

BLUE BOOK

FEBRUARY

MAGAZINE

25 Cents
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ADVENTURE MYSTERY ROMANCE HUMOR

George Worts · William Ashley Anderson · F. Britten Austin
Clarence Herbert New · Edgar Rice Burroughs *and many others*

\$500 in Cash Prizes for Real Experiences

FRONTIERS

THE frontier is still with us: frontier of the frozen North, of course; frontier of impenetrable tropic jungle; frontier of the untamable ocean; frontier above the highest-winging airplane.

More important, perhaps even more impassable, are the frontiers of another sort: the frontier between the law-abiding and the criminal which keeps firearms flaming in city streets; frontiers between our civilization and others—between ours, for example, and that of Russia, with its denial of property and its war on religion. . . . Beyond all these, the abiding frontier between life and—that still undiscovered country. . . .

To primitive man, of course, the frontier was very near and very terrible, but it was also very small—the close circle of his own harried wanderings. To the ancients it was much larger and still a place of immediate peril; but their known world was only a small flat region, with a mysterious jumping-off place not far beyond; and returning sailors could bring home thundering yarns without risk of refutation. Step by step knowledge and civilization have striven to push back the frontier—and have succeeded chiefly in making it larger. This generation, therefore, has its pioneers as well as the last; until the universe gives up its mystery, indeed, we are all pioneers.

Because the frontier—a frontier of any sort—is essentially perilous, novel and unexplored, it is always interest-

ing. And for that reason many of our most engrossing stories have some frontier for motive or background. Undoubtedly Charles Brower's autobiography derives its special appeal from its picture of a Northern pioneer's life; but so too the deep drama of Seven Anderton's racketeer stories like "The Mob Master" lies in their picture of a frontier, even though it is laid in a modern city—that frontier between the lawless and the law-abiding. Likewise in William Ashley Anderson's colorful "Yellow Flood" the borderland between the Chinese civilization and ours is ably employed to stage an unforgettable story. And in most of the other stories, one or another sort of frontier provides its particular fascination.

NEXT month we print a novel of the conflict between our civilization and that amazing social experiment of Soviet Russia—"Comrades of Chaos," by Andrew Wood. . . . The newspapers have recently printed a report that the children of American engineers and workmen in Russia are to attend Soviet schools; and when one reflects on the peculiar tenets of the Bolsheviks, one realizes that here is a frontier dangerous indeed. At any rate, Mr. Wood's story of the struggle of two Americans to escape from pitiless perils is based on first-hand acquaintance with Russia today; and it is one of the most enthralling stories we have read in years. Watch for it.

—*The Editor.*

"I Saved Six Orders and Made \$90 in One Day... Thanks to This Pocket Volume!"

I'VE only been selling about a year. When I broke in, though I realized that trained salesmen are the highest paid men in the world, I expected the going to be hard at first. It was—a lot harder than I'd expected, even. At the end of six months I was commencing to get discouraged. I certainly hadn't made a flop of it—but I wasn't getting the results I should have had.

Naturally, seeing other fellows who started right with me go right ahead, I realized something was wrong. A particularly disheartening thing was the fact that at times I'd be right on the point of closing a good-sized order—and all of a sudden, it would go "flop." In fact, it kept happening all the time. I was doing something, I knew, that was killing those sales.

Finally I decided that I had to do something. I had been hearing a lot about National Salesmen's Training Association. But I'd never investigated them. Then, one day, I read one of their announcements. I was amazed to find how comprehensively they covered the training of salesmen. Furthermore, they announced that they were sending a most unusual volume, "The Key to Master Salesmanship" to ambitious men who asked for it—not only experienced salesmen, but men who had never sold, but wanted a chance in this highly paid field.

Naturally, I wrote for it—it seemed to me that here was the certain solution to the errors I had been making. Imagine my surprise—and interest—when they arrived, not only one book, but two. To this day I can't decide which of those books helped me most. The little book which I had not been expecting was just what I needed at the time. It was written for men just like me—men who had been plugging along in salesmanship—never successful, never so hopeless that they quit selling. And while "The Key to Master Salesmanship" gave me an insight into the real secrets of salesmanship, the other book, "Mistakes Commonly Made in Selling" was the one I could



first get practical use from.

Right in the first few pages, I saw some examples quoted. They were things I had been doing every day. I'd never dreamed they were dangerous errors. The more I thought about them, the more clear it became, though, why I was having such difficulty with my closes. I thought to myself: "By golly, that's why Barnes decided to put off buying, this very afternoon!" I kept on thinking of men whose orders I had lost, through just that very mistake. There were six of them.

The next morning, I sallied out, bright and early to see if I couldn't save those sales, using the tips given me. Before noon, I had put the practical suggestions of that little book to work—and sure enough, in every case, I made the sale which I had thought was gone glimmering. Six sales saved—at \$15 commission apiece, that was \$90 made, by one morning's work, plus the advice of a little book that cost me nothing!

Of course, that set me to thinking. If that one piece of knowledge could make me \$90, how much would I make out of having all the knowledge which

the National Salesmen's Training Association could give me? It didn't take long to figure that one out, either! I was enrolled for the full training that same night; and the next two weeks saw my sales record soar. Not a minute of time lost—I studied just in spare hours, but I learned things in those spare hours that I'd never have picked up, just by my own experience.

Today, I find amazing increase in the volume of my sales now over what they were a year ago. Then I was selling only about 40% of my quota—this month, with a quota twice as high as it used to be, I'm 50% over! And you know what quantity production means when the bonus checks roll around!

Today any man who wants to see how to end some of his biggest sales weaknesses can learn from this book some of the most fre-

quent mistakes which spoil sales, and get practical suggestions how to end them. Not a penny of obligation—"Mistakes Commonly Made in Selling" is now FREE to any ambitious man. At the same time we will send you, also free, the new and finer edition of "The Key to Master Salesmanship," which since its publication has been read by many men who have got into the biggest pay class of salesmanship. Write for both these valuable volumes now—the coupon will bring them by return mail.

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The BLUE BOOK

FEBRUARY, 1932

MAGAZINE

Vol. 54, No. 4

Two Memorable Novels

- The Phantom President** By George F. Worts 32
Two men who, under one name, sought the Presidency of the United States.
- The Triumph of Tarzan** By Edgar Rice Burroughs 82
New adventures of the champion fiction hero of our time.

Thrill-filled Short Stories

- The Shattered Atom** By F. Britten Austin 19
A deeply interesting story by the noted author of "The Saga of the Sword."
- The Madness of Fiddleface Dugan** By Bud La Mar 26
This gay tale is by a man who is himself an unrepentant bronco-buster.
- Truly Run** By Jonathan Brooks 46
A specially attractive race-track story by the author of "Keep-a-goin' Kelly."
- Try to Stop Me!** By Conrad Richter 52
Broadly the hard-rock man again shows his mettle in this lively mining story.
- Hell's Angels on Horseback** By Warren Hastings Miller 58
Texas Ike and his squad fight their way out of a tight corner.
- One Night in Agadir** By Valentine Williams 95
The famous Man with the Clubfoot gives the secret service a hard battle.
- Free Lances in Diplomacy** By Clarence Herbert New 110
"The Buildings That Vanished" describes an extraordinary attack on London.
- The Mills of God** By George Barton 118
"The Man Who Never Returned."
- Bugwine Gets His Man** By Arthur K. Akers 122
A stove-colored detective trusts his bloodhound not wisely but too well.

Two Unusual Novelettes

- Yellow Flood** By William Ashley Anderson 6
The picturesque story of a lost American boy brought up among the Chinese.
- The Mob Master** By Seven Anderton 66
A newspaper reporter turns detective to ferret out a city's master crook.

Stories of Remarkable Real Experience

- The Cowboy Today** By Will James 81
"The Old Slicker."
- My Arctic Outpost** By Charles D. Brower 98
The primitive hunt for the bowhead whale, by our great pioneer of the North.
- The Masked Death** By Robert Morris 128
A bad quarter-hour in company with a maniac and an infernal machine.
- Hand to Claw** By Captain Robert J. Bailie 130
A wild-animal trainer tells of his most dangerous encounter.
- By Authority of Bayonets** By Milton M. Craig 131
An American sailor's part in the work of rescue in the Smyrna massacre.
- A Hanging Matter** By J. F. Bledsoe 133
Wherein a young cowboy trades horses and barely escapes hanging.
- Dogs Are Like That** By T. Howard Kelly 135
Just a couple of collies in peril—but their story is well worth while.



S. ANDREW
WOOD

HE was born in Scotland; and since the war—in which he caught "an enteric germ, a gas-bomb, and shrapnel in the leg, all in the same hour"—he has won distinction as a fiction-writer. A recent extended sojourn in Russia gave him material for a novel of conspicuous dramatic power—the story of two Americans' desperate struggle to escape from the dreaded Russian secret police. Watch for it in our next issue under the title:

"Comrades
of Chaos"

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The BLUE BOOK Magazine

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The BLUE BOOK
Magazine

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Yellow Flood

By WILLIAM ASHLEY ANDERSON

THOUGH the rain still beat rhythmically upon the gray tile roof, churning up the mud of the yamen yard with a muttering sound, Mah K'oung, the ambitious sub-prefect of the village of Fang-Erh, would no longer be detained.

Rising abruptly, he pushed aside a little saucer of melon-seeds with a gesture of reluctant determination, stamped in his felt-soled shoes, clapped his hands briskly for his servants, and turned to Big Bill Morris with an expression on his beaming countenance that indicated both regret and embarrassment.

"No, no!" he protested, pushing the American gently back into his chair. "You must stay here, poor though my shelter is. Stay, and at least keep dry. Believe me, I wouldn't leave you except that I *must*. To an official, a summons is more than an order. How can I disobey?"

"Let me go with you."

The sub-prefect smiled wanly.

"I have only one Peking cart. At most we could crowd in only two persons. And there is the boy! I could get you country carts, but they'd be sunk in mud within a *li* of the village. Be patient, Mah Ri. Your junk is truly comfortable. And dry!"

A gust of wind interrupted him, dashing rain against the oiled-paper windows with the rattle of pebbles against a drumhead. The occupants of the room shivered, reaching automatically for teapots. There was such obvious misery on Mah K'oung's countenance that the American gave a short snort of laughter. With a gesture of disengagement, Mah K'oung began to laugh also.

"If you only had as much patience as you have good-humor, Mah Ri," said he, "you'd be a man of rare qualities. Why didn't you come to me a year ago? At that time there was money to spend on improvements. We might have done something with your excellent plans. But don't worry, the dikes are in good enough condition. You'll be in Tientsin before I reach Peking."

"Patient!" exclaimed Morris. "How can I be patient when I'm practically a prisoner?"

"No, no! Those are not good words!"

"Well, it's not your fault, Mah K'oung. But you know perfectly well I can't move my junk a pike's-length without being shot at by farmers!"

"A bird but whistled, and the moon fell down!" the sub-prefect reminded him.

"Yes, there's danger in a single ripple!"

"Good, you appreciate the difficulty. I prophesy that tomorrow the sun will be shining."

"Always tomorrow," said Morris resignedly, refilling his pipe.

With sudden brisk energy, the sub-prefect clapped his hands. Immediately the damp, crowded yamen became a scene of activity. Morris relapsed on a corner of the *k'ang*, within which a smoky straw fire burned, his blue eyes watching his Chinese friends with a mixture of irritation and amusement.

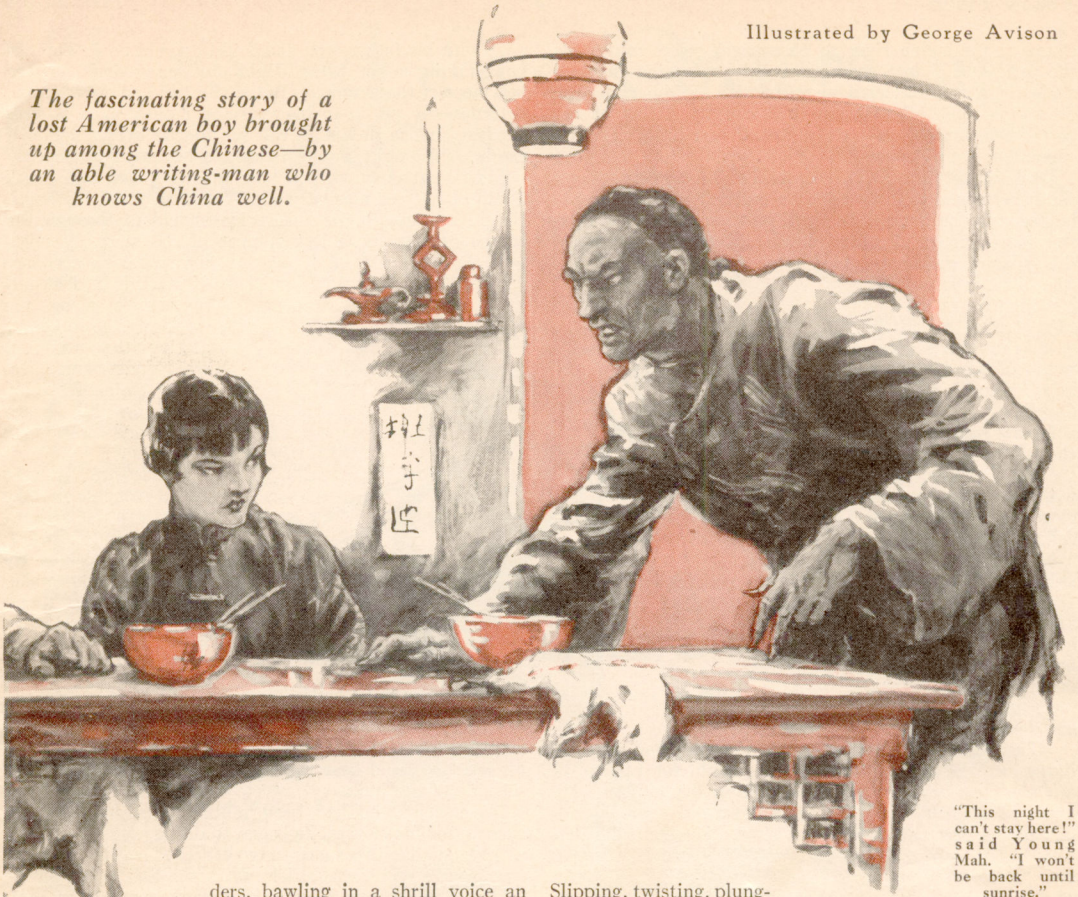


Turning up the cuffs of his blue silk coat, Mah K'oung affixed his chop to official papers. He briefly scanned documents his clerk had prepared for his Peking report and stuffed them into a pigskin traveling-bag. A small boy came shuffling in with a fresh pot of tea. Pausing just long enough to offer some politely to his guest, Mah K'oung noisily gulped down three cupfuls.

"Quickly! Quickly!" he called breathlessly. "Are all preparations complete?"

Servants and retainers had been slipping into the room in ones and twos until walls and *k'ang* were banked with them; and Mah K'oung, representative of Heavenly Authority, stood alone in the center, an imposing if rotund figure. His twinkling eyes swept the array, old and young, weatherbeaten and wan, some in meager garments of coarse American cloth, others in faded silks kept with the scrupulous neatness of clerical necessity, all self-conscious as supernumeraries in a drama, all with eyes fixed brightly on the master. The guard of four rubber-coated and re-plumed pony soldiers in the doorway drew aside, and a brown, wrinkled, merry face, shining with moisture like a varnished wood-carving, thrust itself over their shoul-

The fascinating story of a lost American boy brought up among the Chinese—by an able writing-man who knows China well.



"This night I can't stay here!" said Young Mah. "I won't be back until sunrise."

ders, bawling in a shrill voice an echo to the sub-prefect's inquiry: "All preparations complete!"

With spasmodic struggles, Mah K'oung was assisted into a yellow oilskin, while his satchel, his bedding, a square pillow and a box of cakes were disposed in the high-varnished Peking cart. He turned to Morris with hands outstretched.

"Some day I'll do you a favor to recompense you for my helplessness now. Remember, if it is in my power, I will surely oblige you. That is the word of Mah K'oung, your humble servant."

"When you are viceroy," said Morris good-naturedly, "I'll come to you for a concession."

"It is yours!" said Mah K'oung.

He tumbled precipitately into the cart, pulling the black waterproof curtains behind him. The carter snapped his whip and flung himself against the shafts. The pony soldiers swung themselves on to their dripping mounts. "Tr-r-rp!" clucked the driver; and away they plunged through the sloughed road, lurching and bumping and splashing in momentary peril of capsizing, yet drawing nearer by every forward lurch to the higher levels stretching away to Peking, two hundred *li* to the north.

When they had disappeared in the murk, Morris slipped out of the doorway, keeping close to the clay walls of the shops along the main road of the village, now shut tight against the driving force of the rain. He stumbled over worn-out millstones, clay benches, outdoor ovens dissolving into heaps of mud, and litters of kaoliang stalks.

Slipping, twisting, plunging forward unexpectedly, floundering up to his

knees in the slough, or pausing to take a breath on some sheltered threshold where the odor of damp smoke seeped through the crevices of tightly barred doors, at length he came to the top of the dike.

The dim village lay below him like mud barracks sunk into a mire from which the smell of smoky cooking drifted. The rain still pelted in the mud, like machine-gun bullets whipping the crest of a soggy parapet. The wind swept across the misty swollen river, yellow as maple sugar, with heavy intermittent sighs uncannily suggestive of *feng-shui*, the elemental gods of China. Somewhere below in the darkness where several sampans loaded with kaoliang stalks were clustered against the bank, a murmur of subdued voices could be heard, a weak human sound accentuating the dreariness. Moreover, the water at his feet, hardly six inches below the crest of the dike, licking at the bank with the quick lapping sound of a famishing monster, was disturbing. Morris was aware of vague figures farther up the dike, listlessly stacking sacks of mud and revetments of stalks at weak points. He shrugged with mild despair.

"What a hell of a position for an ambitious engineer!"

A sudden lull in the downpour turned Morris' eyes toward the west, where in the hills of Shansi the real menace formed. A rift appeared in the dark canopy through which the sinking sun suddenly glowed hot and red, sending one beam of light across the sodden country,

changing the sullen river to champagne-color, converting the paddy-fields into squares of jade, splashing the pinnacles of a few scattered pagodas with saffron and gold, bestowing upon all that flat drab country a sort of imperial benediction, an aura of the divine authority that emanated from Peking.

Darkness settled solidly. A round of laughter came from the fishermen in the sampans; a murmur of voices could be heard in the huts. The shrill piercing voice of a songster soared above all other sounds, except the warning of the village watchman who had commenced his nightly rounds. *Clack!* went his rattle with the sharp clear sound of wood on hollow wood. *Clack!* *Clack!*

Morris scrambled up the slippery board to the deck of the junk, with an unexpected glow of cheerfulness, calling briskly:

"Ahoj, there, Little Bill!"

A couple of bronzed sailors poked their heads through the hatchway, grinned and ducked down again, for rain was still falling.

"Clearing weather," said Morris cheerily, and dropped down into the narrow cabin, calling again for Little Bill and the cook-boy, for hot tea and some dry clothes. He expected a shout from his twelve-year-old son; but all at once he became aware of a visitor. Perched with dignity beside gaping Little Bill was Mah K'oung's young son. Both were enjoying themselves hugely with a can of Scotch shortbread on one hand and a can of toffee on the other.

"There's one thing in which all Chinese excel," observed Morris, shedding his waterproof and loosening his belt, "and that is in eating!"

"Senior, have you eaten?" inquired Hsiang politely.

"It's good!" said Little Bill, with his mouth full.

"Too much will make you fat!" said his father. "One of you is bad enough. The pair are worse than an invasion of rats! Here, let me have a piece!" He looked down at the boys with a severe stare, thinking to himself: "What a cute pair! Shoulder to shoulder, eating away there, they might be remote cousins—and yet they're a hundred thousand years apart!"

Hsiang resumed the mechanical operation of chewing, the sudden solemnity of his expression utterly belying the delicious sensation he continued to experience as the mixture of honey and butter and vanilla flooded the taste-buds of tongue and palate. Little Bill continued to chew too, mumbling:

"We didn't know when you'd be coming in; so we thought we'd eat supper."

"But look here," protested his father suddenly, "Hsiang can't go home tonight, and his father's gone to Peking.—Wonga! Send one of the crew to the yamen and say Hsiang is staying here."

"Sir," said Wonga, unloosening his pigtail, and looking slightly bored, "the young master has already sent such a message."

"The devil he has! If I had only half as much assur-

ance with his father, you and I, Bill, would be in Tientsin now, taking a hot bath. Hold on, there; don't eat the last piece of that toffee!" But Little Bill had casually and determinedly put it in his yearning mouth, as if it were his last chance in life to roll his tongue over a lump of candy. "All right, young fellow, to bed with you both!"

Morris sat down with a long whistling sigh and drank a cup of hot tea noisily, while Wonga removed his boots. Before turning in, he thrust his shoulders through the companionway for a last glimpse of the stars, speculating on taking a chance of starting a devastating ripple along the crest of the dike by getting the narrow craft under way. Deciding against it, he lay down on his board berth and was soon asleep. . . .

Somewhere in the dark reaches of the night Morris found himself wide awake, sitting bolt upright. He had rushed into wakefulness from deep slumber. At first nothing seemed wrong. The crew were snoring in their cramped quarters under the rear deck. There was a vague, re-

assuring stir where the boys were sleeping. Just beside his head he could hear the *lap-lap-lap* of wavelets against the side of the junk.

Nevertheless he had been robbed of sleep. Groping silently for his clothes, he began to dress. A pipe on deck was better than this suffocating silence. . . . *Silence!* The watchman's rattle was still! With the hair rising on his scalp, Morris threw himself in a panic toward the companionway.

As he burst into the cool bracing vastness of the night, it was as if plugs had been drawn from his ears, a film from his eyes.

On the outskirts of the village a dog gave a whimpering yelp as if awakened by a kick. The other *wonks* of the village took it up with a full-lunged chorus that faded away quickly. Murmurs were rising from the mass of buildings spread in the darkness below. Shouts and a broken babble seemed to churn up the blackness that had settled behind the dike as mists settle in a valley. A hoarse shout of horror and warning broke from the American:

"*Kuanchuanti!* . . . Wonga! . . . Quick! Quick! . . . Help! . . . Bill! . . . Bill! Wake up! . . . Come to life! . . . The dike's broken up there somewhere! . . . Bill! For God's sake, kid, come up here! . . . *Kuanchuanti*, pole out of this, or we're caught!"

Morris had jerked a pole from the rack and was thrusting with all his strength against the backwash that was slipping toward the current upstream where the flood with a dull swollen roar was gobbling up the dike and the village and all it contained, rushing out upon the lowlands and smothering it in a welter of mud and thatch and yellow foam. Already the dank musty smell of a wet abandoned barnyard was in the air. Murmurs were all about, like the murmur of high-flying geese through the rack of a November storm. With the veins of his neck swelling as he strained against the pole, all at once Morris



Little Bill ran swiftly, with the crutch dragging at his heels.

realized that the boys were on deck behind him, yelling with excitement.

"Good God!" he cried, thrusting himself upright, staring at them in a panic.

The deck beneath was yawing sickeningly. In the darkness objects appeared here and there, fleeting glimpses of a thatched roof spewed up, a mass of clawing figures on a tavern door, a sobbing hog, tearing its throat out in a futile effort to swim, inchoate masses that were bubbled up indistinctly for an instant only to be sucked down.

By this time the crew was frantically at work. Wonga had cut the anchor-ropes with a cleaver. The *kuan-chuanti* was shrieking out his orders, while the men stumbled and struggled about confusedly. A *ulo* had been shipped astern; and two of the men were working desperately at the sweep. All knew that if the junk could be moved no more than two pole-lengths toward the main channel of the river, there was still sufficient down-current to pull it away from the vortex.

Little Bill had seized a light pole, imitating his father, and was heroically thumping his bare feet on the slippery deck. Hsiang remained calm, as became a mandarin's son, looking about him curiously. Pulling at Morris' breeches, he said loudly and firmly:

"Look there, Senior! Those are Black-legs—mischiefmakers. You'd better watch them, Senior; you'd really better watch them!"

Nothing was more calculated to add to the *macabre* character of the situation!

Rising over the oozing edge of the dike were the wild terrified countenances of the paupers, nightmarish apparitions in the wild night. Careless of life, yet desperate to live, they floundered across the sinking dike and flung themselves in increasing numbers on the junk.

Under the added weight the light craft careened drunkenly. Morris twisted about spasmodically, clutching at Bill, who almost plunged overboard among the writhing figures, while Hsiang, tangled in his legs, saved himself by seizing the handle of the great wooden *ulo*. The sailors who had been working it were throwing themselves at the invading beggars, striking at them with poles, kicking at the dark dripping faces that were rising above the gunwales. Similar combats were occurring among the sampans lower down. It was an incredible bedlam, a shrieking babble over which rolled the steady rushing roar of the elements.

Morris hung on for a moment, sick and numb, clutching the boys. What could he do? What hope was there? The junk, without propulsion, was swinging slowly and inevitably back toward the break, its movement to destruction accelerating. The American's next movements were almost instinctive; for he judged subconsciously by the small whirlpools rolling along the side of the junk that the current in midstream was still flowing eastward. Obviously, everything else was lost!

"Can you swim?" he shouted at Hsiang, his wet blond

mustache sticking out like frayed horns, his blue eyes bulging like a veritable foreign devil. Hsiang said nothing, but he looked at Little Bill and his mouth opened. "Go to the bow. Jump overboard where the eye is, and swim downstream across the river! Quickly! Now! Don't be afraid!"

Hsiang obediently swallowed his heart as he clawed his way along the lifting gunwale. Then he found himself sinking into the depths, the water hammering in his ears, wrapped in liquid mud. Paddling wildly like a little

turtle, he came to the surface, wailed once, and was silent, splashing furiously to keep himself afloat.

"Come on, old kid," panted Little Bill's father, heaving at the great wooden rudder and unhinging it. "We'll get off on this."

They drew the rudder along the free side of the junk until they gained the eye where Hsiang had gone overboard. Slipping into the water, they pushed vigorously away from the junk. A minute's delay would have been too late. Caught on the edge of a wide slow

whirlpool, they were swung in a circle to where the two currents separated. There was a riffling about them; then they were in a current bearing them eastward, as they yelled over and over again for little Hsiang, lost in that yellow void. All at once, there he was thrashing about him, gasping: "*Mah Ri! Mah Ri!*" Soon the flood was smooth as silk.

Trembling violently at the suddenness of the horror and the narrow margin by which they had escaped destruction, Morris lay with his chest and face pressing the planking, eyes closed, still struggling for breath. The muffled tumult died away. Motion seemed to cease as they were borne smoothly onward, drifting through a yellow fog. Fortunately the night was mild, and presently a delightful calmness poured through the American. The boys were safe!

Hsiang's wet sleek head, pressing on his ear, was almost face to face with Little Bill's. For the boys it was a notable adventure. They said nothing, thought little, and cared next to nothing for what fate might lie before them.

"Well, boys?" said Morris, when the first danger was well behind them. "We're not out of the flood yet. Hsiang, I'm afraid there'll be no going back for you. We've got to go on to Tientsin. I'll take you to Peking to join your father. The sub-prefect of Fang-Erh won't be hard to find."

"We are of the family of Confucius," observed Hsiang. "That's going to help us a lot!" said Little Bill.

"Bill," said his father, grinning through the gloom at the boy, "you look like a relative of Confucius yourself. That wet black hair of yours is as sleek as Hsiang's. Your eyes are lighter brown, but your skin is almost as tan. Lucky you're a pair of water-rats."

"And I can speak my Mandarin as well as Hsiang!" said Little Bill.

"That's going to help us a lot!" said Hsiang. "You can't talk your way out of a flood, even with Mandarin. You

"Come back, you white-skinned brat! I'll catch you and torture you!"



must have all the luck the *jeng-shui* can give."

"With your luck, you'll travel a long way—and with a full belly!"

But they didn't travel long together.

The gray dawn was being stifled in fog when Morris was electrified by the sudden contact of mud with his knees. He gave a loud triumphant shout: "We're over farmland. Look, it's only up to my knees!"

Instantly Hsiang was standing by his side, up to his bare belly in water, laughing wildly. Little Bill held on to the raft, a little cramped, as his father rose to his feet pushing the raft away from him with the effort of rising on his numbed legs.

"Thank God for this!" he said fervently. "It's good to have feet on solid earth again."

But when he took a stumbling stride forward, he stepped into seven feet of water, and was almost drowned before he thrashed his way back to what proved to be the crest of a grave-mound, where a past generation was assembled beneath. It took him a minute or two to clear his bursting lungs of flood-water, while Hsiang yelled and churned up the water at his side. When he began to breathe more easily, suddenly he realized that Little Bill was still on the raft somewhere in the mists. Hsiang was yelling to him. Morris began bellowing hoarsely; but Little Bill's voice came back with maddening evasiveness, magnified, scattered, dissipated by the rising mists. Once his father saw him, and plunged toward him like a frightened moose, but instantly the curtain folded down, almost trapping him, and he was forced to feel his way back, choking, yelling, sobbing, kicking downward frantically until he found bottom again and pulled himself back on the crest of the grave-mound. . . .

But that was not the end of Little Bill.

As the sun was slipping back once more to its old hiding-place behind the Shansi hills, large round mauve summer clouds grew in the sky as if the flat purple-faced heavens had puffed out cheeks to blow upon the terrestrial bubble. Puffs of wind came and went, sending the exhausted Little Bill willy-nilly across the yellow waters until at last, in apparent exasperation, a more vigorous squall caught the raft and careened it against a furrow of mud.

Little Bill awoke wailing, on his hands and knees in fourteen inches of mud and water, matted with bean stalks.

He rose dripping to his feet.

Looking stupidly about, with the sleep still hanging to his eyelids, his skin taut from an added coat of tan, he became aware of four things. He was alone, drenched; there was a gnawing within him; and night was sweeping down like a cloud of ravens. Standing there, blubbering, it seemed incredible to him that he was actually Little Bill. He gave a few faint dubious calls, and the sound of his voice frightened him. Some curlews wheeled and darted about screaming plaintively.

One by one as he rubbed his eyes with his fists, the chief events of the night and day came back to him, but vaguely, like images moving behind a black veil. Those things which yesterday had seemed to represent all that was real, palpable, permanent, were gone. Nothing remained. Nothing lived except inchoate recollections of things once known and seen. Boylike, to him the ghosts of memory were but ghosts; and reality lay only in the future.



He ran tottering through the shallow water until he reached the muddy verge of the bare land. He could hear no sound save the droning of the evening wind across the ridge of mud, the gulp of the mud as it swallowed each footprint; the cries of the curlews; and from within his own empty stomach an occasional quick grumble for food that was more terrifying than the shadowy silence of approaching night.

As he stopped, dizzy from the exertion of running, Little Bill saw in the distance a low gray rectangular building that almost merged with the landscape. There were no apparent signs of life about it; but as he advanced, tugging up his baggy brocaded pajama breeches, he saw that it looked like an old tumble-down inn.

It was, in fact, the Inn of Heavenly Virtues. . . .

On this day the host of the Inn of Heavenly Virtues was a fat scorbutic individual of extraordinary antecedents. He was called Fok. Instead of being a bustling, cheery, hospitable innkeeper of the familiar type, Fok was a beggar, a king of beggars, in fact, head of a large guild. The legitimate innkeeper was in an inner room, sunk in despair, the victim of a thorough lazy-going loot.

Fok sat on a millstone in the courtyard from which all travelers and paying guests had long since fled, engaged in the merry game of hunting the Asiatic flea along the seams of garments spread across his fat knees. There was the benignity of a clay statue in his unconscious nudity. His plump puttylike cheeks seemed to indicate a character that brimmed with sweetness and was molded in gentle determination. He was in fact a paradox.

In his youth Fok had been destined to grace the scholarly halls of Han-lin. He had indeed received his bachelor's degree with modest appreciation. The master's button was conferred upon him, and yet he was not proud. Coarseness pained him; nothing satisfied the delicacy of his desires; he had a passion for perfection—for the ideal.

One day it had been forced upon him that there was famine in the land. His servants said there was no more food! Distracted, he left town hurriedly to seek the hospitality of friends to the northward. On the road he was robbed. Within two days his face had become gaunt. His eyes glared. All at once he was indifferent to dirt.

Within two weeks he was going around like a wild man with a small band of despairing, ferociously hungry farmers, struggling over chance-flung scraps of food. Before long he recognized the futility of this and established himself as the leader of an organized group—lawless, non-coöperative, living only to satisfy their immediate appetites at the expense of a society that could not destroy them and could not absorb them.

Their methods were simple. With a legion of tatterdemalions at his heels, grunting, wheezing, whining, beating maddeningly upon their earthen bowls, Fok would suddenly appear in a promising town, and placidly demand tribute. In vain were the inn doors barred; in vain were the shop shutters put up; in vain did the magistrates scream and threaten. The beggars crawled in the gutters; they insinuated themselves through doorways; they beat the yapping dogs mirthlessly with their staves; and they spoiled the market for days to come. When merchants and headman paid the tribute demanded, with Fok parad-

ing amiably at their head, wrapped in philosophical abstractions or sighing with satiated desire, they would drift on to another rendezvous.

It was Fok, amid all the grotesque activity in the inn-yard, who first saw the gate-door open and a strange boy enter.

It could not have occurred to anybody in this part of China that Little Bill was anything but Chinese; but there was a certain queerness in his appearance that attracted attention. There was the unkempt mop of hair upon his head, to begin with, and his disconcerting hazel eyes. In South China he would have stood out instantly as of a foreign race; but in North China with its sturdier stock, large of frame, bold of feature, weather-beaten and strong, there was room for variation.

Fok saw a thin solemn boy, clothed in flapping muddied pantaloons of brocaded silk, a beggar's mop of hair upon his head, standing inside the great gates with feet firmly apart, gazing at the horrible assemblage without fear.

"Come here!" said Fok, raising his flutelike voice.

An old hag, who was reaching out to seize Little Bill by the ankle, withdrew her claw with a dry cluck of disappointment and gave the boy a poke with her stick directing him towards Fok. Activities in the inn-yard came to a fluttering halt as the mendicants, like a swarm of bats, guided him along towards their leader.

The nausea in Little Bill's stomach was making him dizzy. He stumbled and fell down. Rising, he choked back his tears, weakly brushed the dust from his pantaloons and advanced dubiously, looking neither right nor left, but sniffing hungrily at the smell of hot dumplings frying in pork fat.

"What are you doing here?" said Fok, his dimpled hand raised from his garment.

Remembering his manners, Little Bill clasped his hands and bowed low. As he did so, his head swam and his hunger tore cruelly at him. He began to blubber.

"My father's gone! Oh, Senior, I have no father! I have no mother! Give me only a little piece of bread, O Mandarin! Look at me with pity! I'm starving!"

A hoot of ribald laughter rose to a shout in the courtyard. Fok himself gave a perceptible start. For Little Bill by the instinct of necessity had spoken the beggar's cant—the words learned in the filthy alcoves of Nanking's walls, the phrase whined in the slimy alleys of Canton, the argot of Peking, the groan of Hsuehchowfu.

"What does this mean?" demanded Fok, stilling the rabble by an imperious gesture, and turning to the lad with murderous calm, his delicate nostrils twitching.

Lifting his face to the open sky, Little Bill sobbed unconstrainedly, the tears running down his cheeks into the corners of his distorted mouth.

"Everything is under the water. They are dead. They are drowned—Father and Hsiang and everyone. And oh, Senior, Senior, I am hungry!"

"Ah!" exclaimed Fok with instant comprehension. "Give him a piece of bride's cake."

Hsueh Chang, Fok's prime minister, his appalling form twisted about a single crutch, thrust a piece of gray doughy cake stuffed with Chinese dates toward Little Bill, glaring at him with a single baleful eye—an eye that would have horrified and appalled nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand Chinese.

Little Bill, however, unimpressed, eagerly seized the unappetizing and none-too-clean portion of food and stuffed it into his mouth, still blubbering, though more restrainedly.

When he had done, and his stomach's craving had been satisfied,—and now feeling somewhat ashamed of his tears,—Little Bill dug his fists into his eyes, sniffled once or twice, then stared once more calmly at the obese king of beggars.

"Well," observed Fok, his interest waning, "there doesn't seem to be anything about you that is worth bargaining for. Your silk pantaloons I think would hardly fit me."

"Let me have them!" demanded the misshapen and filthy Hsueh Chang instantly, in a guttural explosion.

"Hai-yah!" exclaimed Fok with mild contempt. "We're like two Shantung men quarreling over an onion! Boy,



"There he is! I thought it was he—I struck at him and killed him—"

get out of here, and quickly, or there'll be a fight for your single possession."

"Let me have them!" insisted Hsueh Chang.

"You see? The beginning of a revolution. And yet according to the writings of Yuan T'ien Kang and Li Ch'un Feng, there is only one small revolution every three hundred years, and a great one only every five hundred years. Boy," he added with sudden glazing eyes, "get out of here!"

Little Bill turned and ran for his life, dashed like a scared rabbit, zigzagging across the innyard and darting through the door into the darkening outer world.

The Inn of Heavenly Virtues was an isolated stopping-place on unproductive soil halfway between marketplaces. So when once Little Bill had turned his back on it, there seemed no place for him to go; yet he hurried away.

It was the end of summer. Crops had been harvested. Each spear of grain had been uprooted from the ground, and the earth itself sifted for the last bulb; so the prospect in all directions was bleak, bare and desolate. To the south the darkening sky was made more gloomy by the haze that hung over the flood; while to the west, north and east, a similar haze caused by the rapid evaporation from the sodden soil obscured all signs of villages or other habitations.

Little Bill paused only to look out across the clayey fields, spotted in patches with soda exuded from the soil like white splotches on an unhealthy skin. He saw that a rutted cart-road wound away to the eastward and disappeared behind low-lying hills. It offered the only promise of change; so the boy began to trudge through the caking mud until the inn had almost disappeared behind an intervening hillock, constantly looking over his shoulder as if reluctant to leave even the dubious hospitality of beggars. At this moment he saw the gate-door swing open, and out lurched Hsueh Chang. Fok's prime minister glanced at the marks in the mud and set out after Little Bill, twisting along grotesquely on his crutch.

Little Bill promptly fled.

He had not gone three hundred yards when he was brought to a stop with a squeak of delight.

Coming along the road toward him was a withered little peddler, dry-skinned and merry-eyed, pushing a huge wheelbarrow laden with cheap wares intended for the country market. In front of the barrow, with a rope over his shoulder, tugging for all he was worth, was a boy several years Little Bill's senior. Both father and son were garbed alike in nothing more than faded blue pantaloons rolled up to the knees, and dirty sweat-cloths about their heads. They were panting with exertion, and the ungreased axle of the barrow shrieked its protest. A broad band tied to the handles and passed over the peddler's wrinkled shoulders helped him maintain the balance of the wheelbarrow, but even with this assistance it was

astonishing how he skipped from side to side to maintain the barrow's equilibrium. At the sudden appearance of Little Bill, both father and son stopped automatically, rested the barrow on its side and stared at him.

"Where are you going so fast, little old man?" demanded the peddler good-naturedly, readjusting the band around his head.

"I don't know," said Little Bill. "I came out of the flood."

"Ah!" said the peddler. He squatted on his haunches, took a bamboo pipe from his girdle, filled it, struck a spark into it, and puffed tranquilly, his kindly eyes fixed thoughtfully on Little Bill. The son, squatted beside him, looked at the strange boy surlily, comparing his own day of toil with Little Bill's apparent independence. "Ah," repeated the peddler, "where did you say you were going?"

"I don't know, Senior. But I'm very hungry. When the flood came, everything disappeared—my father, and Hsiang, and everything. And the Black-legs chased me away."

"What is your father's name?"

"Mr. Morris," replied Little Bill.

"I'm a friend—I'm an American! I want to get back home!"

"Ah! Mi Teh Mah Ri. A strange but important name. But it sounds like that of a foreign devil."

"My father is a foreigner."

This was too incredible to register seriously upon the peddler. He accepted only the allusion to a foreigner; and in order to air his metropolitan knowledge, he observed sagely:

"Ah! I know those foreigners. I've seen them in Tientsin. Very funny, with their long red noses and teeth like rats—with eyes that have been bleached out by sunlight or washed out with salt water when they came up out of the sea."

"And hair all over their faces like goats," said his son.

"Quite true. And phew! They smell like goats—unbearable!"

Little Bill, choking back his words, decided it wouldn't be worth while to make any claims on the basis of race.

"But what is this you tell me about the Black-legs?" asked the peddler.

"They are in the inn over there—a lot of them. Here's one now, coming after us."

"Wombada!" squealed the peddler, leaping to his feet, thrusting his pipe into his girdle, and struggling desperately to turn his barrow about, while his son tugged at the rope. In the midst of the struggle Hsueh Chang came swaying around the hillock, rocking along on his crutch like a twisted stork. Groaning with despair, the peddler continued



to heave at the cumbersome barrow, while the beggar swept down upon them with terrifying roars.

Had Little Bill been a Chinese boy, he would have floated away over the hill and watched the details of the meeting with a detached interest in the drama; but now that he was reinforced by two companions, he felt a sudden wildly excited interest in the odd proceedings. Fascinated by the grotesque gait of the apparition, swinging itself forward on the single crutch, his instant thought was: "Take away the crutch!"

His instinctive act was to take the peddler's light staff, and running beside the roaring beggar, thrust it between swinging leg and swinging crutch. The crutch went flying in one direction; the prime minister went into the mud, plowing it with his chin.

"Get the crutch!" shrieked the peddler over his shoulder, as the barrow at last got under way.

"Bring the crutch here!" roared the beggar with a string of blistering filth. "Bring it here, you tortoise spawn! Bring it here, or I'll tear your backbone out and eat you!"

Little Bill retrieved the crutch and ran with it dragging at his heels.

"Come back! Come back, you white-skinned brat! Come back! I'll catch you today or tomorrow! I'll catch you and torture you!" As Little Bill continued to run on, still dragging the crutch, leaving the misshapen beggar writhing and roaring out curses and threats that would have terrified any man of imagination, the boy's feeling was only one of complete elation.

"Good! Good! Good!" gasped the peddler. "Put the crutch on the barrow. Good! Take hold of the rope with Young Mah. Good! We are complete! Little old man, you are going to go with us to Tientsin!"

YOU do not know boys entering their teens if you marvel at the easy transition by which Little Bill passed from American boyhood to Chinese boyhood. Had he been a Treaty Port boy, he might have had an ingrained contempt for Chinese that would have made him reluctant and extremely unhappy at intimate domestic association with poor Chinese. But his years with his widower father had kept him close to Chinese life; many of his friendships were with Chinese boys; his food, his speech, his viewpoint, even, was as often Chinese as it was American. Only the fact that he had leaned upon that great pillar of his race, his father, had kept him apart from even a closer feeling for the Chinese. Moreover, now that he was certain his father had drowned, it didn't concern him greatly that his days were to be spent entirely among the Chinese. He was as complacent on this point as any American city boy might be if orphaned and then adopted into a family of farmers.

Little Bill had been taught by a Han-lin scholar. He had actually survived the Trimetrical Classics, that primer and library of Chinese literature and knowledge; and he



One raised his rifle and pointed, calling out angrily in Japanese.

possessed a sufficient knowledge of Chinese characters to read signboards, handbills, theatrical notices, bulletins. Boylike, he painted his letters with a bunched fist, and the result was awkward writing; still, it served.

Old Mah was delighted with him.

The story of the fight with the beggars became a neighborhood classic. He told it over and over at the door of his shop, while Little Bill illustrated with dramatic skill and heroic shouts how the flank attack had been made.

The shop was small and obscure, its walls of flat gray bricks mortared with straw and mud; and the inner court where the sleeping quarters were was cramped and untidy. The two boys and Old Mah had their meals in a small room off the shop. Little Bill slept here too, shivering on a small mud *k'ang* where straw and kaoliang stalks were burned on cold days. Hot water, sometimes flavored with tea-dust, kept his insides warm.

