beauty Prize Winner

This wonderful book tells the beautiful story of how this remarkable woman developed herself in such a way as to be talked about by the whole world. Her life is changed to one of joy. Be just with yourself. Do not stand in your own light. It is your duty to rise to your best—be a healthier, more attractive sweetheart, wife or mother.

Write for it to-day and all treatment methods and everything will be sent absolutely free. Address

DELLA CARSON, Suite 880, Dearborn Bldg., CHICAGO

MUSIC LESSONS FREE

AT YOUR HOME. Write today for our booklet. It tells how to learn to play Piano, Organ, Violin, Mandolin, Guitar, Banjo, etc. Beginners or advanced pupils.
AMERICAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC, 39 BB. Lakeside Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE

Shake Into Your Shoes

"In a pinch, use Allen's Foot-Ease."

Allen's Foot-Ease, the **antiseptic powder for the feet.** It relieves painful, swollen, smarting, tender, nervous feet, and instantly takes the sting out of corns and bunions. **It's the greatest comfort discovery of the age.** Allen's Foot-Ease makes tight or new shoes feel easy. It is a certain remedy for ingrowing nails, sweating, callous and tired, aching feet. We have over 30,000 testimonials. **TRY IT TO-DAY.** Sold everywhere 25c. **Do not accept any substitue.**

FREE TRIAL PACKAGE sent by mail.

MOTHER GRAY'S SWEET POWDERS, the best medicine for Feverish, sickly Children. Sold by Druggists everywhere.

Trial package **FREE.** Address,
ALLEN S. OLMSTED, LeRoy, N. Y.

Send Your

Old Carpet

We Will Make

New Rugs

Beautiful designs to your taste—Plain, Fancy, Oriental—fit for any parlor. Guaranteed to wear ten years.

Rugs, 50c and Up

Ours is the largest factory of its kind in America. Established 37 years. Originators of OLSON FLUFF RUG. (Grand Prizes at 3 World's Fairs.)

We Pay Freight

Old carpets are worth money; don't throw yours away.

FREE Write today for book of designs in colors, prices and complete information.

Olson Rug Co.,

106 Laflin Street, Chicago, Ill.

"Coming events cast their shadows before"
Health, Good Digestion and Pleasure in store

White Rock

"The World's Best Table Water"

Put up Only in NEW Sterilized Bottles

FREE Trial
Full Size
$1.00 Box
Sent You Prepaid

Nurbell
OXYGEN
Face Powder

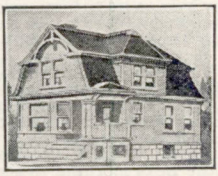
The largest, finest, full-sized $1.00 box of the best face powder known, sent on approval—not one penny down. Take it and try it one week entirely at our expense. If it proves satisfactory, remit 50c, and the dollar's worth is yours. If not satisfied, return what you have not used and pay nothing.

Thousands are ordering the new face powder under this remarkable introductory offer.

This is our way of proving the difference between Nurbell's Face Powder, which enables the skin to breathe by means of oxygen-bearing properties, and old fashioned cheap powders made of chalk, injurious to the skin, unsightly and fatal to the complexion. Oxygen is the only natural beautifier in the world. **Artificial beautifiers** cannot produce **natural beauty.** Most face powders coat the skin and fill the pores, thus **keeping out** fresh air which contains oxygen necessary to feed cells. **Nurbell Oxygenated Face Powder** is peculiarly compounded so that it holds and carries beautifying oxygen in proper form until, on contact, with the skin, nascent oxygen is liberated—100 times its own volume. It clears' purifies, beautifies. Deodorizes and absorbs perspiration. So soft, fine, light and delicately tinted that it conceals defects of complexion and yet doesn't show that anything has been put on face. Blends perfectly and adheres so closely that it cannot blow off or become spotty. Delightfully perfumed. **Best for brunettes—best for blondes.** Four tints—Flesh, Pink, Cream and White. Remember, not one penny in advance—no receipts or papers—we take all the risk. A post card will do—just your name and where to send it. Mention tint wanted.

THE MORLAN-SPICER CO., 923 Caxton Building, Cleveland, Ohio

400 Plans for $1.00



We offer our four big books, showing nearly four hundred designs of cottages, houses and bungalows costing $300 to $10,000 for only **$1.00.** These books are:

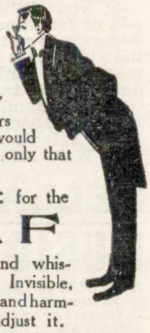
Palatial Modern Homes	**$3500 to $10,000;**	**50c per copy**
Low Cost Modern Homes	**$1500 to $3000;**	**50c per copy**
Cottages and Bungalows	**$300 to $9000;**	**50c per copy**
California Bungalows	**$500 to $8000;**	**50c per copy**

(All four books for only $1.) Don't build until you have seen them.

"Art In Architecture," a monthly magazine, $1 per year.

J. H. DAVERMAN & SON, Architects
631 Murray Blk., Grand Rapids, Mich.

"DON'T SHOUT"



"I hear you. I can hear now as well as anybody. 'How?' Oh, something new—THE MORLEY PHONE. I've a pair in my ears now, but they are invisible. I would not know I had them in, myself, only that I hear all right."

The MORLEY PHONE for the
DEAF

makes low sounds and whispers plainly heard. Invisible, comfortable, weightless and harmless. Anyone can adjust it.

Over one hundred thousand sold. Write for booklet and testimonials.

THE MORLEY CO., Dept. 765, Perry Bldg., Phila.

CRYSTAL Domino SUGAR

FULL SIZE PIECES · 2 lb. and 5 lb. Boxes! · (Blue Label)
HALF SIZE PIECES · 2 lb. Boxes only! · (Red Label)

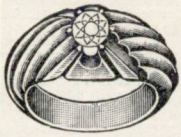
DIAMONDS ON CREDIT

Big Bargains for Easter Gifts

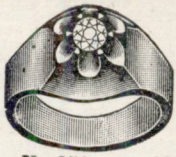
WRITE FOR OUR HANDSOME 100-PAGE CATALOG

containing over 2,000 illustrations of Diamonds (new exclusive mountings, our own designs), Watches, Artistic Jewelry, Silverware, Novelties. Every article priced 10 to 20 per cent lower than others charge for equal value. We are direct importers, and give our customers every advantage. Let us send you a fine Diamond or Watch on approval, all charges prepaid. If satisfactory, keep it and send us one-fifth of the price, balance in eight equal monthly amounts. Write for Catalog today. Send for free copy of our new booklet, "Historic Diamonds."

No. 256.....$45
$4.50 a Month



No. 257.....$37
$3.50 a Month



No. 251.....$30
$3 a Month

No. 250.....$125
$12.50 a Month

No. 214.....$32
$3.00 a Month

No. 249.....$50
$5 a Month

LOFTIS BROS & CO. EST'D 1858

THE OLD RELIABLE ORIGINAL DIAMOND AND WATCH CREDIT HOUSE

Dept. D707, 92 to 98 State St. CHICAGO

Branches: Pittsburg, Pa., & St. Louis, Mo.

STUDY CRIMINOLOGY

And Methods of Detecting Criminals

Who Is It?

A scientific and practical course in this most interesting and absorbing study taught by mail. For professional and amateur detectives, business men, story writers, students of sociology and all others interested in the subject. Among the subjects discussed are criminals, methods of detection and identification, shadowing, observation, clues, logic of deduction, white slavery, the Bertillon system, method by finger prints and legal points involved.

For particulars write to the

American School of Criminology

Dept. A, Bowles Building, Detroit, Mich.

12 Art Panels 50c

Beautiful Duo Tint Reproductions of Famous Paintings—Panel Size 7x10

These pictures are real gems—the **most exquisite portrayals of**

"WOMAN BEAUTIFUL"

ever shown in one collection. We send a full set of 12 in a handsome Art Portfolio, packed flat and safe delivery guaranteed together with 120 life-like miniature illustrations of other beautiful art pictures, for only 50c coin, money order or U. S. stamps. **Send at once. Money back if not satisfied.**

FLORENTINE ART COMPANY

Dept. J4, 2009 Prairie Ave., CHICAGO, ILL.

FREE Order at once and we will include "FREE" a beautiful den picture in colors.

These Pictures are Proof

Before

2 Months Later

These two photographs tell a story that cannot be denied. They are of Edna Guyton, daughter of Mr. L. E. Guyton, Walnut Springs, Texas.

Edna was born with club feet. The left picture shows exactly how her feet looked when she came to us July 12, 1910. The other was made shortly after she left the Sanitarium, September 23, 1910.

Mr. Guyton had tried plaster paris and other methods for treatment before he brought the girl to us. Write him and have him tell you of his experience in the treatment of his girl's affliction. The

L. C. McLain Orthopedic Sanitarium

is a private institution, devoted exclusively to the treatment of crippled and deformed conditions, especially of children and young adults.

Write us freely regarding Club Feet, Spinal Diseases, Deformities, Infantile Paralysis, Hip Disease, Bow Legs, Knock Knees, Wry Neck, etc., and we will send you descriptive literature and advise you fully. Ex-patients everywhere as reference.

The L. C. McLain Sanitarium,

951 Aubert Avenue, St. Louis, Mo.

$70.50 Buys This $159 Dining Suite in Quartered White Oak

Lowest cash store prices as follows:

No. 429 Buffet, Antique Copper Trimmings, Beveled French Plate Mirror,	$ 42.00
No. 428 China Cabinet, similar Mirror, glass extra,	42.00
No. 345 45 in. Pedestal Table, with 3 leaves, Top and Pedestal Lock included,	47 00
No. 100 Carver's Chair,	5.50
Five No. 100 Diners,	22.50
Dealer's price,	$159 00
"Come-Packt" price,	$70.50

New "Big Six" Catalog Ready

Write for our big catalog with six money saving departments; over 200 pieces of Mission and Bungalow Furniture, Willo-Weave Furniture, Cluny Lace Curtains, Mission Lamps, etc. MAILED FREE.

COME-PACKT FURNITURE CO.,

430 Edwin Street, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Classified Advertising Department

RATE:—75 cents per line—cash with order. No advertisement of less than 4 or more than 12 lines accepted.

The May issue will appear on April 1st. Forms close in Chicago on March 15th, by which time order, copy and remittance must be in our hands.

THE STORY-PRESS CORPORATION. 158-164 State Street, Chicago, Ill.

INVESTMENTS

FREE—"INVESTING FOR PROFIT" Magazine. Send me your name and I will mail you this magazine absolutely FREE. Before you invest a dollar anywhere—get this magazine—it is worth $10 a copy to any man who intends to invest $5 or more per month. Tells you how $1,000 can grow to $22,000—how to judge different classes of investments, the REAL EARNING POWER of your money. This magazine six months FREE if you write to-day. H. L. Barber, Publisher, 409, 77 Jackson Boulevard, Chicago.

HELP WANTED

$100 MONTHLY and expenses to trustworthy men and women to travel and distribute samples; big manufacturer. Steady work. S. SCHEFFER, Treas., MO177, CHICAGO.

WIDOWS, Ladies, Men. NEW. Interesting, profitable, easy work. Spare time or permanent. Sell our useful specialties. Our ORIGINAL selling plan will double your sales. Particulars and $2 premium offer FREE. Fair Mfg. Co. FM4, Racine, Wis.

$25 WEEKLY and expenses to men and women to collect names, distribute samples and advertise. Steady work. C. H. EMERY, MJ47, CHICAGO, ILL.

LIVE AGENTS WANTED.—Hustlers to handle our attractive 1911 combination packages of soap and toilet articles with valuable premiums. One Michigan agent made $65 in 47 hrs., another $21 in 8 hrs., another $22.50 in 10 hrs. Write today, E. M. DAVIS SOAP CO., 43 Union Park Court. Chicago, Ill.

LADY SEWERS wanted to make up shields at home; $10 per 100; can make two an hour; work sent prepaid to reliable women. Send reply envelope for information to UNIVERSAL CO., Desk L., Philadelphia, Pa.

AGENTS—$300 every month. Brand new aluminum 4-piece combination cooker at half-price. New proposition. Pocket samples. Outfit free to workers. Thomas Mfg. Co., 1313 Third St., Dayton, Ohio.

IF YOU STAMMER

Attend no stammering school till you get my large FREE book and special rate Largest and best school in the world curing by natural method. Write today. Lee Wells Millard, Pres., North-Western School, Inc., 851 First St., Milwaukee, Wis.

SINCE flowers are the rarest of Easter Gifts, why not the soul of the flowers?

Remember your mother, your wife, your sweetheart or your friends with

A BIRTHDAY GIFT

this year. Rieger's "Flower Drops," the soul pure essence of radiant flowers, will carry that message as clearly as your voice or your eyes. Lily of the Valley, Rose, Crab Apple, Lilac, Wistoria, at any druggists, or send $1.50 in check or stamps for this beautiful cut glass bottle, encased in maple wood, or 20c and name of druggist for a little bottle for a personal trial. Ask for "Flower Drops" the memory gift. Address

RIEGER, the California Perfumer, 272 First St., San Francisco, or 1658 Randolph St. Chicago, m'k'r of the famous FLORAL CROWN PERFUMES: Violet, Rose, Lily of the Valley, Lilac, $1.00 per ounce at druggist or by mail.

YOUNG MAN—Big demand for automobile experts. A few weeks study in your own home qualifies you. Earn $35 to $50 a week—Job a cinch. Models free to every student. Small down payment starts you. Write today for our free prospectus with sample lessons, also plan to earn cost of course. Buffalo Automobile School. 117 Centaur Building, Buffalo, N. Y.

AGENTS—make $103.50 per month selling self-sharpening scissors and cutlery. V. C. Giebner sold 23 pairs in 3 hours, made $13; you can do it We show you how. Free outfit. Thomas Mfg. Co., 313 Third St., Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS, male and female, can make $15.00 daily selling my new French foulard princess patterns in Persian designs, also Swiss lawn waist and suit patterns, white and colored embroidery. Catalogue free. Jos. Gluck, Dep't B. 621 Broadway, N. Y.

AGENTS, 200% profit selling our handy Automatic Hame Fastener, Horse owners and teamsters wild about them. Money back if not satisfactory. Write for terms to agents. H. Thomas Mfg. Co., 813 Third St., Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS—Portraits 35c, Frames 15c. Sheet Pictures 1c, Stereoscopes 25c. Views 1c. 30 Days' Credit. Samples and Catalog Free. Consolidated Portrait, Dept. 1178. 1027 W. Adams St., Chicago.

4 NEW PATENTS—just introduced from Germany. Wonderful inventions—high-class agent's proposition—big profits—32,000 sold, first month, in Milwaukee. Catalog, 250 other fast sellers. F. Edgren Mfg. Co., Milwaukee, Wis.

Many Government positions are open. Spring Examinations everywhere. Large salaries. Short hours. Annual vacations. Write for list of positions. Franklin Institute, Dept. G-48. Rochester. N. Y.

AGENTS: You can positively make from $30 to $75 a week. New patented article. Low priced. No competition. Sells in every home. No experience needed. Write for terms. Suction Cleaner Co., 113 Milton St., Dayton, O.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE WANTED. Splendid income assured right man to act as our representative after learning our business thoroughly by mail. Former experience unnecessary. All we require is honesty, ability, ambition and willingness to learn a lucrative business. No soliciting or traveling. This is an exceptional opportunity for a man in your section to get into a big-paying business without capital and become independent for life. Write at once for full particulars. Address, E. R. Marden, Pres. The National Co-Operative Real Estate Company, L 168, Marden Building, Washington, D. C.

MEN AND WOMEN—If you want work, sell guaranteed hosiery to wearer. Big commissions; make $10 daily; experience unnecessary. Address International Mills, 3024 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

LADY AGENTS make $15 to $30 a week. Men Agents make more, selling our high class Flavors, Cake Icings, Desserts, Pastries, etc. Let us send you one of our handy sample case outfits, or a trial order. Address T. H. Snyder & Co., 8 & 10 North St., Cincinnati, O.

FREE ILLUSTRATED BOOK tells about over 360,000 protected positions in U. S. service. More than 40,000 vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Easy to get. Just ask for booklet A 43. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

AGENTS—Send for free booklet—inside information on the agency business. Written by a man who started as a local agent and built up a business of over $500,000 a year. State if you are an agent and what you are now selling. M. Milton, 1213 Third St., Dayton, Ohio.

BIG MONEY WRITING SONGS. Thousands of dollars for anyone who can write successful words or music. Past experience unnecessary. Send us your song poems, with or without music, or write for free particulars. PUBLICATION GUARANTEED IF ACCEPTABLE. Washington only place to secure copyright. H. Kirkus Dugdale Co., Dept. 15, Washington, D. C.

TOILET ARTICLES

MAKES WRINKLES DISAPPEAR IN A NIGHT in many instances; no face massage, no steaming, no creams or so-called skin foods, no masks or rollers; nothing to inject, but a marvelous, simple discovery that works surprising wonders in eight hours by the clock; I fooled them all and took my own wrinkles out by my discovery after massage and beauty doctors had failed. For further particulars address Harriett Meta, Suite 8C, Syracuse, N. Y. Before I give full particulars I require promise of secrecy for my own protection.

MISCELLANEOUS

LEARN TO DANCE AT HOME. Easiest, best method for perfect dancing. Children learn in two to four hours by Maxwell's Original Dance Charts. All steps illustrated and explained. Popular dances, $1.00 each. Prof. R. I. Maxwell, Box 291, Sta. C., Los Angeles, Cal.

ARNICA TOOTH SOAP

Cleanser and Mouth Wash In One

Polishes the teeth to dazzling whiteness, while its fragrant antiseptic foam reaches every part of the mouth—neutralizing all tooth-destroying acids, preventing discoloration and decay.

Strong's Arnica Tooth Soap

comes in a handy metal box—nothing to break or spill A convenient cake that insures beautiful teeth, healthy gums and a sweet breath. At your druggist, 25 cents.