There was no rest for the boys. They carried bundles of straw and buckets of water or slops slung from *kuntzes* on their bony shoulders; they served customers; they laboriously wrote up accounts on rough pulp paper in the flickering light of a bean-oil lamp until far into the night. But since all other boys worked too, there was no objection to activity. Besides, there was food and shelter. Why should they complain?

Little Bill's brocaded pajamas had been traded at the pawnshop for some padded cotton drawers and a quilted overshirt. Old Mah's wife protestingly made over a pair of felt slippers for him, which he stuffed with straw on cold days. With his head shaved, and pig-tail trimmed respectably, Old Mah was by no means ashamed to have him as a foster-son. . . .

Of course Little Bill often suffered yearnings for his old life—a life of independence, with toffee and shortbread in comparatively unlimited quantities. Occasionally, especially on cold nights, recollections of his father and very dim recollections of his mother, of relatives in America, and boisterous loud-laughing friends in the Treaty Ports, would surge up within, smothering him with self-pity. Many a night he cried himself to sleep with long anguished sobs that no one heard, and nobody could possibly have understood.

It might seem a simple thing for Little Bill to have walked through the city and claimed protection in the foreign concession; but even then Tientsin was a city of a million inhabitants sprawled in great confusion along the banks of the yellow Pei-Ho and tortuous Grand Canal. Its narrow, labyrinthine streets and alleys were choked with traffic: great rumbling carts drawn and pushed by teams of coolies, high-wheeled rickshaws with ringing bells, pony-carts, palanquins, peddlers with wheel-barrow, peripatetic barbers and food-merchants selling hot dumplings, bride's cake, nuts, cigarettes and tea; coolies in tandem and alone, carrying long *kuntzes* on their shoulders from which hung every sort of burden, from buckets of swimming fish to black bawling hogs. Shoppers, clerks,

idlers swelled the crowds. The uproar, except for a few hours of the night, was indescribable. Shrieking, nasal singing, bells ringing, tuning-forks twanging, triangles and cymbals clanging. . . .

Amid all the noise, congestion and confusion, Little Bill was extremely fortunate to have found a single friend and a place of shelter.

The foreign concession, miles away, was little more than a dot as small as Battery Park relative to the broad metropolis of Greater New York. It was a lost world to Little Bill, and soon it passed out of his mind.

The living present was all that concerned him.

The first winter was terrific, and only the novelty of the new life made it possible for him to bear it; but with the coming of spring, life suddenly became pleasant again. He swam in the yellow water with other boys, and soon once more was as tan as any of them. He visited temples without embarrassment. He went to an open-air theater where free performances were given as an act of gratitude by a merchant whose family had survived the plague. He almost lost his home for this; for he stayed away two days, working to erect the bamboo platforms, delirious with delight at the stolen holiday. Only Old Mah's kindness bore with him; for the other boys were sore and sullen at having to stay at home, and burdens were heaped upon him in the days that followed. A hot dry summer succeeded, then fall again, and another wonderful tour of the country markets with Old Mah and Young Mah, who was now a self-centered sullen youth entering manhood.

Another winter Little Bill made the acquaintance of an itinerant entertainer, a story-teller. This man was a scholar, a tall, stooped artist, with a thin beard and a wrinkled skin. He always seemed to be smiling gently, and was full of wise epigrams and apt retorts that dumfounded his stupid audience. With a tuning-fork to punctuate dramatic pauses in his narratives, and a fan to mark the metrical measure, he mesmerized Little Bill, who sat in the circle about him every minute he could steal away until the story-teller came to recognize him and accepted him as his friend.

Little Bill would come up to the old story-teller as he sat on his lean haunches blinking tired eyes at the endless procession of junks and sampans on the yellow water, and squatting in front of him, would ask good-naturedly:

"What does the Respected Teacher think?"

The old man's eyes would twinkle.

"Hah! Little Long Nose, you've come to learn! But in the light-heartedness of youth, don't forget the words of the Master K'ung: 'To learn and then to practice opportunely what one has learned—does not this in itself bring a great sense of satisfaction?' Heh! You are still too young to appreciate the happiness in pure philosophy."

"But what happened to the black devil who tried to cut off the dragon's tail?" demanded Little Bill.

"And the Master also said," continued the old story-teller, without annoyance, "'Are not those who, while not comprehending all that is said, yet remain not unpleased to listen, men of the superior kind?'"

"I don't doubt it," said Little Bill, blowing through the nozzle of the story-teller's teapot to clear it of leaves, and pouring out a fresh cup for the old man. "But did the dragon eat him up? Is that why the dragon is full of flames, perhaps?"

"Very well," said the story-teller, flipping open his fan with a graceful turn of the wrist; "the truth of the matter is that the black devil was not black until after he tried to cut off the dragon's tail. Until then he was white; but when the dragon felt the prick in his side, he opened one nostril and



A club descended upon his head, and violent hands seized him.

snorted—and lo!" (*ping!* went the tuning-fork) "and the white braggart was burned into a black crisp!"

"Hai-yah!" said Little Bill, fascinated.

"I'm glad you followed the story so closely; for though the Book of Odes contains three hundred pieces, but one expression covers the purport of all—namely, Unswerving Mindfulness."

"Old Senior," said Little Bill querulously, "I always try to pay attention to what you say. I want to learn all I can!"

"Learning, without thought, is a snare; thought, without learning, is a danger. What use can you have for learning?"

Unintentionally, Little Bill replied in English, since there was no Chinese equivalent:

"I want to get on in the world."

"What!" exclaimed the story-teller, perplexed.

"I aspire," said Little Bill, in Mandarin.

"Ah! May you attain!"

Had little Bill retained the friendship of the story-teller and his protector, Old Mah, he might at least have attained distinction as a Chinese scholar, studying in reasonable comfort by the smoky light of his bean-oil lamp. But one day while he was talking alone to the story-teller, a shadow fell across them. Little Bill turned his head just in time to scramble to his feet and twist aside from the blow of a heavy crutch that would have crushed his head had it struck him. Spitting at him, eyes blazing like the black devil in the story, writhing toward him like a crippled snake, was Hsueh Chang the beggar. Little Bill fled again; and after that dared not venture near the old story-teller for he had the uneasy and dreadful impression that the vindictive beggar was searching for him.

Another fateful season while traveling in the country with Old Mah and his son, the old man, in a thirsty moment when out of reach of a teapot, filled his belly with the unsterilized cold water of a village well. . . . That was the end of Old Mah.

BY this time Little Bill was sixteen years old, a powerfully built youngster entering manhood, smart, resourceful, easy-going and good-natured. After performing the ancestral rites over the old man, in which Little Bill shared religiously, Young Mah decided there was no need for Little Bill in the shop, and told him to go out and make a living somewhere else.

Little Bill was not unprepared. He became a cobbler.

With wax, awl, wooden tray and twine, he squatted on the sunny side of the Drum-tower, and sewed felt patches on gaping soles. His work was crude; but his patrons, though poor, were numerous, for he had a cheery heart, cared not a copper *tungsa* for his profits, sang at his work an extraordinary variety of songs, and found a ready retort in Chinese or English for every word flung his way.

When night fell, he'd pack up his tray, and immediately cease singing, as suddenly as the notes of a Peking thrush are stilled by a cloth flung over his cage. Making his way through the slippery crowded lanes, each evening he returned to his foster-brother's shop, for though he was no longer concerned in the establishment, the homecoming instinct could not be shed.

This arrangement was not unsatisfactory to the brother, for by giving Bill permission to sleep on the bench in the shop, he managed to provide a watchman at no more expense than a bowl of gruel in the morning and a share of the evening's meal. As soon as Little Bill was earning a few *tungsas*, he charged him for the accommodation, so he made money out of the arrangement.

Unfortunately for Young Mah, he failed to consider his wife when making this arrangement; for Young Mah, at the age of twenty, had been married two years. . . .

Young Mah's wife was a Manchu, with natural feet, a plump body, ruddy beaming countenance, and eyes that brimmed too readily with feeling. Her tongue was always wagging good-naturedly; and with the democracy of her caste, she made free use of the shop, assisting her husband, discussing local scandal frankly and shrilly with the gossips of the neighborhood who came each morning to buy—a spoonful of salt, a few pickles, a small cornucopia of cornmeal, a bit of bear-curd. She was also an excellent cook, and managed in addition to attend to her simple household duties, such as making her husband's clothes and her own, sweeping the rooms, keeping the *k'angs* in order, attending the parental lares and penates, serving her husband, tending the fire, scouring the iron bowl, washing, trimming the potted plants, steeping cabbages and pickles, manufacturing vermicelli and going to market.

But she had borne no children. Young Mah accordingly called her "The Thorn in My Side."

Before long, Young Mah was stealing sidelong suspicious glances at his wife when she laughed and chatted with Little Bill. He began to observe closely her face glowing with animation, her eyes twinkling as they met Little Bill's, her habit of drifting to Little Bill's side of the table to remove his dish or offer him more millet. His fury soon turned to a cold, calculating hatred toward both.

Little Bill thoughtlessly delighted in the situation. He liked the woman. He liked her bright cheeks; and he felt a ticklish sensation within him when his eyes met hers. Once when she pressed against his shoulder as she leaned over him, his heart seemed to turn over tumultuously, suffocating him. It made him feel at the same time joyous and ashamed. He laughed deeply with his new man's voice; but then as he looked toward her husband noisily devouring his food, he surprised a look of such concentrated hatred that his breath caught. Young Mah held him with his eyes until Little Bill began to feel guilty.

Thrusting his bowl away from him, Young Mah said in a quick breathless voice that rose higher and higher, until he broke off with a violent gesture:

"This night I can't stay here! There's a junk leaving for Sheng Fang an hour after midnight. It's a long walk to the *likin* station, and I'm going right away. I won't be back until sunrise. You, woman, can take care of yourself safely in your own room, and the Long-nosed Shoemaker, here, will protect you and the shop. —Will you?"

"Certainly!" said Little Bill in a low, astonished voice.

But after Young Mah had left precipitately, Little Bill thought it over uneasily, and decided the best place for him was outside. This conviction was made positive when he took the Thorn to the courtyard and gave her a gentle push toward her room, for she pressed his hand in both her warm palms, sighing deeply.

"I'm afraid in there alone!" she said softly.

"Wait there," gasped Little Bill, trying to talk with assurance. He left her slowly crossing the inner court and went about the business of closing the open front of the shop. There was a drizzle of rain outside. In the confusion of his thoughts, stumbling about the shop, Little Bill failed to see a grotesque form twisting toward the inner door—merging with the darkness of the inner court, where the Thorn was waiting.

Standing uncertainly in the gloom of the bean-oil light, Little Bill suddenly began to think of the white world of his boyhood. . . . Closing the wooden store-front, he went to a neighboring grocer's, where he slept the night.

UP early in the morning, Little Bill waited until after sunrise, then slowly walked back to Young Mah's shop. The alley was crowded with a yelling, exclaiming crowd. A premonitory thrill of horror swept over him.

Pushing his way quickly toward the shop, he saw that there were uniformed yamen officers there. Two of them had Young Mah by the arms. He stood as if paralyzed, mouth agape, until he saw Little Bill; then his face became convulsed, and he began to scream out:

"There he is! I thought it was he! I entered quietly in the dark, knowing they were together—knowing I would find them there—guilty! I had a sword. In the yard I bumped into him. He struck at me, but he didn't hurt me; then I struck at him and killed him—"

"Killed whom?" cried Little Bill terrified.

"Come with us," said the yamen runners. They took him into the yard, where a gray, stained heap of rags lay in a puddle of water. A heavy crutch lay beside it.

"It's the beggar—Hsueh Chang!" cried Little Bill.

Little Bill was freed by the magistrate in the district

yamen, as a youth of obvious good character. Young Mah was also freed, after being almost ruined by the payment of court fees, for having acted within his rights in killing a dangerous housebreaker. No charge stood against the Thorn—but thenceforth she made Young Mah's life a misery.

As for Little Bill, he knew that his home was now gone. Even worse than this, his tools had been stolen. Without testimonials, he had no hope of employment except as a coolie. He was forced to think and think quickly. With the body and strength of a man, he knew he was capable of manual labor; but the thought of hitching himself to a cart horrified him.

Before he could make a practical plan, the decision was taken quickly out of his hands.

LITTLE BILL had decided first of all to make his way in the direction of the foreign concession. A vague but profound loneliness was oppressing him more and more. He found himself longing for those of his own kind.

It took him the better part of the day to find his way across the city to the Japanese concession. His impression of it was not notable; for it seemed simply a refinement of certain parts of the Chinese city, with a broad macadamized street which had been built by Yuan Shih Kai on the site of the old walls of the city, leveled after the Boxer War. He saw a small tramcar go bobbing by. A raucous honk sounded in his ears, and he jumped in time to avoid an automobile that darted past. Little Bill sat down on the curb and laughed, with tears running down his face. This was getting near home! But as he continued farther, all at once he saw that masses of barbed wire were strung across the street, and Japanese soldiers in uniform were there looking at him. One raised his rifle and pointed, calling out angrily in Japanese. Little Bill didn't understand, but he responded in English:

"I'm a friend. I'm an American. I want to get over to the American concession! I want to get back home!"

Two rifles went up as some curious Chinese crowded forward to join Little Bill, interested in his boldness.

"Come away," one said. "They shot a man here last night. Come away. Those devils will really shoot!"

"What is the trouble? What has happened?" he asked.

"Trouble everywhere! Now that we have a republic, look for trouble everywhere! There'll be trouble tonight. The Tenth Division is coming in from Peking. There'll be trouble, and there'll be looting!"

Had Little Bill been the least bit concerned in the political situation or experienced in the sudden brawls that swirled with increasing momentum into the dimensions of riots and bloody rebellion that characterized the history of Tientsin, he would have felt the electric tension in the air, would have understood the steady rumbling procession of drays loaded with merchandise all moving desperately towards the protection of the foreign concessions.

The people of the poor quarter where he lived cared nothing for military disturbances and political upsets. The establishment of a republic meant little more to them than the rumor of a distant battle. Their concern first and always was to procure food and to continue in the reasonable peace of obscurity. Moreover, the fact that Little Bill had spent several days incarcerated had kept him ignorant of the struggle going on between republicans and the reactionaries from Peking for control of Tientsin.

As darkness fell quickly and the crowds in the streets thinned out, Little Bill drifted quietly with the current through Old Clothes Street, his arms crossed over his chest, hands folded under his armpits. He was hungry, as usual, but unworried, for he knew friends who would feed him, at least for a day or two longer.

Loitering along the narrow but famous thoroughfare, he marveled at the wealth and beauty disclosed in the open-fronted shops. There were tiger-skins from Szechuen, bear-skins from Kansuh, sables from Siberia, silks, satins and brocades from the south, silver and jade worked in exquisite designs, thick embroideries and filmy laces equal to the fairest work of Europe—all the wealth of the Orient was piled in promiscuous display on floors and counters. Perhaps, at that time, there was no more picturesque street in the world than this Old Clothes Street; it intensified Little Bill's loneliness, for he remembered as in a dream walking through this street when he was a small boy, holding his father's hand as he spoke of the wonders spread before them.

The sun was red as it dropped behind the Drum Tower; the dusk of approaching night already filled the streets; shopkeepers came out and clattered their shutters into place.

By the time Little Bill had reached the shop of a friend, the dark alleys were deserted. There was life and animation only in the theatrical district where messengers were darting around with their great bulbous lanterns like bobbing fireflies. The squeak of hu-hus, the thump of drums, the plunking of snakeskin banjos, made a wild irregular accompaniment for the shrill nasal voices of the sing-song girls, the laughter and clapping of bibulous guests, the shouts of waiters in the restaurants. Marvelous smells floated in the atmosphere here, rising in appetizing fumes from the glowing kitchens where medieval banquets were being prepared. But this was not for Little Bill. Where his footsteps led him the silence was broken only by the forlorn yelp of a hungry *wonk*, or the lonely clunking of a banjo behind closed shutters.

At length he found a friend, and made a meal of a great lump of gray unleavened bread, a bowl of cabbage soup, several cups of watery tea.

Soon he was sleeping peacefully on a cold *k'ang*. At about eleven o'clock a vibration passed through Tientsin. The city awoke in fear. As Little Bill ran out into the alley, he found the neighbors running out too, shouting and pointing toward the heart of the city. Little Bill ran toward what appeared to be the center of excitement.

People were pouring into the streets by the thousands, yelling, running; *wonks* were barking furiously; there was a continuous babble of frightened women's voices from behind walls; roughly awakened babies were screaming; a strange crackling sound came from the distance.

Little Bill made his way first to the edge of the Grand Canal from where he could get a clear view eastward toward the Taotai's Yamen where a steel bridge spanned the canal at the busiest part of the city. The Ta Hu Tung, a rich and busy modern street, crossed this bridge northward, with Old Clothes Street branching off on the near side.

Seven tongues of flames were rising from the skyline, like the yellow flames of bean-oil lamps. Little Bill made his way excitedly toward the Ta Hu Tung, and soon found himself struggling in a surging mass in Old Clothes Street. Caught up in the mob, he was carried involuntarily on the flood. The continual roaring of voices around him, the sensation of being borne inevitably along on an uncontrollable current, brought back to Little Bill a recollection of the night he was swept away into a new world on the surface of strange waters.

THE nightmarish character of the scene was magnified for Little Bill because of the astounding juxtaposition of civilizations many centuries apart. The throngs about him were like an incursion of medieval barbarians sweeping into a modern city, curbed and guttered, with

watermains and electric-lighted streets, with tramways, telephones, and steel rolling-lift bridges—laughing, screaming, destroying! The horrors he saw were like scenes upon a stage—*incredible!*

"What is happening?" he shouted into the frightened face—orange-colored in the reflection of rising flames—of a plump merchant crushed against him. "Where did it start?"

"Despicable soldiers!" hissed the merchant. "They went to the Taotai's Yamen in revolt, asking money, money, money! Curse the gluttonous pigs! He told them to go to the Mint—or take what they wanted in the city!"

"Ah!"

"But who knows? Everyone is stealing, burning, ruining. It's worse than in the days of the Boxers! Hai-yah, look there!"

The mob, congested at the doors of a three-storied store, was trying to burst in. The merchant appeared on a balcony above, a strong determined man in a long dark-blue silk coat.

"If you enter," he said, "we'll burn together. I've flooded the floors with oil. Take this money, and leave me in peace!" Opening a sack of silver, he flung handfuls as far up the street as possible, leaving the crowd to stampede for it. But farther along, a large department store on the North Maloo was burst into. The merchant faced the crowd with desperate calm.

"Don't destroy the building!" he asked. "Go quietly upstairs where the money is!" But when the stairs and the floors above were crowded with the pushing, shouting mob of looters, he struck a box of matches and flung it into an open can of gasoline; within a few moments, as the merchant walked calmly into the street, the smell of burning flesh, the roar of a giant holocaust, was added to the pandemonium.

Loot was being carried away in the arms of looters, in rickshaws, on drays. The streets and gutters were littered with cloth, shattered porcelain, merchandise of all sorts. In the midst of all the confusion, the conflagration caught hold of the heart of the city. A sea of flame surged up to the pale moon, breaking like combers against brick walls, while underneath, pushing and crowding and weaving in and out like sands upon the beach, humanity filled the open places. The roaring of the flames and the crash of falling walls drowned all other sounds, except occasionally when with a shift of wind, there would break out the crackling of rifles, the pinging of bullets, the hoarse and shrill shouts of the mob, and a vast shuffling of feet.

At the far end of the North Maloo, Little Bill suddenly saw two white men—a red-faced Scotchman and a tall thin German with a cold face. Yelling at them wildly, Little Bill struggled violently to reach them. They were watching a captain of police, sarcastically commenting on his ineffective efforts at stopping the mob. The German said in clear Chinese:

"You are acting exactly like an old woman, waving your hands without meaning a thing. Shoot into them! And shoot straight!"

The frenzied captain of police ordered a volley. The man beside Little Bill instantly fell down; and several others collapsed around him, dead and wounded. A second volley struck them like a blow. Little Bill flung himself into a doorway, with others crushing beside him for shelter. Terrified, and cursing wildly, he was at last convinced that the safest place was far from any white man.

Despite all the madness and confusion, it gradually became obvious that there was a certain degree of orderliness in the looting. There were three or four sets of uniforms actuating the movements of the brainless mobs.

Men in uniform burst into the better shops, took their pick of the choicest valuables, then threw the places open to the mobs. But men in uniform also arrested isolated looters, or picked up stragglers where the looting had been complete. Many police in the southern sections of the city remained faithful to their duty; some in the north fought desperately to check the looters; there were even fights between soldiers and police.

By two o'clock in the morning it became evident that a struggle was going on for possession of the city. A new military force was fighting to clear the streets, and take possession. It was said that foreigners had been killed, and the foreign military forces were demanding instant retribution.

All at once the mob seemed to have become glutted, or rendered panic-stricken. Bloody heads were already hanging by their pigtailed from the steel work of the Taotai's bridge. By half-past two the crowds were evaporating. All at once they seemed to be rushing for shelter, to hide themselves, to sink once more into the safety of obscurity. All knew perfectly well that the police would soon be rounding up victims for the executions that would be necessary on the following days in order to keep face with Higher Authority.

Little Bill scuttled back to the home of his friend. He had had more than enough; though he was not yet sure whether he had been wise or a fool to keep clear of those marvelous shops. Stumbling upon a bundle of clothes, entirely too inviting to leave in the gutter, he picked them up and opened them. A club descended on his head, and violent hands seized him by the shoulders.

In the heat of the afternoon a great crowd, recruited from every rank of life, was pushing and sweltering in the dust of the busy North Maloo, impatiently waiting to see the day's decapitations. The spectacle had been of daily occurrence for the last four days, and grisly heads decorated lampposts at strategic points throughout the city. Since the fire had burned itself out, there had been a noticeable chilling of the hot blood of the populace, despite the oppressiveness of the atmosphere. The first chill of dread, however, had passed; decapitations were now rapidly becoming entertaining spectacles to relieve the boredom of a dull afternoon, and to give pungency to the political situation.

It was a terrible crowd; not excited, not sullen, but apparently jocose, laughing at the slightest distracting incident, shoving half-playfully for places of advantage, like boys at a ball-game, hooting with laughter when a roof collapsed under the weight of spectators.

The spectacle afforded a great opportunity for tourists who were passing through the Treaty Ports to step into China proper and see for themselves grisly horrors with which to entertain dinner-guests at home. In the heart of the crowd along the North Maloo were a few such foreigners, curious civilians, a few photographers, a newspaper man, and some women—curious women!

Suddenly there was a running murmur, a rumbling shout. The crowd swayed, yelling:

"*Lei-la! Lei-la!* Here they come!"

A file of soldiers on foot pushed vigorously through the crowd, frowning ferociously and bringing the butts of their rifles down on bare feet—pushing a furrow through the gaping spectators and leaving a space behind which was immediately encircled with soldiers who kept the crowd savagely back. An exception was made in the case of the foreigners, who were allowed to stand in the open unmolested.

All at once, there were the prisoners, thirty of them, stripped to the waist, marching between lines of police.

Their arms were trussed up behind them like the wings of a fowl, the hemp rope passing around the waist, encircling the arms and drawing the elbows together in back, then under the armpits, over the shoulders and back of the neck. The circulation had almost been stopped in arms and shoulders, and the flesh appeared blue and bloated. The backs of the head had been neatly shaved, and the pig-tails were coiled high on top.

Suddenly the crowd was silent as it watched the show.

None of the prisoners showed fright. They walked steadily along in silence, craning their heads occasionally at each halt, to look over the shoulders in front to see what was happening beyond. Their faces were generally void of expression, except for a slight working of the jaw-tendons.

All at once some one in the crowd made a remark that was taken up. In a few seconds it ran like electricity up and down the street, thrilling the crowd, bringing every one up on his toes, exclaiming, pointing:

"Look! Surely that one there is a foreign devil!"

Little Bill was marching dully to his doom—scared as any American boy would be, yet as stoic as those who went the way with him. Dazed, hurt, suffering cruelly from the rope, he had had no time to think. Crammed in a dark bare cell with others of his class, race had meant nothing to him. He was simply being swept along in the flood like any other creature who had lost favor with the gods.

Now, as he walked, faint and terribly tired, he tried to keep breathing evenly, not caring particularly when the march would end, vaguely aware with a sense of shame of voices shouting in a rising chorus:

"Look! The skin around the waist is white—his neck is blue-white. . . . Look, at the eyes! Surely, they are yellow!" They began to address questions to him, despite the curses of the soldiers: "Where do you get your white skin, son of Han?"

"I am a white man," said Little Bill faintly, lifting his head as if trying with soundless voice to call for help in a nightmare. "I am an American."

"American! American! . . . He is an American!"

The waiting Europeans caught the roar. The significance of the word "*Meig-wo-jen!*" they at first interpreted as bearing upon their presence. Then the newspaper man saw Little Bill slowly walking along.

"Good God!" he shouted. "Look! Look, there! That boy's white!"

The photographer was a China-coaster. He called out incredulously in Chinese:

"Of what people are you? Prisoner, what is your family?"

Little Bill turned his head. Looking from one to another of the stricken faces of the Europeans, he said distinctly:

"I'm an American. . . . Can't you do something for me? . . . I'm an American!"

THIS was entirely too much for one of the foreign women. A scream broke from her lips. She swayed and fell into the dust. Instantly soldiers and prisoners and excited crowd were thrown into confusion. As the woman recovered her senses, she lost complete control of herself, screaming over and over again. Word ran wildly through the crowd that the executioners were torturing a white woman.

The *hun hsing tzu* of Tientsin are notorious brawlers, makers of tumults. In an instant, therefore, the soldiers found themselves in a serious situation. For once the crowd, hating the soldiers, were on the side of the foreigner, delighted at the prospect of attacking men in uniform.

Four of the European men rushed toward the officer in charge of the guard, pointing toward Little Bill, rolling their eyes, sputtering with incoherent protest. One, drawing a revolver from his coat, walked as near as possible to Little Bill, shouting at the soldiers who held his arms: "If you hurt him, I'm going to shoot you! . . . I tell you I'm going to shoot you!"

Acting with promptness, a policeman had telephoned the Taotai's Yamen, reporting a serious situation, asking for instructions. While the guards were still swaying indecisively, therefore, in the face of the tumult, bugles rang out. Squadrons of mounted soldiers appeared at a fast trot on the broad Maloo—and in a few moments the prisoners were again surrounded by a cordon of pony-soldiers with drawn swords.

Trotting up to the Europeans, the scowling commander demanded an explanation. When he saw Little Bill, he stared for a moment with a blank expression. Then he nodded his head and gave a short order for the return of the prisoners; for old custom had dictated that if one prisoner is reprieved all are reprieved for the day.

The ropes that bound Little Bill were cut. Soon the blood was bringing back life to aching arms and back. The officer in command had insisted that the prisoner must be returned to the Taotai's Yamen for the case to be immediately reviewed. Few words, therefore, passed between Little Bill and the Europeans who followed close behind. But the foreigners conferred frantically among themselves, fearing that the Chinese might dispose of the difficulty by executing little Bill out of hand away from embarrassing witnesses. Franklyn, the newspaper man, commandeered an automobile and raced back to the foreign concessions to inform the consuls. Soon the telephone wires were stuttering with messages and orders.

BY the time the procession entered the courtyard of the Yamen, the sound of the tumult had aroused the Taotai himself. It was an occasion for one of those dramatic situations which every Chinese loves. The Taotai came forth in person. Taking his position on the top step of the Yamen, flanked on either side by his uniformed retainers, he gave orders for the prisoner to be brought to him immediately.

Little Bill was marched to the foot of the stairs, where he stared up at the Taotai, while shocked Yamen runners called out furiously:

"Bow down! Prostrate yourself before Heavenly Authority!"

At that instant, as both looked across the centuries, the anxious expression on the Taotai's full face vanished in a bright flash of recognition.

Little Bill, with pounding heart, felt himself thrilling at a vaguely remembered face.

"Oh, Senior!" he cried out. "It is you! Mah K'oung!"

The great Taotai held himself in place with great difficulty, for it was necessary to keep his dignity in the face of the people. But he raised his clenched hand with thumb upward to indicate good-will and friendliness, and his voice rang out triumphantly:

"Surely it is the son of my friend! This is indeed young Mah Ri—son of my friend, the great American maker of works! Young Mah Ri come to me! Some one go quickly and bring him clothes. Go quickly! For this boy is as a son to me, the companion of my son!"

Little Bill was escorted up the stairs, stammering, drunk with a rush of emotion. As the Taotai put his hands on his bruised shoulders, he said with great feeling:

"Truly fate has made a wonderful balance here. For as your father returned my lost son to me, now I may restore you to him!"

"Was murder to be added to this fantastic night? I went after him, as silently as I could."



Illustrated by
L. R. Gustavson

F. BRITTEN
AUSTIN

The distinguished author of "In Action" and "A Saga of the Sword" here gives us a not-soon-to-be forgotten drama of science at war with human nature.

The Shattered Atom

WE were seated on the veranda of the Alpine Hotel, enjoying the indescribable magnificence of the sunset, golden, rose and purple on that immense panorama of snow-clad peaks.

"The Almighty does well to stage such a spectacle," I remarked to my holiday acquaintance, a jolly rubicund oldish man, with a Rabelaisian turn of humor, whom I had discovered to be no less a personage than Professor Massingford, the celebrated physicist. "It dwarfs us fussy little humans to something like a proper humility. What are we, in comparison with those eternal giants displaying that vast glory to the illimitable void?"

Professor Massingford readjusted the steel-rimmed glasses on his nose, and peered at me over their tops.

"I suppose you novelists can't help getting debauched yourselves by the sloppy romanticism you professionally ladle out," he replied. "To my coldly precise scientific brain, your statement is rumbustious nonsense. Those peaks are not eternal. We can even approximately determine the date when, on the contrary, they were an ocean bed. And, moreover, nothing is less certain than their indefinite continuance. It may depend entirely on the caprice of one of those fussy little humans you ignorantly despise. The human spirit, whatever that mystery may be, may nevertheless be the one ultimate arbiter of the cosmos. Incredible though it will be to you, the factual existence at this moment of those immense upheaved masses, of the world itself, is due not a little to your humble servant—to me, who am talking to you."

I stared at him. I had become fairly intimate with Massingford these past few days, and nothing in his manner or ideas had led me to suspect a latent insanity in him. Quite the reverse! He was one of the most humorously matter-of-fact men I had ever met; and genuine humor—I do not say wit—is the infallible guarantee of a sane mind.

"You're joking," I said.

"Not in the least. I can imagine that it gives your complacency a jolt. But it is an exact fact. To a certain extent you owe it to me that at this moment you are here to enjoy that pleasing polychrome effect of reflected and refracted sunlight upon those crags and snow-fields and glaciers; you owe it to me that there is any *here* at all—that an explosive disintegration of this small planet is not now propagating an incomputable disturbance throughout the infinity of stellar space."

This was certainly one of his elaborate jests.

"As how?" I asked.

He shook his head.

"No. You'll put it in a book. I don't see why I should give you copy for nothing. You fellows are an unscrupulously immoral lot of thieves."

"We have to be to make an honest living," said I. "But in this case, I'll make an exception. Tell me the yarn—and if it's any good, we'll go halves. And as an earnest of good faith, I'll buy you an *apéritif* now."

"It isn't a yarn. It's a fact. I don't know whether you have brains enough to tell it. It requires a certain amount

of education. Real education—not Latin verses in the fifth form. But I'll have the *apéritif*, anyway."

I signaled to the *Kellner*.

"Well?" I said expectantly, as he sipped his glass of Dubonnet *sec*.

"You are taking advantage of a simple-souled scientist," he complained. "However, I suppose I must give in. . . . Did you ever hear of Vandermost?"

"Never," I replied emphatically. "What is it—a patent medicine?"

He sighed.

"That is the sort of ignorance I have learned to expect. . . . Vandermost, my dear sir, is the name of the greatest physicist who ever lived."

"I take your word for it. What about him?"

"His father went to the United States as a stowaway and made some score of million dollars out of oil. Antony Vandermost inherited them, *àtât 22*, and hid himself from the world with the only thing that interested him. It is perhaps the only thing ultimately worthy of the interest of a reasoning being. A good bottle of wine and a pretty girl are indeed not to be despised as anodynes; but the one thing that really matters to us is to find out something about the real texture of this apparently material universe whereof we are mysteriously part."

I put up my hands.

"*Kamerad!* I never could understand the first thing about science, and I'm too old to begin now."

"I think it highly probable. But doubtless even you are aware of the elementary fact that all matter is reducible to specific atoms, and that those atoms are each infinitely minute solar systems of electrons grouped about a nucleus. You may possibly be aware that if one could disrupt that nucleus so that it would combine with another nucleus, we should be able to transmute the element. Lead, for instance, might be turned into gold. And in so doing, a colossal energy would assuredly be released."

"I have read about it in the Sunday papers," I admitted. "A lump of sugar contains enough energy to blow up a battleship, or words to that effect. The newspaper never explained how, and I was not interested enough to inquire. I am content to have the simple faith of a child in these matters. . . . Go ahead."

"WELL, Vandermost built himself a marvelous laboratory in the Bavarian Alps. Only in Germany could be manufactured such elaborate and delicate apparatus as he devised, and he needed absolute seclusion for his experiments. From time to time he startled the scientific world by quietly issuing some mathematical demonstration which revolutionized existing theories, but rarely did anyone see him. International congresses knew him not. He had absolutely no itch for publicity. His was a purely scientific brain, perhaps the most austere so which has ever existed."

"This is an opening after my own heart," I mocked. "I know that austere scientist. Surely he falls like a boob for some pretty chit of a girl."

"Your scientists doubtless would," he said. "You create them after your own image. But Antony Vandermost never knew there was such a thing as a girl. He presumably knew, as an abstract proposition that the human race was divided into the male and female sex, but the phenomenon did not personally interest him. The only thing that mattered to him was to know all that could be known about the atom. He certainly knew more about it than anyone else. Much as I suppose Buddhist monks regard the Grand Lama, with an almost superstitious reverence we workaday professors regarded him locked away in his Alpine hermitage. His slightest pronouncement came

vested with an almost superhuman authority." He sipped again at his Dubonnet. "Consequently when one day I received a telegram asking me to come out to him, I went at once.

"He was certainly an extraordinary fellow. About forty years of age, tall, and cadaverously thin. Somewhat bulgy eyes under a bald brow. Clothes that looked as if he had stolen them from a scarecrow. No society manners at all. He scarcely shook hands with me in the cheerless cell-like parlor, whither I had been led by the old German house-keeper who had admitted me to this house perched high up on the mountain.

"I'm much obliged to you for coming, Massingford," he said. "I've got something immensely important to tell you." His bulgy waterish eyes looked at me. "You may as well know at once what it is:

"I can disrupt the atomic nucleus!"

"I JUMPED. For years, scores of physicists the world over have been working intensively on that problem, in the hope of releasing and harnessing the atomic energy which would revolutionize every phase of human life. As perhaps you know, as a laboratory experiment on an exceedingly minute scale, we have succeeded in knocking an electron or so out of an atomic system. But no one had ever succeeded in disrupting the nucleus. It is bound together by the same cosmic force that binds the universe. So you can imagine I was startled.

"Do you mean to tell me you've actually done it?" I asked.

"He smiled, a grim sort of smile.

"Not yet. But I can, and I'm going to. I wanted to tell you about it first. That's why I telegraphed you. You're the only man in the world I consider competent to appreciate my success."

"I was flattered, and said so. Vandermost was not in the habit of paying compliments to his fellow-scientists. Far from it: he considered most of us little better than imbeciles, and had no scruple in publishing his opinion.

"He glanced at his watch.

"It's time for lunch," he said, "and I dare say you are ready for it." I was. It seemed an eternity since I had had breakfast on the train, and it had been a long, cold motor-ride up to this eyrie. "We'll discuss the matter afterwards. . . . This is where we eat."

"He led the way into another ascetically bare room where a couple of young Germans were waiting for him. He introduced them as his assistants, Franz Schmidt and Hugo Breidenbach. The first was a cropped-haired blond Teutonic giant; the other was of the dark South German type. Both muttered some insignificant banality. They struck me as the sublimification of university research-students, their entire intelligence concentrated onto the pin-point of specialism indicated to them by their professor, docile machines to do his detail work. I keep a hutch full of such myself.

"Vandermost bade us be seated. As he went to his own chair, an immense Alsatian dog got up from in front of it, and flopped down again at his side. "This is Wolf," he said to me. "The only real friend I have in the world! A noble animal." He spoke with a genuine affection which made me like him better. Until then he had seemed utterly destitute of any human warmth whatever.

"We all took our places, and a quite attractive rosy-cheeked girl in peasant costume brought in a big tureen of soup. Vandermost took no more notice of her than if she had been an automaton, but the young assistants called her *Kätchen* and grinned at her. I thought I saw the dark-featured Breidenbach give her a surreptitious pinch as she served him. That sly flirtatiousness cheered me up

a little. The glacial bleakness of the place was getting on my nerves.

"We ate our *Mittagessen* with a constrained minimum of talk. Evidently Vandermost did not take his assistants into his confidence. He said nothing at all about the purpose of my visit, and did not even mention atoms. His few remarks to Schmidt and Breidenbach were exclusively on technicalities of their laboratory work. Most of his attention was devoted to the dog, which he fed with choice morsels from his own plate, caressing it and smiling to it, while the animal laid its great head heavily upon his arm, looking up to him with adoring eyes.

"I tried practicing my German on the blond Teuton, Schmidt. But I got little response from him other than '*Ja?—Ja wohl!—Ach so?*' at intervals. His mind was evidently not on me at all. His eyes followed Kätchen round the room, and he frowned as she giggled and twisted every time she came near Breidenbach.

"As I say, I was grateful for that little suggestion of amorous intrigue, vulgarly ordinary though it was. It was a relief in that chill taciturnity prevailing at the table. I was glad when the meal was over.

"Followed by the dog, Vandermost conducted me to his library, a large room filled with books from floor to ceiling, and indicated to me the least uncomfortable chair. He himself did not smoke, but he had no objection to my lighting my pipe.

"Now, Massingford," he said, "I've no doubt you are bursting with curiosity. Let us get to business: First we'll go through my mathematical demonstration. And I need not say you are welcome to find any flaw in it that may exist."

"He wheeled toward me a small table whereon was a thick wad of papers neatly fastened together, and brought up another chair for himself. "There you are. And we await your verdict with complete confidence. —Don't we, Wolf?" He smiled down to the dog he caressed with his long thin fingers.

"It would be a waste of time to recapitulate even the broad outlines of his abstruse mathematics. I spent some hours going through his demonstration—occasionally asking him questions to which he had ever an immediate



"I'm surprised at you, Massingford. Do you think there will be any world after I have pulled that switch?"

and convincing answer; and I did so with an excitement that gripped me increasingly. Not even Einstein is a greater mathematician than Vandermost revealed himself to be. It would have been utterly beyond my powers to have initiated that marvelous chain of reasoning, but I know enough to follow on the path he had made. To me it was $a + b = c$. And nowhere could I detect the slightest flaw. Theoretically, at least, he had completely demonstrated the disruptibility of the atomic nucleus under certain conditions. I finished in a blaze of enthusiasm.

"By the eternal, Vandermost!" I said. "You're right—absolutely right! I congratulate you—I abase myself before you! You're the greatest man of the century!"

"He smiled, wanly, indifferently.

"Thank you," he replied. "I wanted the one man who could appreciate it, to do so. Wolf, here, of course takes me for granted. It gratifies me to receive the comprehension of another human brain. A queer little human weakness in myself I should never have expected." He smiled again. "That's the theoretical part. Now let me show you the practical side." He rose from his chair.

"Do you mean to say you've actually got an apparatus to do this?" I exclaimed incredulously. "I can't believe it! Why, the cost must be stupendous!"

"He smiled again—that wan smile.

"It cost me a few million dollars," he said. "But you shall see for yourself. Come this way."

"We went through bare corridors to the wing where his laboratory was situated. It was an extremely large room, lighted from the roof, and filled with an amazing plethora of scientific instruments. The two assistants were working there, silently, each upon his own task. Vandermost sent them both out, and locked the door after them.

"Then he took me to an immense piece of apparatus, fitted with huge electrodes connected with thick cables coming from outside.



"I became certain that Kätchen was teasing him deliberately, playing with his jealousy."

"Those two fools haven't the least idea of the purpose of all this," he said. "And I prefer that they should remain in ignorance. This is a matter only for a first-class intellect. Now let me—"

"Again I'm not going to give you his explanation. You wouldn't understand the elements of it. You must take my word for it that Vandermost had indeed contrived an apparatus which would do what no other man had ever succeeded in doing, which would in fact disrupt the nucleus of the atom. The basis of it was an entirely new principle, again beyond your comprehension. But there was no doubt of its practicability. It was a mathematical certitude.

"By the Lord, Vandermost!" I said enthusiastically, "if you can now devise an engine to harness this energy, you'll undoubtedly be the richest man the world has ever known!"

"He smiled at me.

"I'm surprised at you, Massingford. Do you think there will be any world, after I have pulled that switch?"

"I stared, aghast. In my enthusiasm, that aspect of it had simply not occurred to me, obvious though it was. If one violently released the colossal energy stored in the millions of atoms in the smallest piece of matter practicable for his experiment, shattered their cosmic bonds, so to speak, it was more than probable that other adjacent atoms would be detonated in the shock, *ad infinitum*. The possibility of such a result had long been argued about, *pro* and *con*. It was a thing no one knew.

"Then you think the release of atomic energy cannot be limited?" I stammered.

"I am sure it cannot. The optimistic inventors of atomic engines are chasing the impossible. This is not a mere opinion. It is again a mathematical certainty. I have proved it, beyond possibility of doubt. I did not show you those further calculations I have made. I wished you to be convinced first of the practicability of my apparatus. But when we return to the library, I will put them before you. You will see for yourself that it is an absolute certainty that the disruption of one atom must inevitably

entail the progressive disruption of all the others."

"I was staring fascinatedly at the switch.

"And if you pull that?" I said in a dazed sort of way.

"Within a fraction of a second, not only shall we personally cease to exist—the entire world will vanish. Astronomers on stars a few

million light-years away may even see the flash, eons hence." He said it with a certain complacency. Indeed, he was entitled to pride. No human being had ever had such a godlike power of destruction.

"Phew!" I wiped my brow, suddenly damp. "But of course you will do no such thing. You are satisfied to have achieved, in potentiality, what no other man could dream of attaining."

"He smiled.

"On the contrary, my friend, I certainly propose to pull that switch. I am never satisfied with a merely theoretical demonstration. The ultimate test of any scientific theory is the fact itself. The only way to test this particular thesis is to pull the switch—after, of course, the necessary adjustments have been made. It is harmless enough now. I don't take risks of my imbecile assistants meddling with it. There is always the possibility, you will admit, that I may have overlooked some vital factor, and then nothing will happen. But if I am right, as I am certain I am, then I shall have had one fractional instant of knowing that I was right, in the inconceivable swiftness of thought, before my component atoms disrupt into unconfined energy. If, as far away in Cambridge, you similarly ceased to exist, you would not have known what caused that instantaneous cataclysm. It is a compliment I pay to your scientific eminence that I invite you to share my knowledge. Also, as I said, it is a queer little vanity

in me. I wanted you to know that it was I whose intellect had thus triumphed.'

"My brain was reeling. I scarcely heard what he said. Of course, there might be a flaw somewhere in those later calculations; there was certainly none in the first. Was the man mad? The only thing was to humor him.

"Well,' I said, 'I should like to go through those other calculations of yours, Vandermost. You may have slipped up somewhere. You owe it to me now, that I should have an entirely complete appreciation of the whole thing.'

"Certainly,' he replied. 'Let us go back to the library. You can go through them at once.'

"WE went back to the library, the dog still at our heels. Once more I settled myself in a chair, and went through calculations which were a masterpiece of the higher mathematics. There was no doubt about it. Again it was $a + b = c$. Beyond the smallest peradventure the disruption of one atom must infallibly entail the disruption of all others. It would be like detonating a shell in the middle of an ammunition dump. It made me feel sick to realize it—to realize that this cadaverous man caressing his dog had but to pull that little switch—

"Well,' he said, coolly, 'do you find any flaw?'