Strong's Arnica Jelly

Keeps Your Skin Smooth

No need to endure the discomfort of sunburn or winter chapping. Apply with finger tips, rub gently into pores. In collapsible metal tubes, 25 cents.

NOTE;—If your druggist does not have these goods, send price to us. We will forward them prepaid.

Guaranteed under the Food and Drug Act, June 30, 1906. Serial No. 1612. [3]

C. H. STRONG & CO., CHICAGO, U. S. A.

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 62 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.

Here is REAL Beauty-CARMEN Complexion POWDER

Softens and Restores All the Natural Color of the Skin

and, because it cannot injure any skin, no matter how sensitive and delicate it may be, Carmen Powder not only preserves and enhances the beauty of a good complexion but, as its use so conclusively proves, transforms a poor complexion into one of charm and attractive beauty.

Doesn't Show and "Stays On"

Carmen Powder is scientifically made from pure, wholesome ingredients known to be beneficial to the skin—it is extremely fine and unusually adhesive, blending perfectly with the complexion and imparting that clear transparency and velvety texture so necessary to real beauty. Its dainty fragrance is pleasing and refined and lasts until you remove the powder. Carmen Powder is absolutely perfect and distinctly different from all others and we want to prove it by sending you a

Purse Size Box FREE

Not a small sample, but enough to last for weeks—only a trifle ever being required to produce best effects. Send for this box and try it—no one can ever tell when you use it because it hasn't that objectionable "powdered look." There's a tint for every complexion: white, pink, flesh and cream. When writing, state shade desired and enclose 10c stamps or silver to cover cost of postage and packing. A handsome purse mirror sent along with powder—**Toilet Size, 50c Everywhere.**

Carmen Cold Cream

Pure, snow white, never sticky, delightful and surprisingly beneficial, unequaled for skin roughness — Druggists and Department Stores, 25c and 50c everywhere.

Stafford-Miller Co., 531 Olive St., St. Louis, Mo.

Enclosed find 10c for postage and packing. Send me Purse Size Box Carmen Powder, also Purse Mirror Free.

Name_____

Address

DIAMONDS·ON·CREDIT

20% DOWN—10% PER MONTH

Why wait for your Diamond until you have saved the price? Pay for it by the Lyon Method. Lyon's Diamonds are guaranteed perfect blue-white. A written guarantee accompanies each Diamond. All goods sent prepaid for inspection. 10% discount for cash. Send now for catalogue No. 8

J. M. LYON & CO., *Established 1843* 71-73 Nassau St., New York

SOMETHING NEW--DIFFERENT

Nothing else like it. Works like magic. Reads like fiction—yet true as gospel. Readers listen sharp. Best thing ever happened. Results amazing. Every family delighted. New way of cleaning clothes. You furnish water and soap—we do the rest. No labor. **No more wash day.** Cleans family wash in 30 to 50 minutes. Woman's hardest work made easy. **Not a washing machine.** Does in one operation the work of washing machine, wash board and boiler. Cleans perfectly, without wear or injury, finest laces, curtains, bed clothes, woolen, white and colored clothes. **Saves time, fuel, labor, health and money.** No rubbing, power, motors or chemicals. All metal, durable, sanitary—light in weight. Child or frail woman can use it. Saves washday drudgery. **EASY WAY smashes all records.** Users bubble over with praise—can't help it. Listen:—**J. Mc Gee, Tenn.,** writes: "One lady cleaned day's washing in 45 minutes." **Mrs. T. Bullen, Canada,** writes: "Washed bedding, quilts, curtains, etc., without rubbing." **Lauretta Mitchell, Ohio:** "Done big washing in 45 minutes—sold 3 already." **A. D. Poppleton, N. Y.:** "Washed bed quilts, greasy overalls, fine clothing—greatest thing on earth." **F. E. Post, Pa.:** "Did two weeks washing in 45 minutes." **A.H.Barrett, Ark.,** after ordering 38 Easy Ways says:"You have the grandest invention I ever heard of." **J. W. Myers, Ga.:** "Enclose order 12 more—greatest invention for womanhood, abolishing miserable wash day. Sells itself."

GREAT SUCCESS FOR AGENTS --R.O.Cowan, N.Y.: placed 13 in 6 hours, (profit $39.00). **Mrs. J. Brown** sold 10 in 3 days, (profit $30.00). **K. J. Blevins, Ohio,** writes: "Made seven calls; sold 5 one day, (profit $15.00). **R. H. Latimore, P. A.,** writes: "sold 4 this morning, never yet turned down." **Mrs. Gerrish, Mont.,** ordered sample, then dozen, then 100, profit over $300.00. **N. Boucher, Mass.,** orders 75 more, says; "Everybody wants one. Best business I ever had." **Only 2 sales a day means $36.00 a week profit.** Thousands of letters like these Millions will be sold. Landslide for agents. Write quick. Men or women: home or traveling; all or spare time, to show, take orders and appoint agents.

FREE SAMPLE TO AGENTS--PRICE ONLY $6.00 ready for use. Sent anywhere. Not sold in stores. Order one for your own use. Money back if not satisfactory. Send your name on postal card anyway for free sample, special agents' proposition. **Harrison Mfg. Co., 1669 Harrison Bldg., Cincinnati, O.**

WHITE VALLEY GEMS IMPORTED from FRANCE

SEE THEM BEFORE PAYING!

These Gems are chemical white sapphires. Can't be told from diamonds except by an expert. Stand acid and fire diamond tests. So hard they can't be filed and **will cut glass.** Brilliancy guaranteed 25 years. All mounted in 14K solid gold diamond mountings. Will send you any style ring, pin or stud on approval—all charges prepaid—**no money in advance.** **Write for Free illustrated booklet, special prices and ring measure.** WHITE VALLEY GEM CO., 711 Saks Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind.

I TEACH Penmanship BY MAIL

I won the **World's First** Prize for best course in Penmanship. Under my guidance you can become an expert penman. Am placing many of my students as instructors in commercial colleges at high salaries. If you wish to become a better penman, write me. I will send you **Free** one of my **Favorite pens** and a copy of the Ransomerian Journal.
C. W. RANSOM, 711 Reliance Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

Smoke the "Klean" Pipe

Enjoy a Smoke Without Nicotine

You and all **smokers** know that the **first cool puffs** are **best** with an **ordinary** pipe —then the wet, **poisonous** nicotine soaks into the tobacco—**bites** your **tongue** and disgusts your taste. The "Klean" Pipe is the only one **ever made** which **stops** all that—gives you a full, clean smoke—**last puff good and cool as the first one —no nicotine can gather.**

Handsome bowl, encasing lavite lining where fire comes and aluminum tube below for reserve tobacco. Ashes cleaned off by a push of your finger, and you keep the fire at the top exposed to the air, so the **smoke is always cool.**

Push up with finger to raise charge.

Bent Stem **$1**

Straight Stem **75c**

Postpaid

Bottom and stem can easily be removed and entire pipe thoroughly cleaned with a cloth. Thousands of smokers could not stand a pipe at all until they had tried

(Pat'd) **The "Klean" Pipe**

Booklet free on request.

R. D. GATES
302 N. East Ave., Oak Park, Ill.

If YOU Would Be Successful Stop Forgetting

MEMORY the BASIS of ALL KNOWLEDGE

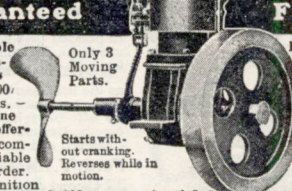
THE KEY TO SUCCESS

You are no greater intellectually than your memory. Send today for my free book "HOW TO REMEMBER"—Faces, Names, Studies—Develops Will, Concentration, Self-Confidence. Conversation Public Speaking. Increases income. Sent absolutely FREE—Address,

DICKSON MEMORY SCHOOL, 930 Auditorium Bldg., Chicago

Detroit Marine Engine

Guaranteed Five Years



You are the sole judge of the engine and its merits. 25,000 satisfied users. **Greatest Engine Bargain ever offered.** Nothing complicated or liable to get out of order. Waterproof ignition system. **Money refunded if you are not satisfied.**

Only 3 Moving Parts.

Starts without cranking. Reverses while in motion.

Demonstrator Agents wanted in every boating community. Special wholesale price on the first outfit sold. Single cyl., 2-3 h. p.; double cyl., 8-20 h. p.; 4 cyl., 20-50 h. p. Suitable for any boat, canoe to cruiser. Also railroad track car. All engines complete with boat fittings. Free Catalog.

Detroit Engine Works, 1242 Jefferson Ave., Detroit, Mich.

GREAT **Order FULTON by Mail** UNEQUALED

Kentucky's Straight Whiskey

Express Prepaid from Distiller to You

2 Gallons for $5. 3 for $7.50 or 1 for $3, choice of Rye, Bourbon or Corn Fulton Straight whiskey highest medicinal thoroughly matured, in Myers patent 1 gal. demijohns. To prove Fulton is best you need

send no money

We ship on 30 days' credit, if you have your merchant or bank write us guaranteeing account. No C. O. D. **Full Quart Bottles** of Rye, Bourbon or Corn are expressed prepaid in plain boxes, either **4 for $3, 8 for $6,** or **12 for $9.** **FREE**—4 miniature bottles of Selected Fulton with **every 2 gallon order, 6 with 3 gallon orders,** accompanied by cash. If not satisfied with whiskey return; and, if paid for, all your money will be refunded by first mail.