"I shook my head.

"I wish I could,' I replied. 'The thing is mathematically certain.'

"He nodded.

"I knew it was. . . . It's time for *Abendessen*. Let's go along. We don't dress here.'

"Carried away as I had been with all these marvels, I had not realized how the hours had passed. It was indeed seven o'clock. As I got up to follow him, I almost smiled at the incongruity of that remark about dressing. Dinner-jackets indeed! And this terrible fellow had but to walk into his laboratory to blow the world to smithereens!

"I'd like to have a further chat with you after *Abendessen*,' I said, 'if you'd be so kind.'

"Certainly,' he answered equably. 'It was to talk with you that I invited you here. We'll come back to the library.'

"*Abendessen* was a repetition of the midday meal. The rosy-cheeked Kätchen, attractive in her peasant costume, waited on us. The two assistants, Schmidt and Breidenbach, were tersely *wortkarg* as before; Breidenbach surreptitiously flirting with Kätchen while Schmidt glowered at them. My host took no heed of them whatever, caressing and feeding his dog in the intervals of commonplace gossip with me. It was all I could do to answer him intelligibly. Of what conceivable interest were all the little personal rivalries and jealousies of Cambridge, when at his whim the whole earth might cease to exist, leaving not even a memory, as if it had never been! I must head him off somehow from that colossally suicidal project.

"But how? I could not think. Even if the man was mad, it would be no easy matter to prove it and shut him up. Long before I could do anything, he could pull his accursed switch. Suppose I killed him with my own hands, in a sudden murderous attack? Then assuredly I should myself be shut up for life as a madman—and selfishly I recoiled from that sacrifice. I am emphatically not of the stuff of which heroes are made.

"Meanwhile I watched the incongruous little comedy going on between the two assistants and Kätchen. The instincts which have hitherto insured the perpetuity of all organic life were normally at work under the very shadow of an annihilation almost beyond imagining. I wondered which of the two young assistants was the favored lover. Personally I put my money on Schmidt; he was so furiously

if supposedly jealous every time Kätchen and Breidenbach smiled at each other. He almost ceased to answer my attempts at conversation. Presently I became certain that Kätchen was in fact teasing him deliberately, playing with his jealousy after the manner of young women sure of their conquest. Once, definitely, she gave a quick little smack to Breidenbach's ear, after he had nipped her arm, and looked quickly, almost alarmedly, across to Schmidt. Yes, I imagined his anger could be formidable. He was that type of Teuton which is on occasion insanely violent. Well, well! I wondered whether Vandermost would leave them time to finish their little drama.

"He seemed quite unconscious of what was going on under his eyes. To him it was supremely unimportant, of course.

"At last the meal ended, and once more we went into the library, now looking a little more cheerful with rose-shaded electric lights. Once more I put myself in the most comfortable chair, filled and lit my pipe. It is odd, the automatism with which one performs one's accustomed acts even under the menace of annihilation. I could appreciate that a condemned criminal would want his breakfast as usual before going to execution.

"We sat in silence for those first few minutes, during which I filled my pipe. I was trying to think of a good opening sentence. Vandermost was playing with the dog, rolling it on the floor and tickling it, while the animal growled in mimic ferocity. Finally I hit on a beginning, humoring his insanity.

"Of course, there's no hurry about this, Vandermost,' I said.

"He looked up at me.

"No hurry?'

"I mean about pulling your confounded switch. Hang it, man, if you've finished your life's work, there's plenty of us who have not. I for one. I have lots of little things on hand. So have some few hundred million of the rest of us. We're all quite busy.'

"He smiled.

"Busy—on what? After I have pulled that switch, the whole fantastic necessity of being busy will be—he made a gesture—will be as if it had never been. What is there to worry about?'

"He appalled me.

"But still, as I was saying—there's no hurry; after all, this fantastic necessity, as you call it, is not unpleasant. I can put up with it a little longer. No,'—I shook my head sapiently, as I applied another match to my pipe,—'there's certainly no need for hurry. After all, I expect there are a few problems you have yet to solve.'

"HE smiled again. If I could only have thought of some way of killing him without seriously inconveniencing myself, I would have done it there and then, so inhumanly detached was that smile.

"My dear Massingford,' he said, 'I should not have expected such petty cowardice from you. I imagined you had an intellect.' ('I have,' thought I to myself, 'and I want to retain possession of it as long as possible.') 'Can't you see there's no reason why I should wait another hour, another minute, even? Obviously, once a human mind had seized the key to this material system which throughout untold eons has blindly perpetuated itself in more and more sentient suffering, there is no longer a reason for enduring that cosmic tyranny. It is like remaining in prison with the key to the door in your pocket. By an act of my volition I can terminate that hitherto inescapable sequence of pain and struggle, of myriad-fold individual birth and death, at least as far as this globe is concerned. On any ethical ground, I am wrong to have waited so

long. It was a little privilege I arrogated to myself. Now, however, I have gratified my vanity by this talk with you. Why not, therefore, tonight?"

"Certainly, the man is mad, I thought. The most dangerous madman that ever was. Delay! Delay! How the devil could I delay him sufficiently to communicate with some of the medical faculty at Munich, and get a couple of alienists out here? I must humor him.

"I appreciate your logic, of course," I said. "But you would personally oblige me by waiting until the morning." As I uttered it, I was conscious of the grotesque feebleness of that remark. "Really, I should like to take those mathematical demonstrations of yours to bed with me. I followed them, of course, but I am far from grasping fully the stupendous intellectual power necessary to have produced them. It has taken all these millions of years since man emerged from the anthropoid to develop this final culmination of his reasoning faculties in your uniquely constituted brain. He can afford to wait a little longer in his prison, while I have the selfish pleasure of completely appreciating this *ne plus ultra* of intellectual attainment."

"He shrugged his shoulders.

"As you say, Massingford, a few hours more or less is of no importance. I was indeed intending to bring my work to an end this evening." It gave me cold shudders to hear him. "But certainly I should like to have your full appreciation. There's not another intellect in the world capable of grasping my achievement."

"I managed to smile. 'You exaggerate my ability,' I said. 'Remember, I'm not infallible. There may be some flaw in your calculations I failed to detect. Why not bring along Delahaye from Paris, or Bredow from Leipzig? In some respects they're both better mathematicians than I am.'

"My heart thudded as I said it. If I could only get a couple of colleagues here, the three of us might put him under restraint.

"He shook his head.

"No. I have confidence enough in you. I've always had a certain amount of respect for your work. And I'm certainly not going to honor those two pretentious imbeciles with a glimpse of mine. It even amuses me to think that they will suddenly cease to exist without even an inkling of what is happening."

"I tried again.

"There's nothing in life you care for, then, Vandermost?"

"I have achieved all I ever cared for. There is nothing more for me to do. There is nothing more for any other man to do. I have attained the ultimate of knowledge. For millions of years, organic matter has been blindly striving to attain pure intellect, automatically capable of solving the riddle of existence. That has been attained in me. I have solved the enigma. There is no further reason for the existence of humanity."

"I SMILED. 'Those several hundreds of millions populating this globe would most certainly disagree with you,' I said. 'Absurd as it may be, they actually enjoy this endless struggle for existence of which they know not the why nor wherefore.'

"He shrugged his shoulders again.

"Their enjoyment is entirely immaterial. Doubtless the hundreds of millions of typhoid germs are enjoying themselves when they kill a man. Enjoyment is ultimately but a reflex of action in a sentient organism struggling to perpetuate its ephemeral personal existence. It has a merciful illusion that its struggle is of importance.' He made a gesture which dismissed it. 'There is no more

reason for any of them to struggle. They have become superfluous. The play is finished.'

"The arrogant megalomania of the man was beyond all argument—the more so, that undoubtedly he could logically prove he was right. If this world could vanish as if it had never been, there was plainly no valid purpose in any of its creatures. But somehow, weakly, as one of those hallucinated sentient organisms, I ignored that logic. I thought of all those hundreds of millions of men, women and children, swarming over the globe, toiling, fighting, cheating, having a good time, struggling in misery and despair, loving, betraying, performing all sorts of base-nesses, performing all sorts of heroisms, and it seemed to me intolerable that all their existences could be summarily annihilated at the will of this man, who boasted—with justification—that he had made them all superfluous, that the vast crowded drama of life was logically finished. Of one thing I was quite certain: that I had no desire to dissolve suddenly into an inchoate whirl of released energy.

"HOWEVER, there was nothing more to be said. There was no plane on which I could appeal to him. Love, pity—he was loftily above them all; had a convincing answer to every plea. Every human emotion was but a concomitant of the struggle for existence—a struggle not intrinsically more valid than that of the typhoid germs he had mentioned. He would have replied that he brought an immense deliverance to all those tortured organisms, that he was about to terminate the blind struggle, to liberate them from the tyrannous concatenation of matter eternally renewing its form. Now was an end of suffering—and the world would not even know that it had ceased to suffer, so instantaneous would be its annihilation. It made my head dizzy to think of it, as I sat brooding in that silent library. I had to remind myself that there was in fact no discoverable flaw in his mathematical processes, no flaw in the apparatus he had devised. The thing was *certain*.

"He glanced at me, as I sat sunk in that meditation. Perhaps I had shuddered.

"I understand now why your intellectual development stopped short, Massingford," he said coolly. "You allow yourself to be invaded by emotion."

"Emotion! I almost shouted at him that I had a wife and daughters, while he only had a damned test-tube.

"I don't suppose you ever loved anything in your life," I said, as politely as possible. "There are things that even you can't comprehend."

"I love old Wolf here," he replied, fondling the animal. "And I have never met a human being to compare with him for all the virtues. He would give his life for mine any day. As it is, we are both going to pass out cleanly together, instead of being eaten by worms. If I had a wife, which God forbid, I should feel the same about it."

"It was intolerable. I could stand no more of it. I felt that in another minute I should shriek outright, and fling myself at his throat. But emphatically I had no desire to spend the rest of my days in a madhouse, for no jury in the world would accept my plea of justifiable homicide. The very arguments I adduced would be proof of my insanity. If I could only wreck his infernal laboratory! But probably he had it guarded by live electric wires or something of the sort. I ventured a leading question, with a nonchalance that I fancied was a masterpiece of histrionic art.

"I think I'll turn in with your papers," I said casually. "I work best at night and in bed. And I'll go through them thoroughly this time. . . . I suppose there's no chance of burglars getting into your laboratory, and accidentally blowing us all up? That would be humiliating, in the circumstances." I even laughed as I said it.

"He grinned at me. I was sure that he had read my thought.

"There's not much chance of that. Old Wolf, here, sleeps on the threshold."

"That's comforting," I said, picking up his scripts. "Well—if you'll show me to my room, I'll say good night."

"He led me up to my room on the first floor, and left me. I found myself shaking all over. For a moment I wondered whether I was going mad, whether the hallucination of another lunatic had infected me also. Then I looked again at his accursed papers. It was no hallucination. It was cold stark fact—a plus b equals c. I felt physically sick. This man wasn't God, to dispose of the world in this offhand way. It couldn't be—it mustn't be—allowed! But how the devil was I going to stop him?"

"I sat there a long time, shivering and shuddering on my bed. It must have been very late when I heard a furtive whispering outside, a stealthy struggle.

"Na—na—Hugo! Lass mich! Lass mich losgeh'n!"

"It was Kätchen—Kätchen, with Breidenbach doubtless trying to steal a kiss. Well, let him! What did it matter? What did a stolen kiss more or less matter, when this time tomorrow there mightn't be any time—nothing but a void in the cosmos?"

"Sheer terror—ridiculous illogical terror—overcame me. If only somehow I could make an end of Vandermost before he ended everything—before he summarily dismissed into nothingness this incomprehensible eon-old drama of existence sanctified by the blood and tears and heroisms of incomputable myriads of human beings!

"The whispering continued. I listened. In that dead silence of the night, I could hear plainly. I got oddly interested in this commonplace intrigue so ardently pursued in blissful ignorance of impending universal destruction. 'Na—na—Hugo!' I could hear the girl repeating. 'Lass mich—'s ist unmöglich.'

"Then Breidenbach had a brain-wave. 'The laboratory!' he whispered. 'No one will look for us there! No one ever goes there at night!'

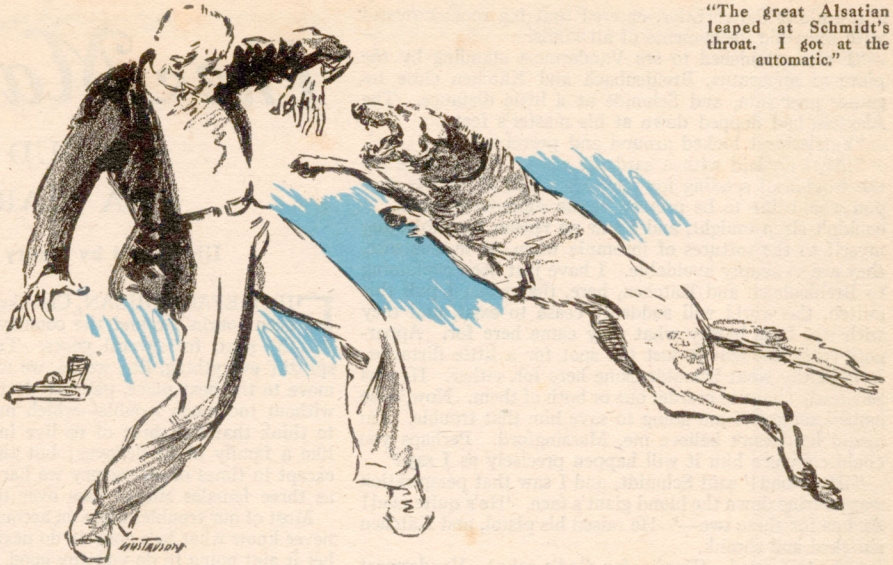
"The girl evidently was still reluctant. 'Aber, Schatz,' she whispered, 'der Hund—der grosse Hund!'

"That huge Alsatian was certainly something to be frightened of. But Breidenbach laughed softly. 'The dog's all right,' he said. 'He knows me. I've often been in the laboratory at night before.'

"Still the girl was reluctant. 'No,' she said. 'No. I'm afraid—I'm afraid of Franz—if he found out—'

"Breidenbach laughed again. 'He won't come and find us in the laboratory,' he said. 'He's far too scared of Wolf.'

"Then they whispered in an earnest colloquy too low-voiced for me to catch it. It was absurd that I should



"The great Alsatian leaped at Schmidt's throat. I got at the automatic."

be thus keenly interested in their surreptitious little love-affair, this last little romance snatched on the brink of universal doom. But I was. I strained to catch what they said, crept close to the door. I arrived, gently opened the door an inch, peered after them. Yes. They were going, arms about each other, to the staircase, presumably to the laboratory, where they might kiss without likelihood of interference. Good luck to them, I thought.

"As I watched them disappear, I suddenly saw another form pass my door, in swift and silent pursuit. My heart jumped. It was Schmidt! He was so intent on following them that he did not notice my door ajar. In his hand he had an automatic pistol. I perceived it with a shock. Was murder to be added to this fantastic night? Murder—when tomorrow—

"Schmidt also disappeared from view, down the stairs. What does A do now, I asked myself. Immaterial though I knew that murder to be, in any larger sense, after all it was my social duty to prevent it if I could. Those social duties might as well be normally performed until the moment of annihilation. I owed it to some sort of human dignity, rebellious in me. Vandermost hadn't yet had the last word. I thought all this, even while automatically, instinctively, I found myself following Schmidt.

"Down the stairs went Schmidt; and down the stairs I went after him, as silently as I could. Anyway, he did not hear me. He went quickly along the passage toward the laboratory, and I after him. Suddenly I remembered that confounded dog. I hadn't the slightest desire to have my throat torn out by an Alsatian. Let me see first how Schmidt managed to pass the brute.

"I stood there and listened. I wondered what Vandermost would say or do, if he were aware of this little drama, the life-force still blindly playing its part up to the very moment when it should please him to decree its annihilation. Everything was eerily silent. Certainly, Breidenbach and Kätchen must already have passed the dog. At any moment I might hear his snarl of rage as he flung himself at Schmidt. No. There was nothing. I took courage again, and crept on.

"The laboratory door was open. There was a bright light inside. What was happening? I could hear voices.

The Shattered Atom

I ran along the corridor, entered that big room crowded with scientific instruments of all kinds.

"I was astonished to see Vandermost standing by the piece of apparatus, Breidenbach and Kätchen close together near him, and Schmidt at a little distance. The Alsatian had flopped down at his master's feet.

"Vandermost looked around and perceived me.

"Ah!" he said with a sardonic smile. "This saves me the trouble of sending for you, Massingford. I felt sure you would like to be present at the supreme moment. I couldn't sleep tonight, and I saw no reason for subjecting myself to the tortures of insomnia when, as in this case, they are so simply avoidable. I have just been explaining to Breidenbach and Kätchen, here, that when I pull this switch, the world will suddenly cease to exist, and they with it. It is hardly what they came here for. Apparently they thought it just the spot for a little flirtation. It is hardly what Schmidt came here for, either. He was recklessly about to murder one or both of them. Now,"—he smiled again,—"I am going to save him that trouble. I'm afraid he doesn't believe me, Massingford. Perhaps you could convince him it will happen precisely as I say?"

"He's mad!" said Schmidt, and I saw that perspiration was pouring down the blond giant's face. "He's quite mad! And as for these two—" He raised his pistol, and Kätchen shrieked and shrank.

"No!" I cried. "Don't—for God's sake! Vandermost is certainly mad—but certainly it is true what he says! If he pulls that switch—he will detonate the atomic structure of the world—annihilate us all! I vouch for it!"

"Vandermost seemed to be enjoying his assistant's bewilderment.

"The blond Teuton stared at me, a horror in his face. And then the girl gave another shriek. 'Ach! Don't let him, Franz! If you love me—don't let him!'"

"Schmidt looked at me, while the girl clung to him.

"*Es ist wirklich wahr?*" he asked incredulously. "It's really true, Herr Massingford? He can do that?"

"Don't let him!" cried the girl in an agony of terror. "If you ever loved me, Franz—don't let him!"

"It's absolute truth, I tell you!" I said. "If he pulls that switch, there's an end of Kätchen and all of us!"

"God forgive me, it was a diabolic thing to say, but I said it. Schmidt was the only man with a weapon.

"Even as I spoke, he jerked it up with a cry. 'Never!' There was a deafening report, and Vandermost pitched headlong.

"The next moment the great Alsatian had leaped at Schmidt's throat, had borne him to the floor. I got at the automatic and shot the brute. But Franz was dying, Kätchen sobbing over him uncontrollably.

"A queer business, eh? And an ironic finale. There was indeed more than an irony in it. That vulgar little intrigue of love and murderous jealousy blindly kept the old world going on in the good old-fashioned way. Trust the life-force. Still, as I said, some credit—or the reverse—is due to me that the Alps are still there for you to sentimentalize over."

"H'm!" I said after a pause. "An odd story. I take your word for it. But it makes me feel a little uncomfortable. How do I know that at this moment some other insane genius is not trying to explode the atom?"

Massingford smiled.

"It's hardly likely, I think," he said. "I myself most thoroughly destroyed Vandermost's papers. And Breidenbach and I together dismantled his apparatus, and carried the component parts up the mountain and dropped them down a chasm. It will probably be some hundreds of years before another genius like Vandermost comes along. Don't worry. The world will see you out."

The Madness

By BUD
LA MAR

Illustrated by Henry Thiede

FIDDLEFACE DUGAN, Cherokee Smith and me have been tourin' around the country, from one rodeo to the next, for several years. Travelin' together and splittin' everything, like we do, we always manage to eat, move to the next place, pay our doctor-bills and our fines without too much trouble—which might lead some folks to think that the three of us live in harmony and peace like a family of turtledoves; but the truth of it is that except in times of emergency we harmonize about as well as three females singin' bass over the radio.

Most of our troubles come on account of Fiddleface. You never know what he's goin' to do next, but you can always bet it aint going to do you any good. You couldn't say he looks for trouble, because he don't need to; he knows right where to find it. . . .

We had paid our entrance fees at a one-day show in southern Arizona. Competition was weak, and we figured we could clean up in the bronc-ridin'. We'd been followin' the McCarthy string; and after those broncos, the horses they had here looked like little white mice to us. The day before the show we were sittin' in the hotel tryin' to decide on the next stoppin'-place, when a man walked over to us and introduced himself as the manager of the show.

"Boys," he says, "I'm in a kind of a hole, and I thought you might be the ones to help me out. We need a clown. We had Sublette hired, but he just wired he couldn't make it, and I sorta wondered if any of you boys had ever clowned. None of the boys around here know how; but you're professional riders, and most likely you've took a shot at it sometime, eh?"

"Fiddleface," I says, "let's me and you go out and get a drink. Aint it hot here?"

"Of course," he continued, "we'd want somebody that could really clown. If none of you boys can do it, we'll just do without."

"Fiddleface," I says, "here's that tourist girl that was makin' eyes at you in the last town. I think she wants to talk to you."

"Well, Mister," says Fiddleface, payin' no more attention to me than if I was a tick on a sheep, "you're shore lucky to come to us in yore hour of need. Why, do you know who you're talkin' to right this minute?" There was a crazy light in his eyes, and I knew it was too late to stop him.

"No," says the man, lookin' surprised, "I can't say that I do."

"Well," says Fiddleface, squintin' his eyes and tappin' the manager on the breastbone with his trigger-finger, "you're holdin' conversation with none other than the great Suicide Dugan, the man which defies death at every turn, and has only to roll his eyes to make the crowds roar with mirth. Suicide Dugan, the top-hand rodeo clown himself in person, at yore service, sir."

"M-m-m-m!" exclaims the man, sort of puzzled. "You don't say! But I don't recall that name."

of Fiddleface Dugan



"Well," says Fiddleface, "you're holdin' conversation with none other than the great Suicide Dugan."

A joyous comedy of rodeo life, by a writing-man who is himself a bronco-buster.

"Idee," snorts Cherokee. "Tdee! Listen to him! Here we been payin' his way out of hospitals and jails for five years, and he tells *us* about his idee. If a mouse decides to jump into a cat's whiskers, is that an idee?"

"Shut up!" says Fiddleface. "I'm gettin' tired of yore advice. To hear you talk, people'd think you was my mother." And he stomps away lookin' like an insulted Senator.

"Bear this in mind," Cherokee tells me, "there's gonna be trouble!"

"I know it!" I says. "But all we can do is wait and hope for the best."

We didn't see Fiddleface again till late that night. Cherokee and me were layin' in bed smokin'

cigarettes and wonderin' what he could be up to, when he come into the room bearin' a large battered old suitcase and lookin' mysterious.

"What you got in there?" I asks him.

"Shhh!" he answers. "It's my make-up!"

"Are you shore you need it?" says Cherokee.

"Gosh, yes! Who ever heard of a clown without no make-up? And let me tell you something: it's a knock-out, too. I aint gonna be a farmer like the rest of them rodeo clowns. No sir, I am gonna be different! I am gonna be an Equestrian!"

"No!" exclaims Cherokee, lookin' shocked.

"What is it?" I asks. "I never heard of 'em!"

"I looked it up this afternoon," explains our partner. "It's a man which rides around them there bridle-trails in one of them saddles-like a shovel, on a horse with a sawed-off tail and no mane!"

"Why would anybody want to be one of them things?" asks Cherokee.

"Why?" says Fiddleface. "Lord, I don't know why! Just to be different, I reckon. By gum, it is different, aint it?"

"How in blazes is anybody gonna know you're an E-ques-tri-an?" I asks. "You'll have to have it announced, or they might think you wandered in there by mistake."

"That's right," adds Cherokee. "Why don't you be President Hoover or Carrie Nation? Something everybody would recognize at a glance?"

"The trouble with you is you aint got no imagination," says Fiddleface, lookin' disgusted. "You wouldn't know how to pour water from a boot if they didn't have the directions printed on the heel! I can't waste no more time wranglin' with a couple of tourists. I got work to do tomorrow. Good night!"

Next day was show-day, and Cherokee and me were busy

"Why, Mister—er—"

"Jones is the name, Sam Jones. I—"

"Why, Mr. Jones, I'm a clown 'at could make a fence-post howl. Look at this!" Sayin' which, he crossed his eyes, stuck out his tongue and went to wigglin' his ears. The man backed off a couple of steps, but Fiddleface jumped after him and chucked him under the chin, makin' a noise like a rooster about to attack.

"Haw, haw, haw!" laughed the manager. "For goodness sakes! I—"

"Wait," yelled Fiddleface, holdin' up one hand. He stuck both thumbs in his ears, opened up his mouth and let out a scream like ten coyotes findin' a dead horse.

"Ha! Hee—haaa!" says the man, wipin' the tears from his eyes. "Mercy!"

"This aint nothin' at all!" states our locoed partner. "Wait till you see me with my make-up on, turned loose among the cattle and the wild cowboys. Mister, you aint seen nothing yet."

"By gosh, I believe you!" exclaims Jones. "Yes sir, I don't know as I ever see anything so funny. Goodness! Suicide Dugan, did you say? I got to hurry to the newspaper and tell 'em about it. I am sure glad I met you, Mr. Dugan. See you all later. Haw-haw-haw!"

Cherokee looked at me, and I looked at him; and both of us said together: "Goodness!"

"Well," says Fiddleface, lookin' hurt, "he laughed, didn't he? Why, he like to busted his vest. You got to admit *he* thought I was funny!"

"Yeah!" says Cherokee. "Boy, you was just simply killin'. I almost cried."

"You two birds is just a coup'le of old maids," says Fiddleface. "You aint got get-up enough to try something different, and it makes you sore when I get an idee!"

all morning, drawin' horses and helpin' the boys cut out horses and steers for the contest. It's always a good thing, when you don't know the stock you're workin' with, to sorta stick around and learn a few things from them that do.

Well, we had our dinner; then somebody started a crap game behind the chutes; and before we knew it, it was show-time. The arena director told us to get mounted for Grand Entry; the band started blarin' away; but no sign of Fiddleface Dugan, the newly become Equestrian.

The manager came walkin' up to us, looking all hot and worried; and he said: "Where is Mr. Suicide? Here it is time to start, and no clown! What is it coming to, anyway, havin' to wait like this? You better go look for him and tell him he's fired if I have to wait five more minutes."

"Go tell him yourself!" says Cherokee. "We don't know where the crazy pelican is; and what's more, we don't care!"

"I wouldn't wait, if I was you," I tells him. "He'll most likely pop out from under the grandstand whenever he figures nobody's lookin'!"

"There he is!" says Cherokee, standin' in his stirrups and lookin' hard. "I guess it's him. Gosh, look at that!"

Sure enough, something was approachin' which might of been an Equestrian on a horse—I don't know as to that; but sure as taxes it was the most scandalous spectacle I ever hope to see.

Fiddleface was wearin' a shiny stovepipe hat tied around his chin with a wide piece of whang leather; his upper lip was decorated with a long flowin' mustache, and over one eye was screwed the half of a pair of spectacles, held in place by Lord knows what, and a red ribbon danglein' from it. His neck was bandaged tight with an old sock, the foot of which kept flappin' against his chest. He wore a white vest with red checks, a pair of pants all puffed out in the legs like balloons, and some tall skinny boots which he would of had to take 'em off before he could sit down. The horse he was ridin' had no more mane than a clipped mule, and its tail stuck out behind like an elm club, and not a hair on it that you could see. The old pony was about eighteen hands high and weighed right around nineteen hundred pounds. 'He was hog fat, and the biggest horse I ever seen, only they had forgot to cut off his fetlocks, and his legs looked like a Brahma rooster's.

The old horse came across the arena on a slow trot with his chin tight against his chest, and Fiddleface sat up on his wide back, lookin' dignified and grave, like he was only ridin' through and not aimin' to stop in any such uncouth surroundings. Every step the horse took, Fiddleface rose slowly about two feet out of his postage-stamp saddle, then settled back into it, only to rise again at the next forward revolution. He took his place at the tail end of the line-up, and after a couple of false starts the parade started, every cowboy lookin' back over his shoulder in awed astonishment at the Equestrian risin' and fallin' on top of the giant horse like a slow-motion moving picture.

Cherokee and me managed to be last, in front of him, and I says to Fiddleface over my shoulder: "What's the

idee, bouncin' up and down like a grasshopper? Can't you screw yourself down on that elephant and stay there?"

He gives me a cold look through his midget telescope and says: "If you knowed as much about ridin' a horse as you think you do, you'd know that in exclusive society this is called posting."

"Posting!" snorts Cherokee. "I'd call it the Rollickin' Flounce. You look like a jumbo frog with both hind feet



in a trap!" A few scattered spectators began to titter; then a few more joined in. This was followed by a general chuckle which soon became like a howlin' storm of mirth. This was a Western crowd, and I don't know as they realized they were given a bird's-eye view of a real genuine Equestrian; but they knew that never before had any such a lookin' outfit come ridin' out of nowhere into their midst. Before the grand entry was over, even the cowboys were in a state of collapse from watchin' Fiddleface's version of an Equestrian. He trotted his horse slow back to the chutes, and the manager ran out wavin' his hands and the tears flowin' out of his eyes like fountains.

"Great!" he choked. "Hooo-haaa! You're doin' fine. I'm glad Sublette couldn't come."

"Mister," says Fiddleface, "you aint seen nothing yet!" "See!" whispers Cherokee. "I was afraid of that. From now on, look out!"

"In order to open this show right," explains Fiddleface, "I'll ride a wild ferocious Texas steer with one hand, wavin' a suitcase in the other."

"Yes, yes, that would be very good. By all means wave the suitcase," says the manager, pleased with the idee. "I should think that would be a hard thing to do, but I suppose it's nothing to a man like you. Goodness—such dargin'!"

Fiddleface ran to a steer-chute and busied himself cinchin' a riggin' on a big mottled long-horn. He climbed down into the chute carryin' a suitcase, grabbed the hand-hold, screwed himself down on the fightin' steer and holered: "Turn him loose!"

Out leaped the steer, buckin' and bowlin' and wringin' his tail most nobly, and Fiddleface sittin' tight, kickin' with both feet and beratin' the animal with the suitcase at every jump.

It was a daggone good steer-ride, and I was standin' there enjoyin' it, when Cherokee clutched me by the arm



Fiddleface came down onto a hind-foot uppercut which sent him flying into the audience like a home-run baseball.

and yelled: "My Lord, look!"—pointin' a shakin' finger toward the buckin' bovine.

"What is it?" I says, lookin' hard. "I don't see nothin' wrong."

"That's my suitcase that idjit is usin' for a bat!" cries Cherokee.

"By gosh, it is!" I exclaims. "What do you know about that! He must of got 'em mixed."

"Come back here, you hell-hound!" yips Cherokee, runnin' out into the arena. "Get off that steer, you ornery so-and-so! Wait till I git my hands on you!"

The suitcase was of the go-to-hell variety, and after about four snacks against the tough ox, it began to leak. First a sock came out, then a necktie. More socks followed; then as the hole got bigger, bright-colored underwear was sown in the wind, along with pictures and photographs, shirts and toilet-articles.

Cherokee followed behind the buckin' steer, dodgin' kicks, pickin' up a sock here, a suit of underwear there, and cursin' Fiddleface at the top of his voice. Seein' a chance to grab the satchel before it was demolished complete, Cherokee dropped what he had picked up, and leaped for it; but at this very moment the steer threwed his head and jumped sideways. One of his horns caught the suitcase amidships and gored it through and through. Fid-

dface, not turnin' loose in time, was pulled forward, and the next buck flang him about ten feet in the air, to the joy of the audience, which was enjoyin' every bit of the performance. The steer went gallopin' off toward the Border with the suitcase on his horn, and Cherokee stood silent in his tracks watchin' the disappearance of his belongin's.

Then he turned and saw Fiddleface gettin' up, and with a cry of rage he charged him.

The police, headed by the manager, came out into the arena and separated the combatants.

"This man attacked me!" says Fiddleface.

"What!" yips Cherokee. "I which? Why, you— I'll—"

"No, no, no!" puts in the manager. "I can't have it at all, my dear sir. Goodness, no!"

"I don't give a hoot if you want it or not," says Cherokee, jerkin' loose from two policemen and fetchin' Fiddleface a punch on his nose. "That was my suitcase!"

"Yow-w-w!" howled Fiddleface, clappin' both hands to his face. "See what he did!"

In order not to miss any of the excitement, the audience got to its feet, abandoned the grandstand, poured over the fence and gathered in a millin' mass around the cause of the trouble.

"Take that man to jail," yells the manager, pointin' to Cherokee. "He's a dangerous character."

"Take who to jail?" bawls Cherokee. "By gosh, you won't!" Sayin' which, he kicked one policeman which was reachin' for him, butted another one in the stomach and smashed the manager under the chin; but bein' greatly outnumbered, he was pulled down, handcuffed and beat up good. They picked him, all dirty, bleedin' and

his clothes busted; and as they led him away, he looked back over his shoulder at me and said: "What'd I tell you? I told you there'd be trouble."

The arena was cleared, and Fiddleface says to the manager:

"While you're gettin' the first bronc' ready, I'll run out and amuse the people. I guess I'll do some trick-ridin' first." Sayin' which, he mounted his horse and headed back for the grandstand.

"Trick ridin'!" I says to myself. "All the trick ridin' he ever done was when he was gettin' bucked off."

Fiddleface bounced his boot-heels against his horse's ribs a couple of times, and the old pony started throwin' his big feet in various directions, not increasin' his speed that you could notice, but pourin' out a whole flock of energy to create a gait which must of been a cross between a lope and a Cuban rumba. About twenty feet from the grandstand Fiddleface kicked both stirrups loose, clambered behind his saddle and stood up on the horse's wide rump, like a circus bareback rider. After three hops, skips and jumps, he began to lose his balance and clutch for hand-holds; but not findin' any, he commenced to run above his mount to keep his footin'. This made the old horse mad, and he looked back over his shoulder, snorted and launched a wild kick at the atmosphere. Fiddleface went over backward; and on his way down, he grabbed the first thing in sight, which in this case happened to be the naked tail of his mount. The horse whirled in his tracks with a speed which was nothing short of amazin' for an animal of his size. Fiddleface was whizzed through the air like the tail on a comet, smashed head-on into the

equine's rear exposure, bounced four feet straight up and came down smack-bang right onto a terrific hind-foot uppercut which sent him flyin' into the audience like a home-run baseball.

The band had been playin' "The Farmer in the Dell" with great determination and persistence for about twenty minutes without a pause; but the sudden and violent arrival of Fiddleface into the bandstand caused the music to end on a gosh-awful note of agony. Flyin' low and at high speed, Fiddleface swept a clear path across the platform until he came to a violent stop astraddle of the tuba-player, which was a large man and not to be displaced with ease while he still had a death-grip on his beloved horn. Three cornet-players, two trombones and one piccolo artist were lost overboard from the shock, and the rest right away leaped and scrambled for safety, divin' into the audience without a thought for consequences. People which were jammed around the bandstand began gettin' out from under this unlooked for downpour of musicians, and climbin' all over their neighbors, who showed their resentment at bein' used for stepladders by launchin' out a wild counter-charge, hittin' out with both hands, kickin' with both feet and buttin' with their heads when opportunity presented itself. The uproar was terrible, what with men cursin', women screamin' and children squallin'.

Fiddleface found himself alone on the platform with a terrified tuba-player and a heap of discarded instruments. He worked his way out from his position and rose half-way, only to be pulled back down by a foldin' chair which was clutchin' him by one leg. His stovepipe hat had collapsed over his ears, blindfoldin' him. Alarmed by the sounds of stampede all around him, he waved his trapped leg with the chair at the end of it like a battle-flag, strikin' the tuba-player amidships. Unnerved by the disaster, the last remaining musician gave up all hope to stay on top and dived into the scramble, clutchin' his instrument to his breast. The chair came loose from Fiddleface's foot. He staggered back several steps, stumbled and fell on his back into the bass drum with a loud "Oof!" and came out on the other side of the busted piece minus the top of his hat, but the brim of it still anchored by the whang-leather strap.

HE looked at the strugglin' mob below, then grabbed hold of a twisted trombone, jumped into the fray and went to clearin' himself a path back to the arena by wildly swingin' the horn over his head and bashing anybody which came between him and open country.

It took some time to restore order and carry out the injured. The band was a travelin' organization and had

never worked at a rodeo before. Fearin' that such things were only part of the performance, they made up their minds to escape complete destruction by gatherin' what was left of their equipment and fleein' for parts unknown.

Now, I've seen a lot of calamities happen at rodeos, but I never saw one busted so complete as this one was before it even started.

The manager was struck dumb. He had been hired by a committee because he had experience runnin' entertainments of various kinds—but not round-ups.

And now, there he was with a headache and some loose teeth from Cherokee's hay-maker, and a mob of yellin' people runnin' every which way on his hands, not countin' about fifty cowboys which were havin' a swell time and celebratin' the occasion by startin' fights of their own here and there. A bunch of 'em had got together and reached the conclusion that it was a shame to pack a cowboy off to jail for only beatin' up

a couple of policemen and a no-count manager. They said the thing to do was to storm to the rescue of poor persecuted Cherokee.

"Don't do it, boys," I tells 'em when they ask me to join 'em. "He don't mind the shade for a little while!"

I've been around these riots for several years, and I know that with a few quiet words here and there you can sort of ease the tension, and pretty soon everybody laughs and goes on about his business. In about ten minutes it looked like there would be a rodeo, after all. One boy got his saddle cinched on a bronc'. The judges and the pick-up men rode out into the arena; the manager quit ravin' and pullin' out his hair; and best of all, Fiddleface has faded from the scene.

"Just a minute, boys," says the fellow on the bronc'. "I want to get a good hold on this rein before I go out. . . . All right, I got him—turn him loose."

But at this very moment a loud cry was heard: "Don't open that gate—there's women afoot in the arena."

And shore enough, there was a bunch of about twenty determined-lookin' elderly females marchin' toward the chute in a body, headed by a little short man with spectacles. The manager went out to meet 'em, and the little short fellow says: "Are you in charge of this atrocity?"

"I'm the manager of this rodeo," says Mr. Jones, "ii that's what you mean."

"We are the Anti-rodeo League of Cochise County," continues the man, "and we must ask you to cease your diabolical performance immediately."

"Why?" asks Jones, not knowin' what to make of this.



"Onward, sisters! Let us rout the cohorts of Satan!"

Here a lantern-jawed old sister shoved the little man aside.

"Why?" she yipped, shakin' a finger in the manager's face. "You ask why, you degenerator of children's morals! You fill the hospitals with bleeding and mangled victims, and yet you ask why the brutish revelry must be stopped! You criminal!" Here she went to slappin' Mr. Jones' head with her open hand, until he whirled around and took to his heels.

Wild with her victory, her eyes shinin' with a strange light, the woman turned to her followers, and pointin' toward the general direction of the chutes, cried:

"Onward, sisters! Let us march against the Pharisees! Let us rout the cohorts of Satan!"

Which they would have done, too, because there wasn't a cowboy there which would have stood his ground against 'em. But at this point somethin' happened which sorta turned the tables around considerable, and this new wrinkle was brought about by none other than Fiddleface Dugan.

Fiddleface, believin' he had fallen into disgrace after his disastrous attempt at trick-ridin' and the wipin' out of the band, had wandered to the other end of the arena, behind the catch-pens, thinkin' hard for a new scheme.

His eyes wandered around until they came to rest onto an old half-breed buffalo cow which was tied up by the horns to a big stout snubbing-post inside the catch-pen. She had been brought to the rodeo to be rode, but she had turned out so ornery that they had decided it would be better to tie her up or she might hurt somebody.

And the minute he saw that cow, Fiddleface says to her: "You can bawl and you can snort, you old ugly rip, but Fiddleface Dugan is fixin' to ride you!"

How he ever got a saddle on her with nobody to help him, I don't know; but at the very moment when it looked like there would be a scarcity of cowboys due to the uncomin' attack of the Anti-rodeo League, the whole side of the catch-pen busted down with a crash, and out came the bawlin' buffalo cow, her eyes bloodshot with rage. Fiddleface had not quite got mounted good when the animal got loose and broke out. He was still hangin' onto the saddle-horn, and tryin' to get straight in his saddle. By the looks of him, he must of had a swell time fixin' the buffalo cow for her appearance.

"Well," I says to myself, "this is about enough. Somebody better get out there before it's too late." I jumps on a horse and hits out at full speed. Another boy well mounted come alongside, and I see he's shakin' out a loop in his rope. I aint much of a steer-roper, so I says to him: "Partner, can you handle that string satisfactory?"

The boy laughs, and he says: "I been snakin' moss-horns out of them hills all my life. I can wrap up this here rhinoceros fine and dandy; you ride herd on the pilgrims and keep 'em from 'arm—they mean well."

The Anti-rodeo League had bunched up around their leader, every one dumb and paralyzed with fear. The cow was headed straight for 'em, thinkin' to herself what a swell



The side of the catch-pen busted down, and out came the buffalo cow, Fiddleface hangin' onto the saddle-horn.

time she was about to enjoy scatterin' the bunch to the four winds, but I spoils her plans by ridin' in between to turn her. She don't turn. Me, horse, saddle and all go flyin' among the Leaguers, knockin' 'em right and left like so many pins in a bowlin'-alley. Howsoever, it sort of stops her, and she gallops off to get under way for another formation. My horse, after gettin' up, is kind of shaky, but I remounts.

That time, I turns her enough to miss another collision. "Listen," I tells the ropin' boy, "I

thought you said you could snare that thing."

"Sure!" he answers me. "I can! But if I do, I can't hold 'er. I got to bust her, and if I do that, what'll happen to that bird a-sittin' on her back?"

"Fiddleface," I yells, "you better jump. We're gonna bust your pet cow wide open."

"You better not!" he answers, lookin' mad. "What do I want to jump off for? I can ride her till she starves to death. I'm goin' over big—listen to the folks cheer!"

"All right, boy!" I says to the roper. "Bust 'er!"

"You're the doctor," he says. Followin' which, he spurs up, swings his rope a couple times and makes a beautiful throw—his loop catches the cow right around both horns. He takes off the slack with a snap of his wrist, throws the rope on the opposite side of the cow and rides off at an angle at full speed.

The rope snaps tight; the cow—with Fiddleface still froze to her back—is whirled around about four feet in the air, and she lights on her side hard enough to knock her clear out. That was bustin'.

The only thing that saves Fiddleface from anyway a broken leg is the fact that his saddle-cinch busts, and when the cow about-faces, he keeps goin' ahead until he meets up with the fence with his stomach; and there he hangs like a wet towel, both feet still in the stirrups!

With everythin' safe and the cow hog-tied, the Leaguers get mobilized again and resume their march, several of 'em limpin' and lookin' bedraggled. But stoppin' the rodeo now was like throwin' life-preservers to a man three days under water; there wasn't any use of it—it was already stopped.

We never stayed to find out how it all come out. It took all the money we had to get Cherokee out of jail, and we left at midnight, in a box-car. Fiddleface never come to until we crossed into California. . . .

Cherokee was sittin' in the open door watchin' the country rollin' by, and he says: "I'm leavin' it up to you, Bill. We'll throw him out on his ear if you say so."

"Well," I says, "I reckon maybe that would be best; but most likely he'll be more careful from now on."

But as I look back upon it now, well, I reckon that we would of been a lot better off and not so sore in the joints in the winters if we had followed Cherokee's idee and pitched the dang' wildcat out into the night!

It was a personal-contact campaign. The Prosperity candidate kissed babies, played baseball with the tots in an orphan-asylum and proved his democracy in scores of similar doings.



The Story Thus Far:

BLAIR," said Ronkton, "it isn't a question of your fitness. We know you are a business genius. We are fully aware what your brain in the White House would do for this country. But that is not the point—the point is, Blair, that never has a man, woman or child called you Ted or Teddy."

Senator Pitcairn suggested that Blair could be built up. "Look what a few Indian feathers and a couple of cowboy hats did for Calvin Coolidge! And remember how the people warmed to Hoover when he brought that kid to Washington—the one who saved the children in that Colorado blizzard."

"We can't dress Blair in Indian garb or have him suddenly begin entertaining heroes," Ronkton objected. "He's not the type for that—he's the aloof mental type."

That very night the fascinating rogue came upon the scene—Peter Varney, who had discovered that he bore a remarkable resemblance to Theodore Blair and had capitalized that resemblance by cashing a check signed supposedly by Blair. And out of this chance meeting grew a fantastic and daring scheme: why not run Blair for the


By **GEORGE F. WORTS**

Presidency, employing his double—a man of exceptional warmth and personal magnetism—to make the necessary public appearances?

They knew that Blair could never win the votes of personal popularity—he had not even been able to win the love of the one woman he'd ever cared for: beautiful Felicia Hamilton, who indeed liked and admired him, but somehow held aloof. They knew that Varney was a rascal—there was the check episode, and his association with another shady character, Jimmy Carlyle. They did not know then, however, that only that day Varney had snatched a pistol from the hand of Kate Ingals' husband and struck him down with it—leaving fingerprints on the barrel. . . . (And they did not know that a mechanic

The Phantom President

Peter Varney was an attractive scoundrel, Theodore Blair an honest but aloof man of great ability. Because these two much resembled each other, the powers behind a desperate political party engineered the nomination of Blair for President of the United States—and hired Varney to make the speeches and do the handshaking Now the crimes in Varney's past have risen up to threaten a scandal unparalleled.



Illustrated by
Joseph Franké

in Steel City, who had lost a hand in the shops, was nursing an insane illogical grudge against Theodore Blair.)

They did learn of some of these things later, but only after they were committed to the venture. For Detective Murchison of the homicide squad found several people who thought they had seen Blair at the Ingals' house on the night of the murder. Of course Blair could easily prove an alibi. Indeed at his request his fingerprints were compared with those on the fatal pistol-barrel, and found wholly different. And Kate Ingals steadfastly maintained, under questioning, that the murder had been committed by a client crazed by stock-market losses, a man who in no way resembled Blair.

The plan proceeded. Varney claimed to have disposed of Carlyle. (Had he killed him too?) And he persuaded Kate Ingals to go abroad for six months—supplying her with money and promising to marry her after he became President! He then went to work and memorized names

and faces and relationships of Blair's friends, so carefully that he carried off chance meetings without causing suspicion. More, he called on Felicia; and she noticed in him only a change for the better—a new warmth and magnetism and charm that quite won her.

"She said the engagement could be announced!" Varney reported to Blair.

"I won't let it be announced. I don't want her," protested Blair in an agony of resentment.

"You fool," the rogue said in a shaking voice. "You poor, egotistical fool!"

He wanted to say more, but the look in Blair's eyes stopped him. He knew Blair hated him enough to kill him.

Blair won the nomination. And Varney the rogue continued to make the needful public appearances. But Varney was not deceived. He knew how convenient it would be for Blair and the Big Four to have him out of the way before or immediately after the election. Since the conspiracy began, he had wondered how it would work out the other way round. If he could safely, quietly kill Blair immediately after the election, Peter Varney would be the next President of the United States. (*The story continues in detail.*)

FOR thirty-three years, since he was a very small and very credulous boy of four, Theodore K. Blair had been following certain precepts that had been laid down for him by his father. Julius Blair had possibly never heard of the English poet who made the observation, some two

hundred years previously, that, as the twig is bent, so will the tree incline. It is doubtful that Julius Blair cared for poetry. But he was determined that his small, adoring son should be started off in life with sensible ideas. He was a practical man; a hard-headed, two-fisted man; a fighter, by God, and proud of it!

Julius Blair was a man of tremendous physical strength, tireless nervous energy and enviable moral courage. One of his rules was: "Get a man mad at you, and he'll do his best work for you." He abhorred frivolity. He loved hard work and the profits thereof. He never traveled, except on business. Only once in his life did he attend a theatrical performance. From a consideration of these glimpses, one's mind is tempted to wander to his wife, to wonder what she thought of life. Certainly she could have made very little impression on her son, who at the age of four was taken in hand by Julius Blair, and molded and shaped according to a fighting man's notions.

When Theodore was four, his father put him on a salary of five cents a week: five cents a week for being a good boy. No pay-day on any week during which he had been a naughty boy. With this salary went a gilded, perforated, cast-iron savings bank. As fast as the bank filled with nickels, later with dimes and quarters as Theodore's salary was raised, his father made deposits for him in a savings account. Every time the account reached one hundred dollars, a bond was bought.

Thus, while he was growing up, the boy learned that life has but one worth-while aim: money. With money went power. And what you wanted in life was power. The more power you had—well, the more power you had. Julius Blair's philosophy of life paraphrased the war-cry of a famous patriot: "Millions for investment, but not one cent for pleasure!"

Julius Blair died when Theodore was twenty-two, with his boots on—fell dead, in fact, at a directors' meeting, with words of combat strangling in his throat. But his precepts and his example went marching on. There was a man to emulate! It became terribly necessary for Theodore K. Blair to prove that he was, in his quieter, subtler, cleverer way, as great a man as his father. What the elder Blair had done as an industrial pioneer, the younger duly did, in the new economic epoch, as an oracle of organization, a miracle man of mergers. By the time he was thirty-seven he had quadrupled the fortune his father had left him, had become the most powerful figure in industrial America, and now gave every promise of becoming the most powerful political figure in the world.

According to Julius Blair's yardstick, he was successful. Sitting in that choice section of heaven which is no doubt reserved for American millionaires who have happily fulfilled their destinies, Julius Blair could look down and approve of his handiwork. His will had been nicely done.

BUT it seemed to Theodore K. Blair, sitting at his price-less old Spanish desk, his fingertips pressed together, at the cheerless hour of four in the morning, that his life might have been ordered with greater wisdom. He was dismayed by the suspicion that he might have taken the wrong road.

Looking back, he had the feeling that he had always missed something, that almost any other man he could think of was getting much more of a kick out of life. It hurt his pride cruelly to compare himself to the rogue asleep in the next room; yet such a comparison, because of their amazing physical resemblance, was only natural. Peter Varney had followed no worth-while precepts or example; he was a rascal, a liar, a thief, a wanted murderer; he was a philanderer, a vagabond; he was wholly selfish; he had broken the laws of God and man. Yet,

to him, life was a lark, and the world an exciting place in which to live. He was happy, and Blair was not.

Felicia, hovering in his thoughts, a bright and unattainable dream, an illusion of happiness, was proof that he had not ordered his life with sufficient wisdom. All his wealth and power would not obtain Felicia for him. But Varney, the artful philanderer, had found it easy.

AT this point, Blair deserted the path of clear thinking. If he could not win Felicia honestly, he didn't want her. He wouldn't let her be dragged into this. Even if it meant the loss of the Presidency, he would not let her be sacrificed.

The rogue was not to be trusted. Ronkton was not to be trusted. There was only one solution: he would tell her everything. He would tell her that the man who had been courting her, the man whose marriage proposal she had accepted, was not himself, but a rascal who was his physical image. Let the rumor go forth that there were two men running for the Presidency! He didn't care. To hell with Ronkton! To hell with politics!

His hand reached out for the telephone. Halfway, it stopped. A man in his senses did not wake up a girl at this hour of the night. That was just it. He didn't want to be sensible. He was sick of being sensible. If he had been less sensible, had been reckless, had cut loose, Felicia would have fallen in love with him as she had fallen in love with Varney.

Theodore K. Blair was through being sensible. He picked up the instrument and called the Hamiltons' number. He heard a measured humming. Felicia's voice, clear and crisp, interrupted it.

"Hullo!" he said, in a voice no less reckless than he felt. It was the first time he'd talked to her in weeks. He had listened on an extension, but Varney had always done the talking. It whipped up his heart. He was almost breathless.

"Why! Darling!" she cried.

"I hope I didn't wake you up."

"How could I sleep? Do you suppose I could sleep—after that? I haven't even undressed."

"Then don't. I want to see you, Felicia—I must see you. I'll be right over!"

"You sound so excited!"

"I am."

"Anything wrong?"

"I want to have a long talk. It's foolish, but I want to drive."

"That will be swell, darling: I'll be watching for your headlights."

Blair left a message on the clip on the inner side of the door of the suite, informing Varney that he had gone out. He went to the garage, opened the doors and started to climb into the roadster. Then he decided to put the top down. He never drove with the top down, but for his present reckless mood, the top must be down. It occurred to him, as he turned the roadster into Pershing Boulevard, that he was a changed man. He had never done anything so reckless. Calling up a girl after four in the morning! Driving on a chilly night with the top down!

This was the sort of thing for which he was starved—recklessness, impulsiveness. The streets were empty. All the traffic lights were yellow. He was upsetting the apple-cart! This was the way to get the upper hand on life! Even the wind in his face was exciting. He was going to see Felicia again! He was going to see her face! He was going to have her close beside him! His hand on the wheel was sure—sure and reckless. His foot on the accelerator pedal was unhesitating. Step on the gas!

Figures fluttered past on the speedometer. He swung into Parkside Drive on whistling tires. The cool wind fingered his hair.

He would tell Felicia the truth. What she wanted was recklessness, impulsiveness, daring, emotion. Well, he was prepared. With all the fierce intensity of his new personality, he would tell her the truth. With such intensity, he would tell her how much she meant to him, how much he loved her. He would take her in his arms and ardently explain. He would sweep away her astonishment, her protests, with his passion. He would outdo Peter Varney at this emotional business. He would give Felicia a taste of love-making that would take her breath away!

"The thought of you in that scoundrel's arms has driven me insane. I had to tell you the truth. It has taught me a great lesson, my darling. I've changed. I'm not a human icicle any more. I'm a new man! Look in my eyes! I don't care if I lose the election. I don't care if I lose everything! Only one thing matters: *you!*"

He would be irresistible. She would be limp, meek, humble in his arms.

This was the solution!

WHEN Felicia Hamilton was five years old, her father put her on an allowance of ten cents a week. There were no strings attached to this allowance. Whether she was a good girl all week, or a naughty girl all week, she got the ten cents. The allowance was accompanied by no precepts. It had simply occurred to her father that giving Felicia an allowance of ten cents a week was a sensible idea. Some day she would inherit his fortune. It seemed a sensible idea to accustom her to spending money.

Even at that tender age, Felicia was discriminating. She saved her dimes, and as her allowance was increased, her quarters and half-dollars, until she had accumulated forty dollars. Then she bought a Shetland pony, because, after months of deliberation, she knew she would enjoy having a Shetland pony.

Felicia discovered early that what she wanted was not to be unhappy. She learned, as she grew older, that one couldn't buy happiness, or force happiness to appear, or catch happiness. But there were certain good rules for avoiding unhappiness. One of them was not to have anything you wanted presented to you, the instant you discovered you wanted it, on a silver platter. She learned that, with a sense of discrimination, it was possible to avoid a great deal of unhappiness.

She loved horses, and later on, she loved flying. Before she was sixteen, she was buying, out of her allowance, her own hunters; she even bought a van in which to ship them from show to show. And because of her discrimination, because of her keen eye for horseflesh, she made almost enough out of prize money to pay for shipping the horses from show to show. It gave her the greatest en-



"Where are we going?"
"Does it matter?" Blair asked. She laughed.
"Nothing matters."

joyment to break almost even. It gave her a tremendous interest in horses and the men who bought, sold, trained, kept and raced horses. Later, when she shifted her affections to flying, she took the same keen interest. She paid for her instruction and bought both her planes out of her allowance. And because of her discrimination, because of her deep knowledge of men, she obtained the best available instruction, and the best available ships.

It seemed to Felicia, smoking cigarettes in the garden, that she had missed very little, because she had never been particularly unhappy. And she was sure that she had, in consenting to marry Theodore K. Blair, exercised the greatest discrimination.

Yet she had, for some time, been puzzled. It was almost as if there were two Theodore K. Blairs, one of whom was Ted, the other of whom was Theodore or T. K. Knowing him so well, she had been startled when he had suddenly become all the things she had wanted him to be. It was delightful, but it was disturbing. It was actually uncanny. It gave her a queer, creepy feeling sometimes, as though T.K. had gone, and a presumptuous stranger had taken his place. And because she was a clear-thinking young woman, she was puzzled at feeling

the way she did. She found herself almost wishing that T.K. would become his old self again. It was as if she had lost T.K., and missed him. And if it were true that T.K. was lost, then she was responsible. For it was she who had changed him; poked fun at him, ridiculed him, goaded him, until he had, almost overnight, become this other man.

The cheerless hour of four o'clock in the morning found Felicia vaguely dissatisfied with this other man. Something decent and fine, as hard to describe as a lost illusion, seemed to have gone out of him.

SHE was glad when, at a little after four, he telephoned. She wanted to see him again, to talk to him.

She picked up a polo-coat in the house, went out and sat on the front steps and waited. There was no moon tonight, but the sky shimmered with summer stars, and the cool air, blowing along the street, smelled sweet.

When the blue roadster pulled up at the curb, she walked down and got in. Turned toward him, she waited for him to take her in his arms, or to slide his right arm around her and pull her against him. Her body was expectantly compliant. When he did neither, she presumed that he was having a reaction from their earlier emotional excitement, a let-down. She understood perfectly. Men sidetracked their emotions, shunted them about almost at will. But when, after driving rapidly for ten or fifteen minutes, he did nothing and said nothing, she grew curious.

He was driving much more carefully than was his custom. Settled down away from her, with both hands on the wheel, he was staring ahead at the road, with chin tucked into upturned collar.

Since the night he had first kissed her, whenever they went driving, she had always waited for the first few seconds, wondering what he would be like. It was as though some watchman in her brain were measuring him, deciding whether he was friend or foe. Tonight, for an indefinable reason, the watchman was more alert than usual.

The feeling presently stole over her, engendered possibly by some subtle attitude of dignity or reserve, that this man beside her was not Ted, but T.K. And she was surprised to find that she was relieved and pleased. It was like having an old friend back again. With a little murmur of contentment, she moved across the wide seat and snuggled against him. She dropped her head to his shoulder. She could just see his lashes and the outline of his nose in the glow from the headlights on the road.

"Darling, I like you," she said, "like this."

"Like what?" His voice sounded cool. It stirred almost forgotten memories.

"You're usually so talkative."

BLAIR said nothing. More surprising, he did nothing. His hand did not leave the wheel to find its way about her waist. It seemed to grip the wheel more tightly. Felicia smiled against his ear and whispered: "Darling, I like you better tonight, now, than I have in ages."

The roadster jumped a little, as though he might have involuntarily pushed the accelerator pedal.

"Where are we going?"

"Does it matter?"

She laughed softly.

"Nothing matters. I love you."

The roadster swam up the last long grade out of the city. Fields and farmhouses asleep flooded past. The road and the earth in which it was embedded seemed to rush toward her, as if she were motionless. She murmured that it was chilly.

"Shall I put the top up?" Blair asked.

"No, darling."

It seemed to her that he was unresponsive, aloof. She was growing curious again. Where was he taking her? But she wasn't curious enough to care. The wind in her face, the soft roar of the engine, made her drowsy. Impressions penetrated her drowsiness with delightful unreality: The cool sweet smell of an orchard, a cool blue light shining on a stone gate, the stars wheeling as the road turned.

The darkness was growing thin. He stopped the roadster on a hilltop and set the hand brake. A trailing plume of light across the eastern horizon, the color of a fine pearl, was suddenly suffused with golden yellow. The stars drew away. A lake at the foot of the hill was a puddle of quicksilver. The grass across the road came greenly out of the darkness, frosted with dew. Smoke, in a thin blue wire, was suspended from a point in the air to the chimney of a farmhouse in the valley, like the legendary rope of Indian magicians up and down which boys are said to climb.

There was no sound except the faint occasional clicking given off by cooling, contracting metal under the hood.

Felicia murmured: "Aren't you going to kiss me good morning?"

Blair had been looking at the farmhouse. He turned his head slowly, tilting it aside a little, so that his chin would avoid her face still resting on his shoulder. His eyes, so close, looked huge. They looked frightened.

"No," he said.

FELICIA quickly sat up. If it had not been for that look in his eyes, she would have laughed.

"What," she said quietly, "is the matter?"

"This can't go on," he said. "It isn't fair to you."

"Our engagement?"

"Yes."

She moved away, swung her knees to the seat, so that she faced him.

"You mean, you don't want to marry me?"

"It wouldn't be fair to you."

"This is—this is incredible. What's happened?"

He was looking at her throat. "I did a lot of thinking—after I left you. I found out it was impossible for me to play fair. I won't let your life be ruined."

"But—" she began thinly. There were no words for it. "Do you realize you're saying that you don't love me?"

He cleared his throat. His face was gray. The early light gleamed on his wet forehead. "I don't love you enough to play straight. I'll try to explain."

"Yes. Do try to explain."

"It began when you were on that flying tour."

"Petting in parks?"

"That was only the beginning."

"You're in love with that girl."

"Not any particular girl. That's the trouble."

"Have you been seeing these girls lately?"

"Yes."

"But you told me only a few hours ago—"

"I was lying. I've been seeing them right along. I haven't played fair with you. I couldn't. If we were married, I couldn't. I'd keep on. I couldn't stop. You don't want that kind of marriage. You understand."

Looking at this man with his gray face, his strange eyes, she faintly acknowledged: "I understand. Yes. I understand. Will you take me home?"

She understood. By ridiculing him, by taunting him, she had succeeded in making Theodore K. Blair into the kind of man she didn't want to marry.

CHAPTER XXI

THE rogue was unable to sleep. He tossed about in his bed, revolving in his mind the aspects of a situation that had suddenly grown intolerable. He had learned from studying Blair the importance of stripping any problem of its emotional values, of approaching it with coolness and logic. One taste of power, he reasonably informed himself, can destroy a man's peace of mind forever. Having tasted it, he craved more. It would be unreasonable, illogical, not to make every attempt to become the President of the United States. Was that fantastic, or was it logical? Wasn't it, after all, a matter of egotism and opportunity? And he would, if Blair got elected, have the opportunity. He would kill Blair before Blair killed him.

It was harder to approach the problem of Felicia with coolness and logic. What applied to power likewise applied to love. One taste of it could destroy a man's peace of mind forever. It had reduced him to a state of anguish. He must face this thing coolly and logically.

Was he in love, or was he having an emotional hurricane because Felicia was unattainable? No! It was love. It was a combination of all those splendid feelings which a man sometime in his life had for one woman: tremendous admiration and respect, a reverent awe, tenderness; a feeling, when in her presence, that life was quite sublime. And, of course, a fierce craving for her.

That was, he assured himself, a sane and rational analysis. It was love. And it was cruelly unfair to deny love. Still fixing, with a cool and sagacious eye, the problem, he perceived that what would solve this would solve the other. One master-stroke! By killing Blair and successfully maintaining his impersonation of Blair, he could have the Presidency and Felicia!

It actually took hours of the clearest, coldest kind of reasoning for the rogue to arrive at this neat conclusion. Dawn was a cool gray light at the window. He was no longer in torment. He wanted to think out the details and drink some coffee.

Slipping on a dressing-gown, he went to the library door and read the message Blair had left on the clip. Wondering where Blair had gone at such an unconventional hour, he refused to consider, even for a moment, the fantastic

possibility that he had called on Felicia. If it had not been for the iron-clad rule that, when one of them was out of the house, the other must remain incommunicado, virtually nonexistent, he would have telephoned Felicia now, gladly waked her up to tell her how he adored her. Even if she were to have the same impulse, he could not answer the telephone.

He turned on the library lights and seated himself at Blair's desk. There were details that he wanted to work out. He must contemplate the killing of Blair as coolly, as rationally, as though he were Blair. He liked the irony of that.

Varney had fallen so completely into the habits, the smallest mannerisms, of Blair, that he quite unconsciously assumed Blair's most familiar posture.

He placed his elbows on the gold-mounted blotter and pressed his finger-tips together, staring at the vague tiny landscape on the opposite wall from which Blair seemed to derive most of his inspirations.

A shaft of sunlight came in at the window. Weighing, setting aside, discarding this inspiration and that yielded by the water-color, he presently recalled his need for coffee and pressed the button on the desk twice.

So deep was his preoccupation that,



"You aren't going to get away with it. I'm going to tell her the truth."

when a key grated in the lock, he did not even look away from the landscape. He was hardly aware of Jerrido's presence, with a silver tray, until the butler said, "Good morning, Mr. Blair."

He lowered the tray to the desk, placed a cup and saucer before Varney. Two lumps of sugar dropped into the cup. A brown, smoking, aromatic stream flowed from a silver pot.

Jerrido stood back from the desk with his hands at his side like a soldier at attention.

"If you will pardon me, you look very tired this morning, Mr. Blair. You look as if you had slept very poorly."

"I didn't sleep at all, Jerrido."

The ex-corporal sighed. "It seems to me, Mr. Blair,

that this whole affair is a great drain on your nervous system. It seems to me that that man is proving to be a terrible worry."

Varney picked up the cup and a spoon. Sitting back, he slowly stirred the coffee and looked up at the spaniel eyes of Jerrido.

"You can speak quite freely, Jerrido. Mr. Varney is not at home."

"Yes sir. It's been on my mind for some time. You can't realize how it worries me, seeing what I see, and hearing what I hear. I don't want to seem intrusive, Mr. Blair, but I do know what is going on, and I do know how upset you are, and it worries me. Shall I go on, sir?"

"By all means, Jerrido, go on."

"Thank you, sir. What especially worries me is that I am sure Mr. Varney has not your interests at heart. I would go so far as to say that he may even be planning to do away with you."

"Jerrido! You don't really mean that."

"Indeed I do, Mr. Blair. I have seen enough of that man to know the kind he is. He is a downright rascal, Mr. Blair. Sometimes, when he is alone with you, I tremble. He is a dangerous character. If he had anything to gain by it, I am sure he wouldn't hesitate to kill you in cold blood."

"Jerrido, this is really shocking. You're virtually calling Mr. Varney a murderer."

"Yes sir, a cold-blooded murderer. I do hope you won't think I'm presumptuous in saying these things."

"On the contrary, I admire you for saying them. What would you suggest that we do?"

"I have given it a great deal of thought, Mr. Blair. In fact, it's all I can think about. In the war, we were told that the best defense is an offense. I would strike before he strikes."

"Are you suggesting," Varney said sternly, "that I kill Mr. Varney?"

"Oh, no sir—not at all. I'm suggesting that, when the time is ripe, you let me kill him. Oh, it would be very simple. I could put cyanide in his coffee, for instance."

The rogue replaced the cup on the saucer. "But aren't you afraid you might make a mistake? Aren't you afraid you might kill me instead of Mr. Varney? You've been mistaken before, you know."

"But I will never be mistaken again, Mr. Blair."

"Have you found some infallible way of telling us apart?"

Jerrido's smile was a self-conscious smirk. "Yes sir." "What's your system?"

"I don't believe I can explain it, Mr. Blair. But I know. There is something noble and—kingly—about you, Mr. Blair, and there is something ugly about Mr. Varney. I won't be fooled again."

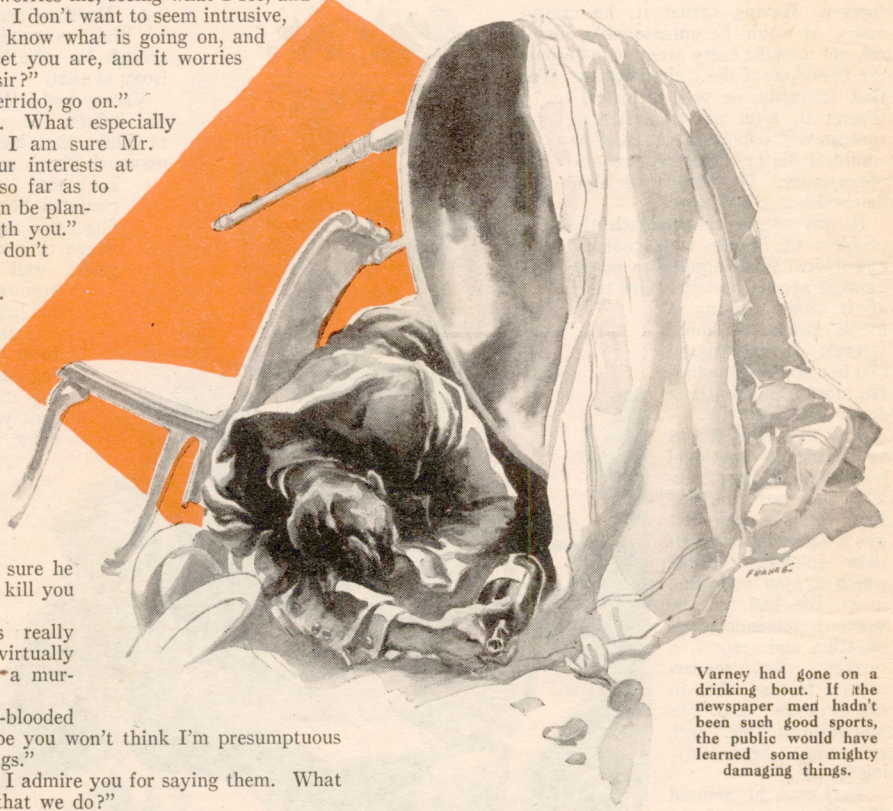
"I'm relieved to hear that, Jerrido."

"You can trust me, Mr. Blair, to help you get rid of that—that demon."

"I'm sure I can depend on you, Jerrido."

"Thank you, sir. My only wish is to be of service to you."

There was the sound of another key in the spring lock. Jerrido backed farther away from the desk. His look of eagerness was cunningly masked.



Varney had gone on a drinking bout. If the newspaper men hadn't been such good sports, the public would have learned some mighty damaging things.

Blair came in and shut the door. With a heavy sigh, he tossed his coat across the arms of a chair. He looked as tired as the man seated at his desk.

He said coolly, "You're up early," and to Jerrido, "Good morning."

The butler gave him a hypocritical smile:

"Good morning, Mr. Varney."

Blair smiled faintly, wearily. "You've made a mistake again, Jerrido."

Jerrido lifted one hand to his head, in the futile gesture he reserved for moments of extreme perplexity. His face was visited briefly by a convulsive smile.

"Oh, no sir." He uttered three small, hollow laughs. "You're Mr. Varney. This is Mr. Blair. I'm not mistaken this time."

"Don't you wish you weren't?" the rogue dryly inquired. Jerrido stared helplessly at him; then, in dismay, he stared at Blair.

"Please tell me," he implored, "please tell me you aren't Mr. Blair."

Blair, no longer amused, answered: "But I am, Jerrido. Bring some fresh coffee."

"And never mind the cyanide," Varney added.

The butler, with another look of anguish at each of them, fluttered from the room.

With his hands on the desk, Varney pushed himself to his feet.

"Where were you?"

Blair, sick from his own hurt, sick from the hurt he had caused Felicia, wearily answered: "Getting Miss Hamilton out of this mess."

The rogue walked around the desk, sliding his hands along the edge, so that he maintained, while he kept his eyes on Blair's eyes, a crouching attitude, as though he intended, once the distance was closed, to leap at Blair.

"What did you tell that girl?"

Blair didn't want to talk to Varney. He wanted to be alone. He had never in his life been so unhappy. For months, not only had he been unable to see Felicia, not only had he had to listen while Varney talked to her on the telephone, but he had had to endure, night after night, the realization that Varney was making love to her and that she was falling in love with him. And tonight, the first time he had seen her, he had had to do the most heartbreaking thing a lover can do—deliberately abase himself in her eyes.

"I had to say something to break that engagement."

"What?"

Blair struggled to overcome a novel impulse. He wanted to sit down at the desk, put his head in his arms, and cry. And he knew that if he could reach such an emotional pitch, Varney, with his nature, would be uncontrollable. Blair felt a constriction in his throat, as though the words were actual lumps, which must drop into this miserable silence.

"I told her," he said, "there couldn't be an engagement. Because I couldn't play fair. I said I'd been playing around with other women. I said I couldn't stop and didn't want to stop. I said if we were married, I couldn't and wouldn't stop."

"Damn you," Varney panted. "You couldn't have her for yourself, you're not man enough to get her, so you wouldn't let me have her."

"I had to break that engagement."

"Yes!" Varney shouted. "Because you're so damned jealous! You know she's in love with me. You know I'm crazy about her. You're so damned mean, so damned petty, you wouldn't let us have a chance!"

Blair knew how he felt. He knew Varney felt exactly as he did himself. He and Varney were in the same boat. Both loved her; neither could have her. It established between them a cruelly ironical brotherhood. Both loved her. Both had lost her.

"You're ice!" Varney shouted. "You're not flesh and blood. You aren't torn apart by losing her. You're getting a hell of a kick out of being a martyr."

BLAIR'S eyes were hollow with suffering. "I wish I were."

The rogue, settling back against the desk, was softly beating his temples with his fists. He left the rug and walked to the end of the room. He began to pace the rug, storming. He cursed Blair. He made absurd, preposterous accusations. Yet he hardly seemed aware that Blair was present. It was as though his emotions were entirely out of hand.

Blair went to his desk-chair, sat down and put his face in his hands. His hurt and Varney's hurt were not really important. But it seemed cruelly wrong to have had to hurt Felicia. He determinedly pulled up his shoulders and dropped his hands to the blotter. His tired eyes followed the cursing man up and down the rug. In Var-

ney he saw himself, giving vent to his own feelings. He became absorbed in this fascinating illusion, seeing himself, shorn of all inhibitions.

Varney rushed toward the desk. He struck it with his fist.

"You aren't going to get away with it. I'm going to tell her the truth!"

The rogue's eyes were blurred. They looked raw. His lips were wet. They looked raw too.

Blair was trying to think clearly.

"If you told her the truth, if the rumor got out, I couldn't possibly save you."

VARNEY was breathing in short, quick gasps through parted lips.

"You think you've got me on a spot. But you haven't. You've driven me too far, Blair. I don't care what happens now. I don't care if this scandal busts wide open. I'll be glad to see it bust wide open. Sure! Let 'em arrest me! Let 'em electrocute me! I'm going to tell Felicia the truth!"

The utter extravagance of Varney's statements made him so ridiculous that Blair stopped feeling sorry for him.

Varney picked up the telephone and called the Hamiltons' number.

"Tell Miss Hamilton," he said a moment later, "that Mr. Blair wants to talk to her. Tell her it's urgent. What? Then wake her up. Tell her— Why! Damn you!"

He put the instrument down. "That butler!" he panted. "He hung up. He won't call her. She's not to be disturbed, under any circumstances, until noon."

"I'm afraid," Blair said, "she won't talk to you."

"I'll call, by God, until she does! If she won't talk on the phone, I'll go to the house. If they try to stop me from seeing her, I'll smash down every door until I find her!"

Blair wondered how it would feel to reach such heights of self-dramatization. No romantic lover down the ages could have attained a finer frenzy. It wasn't acting. It was Peter Varney, expressing himself. Blair wished he could express himself, just once in his life, so spiritedly. It would be wonderful to be able to tell himself go, to smash down doors, even to threaten to smash down doors, as he frantically searched for a hidden lady. His imagination played with the idea: Just one door. It was of oak. He hurled himself at it again and again. It did not yield. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Blair," a servant coolly said, "but that's the cellar door." The picture faded. . . .

"I'm sick," the rogue shouted, "of being a dummy. I'm sick of having my thinking done for me. I'm going to know right now where I stand, or else I quit!"

"You ought to go to bed. You look sick."

"Ah, yes," the rogue said derisively, "I mustn't look sick, and I mustn't get sick, or we'd stop looking alike!"

He would be glad, Blair reflected, to fall ill if it would bring their resemblance to an end. He was not a superstitious man; yet he was sure he sometimes heard the whirring of dark wings. There was something fateful in the very fact of their resemblance. How many times it had already brought them to the very precipice of disaster! But he dared not fall ill. A candidate for the Presidency must be a vigorous man. People wouldn't vote for an unhealthy man. There had been too much talk about the vitality the job needed.

Varney leaned heavily on the desk.

"Who do you suppose the people are really electing? Who's going to tour the country and yap at the yaps from the rear platform? Whose popularity, whose magnetism, is going to win the votes?"

Blair wished it weren't true. But it was true. His brains might, if he were elected, be of immense service to the country; but Varney would really be the man the people would elect.

When he did not answer, Varney cried: "I'm the man they're going to elect! You're nothing but a figurehead."

Blair smiled faintly. "Didn't you say, on the night we met, 'United we stand, divided we fall. My magnetism—your brains. My personality—your power'? Didn't you say that, as one man, we could whip the world?"

"That was before you started double-crossing me."

"Wasn't it, actually, before you got a taste of power?"

"I want something more out of this than money."

"You said you wanted nothing but money and excitement."

Varney took a deep breath, held it until his face turned pink, slowly released it. His hatred seemed suddenly to flow out of him. Blair wondered if this was a substitute for counting up to ten—or was it a hundred? He wished Varney would take deep breaths, and hold them, oftener.

One of the rogue's eyebrows went up a little. He actually looked deflated. His face, quickly losing its pinkness, was pale and wet. His lips, except for a bruised area on the lower one, where he had chewed it, were gray.

"Yes," he said. "Yes. That's so."

The telephone rang. Blair answered. It was Ronkton's public-relations counsel, Sam Gibbs, the man who could, with one paragraph, make people think black was white. The reception-room of his offices was, he said, filled with newspaper reporters and photographers. Telegrams from all over the country, radiograms and cablegrams from all parts of the world, were pouring in, congratulating Mr. Blair on his nomination.

"It puts our fingers on the pulse of the world," he said enthusiastically. "The world is looking to you for its salvation. I want to say, Mr. Blair, that I personally consider this the world's most historic moment, greater than the signing of the Declaration of Independence!"

Blair, wishing he could feel the cosmic importance of the moment, thanked him.

"I've given out the statement you prepared yesterday," Sam Gibbs went on. "But the reporters would like to have a talk, and the news-reel men would like an interview with you for immediate release. It will go into every picture-theater in the country as an extra. If you could come down here, it would be better. From now on, we want to keep you out of a wealthy background. Let the people know you are, in spite of your millions, democratic. A suit that needs pressing wouldn't be such a dusty idea."

"I'll be down in twenty minutes," Blair said. Hanging up, he asked Varney if he felt equal to facing reporters and news-reel men.

"Good God! Look at me!"

Blair said he would attend to it. He was doubtful that Peter Varney's warmth and magnetism would, in his present condition, communicate itself, through the talkies, to picture audiences. He was doubtful also of leaving Varney alone. He might, in his present condition, violate the iron-clad rules: use the telephone or slip out while he was downtown.

The rogue, understanding his hesitancy, said: "Oh, you needn't worry. I'll stay here. And there's no use telephoning her anyway until noon."

But the risk was too great. Before Blair left the house, he instructed Jerrido to notify him, at Mr. Gibbs' office, if Mr. Varney left the house or used the telephone.

PETER VARNEY did not intend to use the telephone or slip out of the house in Blair's absence. His emotions had run their course. The storm, dying away, had

left him calm and rational. He returned to the paths of clear thinking he had traveled during the night. He felt that Blair or his backers would, before or soon after the election, try somehow to get him out of the way: Perhaps with an offer of money. If that failed, poison or a bullet.

The situation, he clearly perceived, had not changed. He would, sometime soon after the election, contrive to kill Blair, quietly and privately, before Blair could kill him.

He rang for Jerrido and ordered his breakfast. The devoted butler was pale, and his spaniel eyes were glassy with fear. His mistake had given him a bad scare. He would, Varney reflected, see to it that Jerrido stayed scared. . . .

Blair returned shortly after twelve, to find Varney seated at his desk, his fingertips pressed tightly together, his eyes fixed on the little landscape on the opposite wall.

This familiar attitude was abandoned the instant the door closed. Varney picked up the telephone and called the Hamiltons' number. He was asking presently for Miss Hamilton. Then, in a shocked voice: "She did? When?" There was a period of intent listening. "Thank you."

He hung up and looked at Blair.

"Felicia left for New York two hours ago. She's taking a trip around the world. She may be gone five months."

Blair waited for an emotional typhoon. The rogue said, with a cool smile: "Perhaps it's better to have her out of the way. Now we can give our undivided attention to the campaign."

His image quietly agreed. This was what he had anticipated.

THEODORE K. BLAIR had been spared, as a young man, the necessity of groping for a workable philosophy. His father provided it by reiterating, all his life, a viewpoint against which to check almost any process of thought or course of action.

"No matter what men say to you," Julius Blair said to him, when he was twenty-one, "keep in mind that all men except weaklings are after one thing: *power!* Once you have it, you'll never voluntarily relinquish it. You may throw away your health, your honor, even your wealth. But you'll never voluntarily give up power."

His son, being at the age when probing into the darker corners of the human mind was a melancholy necessity, wanted to know why some rich men commit suicide.

"Because they've lost power," was the ready answer. "I can't recall a single instance of a man's killing himself when he was, in his particular way, a power."

The only trouble with a ready-made philosophy, however workable, is that it doesn't fit everybody. Theodore K. Blair, reaching out many years later for more power than any one man in the world controlled, suspected that his father's philosophy was too harsh for him. Yet, because he had made it a part of him, he was enabled to judge men and weigh their motives with awful accuracy. He may have been a bungling amateur in the pursuit of love or happiness, but in his own domain he was a superman.

He saw through the guile of Peter Varney as the x-ray sees through human flesh. Having gone to some pains to explore it, he knew what was now in the rogue's selfish, romantic, turbulent mind. He knew why Varney had refrained from having an emotional typhoon, as he had known, some weeks ago, how Varney had felt when he set off that night to save the Prosperity Party by making love to Felicia and making peace with the Ingals woman. He had known how that taste of power had intoxicated Varney. And he knew now that Varney was aware of

his opportunity to seize power. A master-stroke! By quietly killing Blair soon after the election, Varney would acquire the Presidency, and with a clear field, Felicia.

Having perceived this, Blair was content to let matters stand. Varney would, with such high hopes, throw himself zealously into the campaign. And Varney's zeal was needed.

It would be a difficult campaign. Success depended on the hardest kind of work on the part of everyone in the organization.

Ronkton returned from California in a chartered plane. He was weary but enthusiastic. He had spent between four and five million dollars, putting Blair's nomination across.

"Those grafters have got so they expect big money," he said. "But I never in my life felt that I was spending money in a better cause. It was a big satisfaction, Blair, to know that, while I was out there on the firing-line, you were back here, detached from it all—the man who's going to save the country, probably the world! I had the feeling, with every dollar I paid, that it was clean money, spent in a big, clean cause! A noble cause!"

He thanked God reverently that Blair was a practical idealist.

"You won't make the mistakes that Woodrow Wilson made. You are, first of all, a practical business man. Blair, you are the one man I've known in my political career, I don't mind telling you, that I've really felt like fighting for. You're a great man, Blair. In my opinion, you are the greatest man living."

Blair reflected that the big boss had made no such extravagant statements previous to the convention. Having spent between four and five millions for him, Ronkton's respect for the party's choice had increased tremendously.

"I've been doing a lot of thinking, Blair. There's no place like a plane, at night, soaring over dark fields and the lights of cities, to do clear thinking. You're up there flying through space like a—like a star. It's simply wonderful how ideas come to you. I was thinking last night about that suggestion I once made—having a fake assassination just before the election. It's daring, Blair! It would drive the last rivet home!"

Blair pictured Ronkton, flying through space like a star, thinking of a fake assassination which would drive the last rivet home.

"It's too risky," he said. "It involves uncontrollable factors."

Ronkton was disappointed. "Of course, I wouldn't dream of doing it, or anything like it, without your consent; but you must remember that you haven't a political

mind. In politics, if we can't skin a cat one way, we skin it another. You disapproved of Varney at first. But if it weren't for Varney, we'd be licked before we started. Think what a man like Varney could have done for Hoover! Hoover brought a good brain to the White House, but he wouldn't play to the crowds. Can you imagine Hoover playing marbles with a bunch of boys in a vacant lot?"

Blair couldn't. "Are you suggesting that we use Varney after the election?"

"I certainly am."
"It will lead to endless complications."

"None that we can't handle. And there's your second term to think about."

"If my first is a success, we won't need Varney."

"My boy," Ronkton said indulgently, "you don't understand politics. Popularity is fickle. By playing up the warm, genial side of your personality—in other words, Varney—we will insure your popularity. He isn't so hard to handle. Leave him to me. He's really nothing but an impulsive kid. He has already forgotten Felicia."

"I'd like to have it definitely understood that we drop

him. No one can handle him."

Ronkton laughed. "Blair, you're biased. The truth is, you're just a little bit jealous of Varney. Let me attend to him. Save your mind for important things. Leave politics to me."

Blair had long ago measured the word *politics*. It was a large, convenient cloud. It was a smoke-screen into which Ronkton could dive and hide in any argument. It could be used to obscure any issue the Prosperity candidate brought up.

"I've decided," Ronkton went on, "that right after the Fusion nomination, we'll spring the dual-personality story. It will grab the imagination of the voters. And it will plug any rumors they may start about your private life."

"How about the Ingals murder?"

"Isn't that plugged already? Even if it weren't, my publicity campaign would make it ridiculous. The public already knows that you are a thinking-machine. I'm going to play up the other side of your amazing personality—the little boy side. I'm going to put you across as Teddy."

"Kissing kiddies?"

"Blair, you shouldn't," the big boss reproved him, "take that cynical attitude. There's no trick I won't stoop to



Murchison was devoting all his time to the Ingals murder case . . . studying files of police reports.

to put you in the White House. The Fusionists are going to put up Ambassador Lang. No doubt about it. He's popular—he's mighty popular—because he comes from the masses, and everybody knows he wears twenty-dollar suits and smokes five-cent cigars. We've got to combat that. We can lick him if we play our cards right. But you mustn't be critical of the methods I use."

"I understand," Blair said. "It's politics."

AMBASSADOR HUMBERT LANG was, a week later, named the Fusion Party's choice for President, and the campaign was on.

It was a country-wide, personal-contact campaign.

The two mighty political machines went into action.

Ronkton's publicity department gave out, as its opening shot, the dual-

in still another orphan-asylum; as he played with a wire-haired fox terrier that did tricks, as he rode an old farm-horse bareback, and as he proved his democracy in the scores of similar doings which the fertile minds of the Prosperity publicity department were busily inventing. Every close-up showed his warm, magnetic smile, and the loud speakers reproduced his warm, magnetic voice.

Vote for Lang, the simple-hearted man of the people!

Vote for Blair, the thinker with the heart of a child!

Let Lang's integrity and political experience

pull the country out of the depression!

Let Blair's brilliant brain save the

nation! If you want prosperity

back, vote for Lang! If you want

prosperity restored, vote for

Blair! Back to Better Business

with Lang! Out of the

Bog with Blair! Vote

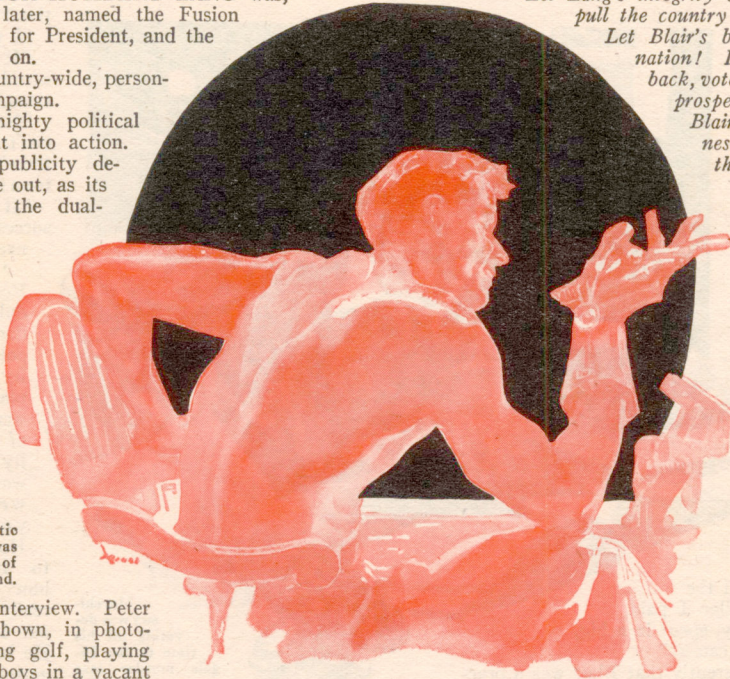
for Lang—he wears

two-dollar shoes!