ADDRESS **MYERS & COMPANY, Warehouse No. 300, Covington, Ky.**

SOLE OWNERS U. S. REG. DIST'Y No. 22, 6TH DIST., KY. Orders from Mont., Wyo., Colo., N. Mex. and West thereof, must call for either 20 full quart bottles, 6 gallons in demijohns, or a cask, for $15 by prepaid freight. Write for express terms.

Write for our book, "A Fair Customer," and price list—sealed

OWN A BUSINESS

WE WILL HELP YOU

"I made $88.16 first three days, writes Mr. Reed, of Ohio. Mr. Woodward earns $170 a month. Mr. M. L. Smith turned out $301 in two weeks. Rev. Crawford made $7.00 first day. See what they have done, judge what you can do.

LET US START YOU

in Gold, Silver, Nickel and metal plating. Prof. Gray's new electro machine plates on watches, jewelry, tableware and metal goods. Prof. Gray's New Royal Immersion Process latest method. Goods come out instantly with fine brilliant, beautiful thick plate, guaranteed 3 to 10 years. No polishing or grinding. Every family, hotel and restaurant want goods plated.

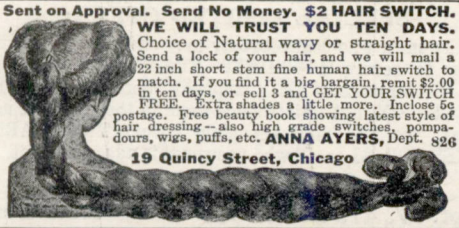
PLATERS HAVE ALL THEY CAN DO.

People bring it. You can hire boys to do the plating as we do. Men and Women gather work for small per cent. Work is fine—no way to do it better. No experience required, we teach you. Recipes, Formulas, Trade Secrets Free. Outfits ready for work when received. Materials cost about ten cents to do $1.00 worth of plating. Our new plan, testimonials, circulars and SAMPLE FREE. Don't wait. Send us your Address anyway.

GRAY & CO., PLATING WORKS, 279 Gray Building, Cincinnati, Ohio

Sent on Approval. Send No Money. $2 HAIR SWITCH.

WE WILL TRUST YOU TEN DAYS.



Choice of Natural wavy or straight hair. Send a lock of your hair, and we will mail a 22 inch short stem fine human hair switch to match. If you find it a big bargain, remit $2.00 in ten days, or sell 3 and GET YOUR SWITCH FREE. Extra shades a little more. Inclose 5c postage. Free beauty book showing latest style of hair dressing—also high grade switches, pompadours, wigs, puffs, etc. **ANNA AYERS,** Dept. 826

19 Quincy Street, Chicago

GOITRE CURE

A CONVENIENT AND SOOTHING ABSORBENT

Have your Goitre removed without taking medicine or having it cut out. We have a convenient, soothing appliance which is worn on the neck at night and cures while you sleep. It checks the growth, reduces the enlargement, and stops all pain and distress in a short time. 18 years' success.

Write today for free booklet and full particulars including testimonials from every State, price, etc.

PHYSICIANS REMEDY CO., 93 Sinton Bldg., Cincinnati, O.

Bright's Disease and Diabetes

Under the Auspices of the Cincinnati Evening Post Five Test Cases Were Selected and Treated Publicly by Dr. Irvine K. Mott, Free of Charge.

Irvine K. Mott, M. D., of Cincinnati, Ohio, well and favorably known in that city as a learned physician—a graduate of the Cincinnati Pulte Medical College, and afterward received clinical instructions abroad, believes he has discovered a remedy to successfully treat Bright's Disease, Diabetes and other Kidney troubles, either in their first, intermediate or last stages. Dr. Mott says: "My method arrests the disease, even though it has destroyed most of the kidneys, and preserves intact that portion not yet destroyed. The medicines I use neutralize the poisons that form a toxin that destroys the cells in the tubes in the kidneys."

The Evening Post, one of the leading daily papers of Cincinnati, Ohio, hearing of Dr. Mott's success, asked if he would be willing to give a public test to demonstrate his faith in his treatment and prove its merit by treating five persons suffering from Bright's Disease and Diabetes, free of charge, the Post to select the cases.

Dr. Mott accepted the conditions, and twelve persons were selected. After a most critical chemical analysis and microscopic examination had been made, five out of the twelve were decided upon. These cases were placed under Dr. Mott's care and reports published each week in the Post. In three months all were discharged by Dr. Mott as cured. The persons treated gained their normal weight, strength and appetite, and were able to resume their usual work. Anyone who desires to read the details of this public test can obtain copies by sending to Dr. Mott for them.

This public demonstration gave Dr. Mott an international reputation that has brought him into correspondence with people all over the world, and several noted Europeans are numbered among those who have taken his treatment and been cured, as treatment can be administered effectively by mail.

The Doctor will correspond with those who are suffering with Bright's Disease, Diabetes, or any kidney trouble whatever, and will be pleased to give his expert opinion free to those who will send him a description of their symptoms. An essay which the doctor has prepared about kidney trouble, and describing his new method of treatment, will also be mailed by him. Correspondence for this purpose should be addressed to IRVINE K. MOTT, M. D., 578 Mitchell Bldg. Cincinnati, O.

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.

FREE TRIAL OF PLAPAO

DON'T WEAR A TRUSS

RUPTURE CURED by STUART'S PLAS-TR-PADS means permanent relief and you do away with the painful, irritating truss altogether because process of recovery is natural. Being made self-adhesive, they adhere closely to the body, purposely to hold the rupture in place without straps, buckles or springs—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or compress against the pelvic bone. The most obstinate cases cured in the privacy of the home. Thousands have successfully treated themselves without hindrance from work. Soft as velvet—easy to apply—inexpensive. We prove what we say by sending trial of Plapao and illustrated booklet absolutely FREE. Write to-day. Address—PLAPAO LABORATORIES, Block 119, St. Louis, Mo.

$50 to $100 a Week

THEY'RE MAKING IT AND TELL YOU HOW.
HARD FACTS THAT MAKE YOU THINK.
A NEW THING THAT'S MAKING PEOPLE RICH.

W. H. Morgan, Pa., says: "Sold 75 in 9 days, (profit $318.75). T. A. White, Ill.; "Sold 15 in 4 hours," (profit $63.75). F. E. Poole, Mass.; "sold 6 first day," (profit $25.50). C. E. Goff, Mo.; "Sold 5 first day," (profit $21.25). In the office of this new, successful, big money-making business are hundreds of letters like these. People are making more money in a day than they did before in a month.

Enormous sale of the **New Home Vacuum Cleaner** smashes all records. **Newest, Easiest, Surest Seller.** Make $4.25 on every sale. New, powerful, double action vacuum cleaning machine. Sells for $8.50. Weighs 9 pounds. Easy to carry. Nothing else like it. Does same work as expensive machines. **No motors, no electricity.** One person operates. Constant terrific suction gets dirt and dust from carpets, rugs, etc. **No more sweeping or dusting. No more house cleaning. Costs nothing for repairs.** Saves time, labor, money. Saves health. Saves taking up and beating carpets. The New Home Vacuum Cleaner is truly a wonder. Astonishes everybody. **Customers delighted and praise it.** They wonder how they ever did without it. Mrs. F. Goodell, Ind., writes: "Home Vacuum Cleaner is certainly a wonder. Does away with the drudgery of sweeping and dusting. I am so pleased that I can't give it justice," F. R. Sears, Ohio, "Home Vacuum Cleaner is a little giant. My next door neighbor has one that cost $25. They say they would rather have the Home." Chandler & Rich, N. Y., "Find you did not overestimate Home Vacuum Cleaner. Did not praise them enough." Henry Rubin, N. Y. "Home Vacuum Cleaner brightens the carpets. It's the grandest machine ever invented for the home." To try the Home Vacuum Cleaner means to want it, then keep it. Takes every family by storm. Women have watched, wished, longed for it. No wonder it's a live wire. A powerful double action Suction Cleaner for $8.50. Not sold in stores. Sell 9 out of 10 families. Send postal today for agency. Full description. Free samples. Address **R. ARMSTRONG MFG. CO. 1529 Alms Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio.**

$8.50

A New Complexion

IN FORTY DAYS

The world's greatest facial remedy will restore ruined complexions to the beauty and purity of youth.

IF YOUR blood is impure, if you have pimples, freckles, wrinkles, blackheads, redness of face or nose, a muddy, sallow skin, or any blemish on or under the skin, you need Dr. James P. Campbell's Safe Arsenic Complexion Wafers.

These marvelous beautifiers of the complexion, skin and form are wonderfully effective, and, being prepared under the direction of the greatest skin specialist, Dr. James P. Campbell, are absolutely safe and harmless. The prescription was first used twenty-six years ago by Dr. Campbell, and he has made countless thousands of women happy in the possession of a pure, spotless complexion.

SPECIAL LIMITED OFFER:

All women who desire beauty may embrace this opportunity to secure a 40-DAYS' TREATMENT FOR $1. The regular price of Dr. Campbell's Wafers is $1 PER LARGE BOX, but to introduce them in thousands of new homes, we will mail (in plain cover) TWO LARGE BOXES FOR $1 to all who answer this advertisement.

RICHARD FINK CO.

Dept. 57, 415 Broadway, New York

Develop Your Bust

50c Package FREE

For 10c stamps or silver to help pay distribution expenses we will send you a 50c package of Dr. Catherine E. Kelly's wonderful treatment for making the bust plump and firm, also our booklet, "The Perfect Figure." She used this treatment herself and it increased her own and her patients' bust measurements from 4 to 7 inches. Write today.

Dr. Kelly Company, Dept. 302DT. Buffalo, N. Y.

THIS MAN

and a thousand others have secured good positions as Traveling Salesmen through our Free Employment Bureau recently, and earn from **$1,000 to $5,000 a year.** There are hundreds of other such positions now open. No experience needed to get one of them. We will assist you to secure a position where you can get Practical Experience as a Salesman, and earn $100 a month or more, while you are learning. Write today for our free book, "*A Knight of the Grip*," and list of good openings, also testimonials from hundreds of men we have recently placed in good positions. Address nearest office,

Dept. 108. National Salesmen's Training Ass'n.
Chicago New York Kansas City Seattle New Orleans

FREE RUBY

A Genuine Uncut Arizona Ruby FREE

Only One to Each Person—WRITE TODAY

We will send you a beautiful **Genuine Arizona Ruby,** uncut, just as sold to us by the Navajo Indians, **FREE,** on request, to introduce to you our genuine **Mexican Diamonds.** These gems look and wear as well as finest South African Diamonds yet cost 1-30th the price. Experts seldom can distinguish between the two. Stand acid and other tests, are perfectly cut and polished, and their dazzling, blue-white brilliancy is **Guaranteed Permanent.**

SPECIAL APPROVAL OFFER

Send $1.00 on account as evidence of good faith, and we will express you **charges all prepaid** a ½ carat stone in solid gold ladies' ring, for a special introductory price of $4 98 (usual cost $7.50), or a 1 carat stone in gent's solid gold heavy Belcher ring (round Belcher or Tooth Belcher style) for $11.33 (usual cost $15.00). Examine the ring and our guarantee that accompanies it, and if quite satisfied, pay our special price as above quoted, less your $1.00 prepayment. State size worn. Order quickly.

Write today for this Free Ruby and our **FREE** Illustrated Catalogue and **FREE Examination Offer.**

MEXICAN DIAMOND IMPORTING COMPANY
Dept KT4R Las Cruces, New Mexico

A $3.00 EXERCISER FOR $1.00

SHOULDER EXERCISE

Prof. Anthony Barker's HERKULES **MUSCLE-BUILDER** (Trade Mark)

Steel Spring Exerciser for Men, Women and Children (Two Exercisers in One)

Price, $1.00 **The Best Exerciser on the Market at Anywhere Near the Price.**

Every person—**man, woman** and **child**—needs an exerciser. A good exerciser is just as important in life as good books. Perhaps it is of more importance for, whereas, good books assist materially in developing the brain and mental faculties, a good exerciser will just as materially assist in the development of the **physical powers** and consequently the **health,** which is our choicest possession.

There are as many different exercisers on the market as there are fish in the sea. A great many of these are almost worthless and are put together absolutely regardless of the requirements of the people for whom they are intended. I would not offer the **Herkules** to the public if I did not know that it is all I represent it to be and the **BEST EXERCISER** that can be had at the price.

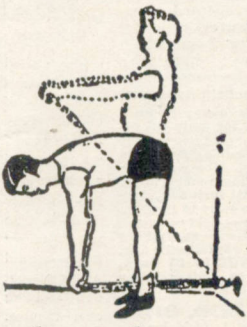
LEG MUSCLES

THE HERKULES WILL LAST

It is not made of cheap rubber and cloth to wear out in a few days or a few weeks' time, but is built from the very best of steel and is **exceptionally durable.** It is never in the way, because, when not in use it can be lifted from its hook and placed in a small drawer or box.

THE HERKULES IS VERSATILE

It will develop a strong neck, broad, powerful shoulders, strong back and stomach, well shaped legs, and gain great strength in your arms, wrists and hands.



SPINE AND STOMACH

COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FREE WITH EVERY ORDER FOR A HERKULES

I include a complete chart of instructions, giving every exercise necessary for a **thorough development** of the entire body. In getting up this chart, I have used the knowledge which I have acquired in my many years' experience of building **perfect men** and **women.** I am operating the largest school of physical culture in New York City, in which hundreds of pupils are constantly enrolled.

If you will follow the lessons which I give in the chart you cannot fail to obtain **satisfactory results.**

NOTICE **As Professor Barker does not employ agents, it is necessary to obtain the complete outfit, consisting of the Muscle Builder, Two Charts of Instructions, Three Separate Handles and Two Screw Attachments to send $1.00 to**

PROF. ANTHONY BARKER

150 Barker Bldg., 110 W. 42nd St. New York, N. Y.

Individual Instructions for Health and Strength at my select Gymnasium or by mail. Particulars on request.

CHEST EXERCISE

PRICE LIST SENT FREE UPON APPLICATION

RIEGER'S PURE OLD MONOGRAM WHISKEY

Purity and age guarantee **Good Whiskey.** Rieger's Monogram is absolutely pure and wholesome. **Guaranteed by us under the Pure Food Laws.** Its exquisite, smooth, mellow flavor has made it a lasting favorite with over 100,000 satisfied customers. We are U. S. Registered Distillers (Distillery No. 60, 5th Dist. of Ky.). Why pay exorbitant prices, when you can buy Rieger's Monogram Whiskey at the regular wholesale dealer's price, and save money by ordering your goods shipped direct.

WE PREPAY ALL EXPRESS CHARGES

8 Qts. Rieger's Monogram PRIVATE STOCK **$5.00**

4 Qts. Rieger's Monogram EXTRA FINE **$3.00**

FREE WITH EACH ORDER
Two sample bottles of Rieger's Fine Monogram Whiskey, Gold-tipped Whiskey Glass and Patent Corkscrew.

Send us an order and when you get the Whiskey test it for flavor, smoothness and all the essentials of **GOOD Whiskey.** Compare it with other Whiskies (no matter what the price); test it for medicinal purposes; let your friends try it; use half of it if necessary to satisfy yourself on these points—then if you are not thoroughly convinced that "Rieger's Monogram" is as good or better than any Whiskey you ever drank, return the balance to us and we will pay return charges and at once send you every cent of your money

J. RIEGER & CO., 1587 Genesee St., KANSAS CITY, MO.

Rémoh Gems

Not Imitations

A marvelously reconstructed gem—the greatest triumph of the electric furnace. ***Looks*** like a ***diamond—wears*** like a ***diamond—will cut glass***—stands filing, fire and acid tests like a diamond—guaranteed to contain no glass. Remoh Gems have no paste, foil or artificial backing—their brilliancy is guaranteed forever. One thirtieth the cost of a diamond. These remarkable gems are set only in 14 Karat Solid Gold Mountings. Sent on approval—your money cheerfully refunded if not perfectly satisfactory. It will be well worth your while to get our De-Luxe Jewel Book—yours for the asking. Cut out and mail the coupon below—or write a postal. Address

Remoh Jewelry Co.,
441 N. Broadway St. Louis, Mo.

Remoh Jewelry Co.,
441 N. Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.
Send your De-Luxe Jewel Book.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....

State.....

Sign And Mail This Coupon Today

MEN-GET THIS MONEY $30,000 IN 9 MONTHS
$13,245 IN 110 DAYS

Amount of orders from **R. V. Zimmerman, Ind., farmer** (*address upon request*) for our

NEW HOME INVENTION

R. V. Zimmerman

First experience as a general or local agent, started at home in spare time while farming. **M. Stoneman, Neb., artist** (*address upon request*) **spare time** orders total

Over $15,000.00

One order exceeds $6,000. **"Best thing ever sold.** Not one complaint from 2,000 customers." **C. A. Korstad, Minn.** (*address upon request.*)

Orders $2,212 worth in 2 weeks

M. Stoneman

Hundreds enjoying similar prosperity. Agents breaking all records—actually getting rich. **Let us refer you to 10 more whose total orders exceed $51,000;** to hundreds like **O. Schleicher, Ohio, (minister)** whose **First 12 hours work sold 30 Outfits (profit $81.90); A. Wilson, Ky.,** who ordered **$4,000** worth and sold **102 in 14 days,** (profit $278.40); **J. Hart, Texas, $5,000** worth and sold **16 in 3 hours** (profit $43.68); **Reese, Pa., (carpenter)** solicited 60 people—sold 55; **Beem, Kans.,** writes: **"I averaged $164.25 weekly for ? months";** Langley, N. D., sold **$115 worth first day.** Why should not Cashman say: "Men who couldn't sell your goods couldn't sell bread in a famine." **Reader,** these results possible for **you** at home or traveling all or spare time as **exclusive agent for Allen's Wonderful Bath Apparatus.**

Sectional View

New—Powerful—Irresistible Think of it! **gives every home a modern bathroom for only $6.50**—abolishes tubs, bowls, buckets, wash rags, sponges. Supplies hot or cold water in any room. **No plumbing—no water works—self heating**—makes bathing **5-minute** operation—easily carried from room to room—child operates easily. Means no more cold rooms, drudgery, lugging water, filling tubs, emptying, cleaning, putting away. No wonder **agents without previous experience make small fortunes, buy homes, have an automobile, bank account;** average 8 orders to every 10 families. Fascinating, dignified, exciting work. **No competition**—patent new—field unworked—demand enormous—price insignificant—a demonstrated gigantic success—**everything ideal for making money. Don't hesitate—business supplies capital.** Be first. Get exclusive rights. Spare time gave **Oviatt, Iowa, minister, $800 in 11 days, $4,000 to date.** Reads like fiction, yet we prove all by affidavits, addresses, any proof you want. Address postal **today** for full details.