Vote for Blair—he

gives apples to

horses!



Martin Drum spent election night working on the automatic pistol which was an integral part of his new steel hand.

personality interview. Peter Varney was shown, in photographs, playing golf, playing marbles with boys in a vacant lot, holding in his arms the elfish inmate of an orphan-asylum, sitting on the grassy bank of a creek with a bamboo fishing-pole.

But the photograph that most amused Blair was one of Varney giving an apple to a skeptical-looking horse. For the serious-minded minority, and to prove that the Prosperity Candidate did have two sides to his nature, there was a photograph showing Blair seated at his desk, with fingertips pressed together, in the thoughtful attitude by which the American public had previously known him. But the Ronkton publicity machine touched this side of his nature very lightly. It was too busy combating Candidate Lang's twenty-dollar ready-made suits, his twenty-five-cent neckties, his five-cent cigars and his humble assertions that all he wanted was the chance to help his beloved country.

Ambassador Lang gave out his simple, homely statements to the press, and was ecstatically written up by magazines of his political color. He spoke over the radio and in the talkies in a slow, agreeable drawl, of the great nobility of the American people, of his willingness to give himself to the task of lifting this unconquerable nation of ours back into the sunlight.

The lighter side of the Prosperity candidate's nature was meanwhile revealed, as he kissed babies in the presence of news-reel cameras, played baseball with the tots in an orphan-asylum, played hopscotch with the tots in another orphan-asylum, gave a hot-dog party to the tots

shook hands with thousands of Americans, flashed his warm, winning smile, and recited the speeches which Blair wrote for him.

These speeches followed Varney by air-mail, and sometimes by telegraph: clever speeches, thoughtful speeches, brilliant speeches, speeches which routed the attacks of the popular but not brilliant Lang.

Blair wished that he could get some satisfaction out of the knowledge that it was his brilliance that was making Varney's campaign so successful. But he could not. Reason told him that his mental ability was the more admirable thing, but what he really wanted, what made him almost sick with envy, was the quality in Varney which was making the country go mad over him. He hated the enforced loneliness, and he detested the tawdry methods which the publicity department was using in order to win the votes of the great gullible majority, or, as Ronkton would have said, the hearts of the great American people.

A political prisoner, Blair was at last a martyr. Yet the saving boon of martyrdom was still denied him. He could not feel sorry for himself. He cut, in his own imagination, a ridiculous figure.

There was no doubt, however, that Ronkton's methods had performed a miracle. Until recently no man, woman or child, had called Blair anything but Theodore, T.K., Mr. Blair, or Blair. He was now known familiarly to truck-

drivers, to sheep-herders, to coal-miners, to delicatessen-clerks, to factory-workers—to one hundred and thirty million Americans—as Teddy.

CHAPTER XXII

JERRIDO and Senator Pitcairn, separated by some twenty-five hundred miles, simultaneously made a dismaying discovery. The devoted butler, laying a batch of morning papers on Blair's desk, called his master's attention to some of Varney's recent photographs, taken on the Western tour.

"He looks very thin to me, sir. Aren't those circles under his eyes? They seem to be in every picture. It couldn't be a shadow in every picture."

Blair was comparing the newspaper photographs when a coded telegram from Seattle, Washington, came to Jerido for him. It was from Thaddeus Pitcairn, the vice-presidential nominee, who was again "riding herd" on Varney. The message said that Varney was still brooding over Felicia Hamilton.

It was the eventuality which Blair had dreaded: the loss of Varney's resemblance to him.

The telegram, decoded, read:

"He has lost weight and has circles under his eyes. Is eating practically nothing. Refuses to sleep regularly. Am convinced he is doing this deliberately, to make you stay in hiding indefinitely. Newspaper correspondents are sending out story tonight on injurious effects of campaign trip on his health. Am very much worried."

"Stop worrying," was Blair's answer. "Am going on reducing diet. He can't win."

But when the campaign party returned to Steel City, Varney was still the thinner of the two, and there were still shadows in the flesh under his eyes. He differed shockingly from Blair. Obviously, it would be impossible for Blair to appear in public until their likeness was restored.

With Varney's haggard appearance went a new assurance, a greater arrogance. A little wistfully, Blair wondered if the cheers of the multitude had done this.

Ronkton and Pitcairn were exasperated. The "impulsive boy" had been hard to manage. Meaty incidents of the trip came out as Ronkton stormed up and down the Bokhara rug, chewing a stump of a cigar. They hadn't told Blair, at the time, because they hadn't wanted to worry him.

In Denver, Varney had gone on a drinking-bout lasting for three days. In Phoenix, Arizona, he had deliberately given the wrong speech. He had, in Hollywood of all places, vanished for an entire night. He made whoopee again in Salt Lake City. If the newspaper men on the train hadn't been such darned good sports, the public would have learned some mighty damaging things about the Prosperity candidate. It was almost a scandal.

"He was more damned trouble," Ronkton summed it up, "than a prima donna."

The rogue, listening to the impeachment with his amiable smile, asked him if he wasn't satisfied with the net results.

"I've fondled enough babies and shaken enough hands to kill an ordinary man."

That, Ronkton angrily answered, wasn't the point. "You're going to snap out of it right now. You're going to start fattening up, and you're going to keep regular hours. Election is day after tomorrow. The big radio speech is tomorrow night. It will take all your energy to put that speech over."

Nonchalantly, Varney shrugged. "I'm not worrying."

Ronkton snorted exasperatedly.

"I wish to God you were! It's the most important job you've ever had. We haven't got Lang licked by any means. That speech must drive home every nail in the platform. You've got to be on your tiptoes. Now, you get to bed and get some sleep. —Blair, how long will that speech run?"

"Just under an hour."

"Anything else on for tomorrow night?" Ronkton inquired.

"A short speech at the Women's Federation Building. At nine."

"And the big speech is at eleven. That's shaving it too close. It's a lousy shame. One of our main objects in bringing Varney into this was to split up the work. It's impossible for you to see those women. Varney will have to do that."

"I might," Blair suggested, "give the speech."

"No, Blair. It's much too important. We need Varney's warmth and color. Everybody in the country will be tuned in on that speech. It will be the biggest hook-up in the history of radio. It's being re-broadcast all over the world."

"It will take me all day to study that speech," the rogue said. "Why not cancel the women's meeting? To hell with the women!"

"Those ladies are," Senator Pitcairn icily reminded him, "the leaders of the Prosperity Women's League. They've done wonderful work. It would be a deliberate insult to cancel the meeting. You'll have at least an hour to rest up for the radio speech."

Blair saw clearly that his election still depended on Varney, on Varney's popular appeal, his warmth, the magnetism of his rich voice. The political prisoner had lost his importance. He had longed, in his isolation, for human contacts. The only men with whom he could freely talk seemed hardly aware of his existence. Even in Senator Pitcairn's attitude, Blair sensed indifference. Varney, not he, was important.

Blair had labored for weeks in preparing that radio speech. It embodied his clearest, most vigorous thinking on national and international issues. Yet he was, compared to Varney, of little importance. He foresaw a future in which he became less and less important. Varney had become the man, he the shadow. . . .

The rogue, lying awake in bed, hours later, saw all this quite as clearly. On the first of his campaign trips, the inspiration had come to him to lose weight, gradually to change his appearance. He knew that Blair, no matter how rigorously he dieted, could not duplicate his appearance. And as long as the disparity existed, the future for Peter Varney was secure.

CHAPTER XXIII

HARVEY RONKTON, determined to drive home every nail in the Prosperity platform, had had arrangements made for the most comprehensive hook-up in the history of broadcasting. It would exceed, in the number of stations engaged, and the number of kilowatts released into the ether, the colossal Lindbergh hook-up.

All day, while Blair and Varney remained in their living-quarters, Varney studying the speech, Blair making last-minute changes in it, radio engineers were at work in the library, installing and testing microphones and controls to be plugged into the special wires which ran from Blair's house to the Steel City studios.

The speech was to go on the air at eleven-five. It would go out, via telephone circuits, over the New England net-

work, the Round Robin, the Dixie network, and the Don Lee chain of the Columbia Broadcasting System, and the Red and Blue networks of the National Broadcasting Company. Because of the world-wide interest in the campaign, the speech would be re-broadcast as well to Europe, South America, New Zealand, Australia, Africa and the Orient.

Peter Varney's magnetic voice, addressing the civilized world for fifty-five minutes, would lighten the Prosperity campaign chest to the extent of thirty-five thousand dollars.

THE feminine cheering which welcomed Peter Varney to the auditorium stage in the Women's Federation Building continued for fifteen minutes. His youth, his attractiveness, had made him a popular candidate with women. He had a special smile, a special tone of voice, for audiences composed of women. He appealed to their imaginations. He would, in the event of his election, be the youngest man ever to occupy the White House.

Ambassador Lang, backed by the Fusion publicity machine, had assailed the Prosperity candidate's youth, his capitalistic background, and his bachelorhood. Blair, in the speeches he had written for Varney, had ingeniously twisted all three into assets.

Beginning his speech of thanks to the Prosperity Women's League, the rogue was suddenly aware of a pair of eyes gazing up at him electrically from a slim tanned face in the eighth row on the aisle. Felicia!

He lost, simultaneously, his color and his sequence. He stammered, coughed, fumbled for the words—got going again. But his mind was no longer on what he was saying. Although he had watched the papers, he had seen no references to her return.

He raced, stumbling, through the speech, paused the shortest possible time to thank Mrs. Chapman and her committee for their loyalty, and plunged into the crowd. Automatically he smiled, bowed—smiled, bowed. Women surrounded him, plucked at his hands. They were still cheering. He had to push them aside roughly to reach Felicia.

He finally reached her and grabbed an elbow. He said into her ear:

"I've got to see you. I've got to talk to you."

Her clear eyes were lifted. She looked thinner. He wondered if she had suffered, too. She must have suffered.

"If you can get me out of this mob."

"Let me take you home."

"All right."

Smiling, bowing, smiling, bowing, he pushed her ahead of him. In Blair's limousine, he burst out: "Darling! I've missed you so!" He said harshly to the chauffeur: "Drive out into the country."

His face was burning. He felt light-headed. He couldn't think at all. He was shaking with excitement.

"Aren't you scheduled to make a radio speech?" Felicia asked.

"The devil with that! The devil with everything!

When did you get back? Did you miss me? It nearly killed me when I heard you'd gone. I tried and tried to reach you."

"T.K., you're amazing."

He tried to gather her into his arms. She coolly, stiffly resisted.

"Don't," she said. "I mean it!" But she let him take her hand. He squeezed it and kissed it, palm and back.

"Look at me!" he cried. "I love you. I adore you! Just look what it's done to me! You've forgotten those ridiculous things I said. I must have been mad. Darling, you know I couldn't love anyone else. Don't you?"

Felicia shook her head.

"I'll never forget them, T.K."

HARVEY RONKTON, seated at Blair's desk, was making frantic inquiries at a telephone.

"When did he leave? Are you sure? Are you quite sure?"

He jumped up and shook his fists. Niles De Kay, and Senators Pitcairn and Melrose, watched him anxiously. Two young radio engineers across the room, smoking cigarettes, looked bored.

"He went off with Felicia Hamilton! God knows where!"

"NO," Felicia said. "I don't blame you. I never blamed you."

"Then you do love me."

"I don't. I did—but I don't any more."

"But don't you see it's killing me? Don't you realize I was out of my head? There's never been anyone but you."

"It's getting late. You'll miss that speech."

"I don't care."

Felicia picked up the speaking-tube. "Drive to Mr. Blair's house. Quickly."

IT now lacked six minutes of the hour, the thirty-five-thousand-dollar hour, in which Peter Varney was supposed to drive home all the nails in the Prosperity Party's platform.

Ronkton, the two Senators and the boss of the Middle West were huddled in a far corner of the library, near the door. They were whispering.

"We can't," Ronkton reiterated, "use Blair."

"Blair would spoil everything," Senator Melrose echoed.

"Then we're smashed," Pitcairn panted. "We'll have to use Blair."

"But these radio men—" De Kay growled. "They'll recognize the difference. Spill the beans. Varney may come rushing in—"

"Jerrido could head him off—"

"It's four of, gentlemen," one of the engineers said.

The door, opening, admitted Jerrido, pale, perspiring, panting.

"He's coming!" he cried. "Here he comes!"

The rogue, thin-lipped, ugly-eyed, walked in. Four furious men, ignoring the radio engineers, barked questions.

"Go to hell," Varney tersely said. "Where's that speech?"

"It's eleven, gentlemen. We're on the air!"



A repeater had been installed in the living-quarters, so that Blair could hear the speech as it went on the air. It had been connected, in fact, for the entire evening, so that Blair was aware of Varney's lateness and the reason therefor.

Half-sick with anxiety, the prisoner still had wondered what Varney had said to Felicia and what Felicia had said to Varney.

With Varney's first words over the circuit, he knew. Varney was furious. His voice shook with feeling. It lent to Blair's brilliant views on national and international issues a fervor, an emotional quality, which gave them the sincerity of opinions thundered from a pulpit. The nails in the Prosperity platform were being hammered home by a woman's romantic idealism.

CHAPTER XXIV

DAN MURCHISON spent election night seated in an old rocking-chair beside his radio set. He smoked one cigar after another and listened with cold eyes to the returns. The regular program was frequently interrupted by the announcer, who, in the McNamee manner, breathlessly read bulletins:

"Denver, Colorado. Lang six thousand. Blair five thousand. Returns from upper New York State are just coming in. Albany: Lang two thousand five hundred. Blair two thousand eight hundred. Well, folks, we'll have another little song now from Sally Sloane, the Satin Ice-cream Hour's Singin' Sweetie."

The detective smoked and listened and rocked. Each time Blair's name was mentioned, a shadow flitted over his eyes.

Dan Murchison had resigned from the Springfield police force. He was devoting all his time to the Chester Ingals murder case. When he was not tracking down new clues, he was studying the fifteen files of police reports. To track down the murderer of Chester Ingals had become an obsession with Dan Murchison. His professional pride, his very honor, was involved. He was determined to devote the rest of his life, if necessary, to solving the mystery.

At ten o'clock, it was beginning to look as though Theodore K. Blair might be elected.

FELICIA HAMILTON spent election night in bed, with an extension from the radio set downstairs on the table beside her. She lay back in her pillows, with her eyes closed, listening to the returns, and wondering what she was going to do about Theodore K. Blair.

The radio announcer's voice went on:

"Here's some returns, friends, from the mellifluous Mississippi. St. Louis. Lang 3,250. Blair 4,163. It's still a fight, friends. Are we gonna get outa the bog with Blair, or back to better business with Lang? While we're

waiting for more returns, how's for another duet by that famous team, Lock and Lee, generously loaned to us tonight by Old Field Cigarettes? The boys say they'll give us, 'Jazz Up Your Lingerie!'"

The trip around the world had not driven Blair from Felicia's thoughts. She had lost, in those five months, her ability to elude unhappiness. Away from him, she was unhappy. Yet she was sure that marriage with this turbulent stranger would only result in a lifetime of unhappiness. . . .

At ten-thirty, it was evident that Theodore K. Blair would win the election.



KATE INGALS spent election night in Ciro's, in Paris, drinking with Leon Zarinov. She was no longer, however, Kate Ingals, but Mrs. Russell Boardman, widow of an Oklahoma oil millionaire.

Leon Zarinov looked much less Russian than French. His English had a French tinge. He was young and very good-looking. He talked charmingly, made love delightfully, danced divinely.

They were drinking champagne. Ciro's was full of Americans, drinking champagne. It was a big night.

At two o'clock in the morning, Paris time, it became much bigger. The news leaped from table to table that Theodore K. Blair, the American industrial wizard, the anomaly—the thinker with the heart of a child—had been elected

President of the United States.

Kate Ingals splashed champagne over her pearl necklace as she sprang up with the rest and drank to Blair.

When the noise had subsided a little, she made herself heard to Leon Zarinov.

"That man," she said, "that man who's jus' been elected President—I know him well."

"Really?" said Leon Zarinov.

"Yes—and he didn't always call himself Theodore K. Blair. Oh, I know, I know."

The Russian had become tremendously interested. But Kate Ingals would tell him no more. What she had told him was, however, sufficient.

MARTIN DRUM spent election night in the tiny workshop next to the coalbin in his cellar, listening to the returns as they issued from the fiber throat of the wonderfully compact radio set he had built.

He was working that night on the twenty-five-caliber automatic pistol which was an integral part of his new steel hand.

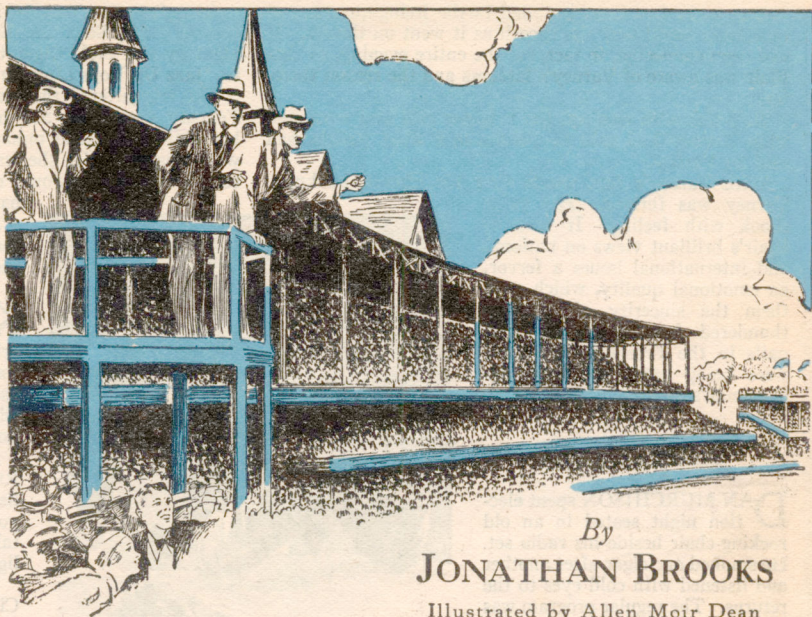
He was patiently grinding down, with an oilstone, a part of the mechanism, so that, with only one pull of the trigger, all nine shots in the magazine would be fired in split-second succession.

Sometime after midnight, Martin Drum became aware that Theodore K. Blair had carried the United States by a landslide.

With ever-mounting power this much-talked-about novel progresses to even more dramatic situations in the forthcoming chapters. Watch for it in the next, the March, issue, on sale February 1st.

Truly Run

This vivid story is told after the plan of Robert Browning's famous "The Ring and the Book." But don't let that frighten you, for it's a lively and colorful tale of the race-track just the same.



By
JONATHAN BROOKS

Illustrated by Allen Moir Dean

FOUR champions battling desperately" (quoting George Daly's bold-face lead in the *Journal's* extra) "carried their nerve-straining struggle right down to the finish in the great Derby. Seventy thousand people screamed in mad excitement. Winken, Nod, Blinken and Blucher, running ear to ear as if they were *Ben Hur's* fine team of old, leaped for the goal, nostrils distended. Then at the last, as they flashed past the thin white line, it was seen that the best horse had won, in a race truly run; for—"

Truly run? Before we get down to that final frenzied leap for the sixty-thousand-dollar goal, let us see:

The four contenders, as listed in the program, were:

"Winken, ch.c.; owner, A. J. Dohertie; trainer, A. Sloof; jockey, Malone.

"Nod, b.c.; owner, the Wilson Farm; trainer, Miss Leona Wilson; jockey, J. Way.

"Blinken, ch.c.; owner, A. J. Dohertie; trainer, A. Sloof; jockey, B. Walker.

"Blucher, bl.c.; owner, Major Downing; trainer, O. Blausenvelt; jockey, Gellig."

MISS WILSON, of the Wilson Farm, a soft-eyed, soft-voiced beauty from the Bluegrass, could throw no light on that rousing, heart-quickenng finish. She seemed exhausted by the day's emotions.

"They were all whipping and spurring, except Jakie Way, on Nod," she said with a shudder. "They all came flying as if harnessed together, but only Jakie was hand-riding. He could not win, that way. But I hoped he would not have to use that brutal whip, after Nod had come on so well, and so gamely. Then it seemed that he would have to, and—must I admit it?"

"I am a little ashamed, for I grew up among horses and horsemen. Yes, and I had to be my own trainer, this year. But right at the finish,—since you insist,—I had to close my eyes! I was afraid. I could not bear— And I did not see the finish at all—to know who won!"

She smiled in a manner meant to be sheepish, but which turned out to be merely charming instead. . . .

YOU can quote me as saying Miss Wilson has a fine colt," A. J. (Sport) Dohertie reluctantly told his interviewer, later in the evening after America's great race. "Major Downing's Blucher is also a very speedy horse, and looked to win, twice. But give me *my* entry, every time. There are no better colts anywhere than my pair, Winken and Blinken! Have you ever seen a better finish than those two chestnuts put on? No, and you won't, soon!"

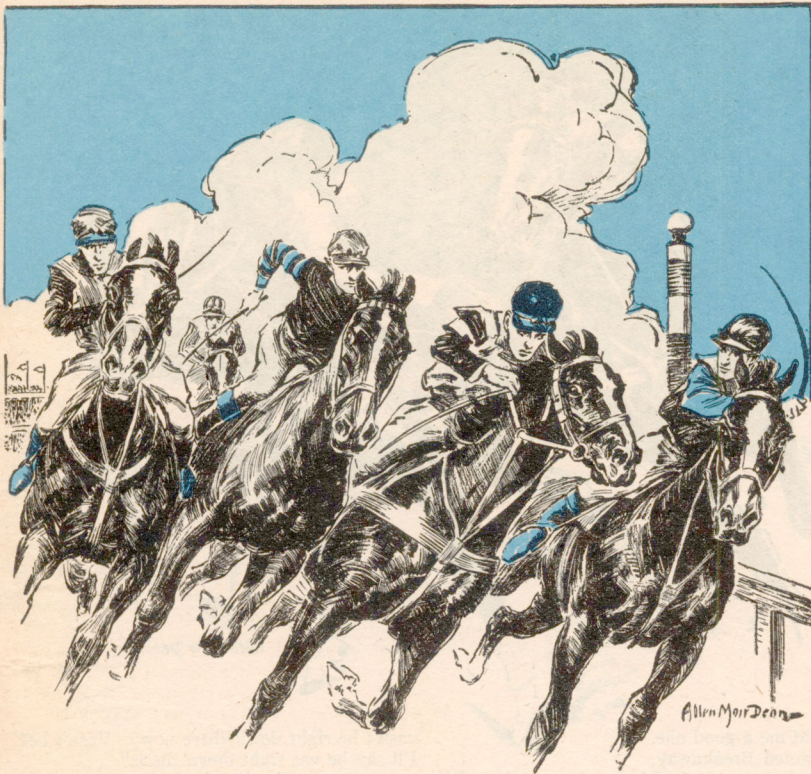
"The way those four went to it, right down to the last whispering whisker—man, it was a sight to stir your very pocketbook! I do not hide the fact I wanted to win this Derby, for it meant more than anything else in the world to me!"

"How do you mean, Mr. Dohertie?" he was asked.

"Well, look here," the oil and candy magnate explained, ringing for a waiter. "I've made my pile by working hard and taking chances. People think I'm a sure-thing player, but that's not so. In sport, it's the same thing; I'll take any risk any sporting man takes. Here I've laid out two hundred thousand for a big breeding and training farm, bought the best blood money can buy, and hired the best training and riding talent to be found. Why? Because I play like I worked—hard! I made good among folks that work; I'll make good among these decent people that play, with horses—see?"

"All right, what do these people want? Why, to win the Derby! That puts 'em down in history, and it puts me down, too. So I've gone to a lot of expense—not that I mind it. I've got Archie Sloof, the Englishman, who is the smartest trainer anywhere, they tell me. I've got B. Walker and Pig Malone, the crack jockeys. Now, this spring when they tell me my other colts are not good enough to grab the Derby, what do I do? Why, I go out and buy the best that money can buy! Winken and Blinken, them chestnuts, both by Man o' War's brother, and they set me back plenty! What? Well, it was in six figures; that's all I'll say.

"The rest of it is no mystery. Everybody knows I was crazy to win this Derby. The biggest kick I ever got



in all my life—and I've had plenty, in oil and the markets—was the kick I got this afternoon when them four great colts come galloping down to the end, fighting like gladiators, or something—and my two chestnuts right with them! Winken and Blinken—man, it was a thrill! I'm glad I got good arteries and a tough old heart. You take the way they fought, and my colts—"

Mr. Dohertie's tough old heart must have missed a beat, for he suddenly paused. Under questioning, however, and following a highball there in his room in the exclusive old club, he presently continued. Everybody, it appeared, who knew anything about the Derby, knew how anxious he was to win it. Everybody, too, knew the chances he took:

"When I go out for a thing, it's all right with me if the whole world knows what I'm after," he bravely declared. "That's just what I told young John Blackledge, in the bank, back home. Yes, I call the Bluegrass home, now. I've got my own place, five hundred acres of Bluegrass, and the finest racing plant anywhere, right there. Bought a house in town, too. What's more, I bought some stock in young Blackledge's bank, because I think a man ought to be part of the business world where he is. Besides, a man is entitled to have his fingers in things, if he's not dead. A live one, a go-getter, wants to be in on whatever makes the world move, see?"

"But as you were saying to Mr. Blackledge—"

"What? Oh, yes." Mr. Dohertie rubbed his curled black mustache with a fat hand before continuing. "Why, we were talking, and it was about the Derby, which is all I've thought about for months and months. I told him I'd move heaven and earth to win this Derby. I told him the way I am, I will smash anything that gets in my

way when I'm after something I want. It was that way in oil, and it was like that in the candy combine I organized. Take chances, to win: if you win, be a good sport; but if you lose, the same. That's how they nicknamed me 'Sport.' Win if you can; don't squawk if you lose. That's what I told Blackledge. I said to him:

"John, you take this bank, where I'm part owner. It's a nice bank, with good people. I'm glad I'm in. But listen, Blackledge," I said, just like that. "If this bank, for instance, got in the way of my winning the Derby, why, I'd just naturally bust the bank! It'd hurt me, and my new friends, but if I had to do it to win this Derby, for example, why, I'd do it, and never bat an eye!"

"That's what I told Blackledge, see? He knew how I felt. But then, everybody else knew, too."

"Everybody?" This question did not fill the gap while Mr. Dohertie poured two more highballs.

"Certainly, everybody!" he exclaimed, glass in hand.

"They all knew it! You take Major Downing—and there's a good sport. He sees which way the cat jumps, and if he can't jump the same way, he gets out of the road, see? I said to Downing:

"Major, I'd give half the stakes, if I could win this Derby. You people down here are used to the Derby, and maybe it's old stuff to you, but it's new stuff to me, and big stuff! If I could win it, I'd gladly give half the sixty grand to the man that helped me. That's how anxious I am to win, see?"

"What did Major Downing say?"

"Hmph? Oh, I'm not sure. Something about half of sixty grand being thirty thousand. Oh, yes, he knew how much I wanted to win. Why, I said to him:

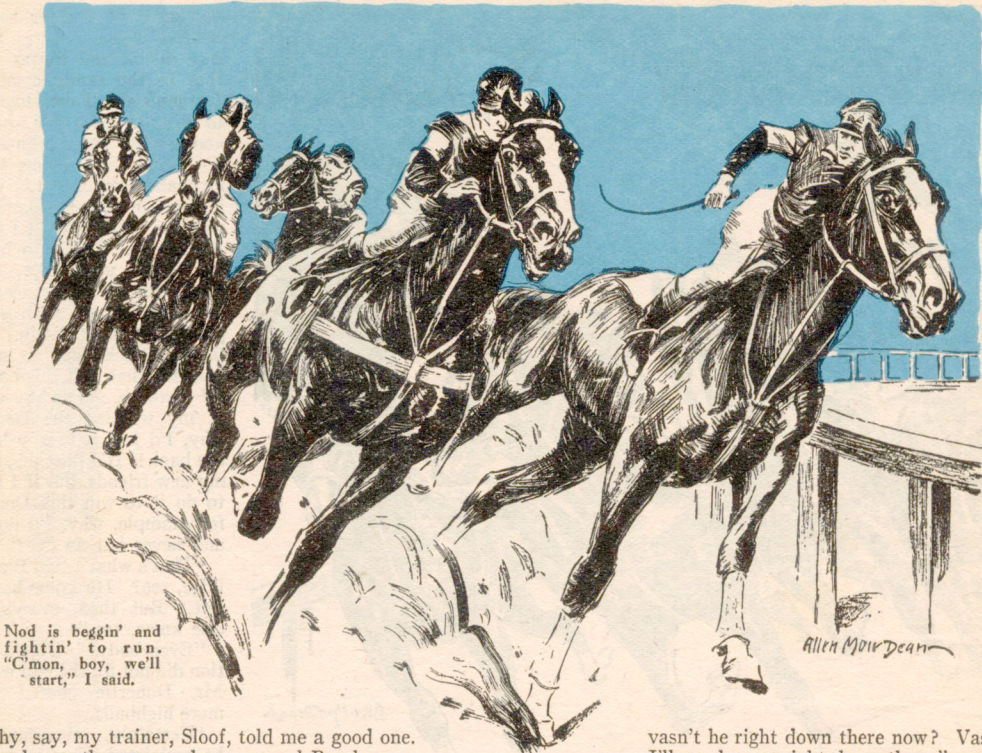
"Major, if I were you and owned a sprinter like this black horse Blucher, of yours, do you know what I'd do? I'd tell my jock to take him out in front early and run the legs off these other sprinters, like Nod—so some decent distance horses could have a clear track to come on and win."

"That's what I told Downing, and he laughed. He knows I'm a good sport, and take reasonable chances. Well, I took a chance: I bought Winken and Blinken, two distance-running fools, instead of playing safe and buying one sprinter and one distance-runner!

"And that was how I felt about it! This Derby is a long race, and distance-runners ought to win it. Of course, sprinters have been winning it, now and then—but if one does this year, I'm out of luck, that's all! I took a chance. Why?"

Another highball helped produce the reason.

"Because I wanted to win! I'm crazy to win this Derby: I'll do anything, reasonable. So will everybody in my outfit. They all get the old winning drive, from me!



Nod is beggin' and
fightin' to run.
"C'mon, boy, we'll
start," I said.

Why, say, my trainer, Sloof, told me a good one. You know, there was a horse named Breakaway, supposed to be in this Derby; but was he? Listen—he hasn't finished yet! Sloof said our two jocks, Malone and Walker, got a hold of the boy that rides this Breakaway, and told him if Breakaway hung around the front of this race *any* time, they'd kill him!

"I had to laugh at these little devils for their joke," the big man chuckled loosely. "But it just shows you, when a man wants to win and goes all the way, his people do the same! Yes sir! And when we go out to make a horse-race, there's a horse-race."

"But this afternoon, with this black Blucher, and this Nod, and my Winken and Blinken, coming down to the finish, nose and nose, tail and tail! I tell you, it's—well, what is a man going to say? Nothing. It makes your hair and tongue stand on end!"

"Is there anything else you can be quoted as saying?"

"Quoted? Who said anything about quoting? Say—but never mind. A. J. Dohertie is a man everybody knows for speaking his mind. I'll take a chance on getting in wrong, just like I always take chances. That's me! I'll take a chance; if I win, O. K. Lose? No squawk!"

"Just put this down: I'll not say I think the best horse won! But if any of these other owners think they can beat Winken and Blinken, we'll take 'em on, any time, anywhere, for marbles, chalk, money, or even some of these no-good farm mortgages! And we'll run 'em ragged again."

"BLUCHER run a grand race. I always knew he vas a good colt, but nobody else supposed he vas so goot as this. Quick breaker? Ye-ah, he's as fast away from the gate as Bradley's Baffling vas, avhile pack. Up to seven-eighths of a mile, there's nothing can stay vith him. Nobody knew he coult garry his foot so far! And

vasn't he right down there now? Vasn't he? I'll say he vas right down there."

Ossie Blausenvelt, Major Downing's old German trainer, waxed indignant that somebody might think Blucher had not been right down there. No one in the crowded lobby of the big hotel on the corner paid any attention to him, except his interviewer. The lobby overflowed with alibis, arguments, might-have-beens, and Derby night celebrations of all kinds.

"He grasps the lead, right outa these funny stalls, and he brings all of 'em all the way home! If I'd had *my* vay—"

"But whose way did you have?"

"Listen: a owner aint any sense about horses," Mr. Blausenvelt began to reason. "How shoult he? But ven we work for him, he's got the say. So he tells me, he says: 'Ossie, you haf the boy take Blucher off on the run. You haf him run the legs off this colt Nod, early, you see, Ossie?' Of course I see, for it's plain as the noes in a dry reverendum! Sure, I said, if them's orders, but—'Now, listen, Ossie, no but's,' he tells me. So that is that, and them's orders. So ve do so—"

"Blucher *did* run the legs off a lot of colts!"

"Aint he, though? But ve knew he coult do it. That's vat I vas telling Miss Wilson ven she stopped py the farm vun day. She stops to choke vit me, and she ask me vy ve spent our goot money to start Blucher in this Derby. I say to her, Blucher vill run Nod and the rest dizzy before the race is half ofer, and then Blucher vil chust coast on home."

"He ran 'em dizzy, but they wouldn't let him coast?"

"Chust like I knowed he coult do—he run *all* the vay! And if ve hadn't gommittid suicides in the early paces—"

"Grand race, and one battle—"

"Ve knew, but Major Downing, he didn't know, that Blucher—" But here Blausenvelt's indignation got the better of him again. He choked.

"OH, yeah? That's hooey! Everything's set, see? We come down to the line, all of us nose and eye. A hole on the rail, then this Nod, then me and Blinken, and outside o' us, this black Blucher, dyin' as fast as his jock will let him!"

"He was with you all the way, wasn't he?"

"Sa-ay, who's tellin' this, you or me? I'm goin' good in this crap-game, and I'll get back in it, and you can go to— All right, I'm tellin' yuh! Pig Malone brings Winken up in this hole, and things are made to order. Just like Sloof said, see? The race is in! But what happens? I'll tell you what happens; it cost me plenty dough, and I'm sore, and don't care who knows it! We can pinch off this Nod colt, but this dirty little Pig Malone, he aint got the guts of a g-nat! That's what. He goes yelluh, and won't come through on the rail!"

"So that leaves it to me, and we've already run our legs off ketchin' this fool Blucher, and stavin' off Nod. I give Blinken the boot, and—well, you see us come past that old line, hey? *Some finish!* But I'm sayin' this, and it's about a guy I thought was game, a guy I thought was my buddy, too: if this lousy little Pig had of had the guts of a g-nat—"

Thus, jockey B. Walker.

JAKIE WAY was playing on the floor of his bungalow living-room, with his two baby girls. He acted more like a tired but happy shoe-clerk father on Saturday night with the grocer paid, than a jockey who had just ridden a grueling race in the hectic Derby.

"Hello," he said, holding a tot's arm by either hand. "Mamie!" he called; and when his wife came in from the kitchen, he added: "This is my wife—uh, Mrs. Way."

"Curiosity about the Derby brought—"

"Wasn't that a horse-race?" he asked, his eyes twinkling with the excitement of it. "Ever see a finish like that, before?"

"What's your slant on it, Jackie?"

"Well, I just laid back till we reached the last turn, and then I asked Nod what he had, and we went up there. That's all."

"And when you got there, found three runaways?"

"You saw 'em," he grinned, but soberly.

"And that was all there was to it?"

"What else would there be?" countered jockey J. Way.

"Nothing, if this were merely a newspaper Derby. But the truth—"

"I get you," said Jackie. "Mother, will you put the kids to bed? 'Night, kids, I'll tuck you in tomorrow night. All right, and Monday night too. Night-night! And come back in, Mamie, when you're through. I was going to tell you about it, anyhow. All right—but it's a long story."

"Longer than the Derby's mile and a quarter?"

"And more exciting."

Jackie Way took a box of fat after-dinner cigars off the phonograph cabinet, offered one, and then lighted it for himself. Leaning back in his Morris chair, he looked absurdly small behind the big perfecto, but surprisingly mature and intelligent.

"You see," he said, "I had just about quit riding. Been at it twelve years, and getting too heavy. I'm lining up a job as trainer, come June first, and didn't look for a mount in the big race. Getting down to one twenty-six is tough work for me, now."

"Smoking black cigars like that might help."

"This? Miss Wilson gave me that box," he grinned.

"For riding in the Derby? Little enough—"

"Oh, she give me a grand, too—all I'd take, from her. If she was rich, like Dohertie, or somebody like that—"

He shrugged. "There's a woman! For her, I'd ride to— Oh, well—anyhow, she's class."

"Sure, go ahead."

"Well, Miss Wilson comes out here ten days ago, after supper, and I'm not home. Mamie telephones around, and I'm at lodge hall. I come home, and Miss Wilson is waiting for me. She wants to know if I'll take a mount for the big race. I tell her I'm too heavy, and anyhow, I've saved some dough and am gonna grab a job as a trainer. But what mount, I ask?"

"My colt Nod," she says.

NOW, my nephew Ernie Way has been riding Nod. Rode him as a two-year-old, and rode him in the Bluegrass, at Lexington. Win, too. So I tell her I can't ooch Ernie outa the saddle. He's a good kid, and I've taught him all I know. He can ride better than most of these monkeys nowadays, who don't know a horse from a haddock.

"But I've talked with Ernie," she said, "and he suggested I ask you to ride. He wants you to, really. And I want you, too. I can't afford to pay you a big fee, but if you'll come out and work Nod his last few days, and then ride him in the Derby, I can pay you a thousand dollars."

"Well, that's not much of a fee, especially if you win, and I thought there must be something up."

"Win or lose?" I said.

"Yes, win or lose," she said. "If you win, I might give you more, but I can't promise. Ernie thought you'd help us out. We're managing everything, Ernie and I, for I can't afford a trainer nowadays."

"I'd have to take off about nine pounds," I said. "And there's only nine or ten days."

"Kids O. K.? Sit down, Mamie. Well, I didn't know what to do. She went right on, and asked me not to say anything, but to think it over, and to come down to the farm if I decided I could do it for them. I'm sitting here trying to figure it all out, when Mamie speaks up and says why don't I make one more ride. If I could win, she said, it would maybe help me land this trainer's job. Extra reputation."

"All right, I'll do it," I said.

"Fine—oh, fine," she said. "Ernie thought you would."

"I'll come out in a couple of days—plenty of time to get acquainted with the colt, and talk things over," I said.

"She was sure tickled. She acted like she wanted to kiss me, but instead she grabbed the girls and kissed them. So I went over in the country, out to her place. Started the old squeeze again, for the last time, I hope, and put it on good and heavy to be sure I got down to one twenty-six. Gosh, reducing's hell—excuse me, Mamie."

AFTER I've worked Nod three days, and get so I know the colt, and talk to Ernie, who's all hot about this scheme for me to ride, I sit in with him and Miss Wilson, and get the whole story. We're in the parlor, in her big house on the old Wilson farm.

"Jackie," she said, "we have to win this Derby!"

"That's a big order, ma'am," I said. "Dohertie's Winken and Blinken are good; and so's Blucher, and so's Breakaway—he's good, too."

"But we have to win," she said.

"Yeah, and Nod's a running fool, don't think he aint," speaks up Ernie. "Only, he wants to run his race the first six furlongs. Goes away from the gate like a bat outa—yeah. Trouble is, Uncle Jake, I can't hold him hard enough to rate him."

"He does give you a lot of pull," I said.

"Big race is eight furlongs," Ernie says. "If I ride, Nod will be through before a mile, for I can't hold him."

"There you are; that's our problem," Miss Wilson said.

"But if he's a front runner—" I began.

"He mustn't be," she said. "Because,—and don't tell anybody,—I've found out Blucher is going out to make the pace. He and Nod would race each other into the ground before the stretch, and something else would come on and win. And we've got to win!"

"How do you know about Downing's horse?" I asked her.

"Found out accidentally."

"But Downing's nobody's fool."

"He's playing around with Dohertie," Miss Wilson said. "John Blacklidge tells me something's up. Dohertie and Downing are stockholders in Mr. Blacklidge's bank, and they've been working."

"What has Blacklidge got to do with it?" I said. "Looked funny, to me, that he'd be mixed up in this, for he sold what was left of his dad's stables, years ago. Been out of racing."

"You're too good a detective," she laughed. "But I may as well tell you the whole story, Jakie. John Blacklidge is my— What is it, Mamie? *Fiancier? Financée?* Oh, well, she's engaged to him. 'But his bank is in bad shape, for the same reason I am poor just now, and all of us Bluegrass people are hard pressed. We haven't had rain since anybody can remember, Jakie, nor any real crops for years. The farms have almost burned up, each year. The bank has helped us all, and the result is, the bank's frozen."

"That's tough; but with this nice weather—"

"You don't understand, Jakie; the bank's assets are frozen—loaned on dried-up farms, and the farmers can't pay or reduce their loans. Now do you see? The bank is in a tight fix. Dohertie holds some stock, and so does Downing. Mr. Blacklidge tells me Dohertie has the Major under his thumb, as far as bank policies are concerned. Both are on the Board—but you wouldn't understand about that."

"I'm not as dumb as I look," I said.

"She laughed again. I tell you, this Miss Wilson is a doll, and a sport, don't think different! And game? Say! 'Now then,' she goes on, 'when Dad died, two years ago, there was a mortgage for fifty thousand dollars on the place. I've reduced it about five thousand, by selling some old mares.' We can't raise enough, these dry times, to feed, anyhow. Dohertie insists that Blacklidge get the mortgages paid in, or heavily reduced—this one included, or maybe especially; I don't know. Blacklidge refuses to call the loans, or take the farms from his old friends and customers. He says ruining the farmers won't help the bank, any more than ruining the bank would help the farmers!"

"Gosh, I've felt sorry for farmers," I said, "but never for bankers, before."

"But how can I, or any of us people, without rain or crops for years, pay anything? I ask you," Miss Wilson said.

"—But Downing don't know anything about banks—only horses," I said.

"Downing looks out for the Major. If playing ball with Dohertie is the way to look out for the Major, that's what Downing does," she said, with her smile. "That's what Mr. Blacklidge thinks. And I too."

"I WAS just trying to keep from swearing.

"You see, I need the stakes money," Miss Wilson goes on. "It will pay the mortgage on the place, helping me; and give the bank some working capital, helping John. And finally, you were right about Major Downing knowing horses."

"Yeah?" I said.

"He's wild to get Nod from me," she said. "He has offered me his twenty-five-thousand-dollar bank stock for him, and twenty-five thousand cash besides, if he wins the Derby! If the bank has more working capital, and I hold Downing's stock, Dohertie will be further from doing any damage to the bank—he's close to control when he has the Major's stock on his side! Now do you see—we've got to win!"

"Oh, Lord, we will win," I said.

"Why, this thing made me so sick, all this dirty frame—and all the time this little Miss Wilson she keeps a stiff upper lip, and her smile—and gameness shines right outa her eyes!"

"You're strong in the arms, and can hold Nod, and rate him, so Blucher will not run his legs off, early," says Miss Wilson. *Leona*, that's her name. Hardly more than a kid.

"You can do it, Uncle Jake!" says Ernie, excited. "And Miss Wilson and Mr. Blacklidge—"

"How's this, I ask you—for riding for crackers and milk?"

YOU know the Big Race (continued Jakie Way), and what it means. Eighteen colts, five of 'em standouts. Winken, and Nod, and Blinken, and Blucher, for Major Downing. Yes, and Breakaway. All right.

We parade, and back. The stalls are set. We head in. Did I say there was talk when it was announced that Uncle Jake, and not Ernie, was to ride Nod? There was, but never mind. This Pig Malone growls something at me, leaving the paddock, but I only grin at him. I've put him and Walker in their places, plenty, at Saratoga—yeah, and right down at Belmont, in their home town, too. Walker don't say anything.

We're in the stalls. We're gone! I give my bay colt Nod half a jump, so's we won't be caught in a jam, and then I take tight hold of his head, and work and swing in, over towards the rail. What?