FREE $13.75 AGENTS' OUTFIT TO ACTIVE AGENTS. CREDIT GIVEN ON SALES

ALLEN MFG. CO., 3278 Allen Building, TOLEDO, OHIO

"Lucky I answered ad. It's great. Money coming fast. 17 orders today."—(writes A. L. of Maine.)

We started these men plus hundreds of others. They investigated—accepted—made thousands. Do as they did—make what they made—send postal—get our amazing offer—it's free.

NOTICE YOU ARE WANTED

U. S. Government appoints 12,000 Railway Mail Clerks; Mail Carriers; Postoffice Clerks, annually. Average salary $1100. Short hours. No "layoffs." Annual vacations. Write for full list of positions open, with description and salaries paid.
FRANKLIN INSTITUTE, Dept. G127 ROCHESTER, N. Y.

BE AN ACTOR

Actress or Orator
Earn $25 to $200 Weekly

Our course in Elocution and Dramatic Art is complete, thorough and comprehensive. It enables you in a short time to qualify for a good paying position on the stage or speaker's platform. Learn by correspondence the most fascinating and best paying profession in the world. Illustrated Book on Dramatic Art, free.
CHICAGO SCHOOL OF ELOCUTION, 298 Grand Opera House, Chicago

QUALIFY FOR CIVIL SERVICE

Steady Positions *Good Salaries*

U. S. Civil Service pays well and offers fine opportunities for advancement. Uncle Sam wants Americans over 18 for all kinds of well-paid positions all over the world. There is a position for *you*, and at some line of work you really like. The International Correspondence Schools will train you in your spare time for any Civil Service position. I. C. S. students are filling Government positions everywhere. To learn how you can qualify for the position *you* have in mind, write the I. C. S. today. Doing this involves no obligation. Simply indicate the position you want and the I. C. S. will gladly tell you how you can qualify through I. C. S. help. Address

International Correspondence Schools,
Box 871 S, Scranton, Pa.

CAN YOU DRAW?

Our Graduates Are Filling High Salaried Positions

EARN $25 TO $100 PER WEEK

In easy, fascinating work. Practical, Individual Home Instruction. Expert Instructors. Superior equipment. Founded 1899. Twelve years' successful teaching.
Financial Returns Guaranteed.

Complete Courses in Commercial, Fashion, Magazine, Book and Advt. Illustrating; Newspaper, Cartooning, Lettering, Designing, Show Card, Architectural Perspective, Photo Retouching, Normal, Color, General Drawing, etc.

FREE ARTIST'S OUTFIT of fine instruments and supplies to each student.

Write for particulars and Handsome Art Book.

Our Own Fireproof Bldg.

SCHOOL of APPLIED ART
E108 FINE ARTS BLDG.
Battle Creek, Mich.

Magnificent Steel Launch $96

Complete With Engine, Ready to Run

18-20-23 and 27 ft. boats at proportionate prices. All launches tested and fitted with Detroit two-cycle reversible engines with speed controlling lever—simplest engine made—starts without cranking—has only 3 moving parts—anyone can run it. **The Safe Launch**—absolutely non-sinkable—needs no boathouse. All boats fitted with air-tight compartments—cannot sink, leak or rust. We are sole owners of the patents for the manufacture of rolled steel, lock-seamed steel boats. Orders filled the day they are received. Boats shipped to every part of the world. **Free Catalog. Steel Rowboats. $20.** (83)
MICHIGAN STEEL BOAT CO. 1242 Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, Mich., U.S.A

FAT IS FATAL

Fat is fatal to Health, Comfort, Happiness and often fatal to Life.

Let me send you a trial treatment FREE OF CHARGE. You can get rid of your fat safely, surely and quickly.

What my treatment has accomplished in hundreds of cases. It will help you! Try it!

E. A. Richards, Mayor of Holly Hill, Fla., says: Your treatment cured me permanently, it has been two years since I stopped taking it and have not regained a pound.

Rev. Mary Kimball, 112 So. Jackson St., Janesville, Wis., says: Have tested and proven the merits of your reduction remedies, none of my garments fit me; they seem made for another woman.

SPECIAL FREE OFFER I have had such wonderful success with my method of reducing superfluous fat that I have decided to offer for a limited time—**free trial treatments.** Hundreds of testimonials on file show that my treatment **takes off fat at the rate of 5 to 7 pounds a week** and what is more, that the fat **does not return** when the treatment is finished. No person is so fat but what it will have the desired effect, no matter where the excess fat is located—stomach, bust, hips, cheeks, neck—it will quickly vanish without starving, exercising or in any way interfering with your customary habits. My treatment is endorsed by physicians, because of its easy, natural elimination of abnormal flesh and its beneficial effect on the whole system. Perfectly harmless, easy and quick results. Rheumatism, Asthma, Kidney and Heart Troubles leave as fat is reduced. **Don't take my word for this;** I will prove it at my own expense. Write to-day for free trial treatment and illustrated booklet on the subject: it costs you nothing. Address Dr. J. Spillenger, Dept. 1420 E., 41 West 25th St., New York City.

BARODA DIAMONDS

Flash Like Genuine

ANY STYLE

DIAMONDS

at 1/40 the cost—IN SOLID GOLD RINGS

Stand acid test and expert examination. **We guarantee them. See them first—then pay. Special Offer** — 14k Tiffany ring 1 ct. $5.98. Gents ring 1 ct. $6.98. 14k Stud 1 ct. $4.86. Sent C.O.D. for inspection. **Catalog FREE,** shows full line. Patent ring gauge included. 10c. **The Baroda Co., Dept. A2, Leland & Dover St., Chicago**

I WILL MAKE YOU PROSPEROUS

If you are honest and ambitious write me today. No matter where you live or what your occupation, I will teach you the Real Estate business by mail; appoint you Special Representative of my Company in your town; start you in a profitable business of your own, and help you make big money at once.

Unusual opportunity for men without capital to become independent for life. Valuable Book and full particulars Free. Write today.

NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE REALTY CO.

M245 **Marden Building**

Washington, D. C.

E. R. Marden, Prest.

FREE FUEL

Most Wonderful Stove ever invented

BURNS AIR

Fuel Drawn Principally From Atmosphere

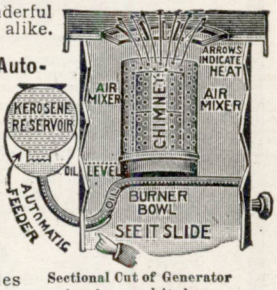
COOKING OR HEATING

Air now burned in this wonderful stove is free to rich and poor alike. No trust in control.

This Valveless, Wickless Automatic Oil-Gas and Air-Burner Stove automatically generates gas from kerosene oil, mixing it with air.

Scientific test proves it uses **395 barrels of air to one gallon** common kerosene oil.

CHEAPEST FUEL—SUMMER COMFORT. Intense heat but **concentrated** under cooking vessels and absorbed by articles being cooked—not thrown out to **overheat** your kitchen.



Sectional Cut of Generator

To operate—turn knob—oil runs into burner—touch a match; it generates gas, which passes through air mixer, drawing in about a barrel of air to every large spoonful of oil consumed. **That's all.** It is self-regulating, no more attention. Same heat all day or all night. For more or less heat, simply turn knob. There it remains until you come again To put fire out, turn knob, raising burner—oil runs back into can, fire's out. As near perfection as anything in this world. **Ideal for summer use.** Not dangerous like gasoline. No dirt, soot or ashes. No leaks—nothing to clog or close up. No wick—not even a valve, yet heat is under perfect control—**kitchen always cool. D. CARN, Ind.,** writes. "It costs me only **4 1-2 cents a day for fuel." L. NORRIS, Vt.,** writes, "The Harrison Oil-Gas Generators are wonderful savers of fuel, at least **50 to 75 per cent.** over wood and coal." **E. ARNOLD, Neb.,** writes, "**Saved $4.25 a month for fuel** by using the Harrison Oil-Gas Stove. My range costs me $5.50 per month, the Harrison **$1.25 per month." THOS. VINCENT, W s.,** "My wife never had anything she enjoyed so much as her stove. It is very quick, no heated room or dirt. Surpasses anything we ever saw."