Sure, that black cloud out yonder is Blucher—blowing away from us faster'n a cyclone. I suppose Gellig is looking for me, because it's a cinch he's got orders to run me and Nod into the ground. Miss Wilson says so, and says she knows.

Past the stand the first time, I'm layin' nice, back about tenth, comfortable and easy. Winken and Blinken are up ahead, settin' in behind the pace. Around the turn, I see first Malone and then Walker lookin' around, to locate me. Down the back-stretch, Blucher is burning up the babies on his tail, and they begin dyin' like flies.

I'm holdin' Nod with all I've got, for he wants to run. All heart and hindlegs, this bay baby, and he don't like it back here. But I hold him, and we pick our way around the bustin' balloons that drift back past us with their tails between their legs already. At the last turn Nod is beggin' and fightin' to run. I decide.

"C'mon, boy, we'll start," I said.

I give Nod half a wrap, or so. He jumps, and asks for more head. But he's already got enough to take us up outside of Winken and Blinken. That way around the turn, with this Blucher, out in front, wingin' wide and high. Never knew he had so much run! Suppose we can't ketch him; suppose we lose? But great gallopers, we got to win—for Miss Wilson, and to beat this Dohertie the Sport.

This reminds me, I better be watchin' these thugs riding for Dohertie, and it's a good thing I'm thinking. For a horse comes up outside me, as we swing on around the last turn.

"Oh-ho, here's Breakaway, at last!" I think. "Five-horse race!"

But no, it's not Break-away. I don't know what ever become of him. Far as I know, he wasn't in the race at all. No, it's Walker, on this Blinken! He's took back, from between the rail and Winken, and now Walker brings Blinken up outside o' me!

"Just when I'm thinkin' I'm free from a pinch," I groan to myself. "They've got me, unless I ride! And Nod runs!"

It's sure time to go, and go plenty, for Blucher must have gone crazy! He's still runnin' free, towin' us, holdin' his lead. So I give Nod his head, gradual, not too quick, and then I give him my heels, hard, and we're wingin'. On our way! Boy, how that bay baby can run! Somehow my holdin' him has saved his early speed, for he's got it all. Put the sprint on the end, not the front, see? We go after Blucher, fast. And an eighth out, I've collared the black colt. We're head and head for a good old two-horse finish—and we'll win! Yeah? Yeah! Blucher all of a sudden swerves a little to the right, and—you've guessed it. Whippin', yellin', kickin' and ding-dongin', Malone and Walker rush Winken and Blinken up on both sides of me! Blucher takes abold again—I never saw a sprinter last like that, and holler for more! Malone and Walker are ridin' better'n they know how, and here come the *four* of us, like a team! If you think seventy thousand nuts were excited, what about us poor little devils on these wild-eyed runaways?

"*C'mon, Nod, c'mon!*" I talk to him.

I sit down and ride, for home and higher! Lift and shove, swing and roll, help him all I can—and he goes! But so do the others—reach and drive! And there's the old white line, jumpin' up in our faces.

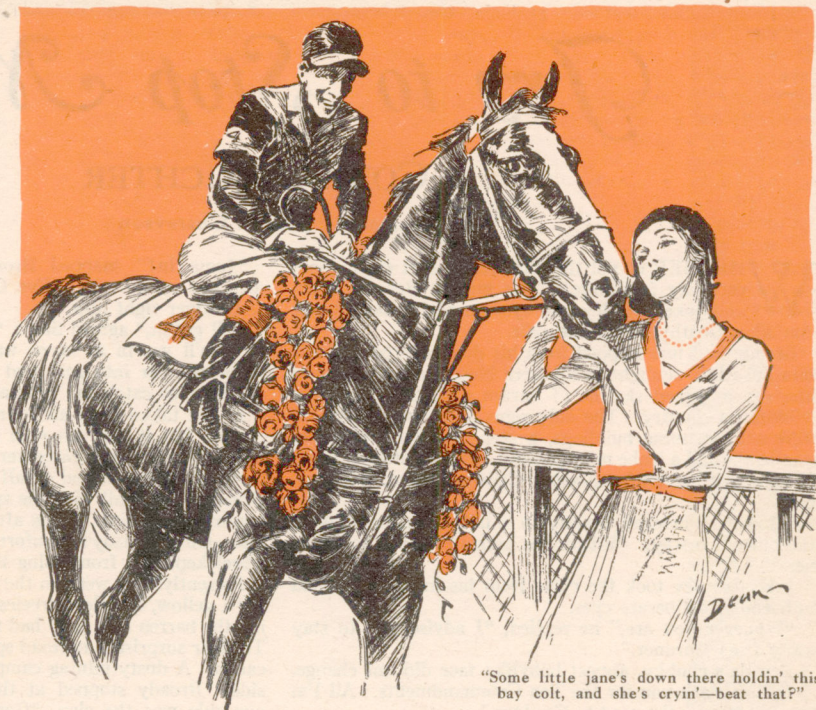
And just that minute, all at once, quicker'n you can breathe, Blucher, he fades a little, wilts; Blinken leans over on me, on my right, and Pig Malone, on Winken, hollers some dirt at me, other side. I grab Nod's head for one last fling at the line, and—Lord help us, for Leona Wilson, the bank and the farm! And Sport Dohertie, let us help him get what he deserves!

I sling Nod's head, and just when I throw him one last time, why, we sorta slide away, melt, slip, and oh, gosh, I don't know! Can't see. Nor hear, for the terrible noise.

But you saw it. You saw it, y'rself!

JOCKEY MALONE deposes: "Walker says I'm yelluh and aint got enough guts to fill up a g-nat, hey? Well, Walker is a cockeyed liar! Why would Piggy Malone turn yelluh, the first time in his life? He never!

"I'm comin' up in that gap, and I got the guts to go in on any rail that gives us foot-room. We'll *make* room for the rest of us! In two jumps we'll have this bay colt Nod pinched in where we want him, and if one of us can't get up to win, why, that distance-sprintin' fool of a



"Some little jane's down there holdin' this bay colt, and she's cryin'—beat that?"

Blucher, he can win. Them's orders, see? So we go up in that hole, Winken and me, and just when we're in, what does this dumb Walker do? Yeah, and too soon, too! Why, he leans in and over on Nod and Way, and that shoves 'em at us; and Winken hangs—but what do I do?

"Sure, y're right! I swing the old bat a ton to crash Winken on through to win—we're home, see? The big dough's counted, just like old man Dohertie said: a three-way split on thirty grand for me, and Walker, and Sloop, if we win! Me yelluh? With ten thousand in my lap?

"So I let Winken have it plenty with the bat, but there's no room! How can I help it, if I whang Nod, instead of Winken? Yeah, I smash Nod, with the butt end! And Nod goes over that finish like a circus dog through a paper hoop! How could I help—

"But jeez, did you see when we get back to the stands? Some little jane's down there on the track, holdin' this bay colt Nod, for the pitchers and the flowers, and she's cryin'—beat that? Wilson, they said her name was."

"THE best horse had won, in a race truly run, for Nod thrust his nose clearly to the fore," (resuming the *Journal* extra's story) "and placed his name on the roster of winners of America's greatest turf classic."

Morning paper experts saw it, and wrote it, the same way. They also reported that Miss Leona Wilson, of the Wilson Farm, sold her great bay colt Nod, prospective champion three-year-old, to Major Downing, that well-known sterling sportsman, for fifty thousand dollars.

Further, they quoted A. J. (Sport) Dohertie as saying that, while it appeared to him as if his entry certainly suffered interference at the head of the stretch and again at the finish, he was no squawker and did not question the official placing. But he asked another chance, with conditions equal, to prove Winken and Blinken the best three-year-olds on the turf, bar none, in a race truly run.

Try to Stop Me!

By CONRAD RICHTER

Illustrated by L. R. Gustavson

WHETHER or not there is love at first sight, there certainly is dislike! The minute Broady Irwin and Jake Crowley laid eyes on each other, strong mutual antipathy swept the pair.

Broady had just stepped from his dust-covered roadster into the white sunlight of southern New Mexico. Around him ran a jagged skyline of barren mountains. It was wild desert country. The only signs of human habitation were a hoist, mine buildings, a stone smelter and stack, slag-banks and a 'dobe mining-camp. Nearer stood a small building with a sun-faded sign, "CROWLEY MNG. & SMLTG. Co."

"Howdy!" breezed Broady to a tall figure smoking in the office doorway. "Where the heck's the road to Gordner?"

Jake Crowley took the cigar from his mouth. He had unfriendly, deliberate eyes.

"Whoever you are," he replied, "I advise you to stay away from Gordner."

Broady's chubby, almost babylike face did not change. "I didn't ask you for the Ten Commandments. All I'm interested in is the road to Gordner."

Spots of color rose on both sides of Crowley's high-bridged nose. The eyes grew harder as he said:

"If you're looking for trouble, you'll find the road to Gordner on your right after you cross the railroad."

Broady got back in his car beside his companion.

"Nice accommodating bozo. Ought to get a job in an information bureau."

Steve Stevens, well-groomed mining engineer, had a thoughtful look on his face.

"I've got the feeling, Broady, we better pass up Gordner. We're out on a vacation—not hunting trouble."

"Try to stop me!" returned Broady. "Jim Gordner's an old Missouri side-partner. If you're scared of getting lead fillings in your teeth, I'll run you over to Silver City, and bump back here alone."

"We'll bump together," drawled Steve. "Nobody's going to shoot at me so long as he has a target like you around."

Several hundred yards beyond the mine, they crossed a standard-gauge railroad. It was a spur of the K. P. The tracks here looked unreal on the desert. Beyond the railroad were two roads. The left was well used—the right, little more than wheel-tracks. Broady swung his car to the right and drove for a long time. Presently they reached the end—a Mexican *placita* in the barren hills. Steve did his best in Spanish. Then he looked at Broady quizzically.

"No mine here. They say we should have taken the left-hand road after we crossed the railroad."

A slightly grim expression hardened the smooth layers on Broady's face.

"You remember Bicycle Nose said to the right?"

Steve nodded. The two men gazed at each other.

"Jump in!" snapped Broady. "And don't kiss any señoritas on the way. I've the notion something's doing at Gordner right now."

"I'll get in," agreed Steve, "provided you let me drive."

"You'll get in as is, or walk!" retorted Broady. He threw the car into gear and let back the clutch. Steve managed to catch the running-board as it went by.

It had taken them an hour and a half to arrive at the *placita*, but it took no such time to get back. On their wheel-tracks were high centers, stretches rough with tumbleweed formation and a half-dozen arroyos to be crossed. Broady took it all with the speedometer tape at the same approximate point. Time after time Steve's head hit the top. Only Broady's comfortable bulk stowed under the wheel kept him from doing the same.

Presently they were on the other better-used road crossing a yellow, fenceless, treeless desert. They began climbing the barren hills they had seen from the Crowley mine. To their surprise a railroad spur followed them up a steep cañon. A dusty mining camp appeared on the mountain-side. Broady stopped at the biggest 'dobe house. On one side was the sign, "GORDNER, NEW MEXICO. POST OFFICE," on the other, "GORDNER MINING COMPANY."

A huge gray car stood at the office door. Broady sauntered in. Within the inner office sat two men with a flat-top desk between them. One was Jake Crowley, high-nosed, cold-eyed. The other was younger, boyish. He looked discouraged and worn.

"Broady Irwin!" he exclaimed at sight of the baby-faced bulk in the doorway. His tired eyes brightened as he shook hands. "What in samhill you doing out here?"

"Looking for trouble!" said Broady genially. "Got any?" His gaze passed on to the chill eyes of Crowley behind him.

Jim Gordner's face looked tired again.

"Plenty. I closed down the mine yesterday. Mr. Crowley's taking it over. I'm quitting—losing everything."

"What's the big idea?" snorted Broady. "Your ore hasn't petered out, if Bicycle Nose here wants it!"

Crowley jumped to his feet. He spoke sharply to Gordner. The latter looked distressed but helpless.

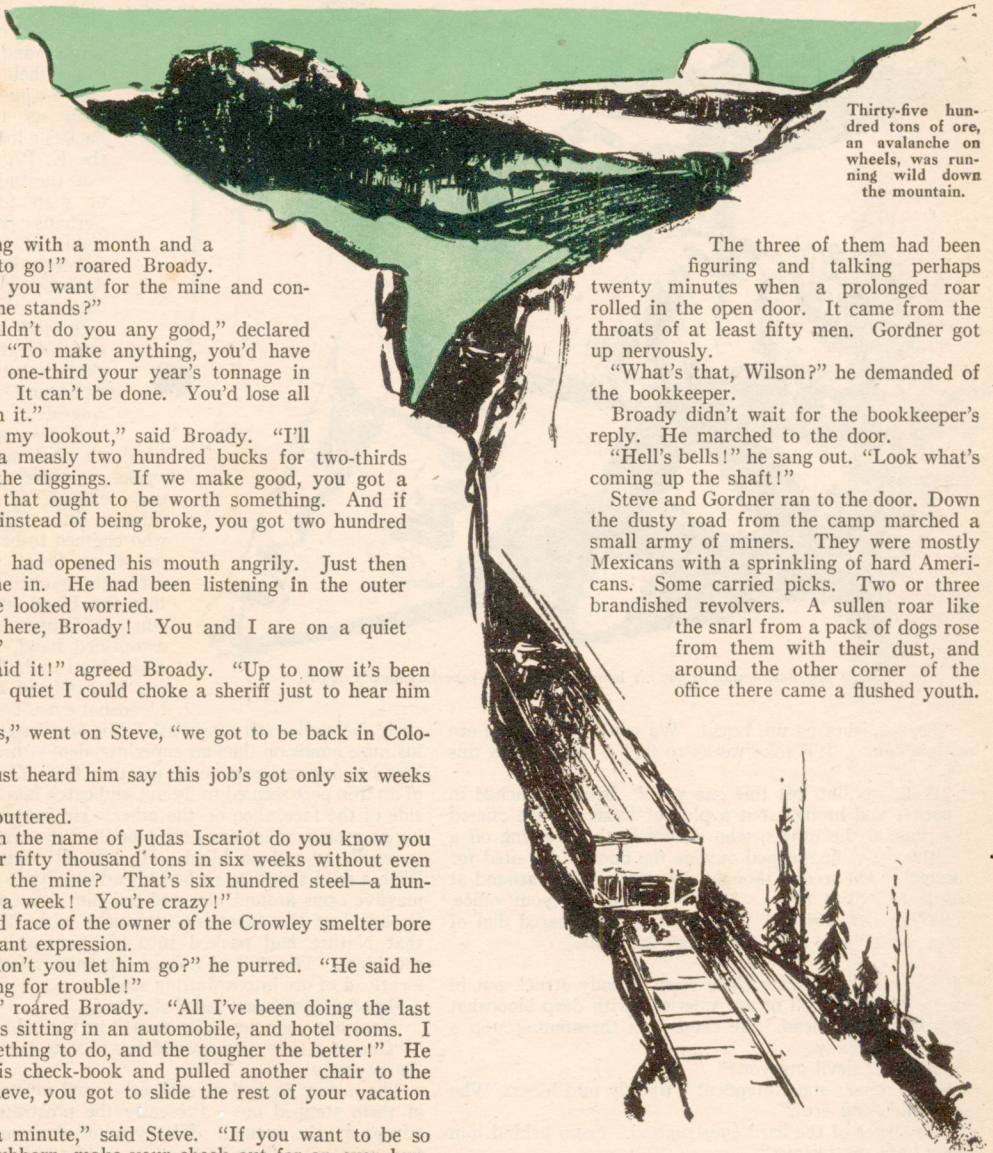
"Do you mind waiting outside, Broady?"

"Wouldn't mind jumping in the sump for you ordinarily," declared Broady. "But we're a little late getting here, due to a crooked sign-post, and I'll be hanged if I'm waiting outside while this buzzard strips you of all you got!"

Crowley started to speak angrily. Gordner stopped him. He turned to Broady.

"You don't savvy this. Mr. Crowley's been doing my smelting, and backing me since my money went dry. I have a contract to deliver him a hundred and fifty thousand tons of dry ores a year. He needs it with his wet ore. I'm fifty thousand tons short now, and only a month and a half to go."

Broady was a real hard-rock man — and something else as well—as those of you who read this lively tale will discover with joy.



Thirty-five hundred tons of ore, an avalanche on wheels, was running wild down the mountain.

"Quitting with a month and a half still to go!" roared Broady. "What do you want for the mine and contract as she stands?"

"It wouldn't do you any good," declared Gordner. "To make anything, you'd have to deliver one-third your year's tonnage in six weeks. It can't be done. You'd lose all you put in it."

"That's my lookout," said Broady. "I'll give you a measly two hundred bucks for two-thirds share to the diggings. If we make good, you got a third left that ought to be worth something. And if we don't, instead of being broke, you got two hundred bucks!"

Crowley had opened his mouth angrily. Just then Steve came in. He had been listening in the outer office. He looked worried.

"Listen here, Broady! You and I are on a quiet vacation!"

"You said it!" agreed Broady. "Up to now it's been so blamed quiet I could choke a sheriff just to hear him shoot."

"Besides," went on Steve, "we got to be back in Colorado."

"You just heard him say this job's got only six weeks to go."

Steve sputtered.

"How in the name of Judas Iscariot do you know you can deliver fifty thousand tons in six weeks without even looking in the mine? That's six hundred steel—a hundred steel a week! You're crazy!"

The cold face of the owner of the Crowley smelter bore a triumphant expression.

"Why don't you let him go?" he purred. "He said he was looking for trouble!"

"I am!" roared Broady. "All I've been doing the last ten days is sitting in an automobile, and hotel rooms. I want something to do, and the tougher the better!" He got out his check-book and pulled another chair to the desk. "Steve, you got to slide the rest of your vacation by train."

"Wait a minute," said Steve. "If you want to be so blamed stubborn, make your check out for an even hundred." From his pocket he produced another check-book. "I'm hörning in on this for a third share."

The triumphant expression died from the eyes of the owner of the smelter. They became hard, malevolent.

"If you boys figure you can fill that contract, go ahead!" he defied. "You'll find all the trouble you're looking for!" With that he marched out of the office.

Broady looked up from his check-book.

"So long, old Bicycle Nose!" he called. "Don't forget to ring your bell at the crossings!"

When the sound of his steps had died away, Jim Gordner drew an uneasy breath.

"I warn you fellows, you're throwing money away! We've got coal and powder to buy, and wages to pay!"

"Let's see what we can scrape together," said Steve. . . .

The three of them had been figuring and talking perhaps twenty minutes when a prolonged roar rolled in the open door. It came from the throats of at least fifty men. Gordner got up nervously.

"What's that, Wilson?" he demanded of the bookkeeper.

Broady didn't wait for the bookkeeper's reply. He marched to the door.

"Hell's bells!" he sang out. "Look what's coming up the shaft!"

Steve and Gordner ran to the door. Down the dusty road from the camp marched a small army of miners. They were mostly Mexicans with a sprinkling of hard Americans. Some carried picks. Two or three brandished revolvers. A sullen roar like the snarl from a pack of dogs rose from them with their dust, and around the other corner of the office there came a flushed youth.

"You better get out, Mr. Gordner!" he panted. "Crowley's told them he can't pay their back wages because you won't let him take over the mine."

Jim Gordner's face had gone pale, and he now spoke rapidly.

"Broady, you and Steve better get away while the getting's good! They're a bad lot here when they get started!"

"Yeah!" came back Broady. His baby face beamed like a boy's at a ball-game. "So Bicycle Nose steamed 'em up!"

"Mr. Crowley did," said the boy. "They're going down to work for him tomorrow."

Gordner made a queer sound. His eyes sought those of his partners.



His one desire was to get his hands on the new superintendent's throat.

"That finishes us up, boys! We can't get out the ore without men. It'll take weeks to find a full crew in this country."

"Well, we aint lost this one yet!" Broady reached in a pocket and brought out a plug of tobacco. He offered the plug to the others, who declined; then cutting off a healthy chew, he stepped outside the door and waited for the mob. On second thought, he threw a look around at Gordner's white face. "Better hole up in your office, Jim!" he spat briefly. "One look at that scared dial of yours, and it's an invitation to go the limit."

THE mob was fairly close when Broady struck out in its path. A bull of an American with deep bloodshot eyes was in the lead. He came to a threatening stop a foot from Broady.

"Who the devil are you?"

"I'm the new superintendent," Broady told him. "Who you think you are?"

The owner of the hard eyes snarled. From behind him came loud mutterings.

"I'm Lenihan, boss carpenter!" he scowled. "We want our back pay! And we want it damn' quick!"

"Yeah!" came back Broady. "Well, I want the moon damn' quick. How'm I going to get it?"

"We'll get our money!" roared Lenihan. "Or we'll tear up the place!"

"Bologna!" jeered Broady. "You couldn't tear me up—let alone a Government post office!"

"I can blow you up with flea-powder!" bellowed the carpenter.

"Make it snappy!" beamed Broady.

The bull of a boss carpenter waited no longer, but rushed. The new superintendent looked so easy, standing there, a short bulky figure with a smooth baby face. The mob of angry miners expected him to go down like a sack

of pinto beans and spill over the ground. They stared and muttered when their bull of a leader came staggering back as if he had bucked a locomotive on the K. P. Perhaps it was the universal love of man for a fight. Perhaps it was the sight of Steve and Gordner in the office doorway with rifles in their hands. At any rate, the miners forgot their grievance for the moment and crowded around the unroped ringside.

It was a fight the Mexicans chattered over for weeks to come, and plenty gory enough to suit even skinny little Tono Gomez, who claimed to be a bullfight fan from Paral. The boss carpenter was too busy to notice the blood at first, but when it dripped red on one astonished hand, it was like a red flag to a bull. Murderous hate flamed in his deep bloodshot eyes. Grunting sav-

agely, he made rush after rush. His one desire was to get his huge hands on the new superintendent's throat. Somehow his fingers never could get that far. The hard butt of an iron post seemed to fly out and catch him first on one side of the face, then on the other. He found with growing amazement that one deep bloodshot eye was beginning to swell up and go blind. He lost all control at that. With a wild shout he rushed his adversary, to wind those massive arms around him and roll him down at any cost. Broady met the oncoming avalanche with all the power that Nature had packed into his hard-rock arms and shoulders. The bull of a boss carpenter went down like a carload of ore into a waiting steel.

Broady turned and faced the mob.

"Trot out your next-best man!" he panted.

"One at a time, you ground-rats!" sang out Steve from the doorway.

The miners looked at each other and muttered. None of them stepped out. Presently the prostrate carpenter stirred on the ground. His eyes rolled around stupidly for a moment. Then he stood up, holding his head.

"You hit me with a pick!" he accused.

That broke the tension. Wide grins came out on swarthy Mexican faces. Scores of dark eyes glanced at Broady with gleaming admiration.

"Bull theenk he get heet by a peek!" they laughed to each other.

Broady seized the high tide by the forelock.

"Boys," he sang out lustily, "we're paying you up soon as we can! We'll have a little money here tomorrow, and every man'll get his share. But no lousy rat gets a nickel that's figuring on leaving us for Crowley's. Put that in your *frijoles*, and eat it!"

The miners stared at each other. Those that understood repeated it in Spanish to those that didn't. A mutter ran through the crowd.

"We got to work somewhere!" a bony American shouted. "You got plenty of work here!" came back Broady. "We're opening the mine in the morning."

At seven o'clock next morning they went on drifting in the west side of the seven-hundred level. They were in the vein, and the ore started coming up the shaft at once. Broady took personal charge underground while Gardner drove to Silver City to cash Broady's and Steve's checks. The money distributed when he got back helped to brighten the men and increase the mine's tempo. But after the first week's ore was out and loaded in standard eighty- and hundred-ton steels, the three partners did some figuring and looked sober. The week's tonnage was more than the mine had produced any month the past year, yet it fell far short of the eighty-five hundred tons necessary each remaining week to fill the contract.

"We're licked!" Gardner set his dry lips. "I was afraid of this. You remember I warned you fellows!"

"The double-deck cages will haul it," muttered Steve. "But we can't blow it out."

Broady said nothing. He put the shift-bosses to running machines, while he and Steve took turns bossing underground. Every day brought the tonnage up a peg. Then Old Lady Nature took a hand.

It was the graveyard trick. Broady had been on duty since early the previous evening. He had telephoned up to the hoist engineer to send him down a pot of hot coffee on the next cage. He was standing in the shaft at the seven-hundred level waiting for his coffee when a deep rumble sounded in the rock about him. He looked up and saw the descending cage swinging like the crazy pendulum of a giant clock. To his amazement the shaft itself was reeling backward and forward while the loaded cars waiting for the cage started to coast first in one direction, then another.

Broady had worked in mines for fifteen years, but had never seen anything like this. His first thought was that the powder magazine had blown up, or the east drift caved. Then he realized there had been no concussion of air. It was as if the mountain in which they were mining had been set on a creaking old rocking-chair. The deep subterranean rumble was punctured at intervals by terrific jolts and grinding roars, as if the chair hit bottom—a hard, solid bottom eternal as the foundations of the world.

Almost at once the miners had begun pouring from both east and west drifts. Even the faces of the Mexicans looked white under their carbide-lighted caps, and still whiter under the electric bulb that hung above the loading platform. They fought to crowd into the empty lower deck of the swinging, settling cage. Then one of them upset Broady's coffee.

"You lousy ground-rat!" he bellowed in a voice the hoister-man might have heard at the apex. Grabbing the nearest man, he threw him back against the advanc-

ing tide. In a minute he had cleaned out the cage like an infuriated mastiff ridding his kennel of vermin. When he lifted up his coffee-pot, it was empty. "Look where you're going, after this!" he roared, and threw the empty can at the crowd of terrified men, who dodged and retreated a foot or two.

"It's an earthquake, Mr. Irwin!" chattered a light-haired Swede.

"What if it is?" bellowed Broady. "You can't stop it, can you? Let her shake, and be damned to you scum that spilled my coffee!"

A deafening explosion sounded close behind them. The first square set in the east drift, the timbers of which had been rocking and groaning, had broken under pressure and gone off like a cannon. There was a second stampede for the cage.

"Back, you scum!" roared Broady, placing himself in front of the cage and breasting the crowd as it pushed. "How many of you's missing?"

"We're all here, Mr. Irwin!" stammered the former shift-boss. His eyes ran quickly over the surging faces. "All except Bull Lenihan."

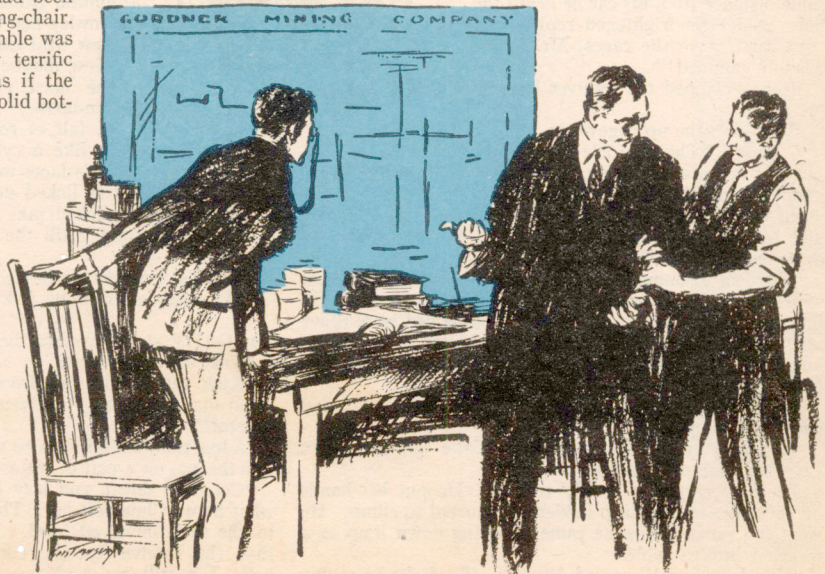
"Where's Lenihan at?" demanded Broady.

"He was tearing down a chute, the last I saw him," some one volunteered.

Broady stepped aside.

"Ride up to fresh air, and be damned to you!" he growled. Letting the crowd rush for places on the cage, he picked up his hand light and started into the east drift, where he himself had seen the boss carpenter working before midnight. The east drift had been taken out more than halfway to the six-hundred level. There had been little or no waste in the vein here, and for quite a distance the chutes had been cleaned. The high empty room stood filled with a forest of timbered square sets, one on top of the other, extending out of sight into the lofty darkness.

It was a bit difficult to walk. The ground appeared to meet his foot before it was fully down. The drift rose and fell like a boat pitching on some rocky sea. All around



"I'll be hanged," declared Broady, "if I'm waiting outside while this buzzard strips you of all you've got."

him the heavy timbers were rising and falling, creaking, groaning, cracking and splitting. They shivered like laths under the stupendous changing pressure. From time to time a square set collapsed with a roar like a bomb-shell. Showers of top timbers and sometimes rock came thundering down.

Broady suddenly found the old shift-boss pulling at his shoulder.

"Come back!" he shouted to be heard above the general bedlam. "You're crazy to go on! These timbers'll fall in a minute!"

"Leggo my shoulder!" bellowed Broady. "I'm looking for Lenihan, and to hell with your timbers!"

"Nobody'll ever find him—or you either!" shrieked the ex-shift-boss.

"Have it your own way!" shouted back Broady. "See you in hell!" And he went on alone.

A hundred feet from the shaft he found Lenihan dragging himself around like a stunned bull. The blood oozed from his head where a falling rock or timber had struck him. Broady shook his shoulder.

"Get up, you drunken dumb-bell!" he shouted.

The dazed carpenter paid him no attention. Broady shook him again, then tried to wake him up with a good smack on his face. That failing, he resignedly threw off his hat, pulled on the carpenter's lighted cap, lifted the huge form and worked it over one shoulder. . . .

The mountain was still muttering and rumbling when he reached the shaft. It was some satisfaction to see the electric light still burning. The shaft was cleared entirely of men. Neither cage was in sight.

Broady laid down his man, and telephoned the hoister-man.

"Get one of those cages down before Christmas!" he snapped, and was about to hang up when in the receiver already some distance from his ear he heard the hoist engineer's frightened reply.

"I can't move the cages, Mr. Irwin. They're jammed!"

Broady clapped the receiver back to his ear.

"Who's on the up cage?"

"Nobody. The men are all out—all but you and Bull Lenihan. I heard a noise in the shaft, and was switching cages to see if everything was all right, when they stuck. I think the rock crept. Mr. Gordner and Mr. Stevens are here, and want to know what to do to get you out."

"Tell 'em to bump their heads together till the sawdust spills!" directed Broady savagely, and hung up. He ignored the subsequent rings, which he judged were Steve wanting to talk to him. Throwing the heavy bulk of Lenihan over his shoulder, he started back into the black hole of the east drift.

At the winze to the six-hundred level, he stopped and shook his companion.

"Listen, you bull-faced lump! Wake up, and start carrying some of your own old iron."

The boss carpenter slowly revived. He put his hands on the rungs of the steep ladder and started to climb. He went ten rungs before he came tumbling down limp as a piece of broken cable.

"You lazy bum!" roared Broady. Tenderly he swung the unconscious man to his own shoulder and started the terrific job of climbing seven hundred feet of ladders. . . .

It was daylight when Broady came out the airshaft. Steve and Gordner had come down part way to give him a lift, but there are few ways to help a man carry another up an endless series of ladders. Neither Steve nor Gordner were big enough to handle the boss carpenter alone. A crowd of men had collected at the top of the airshaft as Broady climbed out with his limp burden over one brawny shoulder. The dazed carpenter was soon on a stretcher, and the whole group started downhill.

A big gray car stood near the shaft. As they approached, a figure stepped out of the engineer's house. It was Jake Crowley. The cold eyes today held an expression of triumph.

"I came up to see if I could do anything for you," he said, showing his teeth. "Take over the property, for instance?"

"You'll take over a property in hell in a minute!" Broady promised.

Crowley's eyes narrowed.

"You have heavy damages in your shaft and timbers. It will be days before you get all your men back to work. I'll give you—"

"You'll give us a good look at your rear end digging out of here!" roared Broady.

Crowley started to go.

"You're only putting more ore in my pocket!"

"It aint in your pocket yet!" bellowed Broady.

Before the words were out of his mouth, a rumbling came from underground. Steadily it increased in volume, like a series of terrific muffled explosions.

"She's starting in again!" muttered Steve.

"Starting in, hell!" said Broady.

"That's a cave-in, or I'm a Rocky Mountain canary!"

Crowley had turned. His eyes had taken on new wild exultation.

"Now maybe you'll get out!" he leered.

The hoist engineer shouted from the engine-house:

"A fall of rock! The air blew up the shaft like a cyclone!"

Steve and Gordner's faces were desperate with gloom.

"We're as good as licked now," muttered the latter.

"If you boys are licked, take a vacation!" roared Broady.

"This mine's running till the end of the year if all hell pops off!"

The hoist engineer again stuck his head into view.

"My cages are running now!" he shouted.

BROADY strode over to the shaft and stepped into the cage as it appeared.

"Kick the bottom out from under her!" he snapped. "And make it snappy! I'm no old woman limping to a funeral!"

In less than ten minutes he was back. His eyes gleamed like the sun on a pair of water-buckets.

"Come on down, you lazy bums!" he bellowed. "See what Santa Claus left us! The whole stope's caved down to the seven-hundred level. The ore lays there prettier than the Twelve Apostles could blow the ceiling out of hell. We still got a chance to beat the smelter!" He whirled on the crowd of miners who had been drinking everything in. "Where the devil's my day-shift?" he



roared. "Get on the job *pronto!* The man that isn't here in twenty minutes gets hung by his hide on a cactus stump!"

From that morning all hands, including the carpenters, were put at shoveling ore and pushing the loaded cars to the shaft. They worked like dogs, but the hoist engineers were in their glory. For the first time in their lives they had orders to drop their cages like sending a lawyer to boiling damnation. A miner would start to talk to one of them as he stepped on the cage, and suddenly find himself talking to a cage-tender on the seven-hundred level. The cage-tenders found themselves busier than cow-punchers herding jackrabbits. They howled for more help. By the end of the second day after the earthquake, the ore was pouring out of that shaft like a stream of bats out of Carlsbad at sunset. The rows of big standard-gauge steels clanged with the ceaseless clamor of falling ore, and the engine from La Jolla Junction, that brought up the fresh empties and coasted back with the strings of loaded cars, started coming every second day.

WEEK after week the ore poured out. Broady had set a night guard to watch for dirty work from Crowley, but none appeared. By the end of the final week, Gordner could scarcely contain himself.

"I never thought we could make it, Broady!" he shouted. "The last of the fifty thousand is up the shaft, loaded and ready to go. We've put it over!"

Broady's face was not so jubilant.

"We aint put it over yet. Your contract was to deliver that ore at Crowley's smelter, and there aint been an engine here for three days."

"One will be along today!" promised Gordner.

"It'd better," growled Broady, "or our name's mud! This is our last day. We can't run down thirty-five hundred ton of ore in a truck."

"Don't worry," assured Gordner. "The K. P.'s promised to move it on time. Crowley can't control a big railroad like the K. P."

"Maybe he can't," agreed Broady. "But I don't like the way that pup's been keeping quiet lately. There's something up, or I'm a polar bear coasting on an iceberg in hell."

Gordner smiled tolerantly.

"If it will make you feel any better, Broady, I'll run down to the Junction, and get after that engine."

He left immediately after dinner. No locomotive and string of empties appeared. Broady could see no sign of smoke down the cañon. When four o'clock came with neither a K. P. locomotive or Gordner, Broady started pacing up and down the office, roaring at every man who came in to ask a question. A little after five Gordner came back, his face white. Broady met him at the door. "Spit out with it!" he snapped.

"We're licked!" said Gordner. "Somebody jumped the engine in the dark last night at the Junction. She can't turn a wheel under her own steam. They're sending up to tow her into the shops at El Paso tomorrow morning."

Broady's baby face had gone grim.

"Of all the dirty, crawling-snake acts! Why the hell didn't them birds send up another?"

"It's the only engine La Jolla's got. I tried to get one from El Paso. I telephoned the K. P. over their own line from the Junction. They can't get an engine into La Jolla till eight o'clock tomorrow morning."

"But damn it all to hell and back again!" thundered Broady. "We got to get that ore to the smelter by twelve o'clock tonight, or we're licked!"

"I told them everything," said Gordner hopelessly. "They said they had no engine to give me. And they

couldn't get it up here in time if they had. These are big distances out here on the desert, Broady. They've got only single track, and a heavy schedule to meet."

Broady paced up and down the office. A little crowd of curious miners off duty began to gather at the door. The word spread about what had happened. Fascinated, the miners watched their smoldering superintendent and his silent striding. Suddenly they were relieved to see him whirl, throw up his arms and bellow in familiar tones:

"What are you standing around here for, you lazy ground-rats? Round up the men—every mother's son! Get 'em up out of the mine. Get all the steel bars you can rustle. And God help the slacker that isn't at the shaft with bells on!"

"What's come over you now?" asked Steve.

Broady's eyes shone at him with an unholy light.

"I'm taking that train of ore to Crowley's smelter to-night!"

They stared at him.

"Without an engine?" demanded Gordner incredulously.

"To hell with engines! If you bozos want to be useful, hustle yourselves along and lend a hand!"

In twenty minutes the entire crew of the Gordner mine was gathered about the long line of forty loaded steel. They were on a level stretch of track below the ore-chutes. The engine left the empties on the grade above. They were floated down by gravity and hand-brake to the chutes, and then to the level stretch of track below.

Broady tackled the first car. With bars levering between wheels and track, and a small mob of willing hands and shoulders pushing, the first car was moved to the beginning of the cañon grade below. Here Broady hopped on. Winding his hand-brake, he rode the loaded car some distance down the pitch, then stopped her dead. Presently he rode another down. One of the loaders sprung the coupling when the two met. Then they tackled the third.

It was long after dark when the long string of forty loaded steel stood solidly coupled on the grade, brakes and wheels tightly frozen.

Gordner looked pale in the flood-lights.

"You'll never make it, Broady!" he told him. "The grade is against you. Brake her down too much, and you won't make the level stretch across the desert. Open her up, and you'll go off one of those curves and land five hundred feet down in the cañon!"

"No man ever made the grade that never took a chance," retorted Broady. His baby face looked grim. He turned to the waiting crowd of miners.

"I need men for brake wheels!" he bellowed. "Who's riding down the mountain with me?"

FOR a moment no one answered. Then Bull Lenihan stepped out. His Newfoundland-like face and blood-shot eyes were masked in poker calm. He was followed by the little Mexican bullfighting fan Tono Gomez. The rest of the crowd stirred nervously, but no one else offered. Broady looked at the two volunteers.

"You boys know we're liable to jump the track over the cañon and go straight to hell?"

The boss carpenter took a chew.

"Sure," he rumbled.

"*Si. Yo tambien!*" eagerly nodded the little Mexican car-loader.

Broady revised his opinion of Mexicans as a race then and there.

"All right—let's go!" he snapped, and turned to the engineless train.

"Aren't you getting sort of high-toned?" drawled a smooth voice. "You haven't asked me yet."

Try to Stop Me!

"Steve!" roared Broady, delighted.

"I'm coming too!" declared Gordner. His face was white, but his mouth looked determined.

Broady placed them over brake-wheels at intervals along the train. When all brakes had been released except the five key steels, Broady on the first car gave a shout. He and the four men opened their wheels, and the train began to move.

With slow but gradually increasing speed the ore-train began to snake down the cañon. Faster came the click of rail-joints. The lights of the camp twinkled behind them and went out. The wind began to stream by. Louder grew the roar of wheels and the rumble of steel. At rocky cañon side-walls it was thrown back in a long continual crash. And now the rushing speed of the ore train warned Broady to put on his brakes.

There was no way of signaling to the others in the darkness. The red stream of sparks that soon began to fly from the wheels of his car told their own story. He could not feel even an instant's slackening of the train. It was like trying to stop an ocean liner with a rowboat. The thirty-five hundred tons of ore, not counting the weight of the cars, rushed on like an avalanche on wheels.

And now the rough road-bed began to tell on the mounting velocity of the train. Cars swayed wildly from side to side. Brake rigging clanged. Gripping his helpless brake-wheel, Broady Irwin needed no one to tell him what had happened. His ore train was running wild down the mountain-side.

With a desperate screeching of wheels they swung around the west side of the mountain. A moon, invisible from the mine, hung low in the west. By its pale light Broady could see grotesque rocks and dark banks flash by. Like a dark meteor they dived into the blackness of a cut. Instant bedlam roared from the vibrating steels and the echoing banks. Out they shot on the edge of a precipice on the shoulder of a mountain. It seemed that no rail could hold them. Perhaps this time, but the next curve must be the last. With all his lack of imagination, Broady had no trouble seeing in his mind's eye forty steel piled in shapeless recognition at the bottom of the cañon. He grinned to himself mirthlessly. Anyhow, Bicycle Nose would get little or none of the hopelessly scattered ore. . . .

Before Broady knew it, the train had left the last grade of the mountain, and was shooting like a torpedo across the straight stretch of desert. For an awful moment he was afraid to look around. Then with a wonderful feeling under his fifth rib, he saw the long string of loaded steels loyally following him. The train settled down to a steady rush. Almost before he knew it, Broady saw the lights of the Crowley camp come twinkling to meet them. Leaping up, he ran across the intervening cars to Steve and sent him down the line with the order to tighten all brake-wheels. Then Broady retraced his way forward, doing the same.

With sparks streaming from scores of brake-shoes, the forty cars of steel thundered past the mining-camp and on to the ore dump, where it dived into a string of empties with a rattle and crash that brought every man in the Crowley camp out of doors on the run.

Broady hurried back to see his men were all right. As he wrung the hand of the little grinning bullfight fan who had held down the tail end, the advance guard of miners came running up.

"What's 'appened?" sputtered a huge Cornishman.

"'Appened!" roared Broady. "Nothing's 'appened. But you're our witness, Cousin Jack, that our ore's delivered! Tell Bicycle Nose happy New Year for us—and if he isn't ready for a settlement by ten o'clock tomorrow morning, there'll be plenty 'appening around here!"

Hell's Angels

By WARREN

HASTINGS MILLER

THE month of October, 1929, seems to have exploded like a bombshell on the French in North Africa.

There was the pocket-sized battle in that gorge of the Grand Atlas where Hell's Angels lost Rosskoff; there was the row near Poste Achana where a *djich* of eighty to a hundred guns—tribes unknown—surprised a mixed group of Légion Mounted, Camel Corps, and Maghzeni, killing twenty-three and wounding seventeen more, a scrap that lasted two hours; and there was the *Affaire Djihani*, where Calamity Cyclops caught a whale by the tail.

About one hundred and fifty of that warlike tribe the Ait Hammou—who have always been a thorn in the side of the French—oiled their assortment of captured Mausers and Lébel's, and started off on foot across the Hammada du Guir, moving out of the Taflelt with Sultan Belkacem's blessing. Their object was loot—cartridges, principally, also as many camels as they could wangle from the caravans of the Doui Menia, that great confederation of camel drivers which maintains an immense traffic from the south up and down the Saoura Valley.

Out of the Taflelt they went—a hundred and fifty kilometers across the hammada to go, with the busy Saoura just waiting to be plucked! A patrol birdman spotted them boldly crossing the road that the Third Legion had built across the hammada. He let go with bombs and machine-gun, but there was much too much space under him to make any impression on a *harka* that vanished into concealment among the rocks like a flock of plover. He flew back to Bou Denib and reported them.

Frantic orders went buzzing out over the wires to the Camel Corps Compagnie du Guir and Légion Mounted at Meridja, to the Groupe Franc at Abadla consisting of a hundred and sixty Spahi, to Knecht at Erfoud, and to the entire A. M. C. at Bou Denib consisting of six auto-mitrailleuse armored cars, with machine-gun cupolas, that could go anywhere on their six wheels and did not need roads. In all about seven hundred and sixty men started from three directions to capture those hundred and fifty Ait Hammou. The General Staff was worked up to a pitch of exasperation this time because these particular hostiles had succeeded too often, and General Naulin himself came down from Algiers to get into an airplane to take part in the hunt. But opposed to him was the sheik commanding the Ait Hammou, a military genius of the first order. His name, unfortunately, is not known. But it was that whale Calamity caught by the tail.

The first that Sergeant Ike of Hell's Angels heard of all this was an order to present himself at Commandant Knecht's office in the big barracks post of Erfoud, that fort on a hilltop that guards against periodical raids out of the Taflelt to the north.

As Ike reported, the Commandant, big, bearded, and jovial, put a hand on an order signed *Naulin*.

"*Eh bien*, my cowboy?" he said, "I have talked too much in my reports, so I am going to lose you and the

on Horseback

Illustrated by
Paul Lehman

A tremendously exciting story wherein one of the few American members of the Foreign Légion bravely leads a forlorn hope.

estimable Hell's Angels temporarily. Here is a requisition for a scout detail of six men and a sergeant. They must be the best men I have, and one of them must speak Berber; also they must be *habile* riders. A description exact, one might say, of you and your esteemed rascallions, *hein*? Confound that robber of a Naulin! But he is supreme head of the Army of Africa—no?"

His brown eyes twinkled upon the tall and leathery Ike, who stood chewing solemnly. In wardly Knecht was delighted that his famous squad had been selected for special duty by Naulin himself; his protest against the order was merely a gesture. Ike shifted one huge boot, pulled at the black forelock straying from under his *kepi* visor, and remarked:

"Some of us birds fought under that guy in the Argonne, sir. Reg'lar ol' he-man piece of work, we thought him, sir."

The Commandant puzzled over that awhile—whether complimentary or otherwise—then laughed.

"*Alors*, this male man, this—er, but yes!—*chef-d'œuvre*, *hein*?—will run the affair in person from an airplane, I hear. It will not be easy, Sergeant Ike! The distances, look you, in the Hammada du Guir— Where last seen, the Ait Hammou were forty-five kilometers south of Meridja,—where you are going,—the same distance northwest of Abadla for the Spahi, a hundred and fifty from Bou Denib for the auto-mitrailleuses. Difficult to concentrate all three forces at the right spot at the right time, *hein*? I do not know what your service is to be in this, but I have ordered a car for you from here to Bou Denib, where you will report to Naulin in person. Need I say that the Second expects of you another gold name of glory on its battle-flag?"

Ike was touched at the Commandant's obvious pride in Hell's Angels, at his confidence that the Second's crack squad would acquit itself so as to do the regiment honor, his military ideals, that belonged back in the days of the knights and chivalry more than in the present machinelike army where personal valor hardly counted and was seldom noticed.

"We'll try to give the Giner'l a run fer his money, sir," said Ike. "Wish't you an' Hörtet was in it too, sir."

"We are in it!" grinned Knecht happily. "Hörtet takes two companies of the battalion mounted on all the horses we can scrape up. Ressot has the entire Camel Corps of



They planted the gun just in time to stop mounted Ait Hammou coming up the ravine.

the Ziz, three hundred Chaamba troopers. I am handy-man for the pair of them. We move out in pursuit at once. A hundred and thirty-five kilometers to go to reach Zguilma. We will meet again, Sergeant, on the field of battle near there, if God is good, *hein*?"

Ike saluted and went out to collect the gang. Within the hour Hell's Angels were buzzing east along the mountain road to Bou Denib in a big military car. Corporal Criswell their giant Michigander, Anzac Bill, the Honorable Jeff, Calamity Cyclops, that snooty Italian the Count di Piatti, and the violent Spanish Mora—some hard-boiled mob! What their job was to be Ike could not conjecture, but this was one of the biggest troop movements yet called out. Just count the units: Knecht moving east from Erfoud with four hundred and fifty men, Dubois moving south from Meridja with ninety-five Légion Mounted and Maghzeni, the Spahi riding north from Abadla a hundred and sixty strong, six armored cars spinning southeast from Bou Denib itself. Enough to swallow the Ait Hammou whole if they ever found them! And to the east was the Algerian frontier with its line of posts—to the west Knecht—to the north the posts along the boundary of the Hammada du Guir in the Moroccan mountains. But to the southwest all the vast Sahara lay open for escape by these raiders. No way to close that gap, was there? As the car sped on to the great walled town of Bou Denib, Ike wondered what Naulin was going to do about it.

He found that out presently. An officer of high rank came into the Headquarters Bureau de Place and beck-

oned to the squad to follow. They barged into the innermost sanctum of Headquarters, a large empty room with a big desk, one lone precise-looking *officier-adjoint* standing at attention near it. The heavy, stern-faced General seated behind the desk smiled at them grimly as Ike lined up his force. He studied their ribbons to form an idea where they had served.

"All those who were in France on detached duty at one time or another, signify," said Naulin at last.

Every hand went up. Naulin grinned, and, "Knecht's Hell's Angels!" they heard him murmur.

"Which of you is the one from Texas?"

"I, sir," said Ike. "Was under you in the Argonne, sir."

"*Bien!* You understand the packing of the horse as they do it in your Far West, then?"

"Kin throw the Lone Jack and double and single Government diamond, sir. Squaw hitch too ef you want it, on'y 'taint no good."

"*Parfait!* What I want is to bring back the cavalry arm," said Naulin. "It has a precious mobility, but is too weak in firing power nowadays. The solution is the automatic rifle. But how carry it, and all its cartridges, by mounted men? I have had an officer devise a harness. . . . *Prut!* Impractical!" He gestured with disdain at a leather contraption lying in a corner. "Cowboy, you show us," he appealed to Ike with that engaging grin that is the Army's tribute to the practical men of the outdoor trail. "Your reward will be the first modern cavalry unit to be sent against a real enemy."

Ike thought awhile, staring at the harness in the corner. Obviously it wouldn't do. Nothing of an automatic rifle's weight could be carried on a man on horseback or it would kill him. And how about the hundreds of cartridges needed?

"Gimme one led horse, sir, an' I kin do it, easy," said Ike finally.

"*Bien!* Draw what you need." Naulin waved a hand at his aide. "Dismissed, for the present."

Their first interview with Naulin was over. Ike, Criswell, and Anzac Bill put their heads together, once installed by the aide in the cavalry barracks of the *Légion Mounted*, which had a unit at Bou Denib. Their job was to turn a feeble squad of six men with carbines into an engine of war that could move fast and far and then strike hard with the full power of two machine-guns opened on the enemy. They wrangled over the elements of it out in the exercise enclosure, a led horse, two clumsy *chaut-chauts*, rifles, boxes of ammunition, a pack-saddle. If they could succeed, the cavalry arm would return from its present discredited state to its original immense value as the contact weapon of the army—a place now held by the auto-mitrailleuses, so far as they could go.

"Aint nawthin' to it, boys!" said Ike, his idea arriving at last. "Fix up two boots so they will take them shoshos; sling 'em to the cross-trees; load yore reserve ammy-nition inter them kyacks an' pile full belts atop the pack, and thar you are. Kin unlimber an' let go in no time!"

"Kin a horse gallop with that rig onto him?" asked Criswell doubtfully.

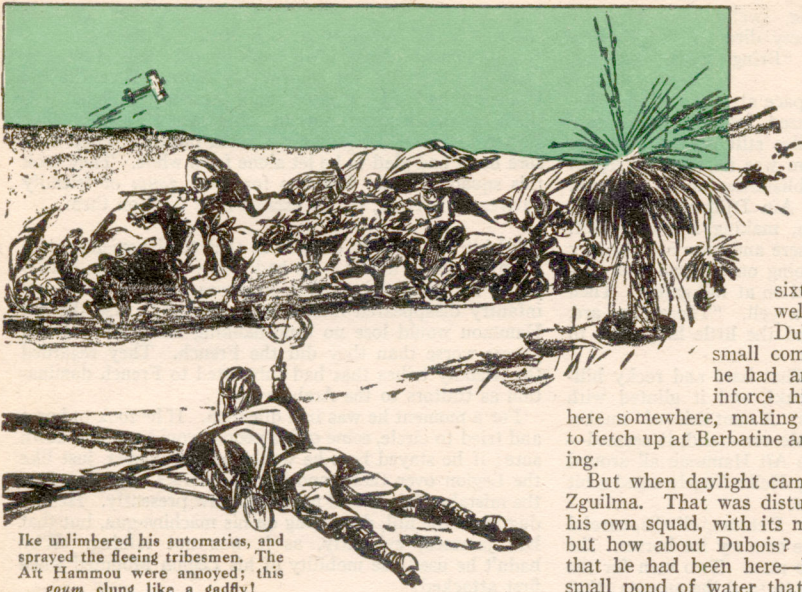


"Shore kin—after I sling a tarp with a diamond hitch onto it," said Ike. "On'y about a hundred pounds dead load."

General Naulin, too, thought that led horse could gallop, when he happened out there later, in that casual way of his of being around when anything interesting was going on. Criswell was galloping at full speed around the court, the led horse following him easily, Ike watching critically, and Anzac Bill purring, for he had commanded a machine-gun unit in Flanders and that automatic was going to be his meat.

"*Tres habile!*" commented Naulin. "It is most practical, my cowboy!" He was looking the equipment over as Ike staged an unlimbering. A yank at the diamond hitch slip-knot and it fell all apart; the tarp was snatched off, the automatics pulled from their boots and propped on their forks. They were ready to open fire within three minutes by Naulin's watch. "One led horse to each squad; eight to the troop. . . . The cavalry arm has come back, my friend!" General Naulin told Ike blissfully. "Firing power! That was what it lacked. And now, look you!"

From his tunic he had drawn a reconnaissance sketch of the lower Hammada du Guir. "A carrier pigeon has come in, Sergeant. It was released this morning by Commandant Dubois of the Meridja *Légion* unit, and reports traces of the raiders at this place, Zguilma." He indicated a well on the map about thirty-five kilometers south of Meridja. "It's a small command, that—only sixty-five of the *Légion* and thirty Maghzeni—and I am worried for him. There are a hundred and fifty of the Aït Hammou—but where are they? If anywhere near Dubois—However, our units are approaching from here, and here. . . . Between them all they should bag these Aït Hammou without difficulty; but there is one point of escape—to the southwest, where they can strike back for the Taflelt, arriving in Gaouz. I want you to close that gap, Sergeant. You will move south, riding all thi's night. You should be southwest of Zguilma by sunrise. Having two automatics and the speed of cavalry, you should be able to hold them till the rest come up. I will be overhead in a plane, covering



Ike unlimbered his automatics, and sprayed the fleeing tribesmen. The Ait Hammou were annoyed; this *goum* clung like a gadfly!

the entire territory so I can order up the nearest unit to you. I start tomorrow at light."

Ike shifted a big boot and patted the "rifle-hoss," as Hell's Angels had already dubbed the led animal. "It oughta work, sir. Either they got to dig in when we sprays 'em with them sho-shos, or, if they tries to surround us, we packs up and breaks through. I reckon us birds'll make out, sir."

"Hold!" said Naulin, remembering something. "Which of you is the man who speaks Berber?"

Calamity was pushed forward. "You can talk to these people, in case you encounter any?" asked Naulin.

"Yes, sir."

"*Bien!* I have in mind a ruse. You will all go in bur-nouses and turbans, Sergeant. It may be valuable, that disguise, who knows—in the Hammada du Guir. You will not be fired on by our people, as the Ait Hammou are on foot, so you will be taken for one of our friendly native irregulars. If possible, I want this sheik of the Ait Hammou captured alive. Any opportunity to do that— I leave the details to your ingenuity, Sergeant!" Naulin grinned as he gave Ike a copy of the map. The positions of the various units at present were marked on it, the topography, the great barren plateau around which were all these points where *postes* were located. It was a waterless region, the movements of all troops dominated by the few wells. Also that long, crooked gorge called the Teniet el Berbatine cut through the plateau near the water-point of that name. Ike remembered it as the place that had stopped the auto-mitrailleuses when Hell's Angels were hunting the boy-caliph down at Gaouz. From there the cars under Chevriér had chased Belkacem clear to Gaouz, arriving in time to rescue the squad and bring the Caliph in triumph to Erfoud.

"Pig-in-a-poke," said Naulin, indicating the gorge. "The raiders will get in there, where the auto-mitrailleuses cannot follow. We shall stop both ends of it, with the Spahis at Hossi Scrouna, and the Légion at the Berbatine end."

Maybe! Ike was not so sure it would turn out that way—not if *he* were that Ait Hammou sheik!

And as a matter of fact, it didn't. They were riding all night over flat hammada with the escarpments of the plateau rising in long cliffs to the east. It was a desolate and rolling country under the moon, not a sign of vegetation anywhere, no water. Somewhere to the west Knecht and the battalion were in dry bivouac, four hundred and fifty men. To the southeast a hundred and

sixty Spahi encamped around the wells of Hossi Scrouna. Due south Dubois was at Zguilma with his small command, waiting for the rest—if he had any sense. The cars would reinforce him in time. They were out here somewhere, making a wide detour and intending to fetch up at Berbatine and refill their radiators by morning.

But when daylight came Ike's squad found nobody at Zguilma. That was disturbing. Ike was not afraid for his own squad, with its mobility and its two "sho-shos," but how about Dubois? There was abundant evidence that he had been here—bits of broken equipment, the small pond of water that was Zguilma all trampled by hoofs, muddy, and almost dry. Their horses drank its slime avidly while Ike puzzled over what to do next. Dubois had gone east, the tracks showed. He had stopped probably at Djihani, the next well about ten miles east. Suppose the Ait Hammou caught him there, with his sixty-five *Légionnaires* and thirty *Maghzeni* and one machine-gun? It did not look good to Ike! The Ait Hammou would finish him off in about two hours, then turn on the Spahi at Hossi Scrouna, with forces about equal. They had nothing to fear from Knecht's large force to the west, nor from the auto-mitrailleuses, which could not possibly get at them through the gorge Teniet el Berbatine.

Ike took counsel with Hell's Angels on what they were supposed to do. It all depended on what kind of man was the sheik of the Ait Hammou. Bold and daring, Criswell pointed out, judging from the numerous successful raids they had made already.

"They're after loot, and they won't go back till they get some, Top," said Anzac Bill. "And what kind of loot? Our cartridges, if you don't mind! This Dubois will have at least two ammunition-mules with him. Bait! I'd take 'em off, if I was that sheik!"

It decided Ike. Their duty was to follow up Dubois at least as far as Djihani; if he had been sensible and kept on to join the Spahi at Hossi Scrouna, all right. The squad would still be somewhere to the west of the Ait Hammou, and if they ran into them it would be just what Naulin wanted.

"Come on, gang, we're gainin' on 'em!" said Ike, and led out his string eastward at a gallop.

Ten miles of flat hammada. The sun was rising over the high plateau as they neared it. The going became bad—rocks, boulders, low out-croppings of primary strata that required detours. All along under the cliffs to the east was broken and tumbled, small hills and mesas detached from the main mass by erosion. Vegetation appeared—creosote-bush, camel-weed, an occasional stunted aloe. Dusty and desolate it was, all of it, and soon it would be broiling with the heat.

And then to their ears came the distant muttering crackle of musketry. They peered ahead but could not locate it,

for the country was all rolling, swales and ridges of rock, cutting off the view in every direction. "By God, they're at it, fellers!" said Ike. "Bring up that led hoss, Mora!"

The squad had quickened its pace at sound of that distant rifle-fire ahead. They gazed intently when they topped the next rise. Five miles still distant rose the cliffs of the plateau; under them was an ungodly region of small hillocks ragged and blistering under the sun. Somewhere in there the spring Ain Djihani gushed out from under the primary strata, making a water-point. Dubois had evidently camped there and been attacked by daylight. It must have been going on for two hours already, then. . . . They clattered on at full gallop. Then Jeff spied the fight and raised a yell. "There they are, old onion!" he told Ike. "Mind the little hill, a bit to your left!"

They all could see it now. That bare and rocky hillcock was tinged with brown khaki, and it glinted with sparks of sunlight on rifle-barrels. A faint drift of "smokeless" rose from it. Dubois' whole command, it seemed—and being sniped at by invisible Ait Hammou all around them in the rocks below. Grimly Hell's Angels urged a bit more speed out of their mounts.

But it was distressingly slow. Detours, climbs, careful negotiations down-hill in terrible country for horses. Ike could not afford to lose a single man. Two men for the guns, two to feed belts, one man to tend the mounts; that left just himself and Criswell to direct this little battle unit. They all swore as the horses picked their way gingerly, galloped a bit, slowed and labored up yet another rocky slope. The fight was going badly for the Légion on its hill. More and more khaki specks were not firing from their dug-in positions. It meant a man dead or wounded when that wisp of smoke trailed off and ceased. That sheik of the Ait Hammou had caught Dubois nicely, all alone at Djihani, and was wiping him out industriously!

At still three miles' distance they saw the wiping-out process being intensified. An eruption of burnouses appeared suddenly all around the base of the hill, was climbing it on all sides. The squad groaned as a fearful hand-to-hand struggle ensued on the hilltop—hordes, it seemed, of the Ait Hammou surrounding that ring of Légionnaires and Maghzeni opposed to them—and this squad too far off yet to help! They cheered frantically as the burnouses gave way in retreat after some ten minutes of desperate fighting. It was the bayonet, as usual, that had done it. Those guys of the First were good, Ike had to admit.

But it was a remnant of them that held the hill. An intermittent and feeble fire came from them as the battle resumed with the Ait Hammou sniping again from their old positions around the base. They would be cleaned up to the last man, in an hour more of that.

AT last the distance was not in miles but in thousands of yards. Ike cast about for a position that would be of help and would command the sniping party. Around a big rocky bend the squad raced, with the led horse wheezing after. They followed the ravine some distance farther and then climbed up a ridge to their left.

"Halt!" called Ike. He and Criswell dismounted and went ahead to reconnoiter while the rest threw off the diamond hitch on the led horse. On the crest the whole battle appeared below, the Légion opposite on its hill, white dots of burnouses everywhere in the rocks around the base that were shining marks from their rear.

"Bring 'em up!" called Ike. "Hyar's the place."

The two guns were brought up on the run, and planted

on their forks. *Pri-rat-tat-tat-tat!* they opened up, with Anzac Bill and Calamity at their butts. There was a sudden squirming of the white dots on this side; here and there one that did not squirm any more. Then the Ait Hammou had all vanished, and presently bullets from them began whistling and smashing rock all about. The Légion across the way cheered them faintly. They were sore beset and glad to be let alone for a while. They took this squad in their disguises for some *goum* of friendly natives apparently, for no excited ones fired on them.

IKE bit his lip with chagrin at that total vanishment of any mark to fire at. He had a new and terrific battle-power for cavalry, but what good was it when the enemy infantry disappeared like so many snakes? Also the Ait Hammou would lose no time flanking him. They hated *goums* worse than they did the French. They regarded the friendly tribes that had submitted to French domination as traitors to the Arab cause.

For a moment he was in a dilemma. If he took to horse and tried to circle, some of his people would get shot down sure; if he stayed here he would be surrounded, just like the Légion over there, and lose his horses anyhow. Just the mistake Dubois had made, Ike saw presently. He had dug in on the hill, depending on his machine-gun, but that had jammed, evidently, as it was not talking. Why hadn't he used the mobility of his Légion Mounted when first attacked?

Well, Ike still had his. "Pack 'em up, boys," he ordered. "We aint going to git caught on no hill!"

Just what Naulin had in mind. His business was to harass this bunch, appearing and letting go with the *chaut-chauts*, getting away again with his speed. In three minutes the led horse was ready again and Ike's force clattered down into the ravine with himself and Calamity out as flankers.

They ran into contact immediately, an exchange of shots between Calamity and a sniper, in which Calamity got his man. Then a detour, and again Hell's Angels appeared on high ground for a look-see. They were south of the Légion hill this time. Interesting, the valley below! It was filled with tribesmen, some sneaking up on their former position, some still pecking away at the Légion. The squad laughed grimly and gave 'em both guns in the flank. Casualties; again a quick Ait Hammou hunt for cover. That ragged Sahara landscape became suddenly a deserted and desolate mess of rocks, with no one in sight save the khaki lines on the hill.

And then the buzz of a plane in the sky came persistently humming in the silence. Ike looked west toward Zguilma and spied it, two black lines and a dot in the blue. Naulin himself! Ike thanked God the General had arrived, though there was not much for him to look at below but a bad miscarriage of his plans, so far. That Ait Hammou sheik had been found, all right, but he had turned on one of his pursuers and was cutting him to pieces properly—would have wiped Dubois out had it not been for Ike and his squad. Even now they could do little but harass him. But they were here, on the job, and Naulin would see them "workin' on 'em."

He did. The plane swept overhead, dropped a message cylinder, circled over the hill. Jeff ran over to retrieve the cylinder where it had fallen among some rocks near by. Presently Ike was reading them the message it contained: "*Félicitations! Hang fast to them. Knecht at Zguilma. Have wireless cars at Berhatine. Am bringing up Spahi. —Naulin.*"

The squad cheered joyfully. He had the whole game in his hands, had the General, with this one airplane reconnaissance, and was moving his units accordingly, like chess-

men. The Spahi would be here in half an hour. Knecht at Zguilma could make it by a forced march in an hour and a half. The armored cars at Berbatine, fifteen miles north, ought to get here in three-quarters of an hour at their twenty-mile rate over raw hammada.

And what would the Ait Hammou sheik do with this enormous force being swiftly concentrated against him? What he *was* doing was not to be seen. They had all vanished in the rocks, so as not to expose themselves to the automatic rifles. And then?

They would not stay put, Ike guessed. That airplane was perfectly intelligible to them. It was buzzing off east toward Hossi Scrouna right now. The sheik knew that he would have a hundred and sixty hard-riding Spahi swordsmen on his hands mighty soon. He had frazzled this Légion command of Dubois to a fare-ye-well; better clear out while the going was good!

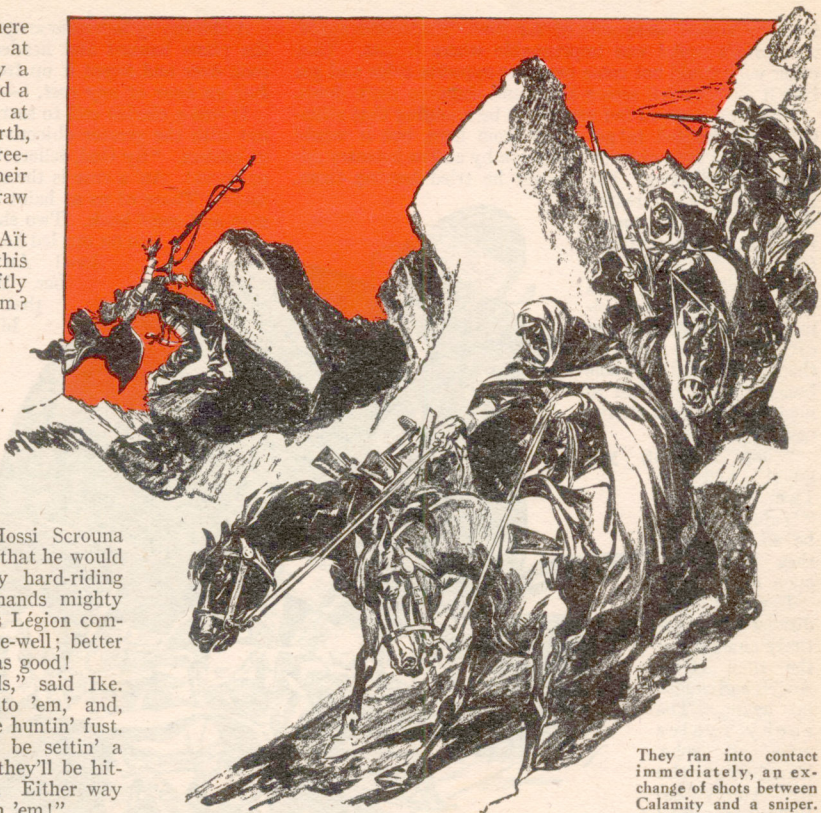
"Pack 'em up, you birds," said Ike. "Naulin, he says 'hang onto 'em,' and, thinks I, we got to do some huntin' fust. Either them hosstyles will be settin' a ambush for them Spahi, or they'll be hittin' it back for the Taflelt. Either way our job is to stay right with 'em!'"

They limbered up. The crackle of fire around the Légion position had ceased and some one over there was signaling Ike to come over and report to him, but Ike had no time for them now. He had Naulin's own order, hadn't he? That guy over there must be a particular fool. All *he* could think of was holding his hill!

They moved out warily. A cursed country, this, all hills and ravines. You could lose a hundred and fifty tribesmen in it anywhere and be a long time finding them again. Ike was using his mobility for all it was worth as the squad scoured one ravine after another, and climbed high ground to scout. Where had they got to? He was an uncanny and versatile devil, that sheik of the Ait Hammou! They just *had* to make contact with him or the son would get away scot-free!

And then Calamity, flanking far out along a ridge, raised a shout of discovery. He was pointing southwest, and Ike and the gang crashed over to him and reined up on the crest. There, riding like the devil southwest through the distant swales, were the Ait Hammou. They had all the Légion's horses and all those of the Maghzeni, and, what was worse, all the laden ammunition-mules of both commands! Those who could not ride for lack of mounts were running alongside, hanging to stirrups.

"What they done," said Ike, "they busts this here Dubois early in the mornin', see? Stampedes his mounts an' trees him on that mill. We comes along, an' then the Giner'l in his airplane, so they sees the party's over. An' so they moseys back to Djihani spring, whar they left them hosses an' mules an' all the loot, takes one good drink an' skedaddles! Arter 'em, boys!"



They ran into contact immediately, an exchange of shots between Calamity and a sniper. Calamity got his man.

Hell's Angels galloped in pursuit. They had the advantage of a slightly superior speed and had caught up within rifle-range in ten minutes. They had been canny enough not to follow in plain sight but to parallel the tribesmen down a neighboring swale. When well up on their flank Ike halted, unlimbered his automatics, rushed them up the ridge and sprayed the fleeing tribesmen at twelve hundred yards.

The Ait Hammou were annoyed. This persistent *goum* hung to them like a gadfly! They swung out in two columns on the captured mounts with intent to envelop this *goum* and abolish it before anything else was done. They left their foot-men to dig in and advance direct. Hell's Angels peppered the cavalry as far as it could be seen; then they were left with only invisible infantry to fire at, while about their position a sweep of bullets sang and howled, combing the rock all around the two gun-emplacements.

"Not too good!" said Ike. He could see one wing of the Ait Hammou cavalry going over their ridge to the south like fox-hunters. It would sweep up their ravine presently, and wipe out all their horses.

"Some good giner'l, that Ait Hammou lad is! Bring yore gun over the ridge, Bill, and stop them sons."

Ike was some good general himself, though he would never admit it! Bill and Di Piatti rushed one automatic over and planted it, just in time to stop about fifty mounted Ait Hammou coming up their ravine. They recoiled before the spray, lost men and mounts, dashed for cover. Jeff on his side kept up occasional bursts as sporadic

infantry rushes were started for him. Stalemate again. . . . Ike's squad was impregnable where it was. That other wing could not come over the opposite ridge and get into it without Jeff seeing them and slapping them down.

The Ait Hammou lad seemed to be studying that situation. He wanted to get away from here, but it would take all day to smoke out this *goum* by a slow infantry advance on all sides. For answer he tried leaving them. His infantry retreated slowly, in short rushes that drew bursts of fire from Jeff, but it suffered few casualties at that range. When far out, almost out of range, the two cavalry wings joined them, and off the whole bunch started, as fast as men running by a stirrup could go.

"Snap into it, you guys!" ordered Ike sharply. "Taint goin' to be so easy once they makes the open desert!"

It wasn't. Conditions were entirely changed by the time Hell's Angels had caught up again. The rocky swales were all gone. Southwest the flat, empty Sahara stretched smooth as a floor.

No rock nests for the automatics, no ridge to leave the horses behind. Ike dared not come up within range and attack, and the Ait Hammou lad had no idea of stopping. He was headed for the Taflelt; these people could hang on his flank if they liked, but they would have to do better than that if they were going to stop *him*.

Hell's Angels cursed vividly. To get ahead of them and give battle was the obvious thing to do. But it was not as easy as it looked, for it meant a detour around them, out of rifle-range, and they could stop it easily by simply crossing ahead of the detour. They all felt helpless and disgusted. The horses were foaming; they would need water soon. What use keeping on? The nearest water was ten miles back at Djihani now. There was none in this direction till you reached Gaouz in the Taflelt, seventy kilometers away; and *then* you wouldn't get it—but a horde of Belkacem's riders landing on you instead! The Ait Hammou would need water too, but those Légion horses of theirs were still fresh. . . . They were about to give up, when that airplane reappeared in the sky. It was buzzing after them from Djihani and soon caught up overhead. They could see a gleam of gold on a *kepi* up there looking over the cockpit side. They could only guess the agony of mind Naulin must be in, with everything gone wrong, Dubois cut to pieces at Djihani, all the other commands concentrated there too late, his slippery enemy escaping right under his eyes—and only this squad in contact.

A shining cylinder came streaking down in the sun and the plane banked and headed back northeast. Criswell rode over and swept it up from the saddle. "*Hold them half an hour at any cost. —Naulin.*" Ike read it aloud.

It was a clarion call to sacrifice themselves so as to win out with the greater objective, the capture of this *harka* of raiders. "By God, fellers!" swore Ike fervently. "It's up to us! An' a ruse is the on'y thing will do it. We attacks. Those of us as haint kilt pretends he is. They'll stop and come back. Two sho-shos, an' all that ammunition on our led hoss—they cain't overlook *that*

loot! An' C'lamity, you speaks Berber. You's wounded; but you gits that sheik talking, an' you *keeps* him talkin', as long as they'll let you live. Any ol' song-and-dance, so long as you uses up time! The rest of you might as well say good-by right now."

However, it looked like success. In five minutes Naulin would be back at Djihani. A hundred and sixty Spahi on fresh horses would come thundering down in pursuit.

If they could amuse these Ait Hammou—at the expenditure of seven lives—for half an hour, it would be O. K. all around. They would have a fine military funeral.

"Let's go, gang!"

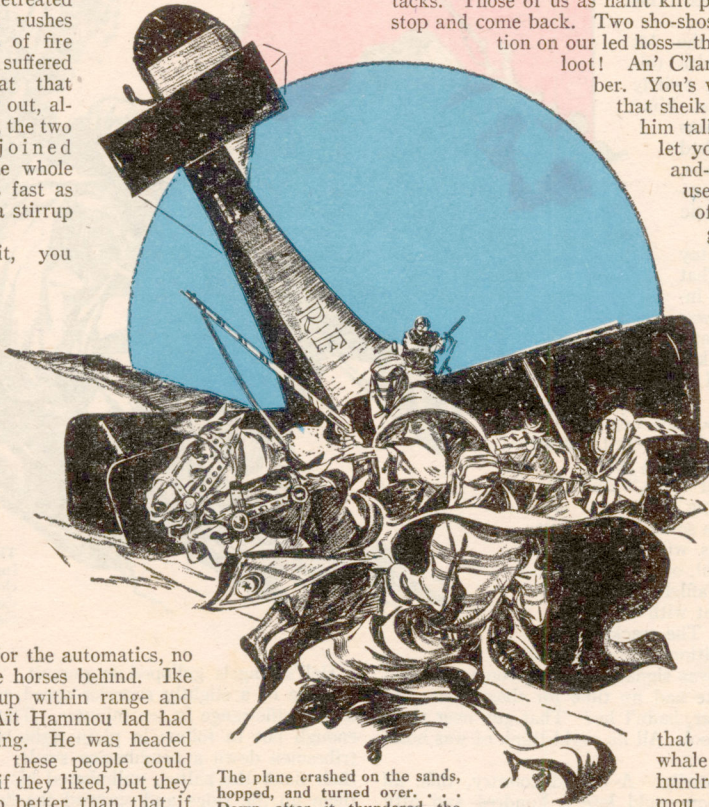
Ike gave order briefly. They urged their horses to top gallop. And it was about now

that Calamity caught his whale by the tail. At twelve hundred yards the Ait Hammou opened up on them. Hell's Angels clattered on through the storm of bullets.

A thousand yards, nine hundred, eight. Then Mora's horse stumbled and went down and Criswell said, "*Ouch! Dammit!*" and clapped a hand to his left shoulder. Hell's Angels reined in to a confused stop, flung off their horses, ripped the tarp off the led horse, yanked out the guns. The Ait Hammou also halted; then the whole *harka* came thundering down on them, yelling and firing.

Prrt!-rat-tat-tat-tat! yammered the automatics at them. Hell's Angels forgot all about their ruse in the excitement of the moment, but the Ait Hammou bullets did not. They were all real casualties in about twenty seconds, all touched somewhere, but with Ike hanging to the trigger of one gun to keep it going, Anzac Bill kicking and cursing beside the other. Their stream of lead stopped as Ike recalled the idea of the ruse and released his trigger. Bill had got up and was leveling his gun again, but Ike called over: "Lay, off, you thick mug! This here party's got to last. —You alive, C'lamity?"

The Ait Hammou had recoiled before that first burst. They now came ahead again, warily, slowly, rifles poised. The first movement of an arm to the trigger of either of



The plane crashed on the sands, hopped, and turned over. . . . Down after it thundered the Ait Hammou.

those automatics, and the man doing it would find himself shot to ribbons.

"We surrender! Mercy!" called out Calamity in Berber at a glance from Ike to do his stuff.

It worked. The Ait Hammou halted. Their sheik rode out a few paces from their center and quieted his restive horse. He was a fine-looking bearded Berber.

"Why do you fight us, brothers?" he asked Calamity. Evidently he had seen no hint of Légion uniforms under their burnouses and took them for a *goum* in French pay.

"The Roumi—*pouah!* Yea, they rule for themselves alone! Ye are fools to take their money and fight your own people. Come, join us, brother, or—*wallah*, we make an end, here and now!"

He looked over each burnoused figure huddled on the sands before him, with generosity. But to agree was to give the show away immediately. And the first question in Berber asked of any of them *but* Calamity—

"Make haste!" said the sheik sharply. "That Roumi flying-thing is coming back again." He pointed north and Calamity looked. Naulin had reached Djihani, sent down the Spahi, and was hurrying back far ahead of them to see how his squad was getting along. He was a new complication, for he would go wild when he saw his squad prisoners, or about to be, and would try his best to rescue them. They didn't want *him* mixed up in this!

"Ha!" said the sheik bitterly. "Are ye his *goum* now, or are ye not? Turn those many-shots on him—or *we* will!" He pointed to the automatics and spoke sharply to Ike. Ike understood that he was being required to turn the gun on that plane immediately or that line of rifles would finish him quick. He fumbled with the weapon. He could see that line of tossing horses' heads not fifty yards off, the brown bearded faces above them, those valiant black eyes all on him. These were the redoubtable Ait Hammou, dead shots all.

"Mercy, *ya sheik!*" said Calamity. "We submit to the generous terms!" Ike could almost translate from the tones. He saw Calamity gesture to Anzac Bill to look alive with his gun. They were to pretend to bombard Naulin as the plane came up. And then what?

THEN Ike caught a wink from Calamity—and saw it all. Calamity's scheme was to capture his whale—alive. The Ait Hammou would not be watching them; they would be looking up at the plane, expecting it to crash down under the "many-shot" fire. And most likely, volleying it themselves to help out. Then, if the automatics were suddenly turned on *them*—no troops in the world could stand it! They would break. A jump by Calamity and Di Piatti, lying near—but not dead at all—and they'd have the sheik, dragged out of his saddle in one snatch while his horse was prancing unmanageably in the uproar. It was a dastardly, treacherous trick, but it was war. Ike resigned himself to it by reflecting on the misdeeds of the Ait Hammou, and got ready. He could see by covert glances at him from the forms lying on the sands that Hell's Angels were all alive and ready for it too.

It might have succeeded, had it not been for Naulin. His plane came zooming on, and as it neared overhead both automatics let go at it. Ike peppered the air full of holes; aiming for the tail. He saw the General's *kepi* looking over at them, and then the gallant gesture of a salute. He understood, did Naulin! Excited ones among the Ait Hammou had begun firing up at the plane as it swept over; then all of them were volleying in rapid crashes of their Lébels and Mausers. And, as luck would have it, one bullet took effect somewhere in the engine of that plane. It stopped, with a couple of sharp backfires, and did not start again. There was nothing for the pilot

to do now but bank down and land Naulin on the open desert, if possible without cracking up!

Ike had been just about to throw off all disguise and turn the automatics into the Ait Hammou, trusting to luck, when that happened. He now watched the plane, worried, and alarmed. A great shout of triumph had risen from the Ait Hammou; then at least half of them were off in a gallop for where the plane was banking down, the sheik at their head. This was the prize of prizes for them!

"At 'em, gang!" barked Ike, and suddenly turned his automatic on those who were left. The execution was terrible at that range: A recoiling, rearing wall of ungovernable horses; riders falling, turmoil and whirling confusion behind them—then they fled, each man for himself, while Bill, Ike, and the gang, come suddenly to life with their rifles, whaled into them.

The plane was meanwhile coming back straight for them in a low, slanting glissade. Its machine-gun peppered a sputter of shots into the galloping mass of about a hundred Ait Hammou riding to intercept it when it struck. Its pilot made a desperate hop to leap over them, then came wabbling through the smoke of their fire. The plane crashed on the sands, hopped, skittered, came to a stop about three hundred yards off, and turned over. Down after it thundered the Ait Hammou, firing, yelling, the sheik at their head waving his yataghan.

And toward it raced also Hell's Angels, unmindful of their wounds, hustling the heavy automatics in pairs, limping, hobbling, sobbing for breath. They got the two of them forked just in time and let go with terrific bursts that sprayed that oncoming charge like a hose. It withered, piled up on itself in a tangle of kicking hoofs and falling horses—finally broke and swerved off wildly.

Hell's Angels found the General and his pilot both unconscious under the fuselage. The pilot was badly cut up and needed a surgeon. Naulin's forehead had struck woodwork; he was stunned but otherwise unharmed.

"*Mes braves!*" Those were his first words as his eyes swept over Hell's Angels, all of them frazzled and bandaged sketchily. He grinned at the two automatics still lying in their forks where stuck in the sand. "Nothing else could have saved us, *hein?*" He got up dizzily and looked around the empty horizon. A tiny dot far to the southwest was the Ait Hammou, about to vanish over it. Far to the north was visible a similar dot.

"There are the Spahi, at last!" he said. "But they are too late, I fear. They may try, but— I envy you, Sergeant!" he told Ike. "You met, if I am not mistaken, that gallant Ait Hammou who has outgeneraled us so superbly. Was it not he on the horse, when I came over and found you captured?"

"Reckon so, sir," said Ike. "But us guys had an idee of pinchin' him for you, sir. We wa'n't captured! Jist a ruse, like, to hold 'em till them Spahi got here—"

"*Tiens!*" said Naulin with interest. "Devotion exemplary, rather! It has been a disgrace to our arms, the Affaire Djihani! This Ait Hammou with his hundred and fifty partisans has escaped us all—after inflicting a loss of almost the entire command on Dubois."

NAULIN gave a gallant salute in the direction where the Ait Hammou had by now vanished; then he turned.

"There is one decoration I can award, however, messieurs!" He included them all in his glance. "One unit that has stuck to the enemy from first to last—that did not hesitate to sacrifice itself with the brave ruse when all else was lost! I shall not forget you, my valiants!"

Sure enough, some few weeks later there arrived seven boxes at Erfoud. The Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor—one of those decorations of which there are but few.

Again that grisly chuckle. "I can hire that sort of thing for a fraction of what I am giving you. Brains are worth more than trigger-fingers."



Illustrated by
Joseph Maturro

The Mob Master

The thrill-crammed story of an arch-criminal and the difficult detective work that led to his overthrow.

By SEVEN ANDERTON

"THERE is a man lying dead in a big, fine automobile on Sedgwick Avenue," announced a feminine voice over the telephone. "I think he is dead. Blood is dripping out of the car."

"Yes?" inquired Dale Farley, city editor of the *Globe*. "Where on Sedgwick Avenue?"

The voice at the other end of the wire gave the location requested.

"Are the police there?" asked Farley.

"No. I—"

"Hold the wire a minute," interrupted Farley. He placed his hand over the transmitter and called across the busy news-room to a reporter. "Dutton! Get out to this number, Sedgwick Avenue, on the run. Dead man in a parked car."

Tommy Dutton, ace of the *Globe's* editorial staff, snatched a handful of copy-paper off his littered desk and was on his way to the exit as the city editor turned back to the telephone.

"Hello," snapped Farley into the mouthpiece. "Have you notified the police?"

"No," answered the voice. "You pay a reward for telephoning things like this straight to your office, don't you?"

"We do," replied Farley. "What's your name and address?"

"Gertrude Mason," came the answer. "I live at 247 Fordham Road."

"How did you happen to discover this?"

"I was out walking with—with a friend. We saw a big car at the curb, and there was a man sort of lying on the wheel. There isn't much light on that part of Sedgwick. We thought perhaps he was drunk. My friend went over to the curb, and I followed him. Then we saw blood on the man's face and on his white shirt. We were going to call the police. Then I remembered that the *Globe* offers to pay—"

"I see," cut in Farley. "Nobody else was about the place where the car is parked?"

"No."

"Good," snapped Farley. "Where are you now?"

"In a booth at a drug-store on Kingsbridge Road."

"Are you going home now?"

"Yes-s. I guess so."

"Do that," said Farley. "I'll send a man out with your money pretty soon. Wait up for him. And you'd better keep your friend there with you. And about telephoning the police. I'll attend to that."

"All right."

"Horner!" called Farley as he turned from the telephone. "Take a photographer and beat it out to 247

Fordham Road. See a dame named Gertrude Mason. Get pictures and interview. Call me up after you talk with her and get the photos. Then I'll tell you how much money to give her."

The reporter to whom Farley had spoken headed for the art department to pick up a camera man, and the city editor shot a glance at the big clock on the news-room wall. It was eleven-fifteen. Tommy Dutton had a ten-minute start toward the scene of the tragedy. Dale Farley muttered the newspaper man's prayer—that neither the officer on the beat nor other passer-by might stumble on the scene before the reporter got there. . . .

Speeding northward in his roadster, Tommy Dutton was fervently seconding the city editor's prayer. And the double entreaty was granted. Dutton's roadster pulled up with a protest of brakes behind a limousine parked in the shadow of several large shade-trees at the reported spot. The reporter glanced up and down the quiet street and saw no other person. Lights showed behind drawn curtains in several houses, but most of the residences were dark. This part of Sedgwick Avenue was lined with middle-class houses set in small, well-kept lawns and banked with vines and shrubbery. Several other cars were parked at the curb, but the nearest of these was a hundred yards from the limousine.

Carrying an electric torch taken from the door pocket of his roadster, the reporter stepped quickly over to the big auto and shot the beam of the flashlight into it. The body of a large, well-dressed man lay crumpled in the driver's seat. The head rested against the lower part of the steering-wheel, and the face was turned toward Dutton. Part of the face and the white shirt-bosom were bloodstained. The man was undoubtedly dead. As the white circle of light came to rest on the dead man's features, Tommy Dutton gave a startled gasp. Then he jerked open the door and leaned into the limousine for a closer look. There was no doubt about it—the man was Max P. Gilchrist, one of the wealthiest men in the city.

A low whistle came from Tommy Dutton's lips as he stared in near unbelief at that dead face. Then the reporter shrugged his shoulders and went on with the investigation. The darting beam from the flashlight moved over the figure and came to rest on a half-closed right hand in which was held a small automatic pistol. Dutton grunted thoughtfully. Again the circle of light began wandering. The bullet which had ended Gilchrist's life had entered the neck just behind the point where jaw and ear meet.

Tommy Dutton was very careful to touch nothing about the body, contenting himself with a minute scrutiny. That finished, he turned his attention to the car. His light picked out a white envelope thrust into the pocket of the door in such a manner that more than half of it was left showing. The reporter took the envelope from the pocket and examined it. It was unsealed, and there was no address. It bore the printed return address of the Continental Chemical Company. Dutton knew that Max Gilchrist was vice-president and treasurer of the Continental Chemical. He lifted the flap and drew out a sheet of paper—Continental Chemical stationery.