ALL SIZES

NOT LIKE THOSE SOLD IN STORES. Ideal for roasting, cooking, baking, ironing, canning fruit, picnics, cottages, camping. **In Winter** use Radiator for heating houses, stores, rooms, etc. No more carrying coal, kindling, ashes, soot and dirt. **No hot, fiery kitchens.** Absolutely safe from explosion. Not dangerous like gasoline. Simple, durable—last for years. Saves expense, drudgery and fuel bills.

ALL SIZES, PRICES LOW—$3.25 AND UP, Sent to any address. Give this stove a trial. Send no money—only send your name and address. Write today for full description, thousands of testimonials. Our 1911 Proposition, Circulars FREE.

EXCITING BUSINESS FOR AGENTS

SALESMEN—MANAGERS—Men or Women at home or traveling, all or part time—showing—taking orders—appointing agents, etc. **MESSRS. HEAD & FRAZER, Texas,** writes, "Enclose order for $81.00. RUSH. Sell like hot cakes. **Sold 50 stoves in our town." B. L. HEUSTED, Mich.,** writes, **"Been out one day and sold 11 stoves."** This patent new. **Nothing like it.** Demand enormous. Agents reaping great harvest. Where operated people stop, look, get interested, want to buy at once. Show dozen, sell ten. **Write today for special agents' new plan, Send no money.** World unsupplied. Get in early for territory.

THE WORLD MANUFACTURING CO.

353 World Building **CINCINNATI, OHIO**

AGENTS STOP RIGHT HERE SOMETHING NEW LISTEN

Sells on sight. No experience necessary. Send your name and address today for free information. Phenomenal opportunity to make money. We want Agents, General Agents and Managers in every county. Anyone can do the work 100% PROFIT TO AGENT. No charge for territory. You will earn

$45.00 TO $90.00 A WEEK

easily at the very beginning. Grand free advertising special introductory plan for agents on the most sensational selling article of the age. Every man a buyer—quick. Every call a sale. Success is yours. Money in abundance is coming to you. Independence—pleasant position—luxuries—a start in real life—SUCCESS.

One man (Hiram Purdy) **took 27 orders the first day out** (sworn statement); **profit $40.50.** 26 orders next day. Once our agent, always a money maker. Get out of the rut. **Send for absolute proof.** Young men, old men, farmers, teachers, carpenters, students, bank clerks—**everybody makes money.**

LISTEN TO SUCCESS: Read these reports. J. J. Green started selling in Louisiana and became General Agent controlling extensive territory. **At a single time he ordered 50 agents' outfits.** Land Office business right off the jump. Orders, orders everywhere. A. M. Clark of Kansas, wrote, "I was out of town the other day—did not go with the intention of doing any soliciting. **Just got to talking and sold 6 before I knew it." Profit $9.00. Brand new business for agents.** Sales roll up everywhere.

400,000 IN 4 MONTHS

JUST THINK OF THIS! A positive automatic razor stropper—absolutely guaranteed. Here at last. The thing all men have dreamed about. Inventor's genius creates the marvelous IMPROVED NEVER FAIL—perfect in every detail, under every test. With it you can instantly sharpen to a keen, smooth, velvety edge any razor—old style or safety—all the same. **Handles any and every blade automatically** Few seconds with the IMPROVED NEVER FAIL puts a razor in better shape to give a soothing, cooling, satisfying shave than can an expert hand operator in 30 minutes. **New idea. Works great.** Makes friends everywhere. Sells itself. Men are all excited over this little wonder machine—over its mysterious accuracy and perfection. Eager to buy. **Agents coining money. Fields untouched.** Get territory at once. We want a thousand Agents General Agents, Salesmen and Managers. ACT TODAY EXCLUSIVE TERRITORY.

SEND NO MONEY. Just your name and address on a postal card and we will mail complete information, details, and sworn-to proof FREE. Don't delay. Territory is going fast. Give name of county. Write today. Address,

THE NEVER FAIL COMPANY, 966 COLTON BUILDING, **Toledo, Ohio**

Young Men Wanted

To Learn the **Automobile Business**

BIG PAY

Work pleasant and demand for men great. Fit yourself for position of chauffeur or repair man. We teach you by mail to become thoroughly efficient in ten weeks and assist you to secure good position. Highly endorsed—reasonable. No automobile necessary to learn—we furnish free model.

SEND FOR FIRST LESSON TO-DAY—IT'S FREE

Owners supplied with first-class chauffeurs.

Empire Auto Institute, 412 Empire Bldg., Rochester, N. Y.

The Original Automobile School.

30 DAYS FREE TRIAL

and if we haven't an agent in your city, we will sell you at **wholesale agents' price,** one

AMERICAN Motorcycle or Bicycle

and **prepay the freight.** Write for our introducing offer and catalog, and say whether you want motorcycle or bicyle. Do it now.

AMERICAN MOTOR CYCLE CO., 374 American Bldg., Chicago

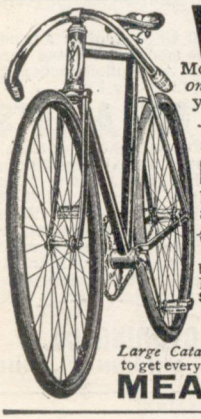
GRAY MOTORS 3 H.P. $60

Guaranteed to develop 4 h. p. Made in 1, 2 and 3 Cylinders, 3 to 36 h. p.

Largest marine gasoline engine concern in the world

3 H. P. Pumping and Stationary Motor $65.00. Write for Marine or Farm Engine Catalogue.

GRAY MOTOR CO., 302 Leib St., Detroit, Mich.



WANTED—RIDER AGENTS IN EACH TOWN

and district to ride and exhibit a sample 1911 Model **"Ranger"** bicycle furnished by us. Our agents everywhere are making money fast. *Write at once for full particulars and special offer.* **NO MONEY REQUIRED** until you receive and approve of your bicycle. We ship to anyone, anywhere in the U. S. *without a cent deposit* in advance, *prepay freight,* and allow **TEN DAYS' FREE TRIAL** during which time you may ride the bicycle and put it to any test you wish. If you are then not perfectly satisfied or do not wish to keep the bicycle you may ship it back to us at our expense and *you will not be out one cent.*

LOW FACTORY PRICES We furnish the highest grade bicycles it is possible to make at one small profit above the actual factory cost. You save $10 to $25 middlemen's profits by buying direct of us and have the manufacturer's guarantee behind your bicycle. **DO NOT BUY** a bicycle or a pair of tires from *anyone* at *any price* until you receive our catalogues and learn our unheard of *factory prices* and *remarkable special offer.*

YOU WILL BE ASTONISHED when you receive our beautiful catalogue and study our superb models at the *wonderful low prices* we can make you. We sell the highest grade bicycles at **lower prices** than any other factory. We are satisfied with $1.00 profit above factory cost. **BICYCLE DEALERS,** you can sell our bicycles under your own name plate at double our prices. Orders filled the day received. **SECOND HAND BICYCLES**—a limited number taken in trade by our Chicago retail stores will be closed out at once, at **$3 to $8 each.** Descriptive bargain list mailed free.

TIRES, COASTER BRAKE rear wheels, inner tubes, lamps, cyclometers, parts, repairs and everything in the bicycle line at **half usual prices. DO NOT WAIT**—but write today for our *Large Catalogue* beautifully illustrated and containing a great fund of interesting matter and useful information. It only costs a postal to get everything. **Write it now.**

MEAD CYCLE CO. Dept. T14 CHICAGO, ILL.

Here is the way through

OUR "DEFERRED TUITION SCHOLARSHIP" supplies the way and removes the last barrier between the progressive ambitious young man and the higher position and salary to which he aspires.

Read every word of this offer. We mean it, and there is a fine chance for you if you improve it.

Thousands of men realize that all that stands between them and good positions with big pay is their lack of special training in some one thing. We are going to help these men We are going to lend them the cost of the training they need and let them make their own terms about repaying us.

This is the greatest offer ever made to men who have "got it in them to rise." We have studied the matter very carefully, and are fully prepared to help everyone who comes to us in earnest.

If you are one of these ambitious fellows, willing to study for an hour every evening, willing to stick to it with the kind of persistence that wins, then you are on the right track.

Check the coupon, mail it to us, and we will explain fully our "DEFERRED TUITION" plan, how we will lend you the cost of the tuition, and allow you to pay us back when the increase in your yearly income equals the amount of the loan

NO PROMOTION — NO PAY — that's what our "DEFERRED TUITION" scholarship means Ask for the little book, "Profitable Worldly Wisdom" It will be sent to you free and will help you.

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CORRESPONDENCE, Chicago, U. S. A.

Opportunity Coupon

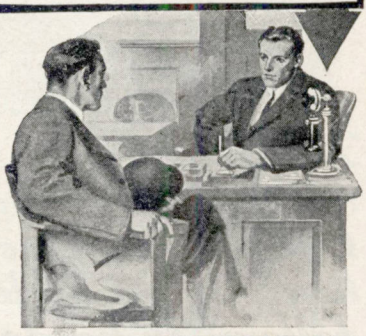
American School of Correspondence, Chicago, U. S. A.

Please send me your Bulletin and advise me how I can qualify for the position marked "X."B.B.4-11

....Book-keeper	....Draftsman
....Stenographer	....Architect
....Accountant	....Civil Engineer
....Cost Accountant	....Automobile Operator
....Systematizer	....Electrical Engineer
....Cert'f'd Public Acc'nt	....Mechanical Engineer
....Auditor	....Moving Picture Op'r
....Business Manager	....Steam Engineer
....Commercial Law	....Fire Insurance Eng'r
....Reclamation Engineer	....College Preparatory

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....



A Happy Marriage

Depends largely on a knowledge of the whole truth about self and sex and their relation to life and health. This knowledge does not come intelligently of itself, nor correctly from ordinary everyday sources.

Sexology

(*Illustrated*)

By William H. Walling, A. M., M. D.,

imparts in a clear, wholesome way, 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.

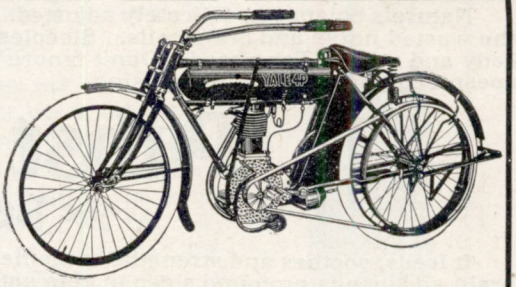
Knowledge a Young Woman Should Have.
Knowledge a Young Wife Should Have.
Knowledge a Mother Should Have.
Knowledge a Mother Should Impart to Her Daughter.
Medical Knowledge a Wife Should Have.

All in one volume, illustrated, $2, postpaid.

Write for "Other People's Opinions" and Table of Contents.

Puritan Pub. Co., 753 Perry Bldg., Phila., Pa.

1911 Yale Motorcycles



Long stroke motor, new positive grip control (patented) and offset cylinder.

Why pay a higher price without securing the distinctive YALE features?

1911 4 H. P. YALE, $200. With Bosch Magneto, $235

1911 7 H. P. YALE TWIN, $300

We shall produce in 1911 only that number of motorcycles which can pass—in every part—the most rigid inspection system in America.

The wise thing to do is to order now.

Write at once for 1911 Yale literature

THE CONSOLIDATED MFG. COMPANY

1724 Fernwood Ave., Toledo, Ohio

"No he won't be back today. Gone home to rest. All worn out. Can't sleep. Nerves and indigestion I guess. Says he hasn't slept more than an hour or so each night for the last week. Poor fellow! If he doesn't take care of himself I'm afraid he'll have to give up business."

Nature's balance is delicately adjusted. Sound, refreshing sleep is necessary to restore the wasted nerve and brain cells. Sleepless nights are but forerunners of grave danger of body and mind. Take heed. Don't ignore Nature's demands. When quiet, peaceful sleep doesn't come regularly begin using

Pabst Extract

The "Best" Tonic

It feeds, soothes and strengthens the nerves, aids digestion, braces up the overworked brain and brings profound sleep to help nature in her efforts to restore the wasted mind and body to normal health and strength. Through its nourishing and tonic properties it will make you mentally and physically fit to cope with business cares and worries.

Pabst Extract is The "Best" Tonic to build up the overworked, strengthen the weak, overcome insomnia, relieve dyspepsia—to help the anaemic, the convalescent and the nervous wreck—to prepare for happy, heathy motherhood and give vigor to the aged. Your physician will recommend it.

Warning

Cheap imitations are sometimes substituted when Pabst Extract is called for. Be sure you get the genuine Pabst Extract. Refuse to accept a substitute. No "cheaper" extract can equal Pabst in purity, strength and quality.

$1000 Reward

for evidence convicting anyone who, when Pabst Extract is called for, deliberately and without the knowledge of his customer, supplies an article other than Pabst Extract.

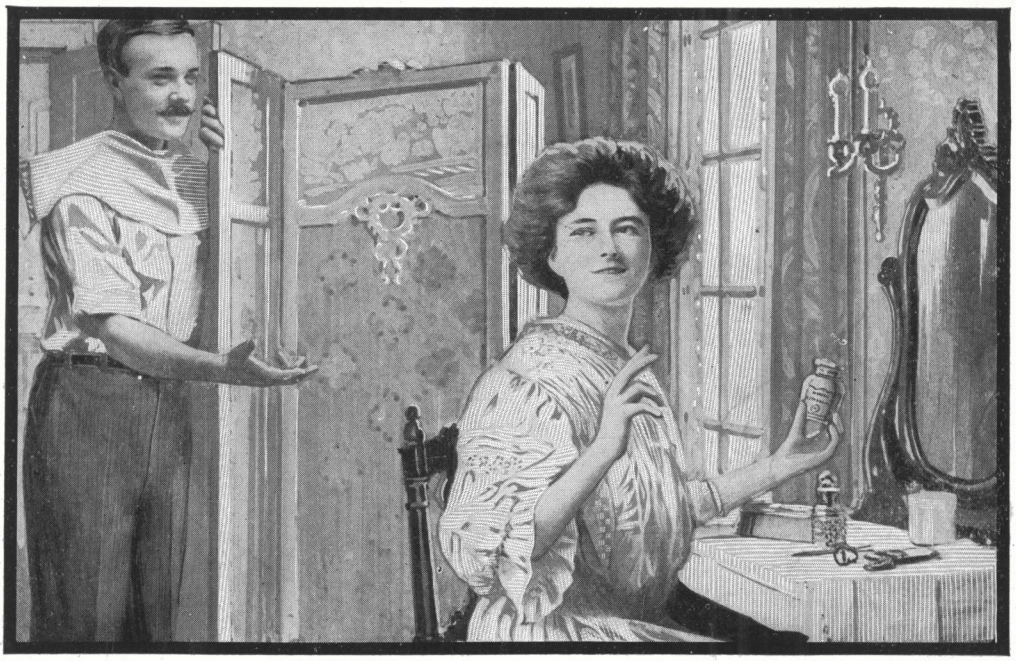
The United States Government specifically classifies Pabst Extract as an article of medicine—not an alcoholic beverage.

ORDER A DOZEN FROM YOUR DRUGGIST
INSIST UPON IT BEING "PABST"

Library Slip, good for books and magazines, with each bottle.

Free booklet, "Health Darts," tells ALL uses and benefits of Pabst Extract. Write for it—a postal will do.

PABST EXTRACT CO. DEPT. 22 Milwaukee, Wis.



An Old Joke *with* A New Moral

(NOTE: This joke in various forms has been sent to the makers of Pompeian Massage Cream by several hundred people. Hence the following must be pretty true to life):

He: Please hand me my Pompeian, dearest.

She: *Your* Pompeian! Why this is a *family jar.*

He: If you don't buy your own Pompeian pretty quick there *WILL* be a *FAMILY JAR* in this house!

Moral. It is a wise family where both husband and wife not only appreciate the merits and benefits of Pompeian Massage Cream, but also realize that Pompeian Massage Cream differs entirely from "cold" or "disappearing creams" in purpose, use and results. Since nearly every family uses some face cream, you should know the difference between Pompeian and "cold" creams in order to get the best results.

Will Your Face Cream Bring These Results?

1. Will it get into the pores and, after a few moments of massaging, *roll out*, laden with dust and other infecting matter, which cause so many complexion ills? *Pompeian will.*

2. Will it bring a natural, healthy glow to the face? *Pompeian will*—it is so scientifically made that a slight invigorating friction induces the rosy circulation through your cheeks.

3. Will your face cream remove the dried skin tissues, which cause so many of the dull, sallow, lifeless complexions? *Pompeian will.*

4. Will your face cream work without clogging the pores or leaving any greasy, sticky or shiny after-effect? *Pompeian will.*

5. Briefly, will it transform an unattractive skin into one that indicates the "clean-cut" man or the "deliciously clean" woman? *Pompeian surely will.*

"Don't envy a good complexion—use Pompeian and have one."

"Cold," "grease," or "disappearing creams" are good for cold cream uses. But when you want an invigorating, completely cleansing massage cream—get Pompeian. It has no substitutes "just as good."

POMPEIAN Massage Cream

All dealers 50c, 75c and $1

Trial Jar and Art Picture, both sent for 10c. (stamps or coin), for postage and packing.

For years you have heard of Pompeian's merits and benefits. To get you to act now, we will send a "Pompeian Beauty" Art Picture, in exquisite colors, with each trial jar. This is a rare offer. The "Pompeian Beauty" is very expensive and immensely popular. Clip coupon now.

MAGAZINES & BOOKS FOR LIBRARY SLIPS ONE IN EVERY PACKAGE

Cut along this line, fill in and mail today.

The Pompeian Mfg. Co.
137 Prospect St., Cleveland, O.

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find 10c. (stamps or coin, for postage and packing), for which please send me a trial jar of Pompeian and a "Pompeian Beauty" Art Picture.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

Grape-Nuts
A FOOD
BUILD YOUR BODY RIGHT
on Grape-Nuts
"THERE'S A REASON"