Again the soft whistle came from Tommy Dutton's lips as he read the message typed on that page. It was a confession that Max Gilchrist had embezzled funds, and otherwise so involved the affairs of the Continental Chemical Company that the corporation was completely bankrupt. The closing paragraph stated that the writer, lacking courage to face the music, was taking the only way out that he could

see. At the bottom was scrawled the signature of Max Gilchrist.

The reporter hastily copied the text of the message on a sheet of scratch-paper and then returned the letter to the place where he had found it. He glanced up and down the quiet street. Still no person in sight. He turned toward his own car, but after taking a few steps turned back. Again he leaned into the limousine and played the bright beam of his torch upon the gun. He took a small pocket magnifying-glass from his clothes and studied the weapon for several moments but did not touch it. Then, whistling softly, Dutton went to his roadster, backed it around and drove south toward Kingsbridge Road. A few minutes later he was reporting to his city editor from a telephone in a restaurant several blocks distant.

"You're sure it is Max Gilchrist?" demanded the editor. "Absolutely."

"Good enough," declared the editor. "Give that message and all the dope to a rewrite man, and then hop right over to 247 Fordham Road. You'll find Horner and a photographer there. Give 'em a lift. The dame that phoned in the tip on this has got cold feet or something. Swears she don't know anything about it. Horner don't seem able to handle her. It won't be so good for us if she sticks to her flop on the tip business. I called the cops just as soon as Horner phoned that the gal denied calling up the *Globe*. They should be on the job by now. But just the same, that dame has got to be brought around. Telephone me as soon as you get her straightened out. Work fast. I haven't told the cops about the gal yet—but I'll have to, when they ask."

DUTTON arrived at the Fordham Road address at five minutes past midnight. At a quarter past he was again reporting to the city editor.

"But Dutton," barked Farley, "it isn't possible. We—"

"It *is* possible," contradicted the reporter. "I've talked to the girl and a bunch of other people. She didn't telephone. She hasn't been out of her room since nine-thirty. She can prove it plenty—and I'd believe her if she didn't have a single witness."

"That's damned funny," growled Farley.

"Queer," retorted Dutton, "but not so funny, I'm afraid. And it has occurred to me that there are some more goofy things about this business. I'll tell you about 'em when I get in. We got a couple of shots of the girl, since she's going to be part of this story. What's next?"

"Come on in, all of you," snapped the editor. "I've got men out on the other angles."

Long before Tommy Dutton and the other two men got back to the office, the *Globe* extra was on the street with the story of Max Gilchrist's death and the circumstances under which he had been found. The name of Gertrude Mason had been withheld from the story, but the text of the note found in the tragedy car was printed.

Dale Farley collared Tommy Dutton the moment that young man entered the news-room. There was a worried look on the city editor's deeply lined face.

"Well, spill it!" demanded Farley.

"As I told you over the telephone," said Dutton, "this Mason girl didn't phone that tip, and she can prove it beyond question. She's a nice, straightforward sort—public stenographer and commercial typist with her own office in the Hawthorne Building. She—"

"Say," interrupted Farley, "the offices of the Continental Chemical Company are in that building."



As the white circle of light came to rest on the man's features, Tommy gave a startled gasp.



"I was coming to that," nodded Dutton. "The Mason girl's offices are on the same floor. She knows—knew—Max Gilchrist. She has done some typing for him now and then when his own stenographers were snowed under. When I sprung it on her that the man found dead in the car was Gilchrist, she very nearly pulled a faint on me."

"Well," grunted the worried editor, "if she didn't telephone that tip, who in blazes did?"

"When we find that out," declared Tommy Dutton, "the story will be different. As I told you, some other odd things about this mess occur to me. The windows of Gilchrist's car were all open. There were lights in several near-by houses, and it's a cinch that on a hot night like this windows were up in nearly every house along the street. *Why didn't somebody hear the shot and investigate?*"

"Something in that," grunted the editor.

"I'm thinking there's a lot in it," said the reporter. "There wasn't any silencer on the gun, and if you'd seen Gilchrist, you'd know that he didn't take one off it after he shot himself. I'm about ready to lay a bet that Max Gilchrist was murdered."

"But the letter—" began Farley.

"If he didn't commit suicide," cut in Dutton, "doesn't it follow that he didn't write the letter?"

"Hm-m-m," muttered Farley. "Got any more ideas?"

"Not ready to spill," replied the reporter. "Got some taking shape."

"Well then," said the editor, "jump onto a typewriter and pound out a signed story for the final. Put in the Mason girl and play up the mystery of the tip. We'll use her picture."

"Shall I work in the possible murder angle?" asked Dutton.

"Nope," grunted Farley. "We'll have to lay off that. The cops are sore now. I've had Higgins down at Headquarters trying to get the Chief to let us use that angle as coming from him. He won't do it, so we'll let it ride for now. I had to give them the Mason dame's name and address. They're grilling her now. Go ahead with what we've got."

Tommy went to his desk and began to work. He had

only well started his story when Farley came over and interrupted him.

"Is that Mason gal a red-headed?" asked the city editor abruptly.

"Nope," answered Dutton. "Brunette. Hair almost black. Why?"

"Traced the phone-call," replied Farley. "It came from a drug-store on Kingsbridge, all right. Clerk remembers the dame who called. Dull night in the store. He's sure. Red-head did the calling. Clerk didn't know her."

"That lets the Mason girl out," said Tommy. "Shall I put

that in the story?"

"Nope," decided Farley. "We'll save it a while."

When Tommy Dutton finished the story that was to be read at a million breakfasts in the morning, he tossed it onto the city desk, went back to his own desk and sat in a brown study until the paper had been "put to bed." Then he left the office with Farley, and they went to a neighboring grill-room for their usual bite to eat.

"I'm a peacock's tail-feathers," declared the city editor as they sat over their food, "if I don't almost wish we hadn't got that tip over the phone. The cops are so huffy that it's going to be tough to get any follow stuff out of them—and this story is going to get bigger, unless I'm badly mistaken."

"You're not mistaken," opined Dutton. "Max Gilchrist was murdered—and it's bound to come out."

"Got any more of those ideas shaped up?" asked Farley.

"One," nodded the reporter. "Gilchrist was killed with a gun fitted with a silencer. There was no silencer on the gun in his hand, nor elsewhere about the car. He didn't shoot himself through the neck and then take the silencer off the gun and swallow it. So let's drop the suicide thing right now. Somebody murdered him, and left that forged suicide note written on Continental Chemical stationery. Looks to me as if the murderer is a man who really did the embezzling mentioned in the note, and took that way to pin the dirt onto a man who couldn't deny it."

"By thunder," cried Farley, "I believe you've got it! If the cops don't come to their milk tomorrow, we'll bust that angle on our own. With Headquarters down on us, we're in for a tough day tomorrow, young fellow me lad."

"Right," agreed Tommy. "And I'm going home right now and get some sleep so as to be ready for it."

It was half-past two when Tommy reached the building, a short distance from the 125th Street subway station, which housed his living-quarters. But he was not to get to bed.

"Hello, Dutton," called a voice from a car parked at the curb in front of the apartment-house. "Come here a minute."

"Hello, Seecord," said Tommy, stepping over to the car. "What's on your mind?"

The man in the parked auto was Frank Seecord, once a member of the detective bureau. He had been squeezed out of the service because he had ideas of honesty and duty that were not in accord with those of certain cor-

rupt politicians. Tommy Dutton had known Seecord rather well, and liked him.

"Selby Kane wants to have a talk with you," answered Seecord in a low voice. "He sent me to fetch you."

"Selby Kane!" cried Dutton, in surprise. "I thought he was in Europe."

"Not so loud," cautioned Seecord. "That's what people are supposed to think. Hop in. I've been waiting for more than an hour."

The reporter climbed into the car beside Seecord, and the car rolled away down the street.

"What's Kane up to?" asked Tommy.

"He'll tell you," answered Seecord. "We'll be with him in a jiffy."

Seecord pulled up before an apartment-house less than a dozen blocks from Dutton's. Tommy followed him into the building, down a flight of stairs and along the basement corridor. At the rear of the corridor they entered the service elevator, and Seecord ran it up to the fourth floor. The ex-detective rapped a signal on a door directly across the hall from the elevator-shaft. The door opened promptly.

In the large and comfortably furnished living-room, Dutton faced the man who had admitted them. He was a gaunt and grizzled man with a thick growth of iron gray hair rather closely cropped. He towered at least two inches above Tommy Dutton's six feet. His face was grave, and deeply etched with the lines of thought and worry. His wide mouth was firm, and his brown eyes sharp, though not without a certain kindly softness. His name was Selby Kane. Until some six months before, he had been head of the city's detective department. Like Seecord, he had been forced to resign by the corrupt politicians who had gained a strangle-hold on the city. Shortly after Kane was forced out, he had sailed for Europe for "a long-anticipated rest." There had been no news of his return.

"Hello, Tommy," said Selby Kane. "Surprised to see me?"

"Flabbergasted," answered Dutton. "And delighted. I—"

Speech suddenly died on the reporter's lips. His eyes had discovered a vision that paralyzed his tongue for a moment. Across the room in a big chair sat a girl—and what a girl! She wore a simple but highly effective frock of dark material; her abundant hair was unbobbed and done in a neat coil low on the back of her shapely neck. The color of old bronze, those tresses were red-tinted where the high-lights showed. Her forehead was broad and low. Dark eyes looked frankly from beneath unplucked brows. Tommy Dutton knew he was staring, but he simply couldn't seem to tear his gaze away from the girl.

"This is my daughter Leah," he heard Selby Kane saying. "Mr. Dutton."

Tommy acknowledged the introduction and was suddenly conscious that his gray suit was unnecessarily unkempt. His fingers went to the loose knot of his tie, and he wished he had had a shave and a haircut. Dimly he heard Selby Kane dismissing Frank Seecord for the night. The girl flashed him a friendly smile; and Tommy, who hated poets, suddenly felt like writing poetry. Selby Kane's voice inviting him to sit down brought him out of his gaze.

Tommy took the easy-chair Kane indicated, a splendid police dog rose where he had been lying beside Kane's chair. With a proud, stately tread, the animal crossed the rug and

halted, looking up into Dutton's face with humanly inquiring eyes. The reporter patted the dog's broad forehead gently.

"Nice fellow," said Tommy.

The animal dropped his sleek muzzle onto Dutton's knee and sat down. A glance passed between Selby Kane and his daughter. Then both of them returned their gaze to the dog. There was a thoughtful expression on the girl's face.

"Tommy," said Selby Kane as he sat down, "you should be honored. You are the first person besides my daughter that Kaiser has ever made friends with."

"Dogs and children usually take up with me," answered Tommy.

"I suppose you're wondering why I sent for you at this hour of the night?" asked Kane.

"I'm so surprised at your being in the city," replied Tommy, "that I haven't wondered about much else."

"Progeny," said Selby Kane, looking at his daughter, "would you mind making a pot of coffee and a platter of sandwiches while I tell Mr. Dutton how I happen to be in town and why I sent for him?"

"Parent," smiled the girl, rising, "I have forestalled you. You'll not get rid of me that way. The sandwiches are made and waiting in the refrigerator. The percolator is loaded and ready. I'll plug it in and be back in a second."

"I didn't know you had a daughter," said Tommy Dutton as the girl disappeared toward the kitchen.

"Leah's been away at school most of the time," explained Kane. "Her mother died when she was a baby. I'm afraid I've rather spoiled her."

The thought flashed in Tommy's brain that it would be a great thing for the world if all the rest of the girls in it could be spoiled in the same way.

"First," Selby Kane was saying, as Leah came quietly back to her chair. "I'll explain why I'm not in Europe as I'm supposed to be. After I was squeezed out by the bunch of crooks that have a strangle-hold on this town, I was approached by a small group of wealthy men who made me a proposition. As you know, while I was in office I did my utmost to enforce the laws and protect the decent people from the crooks. I tried to make my department serve the purpose for which it was created. That's why I was kicked out.

"This group of wealthy men proposed to me that I pretend to leave the country, slip back quietly, form a sort of private and secret police force, and proceed to gather evidence that when placed before the Federal authorities would force action to clean up this city. These men offered to put unlimited funds and all their influence at my disposal and see me through to the finish—come hell or high water.

"I took the job. I've built up a tight and efficient little organization, composed for the most part of men like Frank Seecord—men whom I know I can trust. We have produced results in a small way, but have made little or no progress in the one thing that must be done if the grip of organized crime on this city is ever to be broken."

"And that is—" inquired Tommy.

"Run to earth," answered Selby Kane grimly, "the arch-criminal whose devilish brain conceives the greater part of the outrages that are committed in the city."

"To which one of our well-known big shots do you refer?" asked Tommy.

"None of them," snapped Kane. "Listen, Dutton: The man we've got to find is no blustering gangster, lording it over



the booze business or some other racket in a certain territory and strutting in night-clubs. This devil we want is as far above those fellows as any one of them is above a hop-headed sneak-thief.

"Our so-called big shots are merely his tools—and lesser tools, at that. He permits them to exist and run their little rackets. Tommy, there is an organization in this town of which the best known of our 'mobs' are merely units of small importance. Call it a super-gang. Call it what you please. It's a sinister and ruthless thing, created and ruled by the evil brain of a monster.

"The evil genius who rules over this organization is diabolically clever. We haven't been able to get even a hint as to his name, nationality, appearance, station in life or anything of the sort. We haven't even an idea as to where his headquarters may be. We know a few of his lesser tools, but that is all. Every effort to trace them to their master has been in vain. We haven't even been able to get an idea as to the manner in which he communicates with the half-dozen we know to be affiliated with his organization."

"What particular brand of devilry does this mysterious chap specialize in?" asked Dutton.

"Doesn't specialize," replied Kane. "He omits nothing in the category of crime: murder, arson, blackmail, theft—the whole list. While I can't prove all of it, I know that he has, in the past year alone, caused scores of men and women to be murdered and as many more to commit suicide. He has ruined wealthy men and stolen the savings of the poor. He has corrupted many others with bribery and intimidation. He is largely responsible for the flood of narcotics that flows steadily into the city to undermine the health and wreck the minds of thousands of pitiful victims. He has bled the community for literally millions of dollars—and there seems no end to his greed."

"I hadn't thought," said Dutton, "about such a person existing; but since listening to you, it occurs to me that I've subconsciously noticed things that point to such a man—a sort of monarch of the mobs."

"It was you who found the body of Max Gilchrist to-night, wasn't it?" demanded Kane suddenly.

"Well," replied Dutton, "I went out after a tip was telephoned to the office." He went on to explain the circumstances.

"The *Globe* story, bearing your name," said Kane, "says it was suicide. Do you believe that?"

"No," answered the reporter. "In fact, I am quite certain that Gilchrist was murdered."

DUTTON proceeded to outline his reasons for the belief he had expressed. Kane and the girl listened intently until he had finished. The dog Kaiser had stretched himself contentedly at Tommy's feet.

"And I too am sure that Max Gilchrist was murdered," declared Kane when the reporter ceased speaking. "In addition to the reasons you have mentioned, I have known Gilchrist for a long, long time. He is not the type of man to take his own life. Neither is he the type of man who would touch a penny not rightfully his. He was absolutely upright and honest. And he was one of the men who prevailed upon me to take this task upon my shoulders. His fortune and influence have been at my disposal since I began work."

"Hmph," grunted Tommy. "And you think this under-world emperor is behind this murder?"

"I'd bet my life on it."

"Maybe," suggested Dutton, "our super-gangster has learned of your secret police and found out who is backing you, and—"

"I can't think so," cut in Kane. "Why the suicide note confessing to embezzlement, if a campaign of extermination against my backers and myself were behind the murder? No. The killing of Gilchrist is just part of another of this arch-fiend's schemes. The other parts will develop quickly. Pinning that tip onto an innocent girl puzzles me. In a way it appears crude—not the sort of thing our super-crook would do. On the other hand, it may be so clever that we don't see it."

"Yes," nodded the reporter. "And by the way, you haven't yet told me why you sent for me. Why've you told me all this?"

I WANT your help," said Selby Kane. "Want you to join my crew. I remember some clever detective work you did on behalf of the *Globe* while I was in charge of the detective bureau. Also, you are in a position to get your finger on things quickly—things that will help us no end by saving time and letting us pick up trails while they are still fresh. I'll see that you're well paid for your trouble."

"I see," said Dutton. "I'll be glad to help you in any way I can, so long as my work for the *Globe* doesn't suffer."

"That's all I ask," declared Kane. "I'll give you the phone number here; you can call me any time anything happens you think is our business. I'll call you whenever I want you to do something for me. If what I ask interferes with your work for the *Globe*, you can simply tell me so, and that will be that. I am, however, certain that you can and will render me some very valuable assistance."

"Anything particular in mind?" asked Tommy.

"Could you see this Gertrude Mason as early as possible in the morning and try to get a line on who might have been the unknown who gave Miss Mason's name and address?"

"There's the chance that the party who telephoned the *Globe* picked Gertrude Mason's name from the directory at random," suggested Tommy.

"Possible, but not probable," declared Selby Kane. "Too much coincidence. Miss Mason knew Gilchrist personally. And picking a real person just to hide the caller's identity would have been stupid."

"It would have been dumb," nodded Dutton, "—dumb or deep. Nevertheless, I'll see Miss Mason in the morning. I meant to, in any case. She doesn't get to her office till nine o'clock. I'll catch her at home before seven."

"Stern parent," spoke up Leah Kane, "would a suggestion from a mere female be out of order?"

"No," smiled her father. "You have the floor."

"It was a woman who telephoned the tip to the *Globe*, wasn't it?" asked Leah, looking at Tommy.

"Yes," he replied.

"And she gave a woman's name," went on Leah. "She wanted to withhold her own name—and perhaps she saw a chance to make trouble for another woman she didn't like. It might be a good idea to look up other women who bear Miss Mason a grudge for some reason—who might be jealous of her."

"Say!" cried Tommy. "That's an idea. Thanks."

"I," smiled Leah, "have almost brilliant moments. Hereditary." She shot a mischievous glance at her father.

"Very clever, progeny," nodded Selby Kane. "And if you'll produce the coffee and sandwiches— Mr. should be on his way to get a little sleep, if he's got an early call on a lady."

It was nearing four o'clock when Tommy Dutton left the Kane apartment. Kaiser followed him to the

"I really believe the fickle beast would follow you away," laughed Leah Kane. "It must have been love at first sight."

"Please call me as soon as you have learned anything about the mysterious telephoner of tips," said Selby Kane. "I may have learned something on other angles of the case by that time. My men are at work on several tacks. And remember I am always Mr. Hoff for telephone purposes. Whenever you wish to come to this apartment, ring the janitor's bell and tell him your name. He'll bring you up the service elevator."

Tommy Dutton got three hours' sleep and was interviewing Miss Gertrude Mason in her apartment at a quarter of eight the following morning. The young woman was in no pleasant mood.

"I'm sorry to pester you again," apologized Tommy, "but I must. Some one, it appears, has made a deliberate effort to cause you trouble. Have you any idea at all as to who the person might be?"

"No," declared Miss Mason flatly. "I have no idea who it could have been—and no idea why anyone should have given my name."

"Please," begged Tommy, "think hard. Have you any women enemies? Is any other girl or woman, perhaps, jealous of you?"

The girl started to reply, caught her lower lip in her teeth and flushed slightly. Her eyes wavered.

"Ah," cried Tommy. "Somebody is jealous? Please—please tell me who it is."

Miss Mason shook her head, and closed her lips tightly. Tommy set to work. It took fifteen minutes of the most diplomatic argument of which he was capable, but his persistence was finally rewarded. He obtained Miss Mason's admission that she was engaged to Mr. Carl Yeager, assistant district attorney, and that since her engagement a Miss Rose Cotner, secretary to Yeager, had displayed unwarranted jealousy. Stories, untrue and uncomplimentary to herself, had reached the ears of her fiancé, Miss Mason admitted, and she was almost sure that they had been started by Miss Cotner. Miss Cotner lived in an apartment hotel in the east eighties.

"Is Miss Cotner red-headed?" asked Tommy.

"Yes," answered Miss Mason. "How did you know?"

AT half-past eight Tommy alighted from a taxi before the hotel in which Rose Cotner's apartment was housed. He paid the driver and hurried in, praying that Miss Cotner had not yet left for work. She had not, the switchboard back of the small desk declared.

"Do you ring her for me?" asked Tommy.

"That's funny," said the girl after a few moments. "She doesn't answer. Maybe she's on her way downstairs. A Western Union messenger took a telegram up there about fifteen minutes ago. She was there then, because I called her to ask if I should take the wire or send



the boy up with it. He said there was an answer requested, and she said to send him up."

Ten minutes passed. The girl kept ringing the apartment but got no answer.

"Her phone may have gone on the blink," observed Dutton. "What's the apartment number? I'll run up and knock on the door."

But when the reporter reached the door of apartment 4-F he did not knock. From beneath the door a dark stain had run out onto the floor of the hall. Tommy went back downstairs and told the girl at the desk to call the police. He then flashed his reporter's badge and was soon on his way back upstairs, accompanied by a boy with a pass-key. A slender red-haired girl of perhaps twenty-five lay on the floor of the apartment just inside the door. She had been shot through the heart.

"It's Miss Cotner," said the boy.

The reporter spent several minutes in the room and got away before the police arrived. He stopped at the desk and tried to get a description of the messenger-boy who had taken the telegram up to the apartment. The girl at the switchboard could only remember that he was a small fellow, not very young, and his suit didn't fit very well.

Tommy's next move was to check up with the telegraph company. He was not surprised to learn that no message had been received or delivered to Miss Rose Cotner during the past twenty-four hours. Telephoning Selby Kane, the reporter told him briefly what had happened and was asked to come to Kane's apartment at once. The *Globe* being a morning paper, Tommy was not due at the office until noon. He told Kane he would be over at once.

Selby Kane, in a dressing-gown, admitted Dutton. Leah was not about. At the sound of Tommy's voice, Kaiser appeared from another part of the apartment and

greeted his new friend with dignified but unmistakable joy.

"Our master crook has struck again," said Selby Kane, grimly. "Let's have the details."

DUTTON began with his visit to Miss Mason. "And," he concluded, "this much is plain: The tip was telephoned by Rose Cotner, who gave the name of Gertrude Mason for reasons that appear clear, but may not be. Then Miss Cotner was murdered this morning by a fake messenger boy who carried a silenced weapon under his uniform. The question is—why was the Cotner girl killed?"

"We've got to have the answer to that question," nodded Kane. "But there are things which I believe far more important, demanding attention right now. I think I've divined the purpose behind the happenings last night—and I'm afraid there has been at least one more murder committed—Raymond Sugden."

"Sugden!" gasped the reporter. "Jumping Jupiter! You think Raymond Sugden has been murdered?"

"He's missing, at least," replied Kane. "Listen, and I'll tell you what I know—and suspect. I'm practically certain that the devil back of this is planning to bring about a panic in Continental Chemical stock. Raymond Sugden, as you probably know, is president of the Continental Chemical. Here is my theory: The story of Max Gilchrist's death and the embezzlement confession in this morning's paper is certain to cause the bottom to fall out of Continental Chemical. You see that?"

"Yes!"

"And," went on Kane, "the only man who might possibly do something quickly enough to prevent the crash is Raymond Sugden. And Sugden has disappeared."

"I don't quite see it," said Tommy. "You mean that there is nothing wrong with Continental Chemical? That there has been no embezzlement and no irregularities that have crippled the corporation?"

"Exactly!"

"Now I've got it!" nodded Dutton. "The story in this morning's papers will scare the stockholders to death. They'll dump their shares. This super-crook will buy them for a song. Then the truth will come out, and the stock will go back up again."

"That's it."

"Then all you've got to do is check up on whoever buys heavy when everybody else is selling. You'll have your murderer!"

"Or one or more of his agents," agreed Kane without enthusiasm. "We'll check, of course, but I tell you this man is clever. I don't think we're going to get to him as easily as that."

"But how come that Raymond Sugden is the only other man who can prevent the smash?" inquired the reporter.

"I said," explained Kane, "that Sugden is the only man who might be able to do anything quickly enough. A directors' meeting, an audit, will require time. Anyhow, the directors and lesser executives will be expected to make statements. The stampeded stockholders will pay no attention. No. Only Sugden with his large personal fortune and influence and his intimate knowledge of Continental Chemical's affairs can save the stock from a toboggan ride."

"And Sugden is missing?"

"Missing," answered Kane. "I've had my men trying to locate him since shortly after one o'clock this morning. He lives in a big house on Riverford Drive. He's been a widower for six or seven years. Lives alone. Keeps two servants, a middle-aged housekeeper and a chauffeur. He left home shortly after dinner last night, saying he was going to the Almet Club. For years he has seldom failed

to join a set of cronies in a poker game at the club on Wednesday nights. Last night he didn't arrive at the club. And we haven't been able to locate him elsewhere. If he'd not met with foul play of some sort, he would certainly have seen the papers and have taken steps by this time to save Continental Chemical. I'm afraid."

"Is there anything I can do now?" asked Dutton. "I've a couple of hours before I need to go to the office."

"I have nothing to suggest," said Kane, "unless you can think up some way to try to get a line on Sugden. I've got men out on all the loose ends I have been able to think of."

"In that case," said Tommy, rising, "I think I'll take a walk and try to think."

Kaiser bounded to the door at his side. "Good-by, old boy," said the reporter. "I'll be seeing you."

"He heard you say *walk*," said Selby Kane. "He's wild to get outdoors."

"Let him come," Tommy proposed, patting the animal's head. "I'll take him for a turn and bring him back before I go to the office."

"Fine," agreed Kane. . . .

Tommy Dutton got to the *Globe* office at eleven and had his story nearly written when Dale Farley arrived. The financial editor was also on the job and going around in frenzied circles. Selby Kane had been accurate in his forecast of what would happen to Continental Chemical stock.

A minute after the opening of the Exchange there was panic as everybody and his brother and his aunt dumped their shares of Continental Chemical into a market from which the bottom was knocked out completely.

Continental Chemical had closed at 108 on the preceding day; it opened at one hundred and proceeded to go down like a rock in a millpond. At noon owners of the stock were begging their brokers to get rid of it at forty. At one o'clock a buyer who had dared to offer thirty would have been trampled to death in the stampede of sellers.

IT was just a few minutes past noon when a disheveled figure rolled from a little byroad onto the Post Road some thirty miles north of the city. The figure was that of a man in tattered evening clothes. He rolled, because he couldn't walk. His feet and hands were securely bound with stout wire that had cut into his flesh. An expertly fitted gag prevented him from making any sound louder than a moan. His face and hands were cut and scratched and his torn garments were ground full of grime.

A passing motorist, Leonard Adams by name, stopped his car and freed the man of bonds and gag. The victim gasped out the information that he was Mr. Raymond Sugden and that he had been kidnaped. He asked to be driven to the nearest police station with all possible speed. The motorist at once complied with the request.

At the police station in Tarrytown, Sugden told his story: He had left home the previous evening, telling the chauffeur that he might have the night off, as he, Sugden, meant to walk to the club for exercise. He had walked only some three blocks when he was halted by a man who called him by name.

He halted, tried to recognize the man but failed, and the next moment the fellow was standing close with a gun thrust against his side. A big closed car pulled up to the curb, and the door swung open. His captor told him to step into the car quickly unless he wanted to die. He stood. Sugden stepped into the car, and found himself sitting between two men with guns pressed against him. The car sped northward and finally pulled into a byroad. He was told to get out. As he stepped from the car, a blow from behind rendered him unconscious.

He came to, some time later, to find himself bound and gagged and lying on a rough board floor. It was very dark, and he had not been certain that he was alone until daylight began to come in through the two windows of the small shack. As soon as he realized that he was unguarded, he had begun trying to free himself from his bonds. Finding that impossible, he had hit upon the plan of rolling to the highway which he knew must be near since he could hear automobiles passing along it.

But the door of the shack had been propped shut from the outside, and it had taken him hours of battering at it with his bound feet, while lying on his back, to loosen the props. He had finally succeeded, wormed out of the place and rolled down the byroad to the highway. The local authorities knew the shack, which had been built by an old fisherman now dead, and for more than two years had been abandoned.

When told of the death of Max Gilchrist and the circumstances surrounding the tragedy, Sugden went white and sat limp and silent for several minutes. Then he recovered himself with a determined effort.

"Gentlemen," declared Sugden, "Max Gilchrist did not kill himself. Neither did he ever touch a penny of money that did not belong to him. I have been his friend and business associate for years. I know that what you have told me is impossible. Max— Say!" he cried with a sudden start. "What has happened to Continental Chemical stock? May I use your telephone?"

Three minutes later Sugden was barking orders over the telephone to somebody who seemed bewildered at hearing his voice.

"I'm coming as fast as I can get there," shouted the angry and excited millionaire. "But you get busy right now!"

Shortly before two o'clock Raymond Sugden arrived at the offices of the Continental Chemical Company in the Hawthorne building. Except to wash his hands and face and brush off his tattered evening clothes, Sugden had stopped for no toilet.

In the taxi that sped him officeward, Sugden had read the newspaper accounts of Gilchrist's death and his own disappearance. The news that he had been found, and that the kidnaping had been telephoned ahead, and that the police were crying extras on the streets as his cab sped through the city.

"Only one thing to say to you," Sugden snarled at the reporters who fell upon him as he left the cab. "Max Gilchrist did not commit suicide. This thing is all a

criminal conspiracy to drive down the price of Continental Chemical stock. There has been no money embezzled from the corporation, and its affairs are not involved. An audit which will be made with all possible speed will prove that. Go back and print that in your papers. I'll talk to you again after the market closes, but not before."

Continental Chemical closed at eighty, having climbed steadily during the final two hours of trade. But the



Bewildered, Dutton raised his hands. How the devil had these hoodlums got into his apartment?

damage had been done. Thousands of stockholders had lost large sums of money. The papers carried Sugden's statement and gave themselves over definitely to the theory that Max Gilchrist had been murdered. The police were forced into the same attitude. Experts in handwriting declared the signature on the "suicide" note an indubitable forgery. Microscopic examinations proved that a silencer had been removed from the gun found in Gilchrist's hand. Except for a total lack of clues to the murderer's identity, the case was clear.

It was nine o'clock, that evening when Tom-

my Dutton, who had been sitting at his desk lost in thought for half an hour, asked Dale Farley if he might drift out on his own to check up on some hunches.

"Trot along, *Sherlock*," said the city editor. "Drag in another yarn as good as the one you brought in this morning, and darned if I don't try to get you a forty-cent bonus."

The reporter went to a parking lot, got his roadster and drove northward. He was going to call on Selby Kane, but he stopped first at his apartment to spruce up a bit. Leah Kane might be there. Mulling over some new ideas that were trying to form in his mind, he climbed the stairs to his apartment on the second floor.

The building was a three-story walk-up. The janitor occupied quarters in the rear of the basement; and his wife looked after Dutton's apartment. Whistling absently, Tommy reached his own door, thrust the key into the lock and walked in.

"Stick 'em up, buddy," growled a thick voice as the door banged shut behind him.

The hard muzzle of a gun bored into his middle, and he was looking into a pair of hard eyes that peered between a hat-brim and the top of a handkerchief which concealed the lower portion of the man's face. Tommy's spine tingled. He saw that another masked man had appeared at his side. The second thug held a vicious-

looking blackjack in his hand. Bewildered, Dutton raised his hands. How the devil had these hoodlums got into his apartment?

The man who held the gun brought his left hand from the pocket of his coat and thrust a small, uncorked bottle into Tommy's hand. It contained a liquid of a beautiful ruby color.

"Drink that!" ordered the thug. "It won't hurt you. Just make you take a little nap. We are taking you to see a gentleman who has some nice things to tell you. You'll enjoy the ride more if you're asleep."

"And if I don't drink it?" inquired Tommy, now recovered from his surprise and growing angry.

"Then my partner will have to tap you over the head with his little plaything," said the gunman flatly. "You're going with us. The drink won't hurt near as much as the sap."

Slowly Tommy brought the mouth of the bottle to his lips. His wits were working like lightning. He tipped back his head and let the contents of the bottle run into his mouth, but he did not swallow. When his mouth was full, he went into action with the speed of a frightened rabbit. His hand flashed down to grab the gun at his belt-buckle. At the same moment he spat liquor squarely into the gunman's eyes. There was no shot as he thrust the gun sidewise and kicked out viciously at the thug with the blackjack.

But Tommy had tackled too big a job. The temporarily blinded gunman dropped his weapon and grappled with his struggling victim. He hung on like grim death. The other hoodlum recovered his balance, snarled a curse of pain and rage and leaped into the fray with uplifted "sap." Tommy thought his head had exploded. Then he didn't think anything. . . .

Soft music, far-away music, was sounding in Tommy Dutton's ears. It was nice music; it was coming nearer. Tommy wondered about it, vaguely. He was very comfortable. Then he began to realize other things. He realized that he was lying on his back on something soft. He opened his eyes and saw a white ceiling above him. There was soft light, but it made his head throb with sudden dull pain. He turned his head and was staring at a wall.

Turning his head the other way, Tommy beheld a sight which dispelled his lethargy. He struggled up onto his elbow and stared. He was lying on a divan in a large, low-ceilinged and richly furnished room. There was a radio against one wall from which the soft music was flooding the chamber. There was a buffet, a number of easy-chairs and a large desk of carved mahogany which stood in the center of the room.

SEATED before this desk, and facing him across it, sat a figure so strange that Tommy blinked in wonder. The figure was covered with a flowing and shapeless robe of dark green material. Even the head was covered by a pointed, hoodlike affair that was a part of the robe. Where the eyeholes of the mask should have been, there were two squares of white with narrow black slits in their center. Tommy felt that eyes were surveying him through those slits.

As Tommy struggled to a sitting position on the side of the divan, the robed figure rose and moved across the thick rug to the radio. An arm in a shapeless sleeve reached out, and a hand in a black silk glove snapped the switch on the side of the machine. The music stopped. The figure returned to the chair before the desk and again faced Dutton. A low chuckle came from behind the mask.

"Good evening, Mr. Dutton," said a drawling voice, muffled by the robe. "How do you feel?"

"Not—not bad. What's happened? What's this all about?"

"I merely took some precautions to be sure that our interview will be uninterrupted and not overheard," replied the muffled voice. "I hope you will not hold it against me. I'm truly sorry that my messenger had to be rough with you. The liquor offered you would not have caused you so much as a headache. But let it pass. You are here. As usual, I have obtained the desired result."

"Yes," observed Tommy, his fingers feeling of a lump on his head, "I seem to be here. I wonder if you'd mind telling me why."

"Gladly," purred the hooded one. "I have use for you, so I sent for you. You have entered my employ."

"So?" inquired Tommy after a moment of silence.

"What do I do for you and what do I get for doing it?" "You will do what I tell you to," was the reply. "And you will be paid an amount that will make your salary as reporter seem insignificant. Also, your work will be easy—much easier than the tasks you do for the *Globe*."

TOMMY DUTTON had gathered his wits and was thinking furiously while the man talked.

"Why have me batted on the noodle and carted here to tell me that?" asked the reporter. "I'd have walked out of the office with you in a minute if you had come there and offered me an easier job at better pay."

There was a chuckle from beneath the hood. The man pulled open a drawer of the desk and drew out a thick package of bank-notes. He counted off a number and laid them on the desk.

"There is a thousand dollars," said the hooded man. "That is your first month's salary. You will take it when you wish to. You may have noticed that I didn't ask whether you wished to serve me or not. Those I wish to serve me, either do so or die. My workers do exactly what I want done. For faithful service they are paid royally. For refusal to serve, or for bungling—the wage is death. Remember that!"

"And I am now in your employ—at a thousand a month?"

"You are."

"What do I do first and when do I do it?" Tommy Dutton had suddenly decided to play a part, and he proceeded to play it in a manner that would have done credit to a seasoned trouper.

"Well spoken," chuckled the hooded one. "I like a willing spirit. But be patient. As a matter of fact, I have nothing for you to do before some time toward the last of next week. I called you here tonight to tell you what not to do."

"I work two ways, then?" inquired Tommy.

"You do," was the silky reply. "You are a very clever young man, Dutton. Otherwise you would not be worth so much to me. You have displayed a zeal and a keen observation, since the body of Max Gilchrist was found, that have caused me a bit of annoyance. I do not like to be annoyed. From now on you will lose all but a casual interest in the case and cease to notice things that are not first noticed by others."

"You!" cried Tommy, stiffening. "Then you did the murder—"

"Stop!" the voice came like the sound of a file on tin. Then again, more softly, with something in it like the hiss of an angry snake: "Let us forget the we were about to use. It was I who—had Gilchrist re I also had the Cotner woman taken care of. As missed, it was she who called the *Globe* and told th to find Gilchrist. In her position, she was a fairly ful tool—but she can be replaced. Last night she unde,

took to mix her affairs with mine. She will not do it again. That is something to remember."

"And Raymond Sugden?"

"I had to keep him out of the way for a while," nodded the hood. "I should have removed him permanently, but for the fact that I shall need him again presently. He made a fortune today when he escaped in time to come in such a spectacular manner to the aid of his company. In fact, I believe he took more profit out of the little flurry than I did. He may keep it for the present. I shall take it away from him at the proper time."

"And do—am I supposed to take part in these—these—" began Tommy.

Again that grisly chuckle. "I can hire those who do that sort of thing for a small fraction of what I am giving you. Brains are worth much more than trigger-fingers."

"I see," said Tommy with a sigh of relief. "And am I to quit the *Globe* in the—"

"By no means," cut in the monster in the robe. "I need a man on the *Globe*. Keep your job. It is ideal for my purpose. Simplifies your task of gathering the information I shall need from time to time."

"But if I lie down on the job," said Tommy, puzzled, "I'll be fired."

"No need to, ah, lie down on the job," countered the other. "Just use a little less zeal—be less observant in matters that I do not want probed too deeply. In return, I will keep your job secure by furnishing you information that will enable you to do sensational work in such cases as can be solved without annoying me. A splendid arrangement, no?"

"Clever," nodded Tommy. "Ought to work smoothly."

"And now," said the arch-criminal, taking a glass and a bottle from a lower compartment of the desk, "if you will pocket your money and drink the glass of very excellent wine that I am about to pour for you—"

"But how do I hear from you, get in touch with you?" asked Tommy.

"You do not get in touch with me," declared the hood. "Thousands of employees in this city do my bidding and enjoy my bounty. Not one of them would recognize me if he or she were introduced to me tomorrow. Not one of them knows the location of this very comfortable and convenient room, any more than you will know it when you awake in your apartment after a bit.

"I shall have you brought here again when I have instructions to give you. You need not worry as to how I will do it. Just remember what you are not to do until we meet again. And now take your money and this glass of wine and lie down on the couch. When you awaken at home, there will be no ill effects."

AS he spoke, the hooded figure pushed the stack of bank-notes across the desk with his left hand. His right rested on the edge of the desk and held a businesslike automatic. Tommy advanced, picked up the money, counted it and thrust it into a trousers pocket.

"I suppose that whoever takes me home can be trusted not to pick my pocket," he grinned.

"Have no fear on that score," answered the robed one as he picked up the bottle with his left hand and poured the glass two-thirds full of the ruby wine. "Now if you will drink this—ah—libation, and lie down on the couch—"

Tommy picked up the glass, looked at it with a faint smile and then tossed off the contents. He went back to the divan and had little more than stretched his lanky form thereon when his eyes grew heavy. In two more minutes he was asleep. . . .

The hands of the mantel clock in his apartment pointed

to a quarter of eleven when Tommy Dutton shook off his drugged slumber. He was lying fully dressed on the bed, and the reading lamp beside it was burning. It took a couple of minutes for the fog to lift from his wits. Then Tommy grinned, sat up on the edge of the bed and thrust his hand into his pocket. His fingers found the roll of bills, and he thumbed them through. It was all there—one thousand dollars. Tommy put it back in his pocket.

"Must see Kane as soon as possible," mused Dutton, "but I've got to be damned careful. Some of that monster's dogs may be trailing me to see what I do after I come out of the dope. Telephone may be tapped. Got to use the old bean."

IT was nearing two o'clock when the reporter finally reached Selby Kane's apartment. He had exercised the greatest caution to do nothing unnatural, but he had made certain that he was not followed. He rapped the proper signal on the apartment door and waited several minutes before Kane himself opened the door. Fifteen minutes later Dutton finished his detailed account.

Kane's eyes were glowing with excitement.

"At last," he cried, "that monster has laid himself open. We'll get him now! We'll get him!"

"I hope so," said Tommy, "but I'm darned if I see just how it's to be done."

"I'm getting a plan, but it must be worked out with great care," declared Kane. "I think you realize now what sort of fiend we are dealing with. Don't doubt for a moment what he told you about being absolutely unknown to his army of tools. There must be one man, besides himself, who knows his true identity and the way to that den of his. But I'd gamble there is not more than one."

"He pays well, at least," observed Dutton, dryly.

"Hm-m-m," nodded Kane. "I doubt that he pays many of his tools as well as he has promised to pay you. I have reason to believe that there are more who serve him without pay, because they fear him, than there are who receive money for their services. But that is nothing to us. The fact remains that he is served—and that he is a malignant menace to society. We must get him, and quickly!"

"Amen," said the reporter. "I'm not going to feel comfortable again as long as he is at large. What's your plan?"

"He promised," said Selby Kane slowly, "to have you brought to his headquarters again in a week or such a matter. You've got to be under the eye of one or more of my men every moment from now on. You must be watched night and day—and the watching must be more than clever. It must be a masterpiece of shadowing. Otherwise—"

"Otherwise I'll be guest of honor at a funeral," observed Tommy as Kane paused, "and I'll have no opportunity to refuse the invitation."

"That is what we must and will guard against, above all else," said Kane.

"I certainly hope you will," said Tommy. "Honestly, I'm scared."

"You have cause to be," admitted Kane. "You know I can't hold you to your promise to help me, under the circumstances. You may consider—"

"I'm scared, sure enough," declared Tommy, "but I'm worse scared to have this gobbler loose than I am to try to catch him. I'm with you until they screw down the lid with the glass window in it."

Selby Kane sat for several moments studying the sober face of the reporter. There was a peculiar gleam in the old detective's eyes. "I think," said Kane presently, "I'll get us a peg of brandy."

"I'll get it, parent," said Leah Kane as her father started to rise. "I've been eavesdropping, but I was on the point of coming out. I might miss something if you should lower your voices."

"Pestiferous progeny," growled Selby Kane, dropping back into his chair, "I shall pack you off to your aunt in Boston in the morning."

Leah returned immediately with glasses and a decanter on a tray. Kaiser followed her in, passed her with a sheepish sidewise glance and sat down close against Tommy's leg.

"Traitor!" Leah frowned at the animal.

Tommy laughed and stroked the sleek head.

"Did your check on the buyer of Continental Chemical shares while they were down turn up anything?" Tommy inquired then.

"Nothing much," answered Kane. "There was no heavy buying in the city until Raymond Sugden threw his support behind the stock. There were three heavy buyers from out of town—Boston, St. Louis and Cleveland. Probably the agents of our arch-criminal, but judging from a quick check on them, it would be next to impossible to prove it. The knowledge that you are to be taken back to his den is the most hopeful thing that has yet happened."

"It puzzles me," said Dutton, "why the son-of-a-gun confessed the murders to me so freely."

"It doesn't puzzle me," declared Kane. "His principal reason was to impress you with his deadliness—to put fear in your soul. And he is so cocksure that he enjoys his little boast; and he almost had to tell you, since he was going to order you to let up on the Gilchrist case."

Tommy nodded and said nothing. Leah Kane was watching the young reporter closely.

"Yes," declared Kane, after a silence, "our best chance to trap this fiend is to follow you to his headquarters. I have eighteen men I can depend on. Tomorrow I'll have them drop everything else and concentrate on keeping your every move covered. You must go on with your work at the *Globe* as usual, and for the time being, obey the instructions you receive tonight. If human effort can accomplish it, we will trail you to the spot where you are taken to meet him next. If there was any way in which you could safely telephone a report from the *Globe* office now and then, it would help. But I fear we can't take the risk."

"That should be safe," said Tommy after a moment of thought. "They could hardly tap the wires of a private branch exchange."

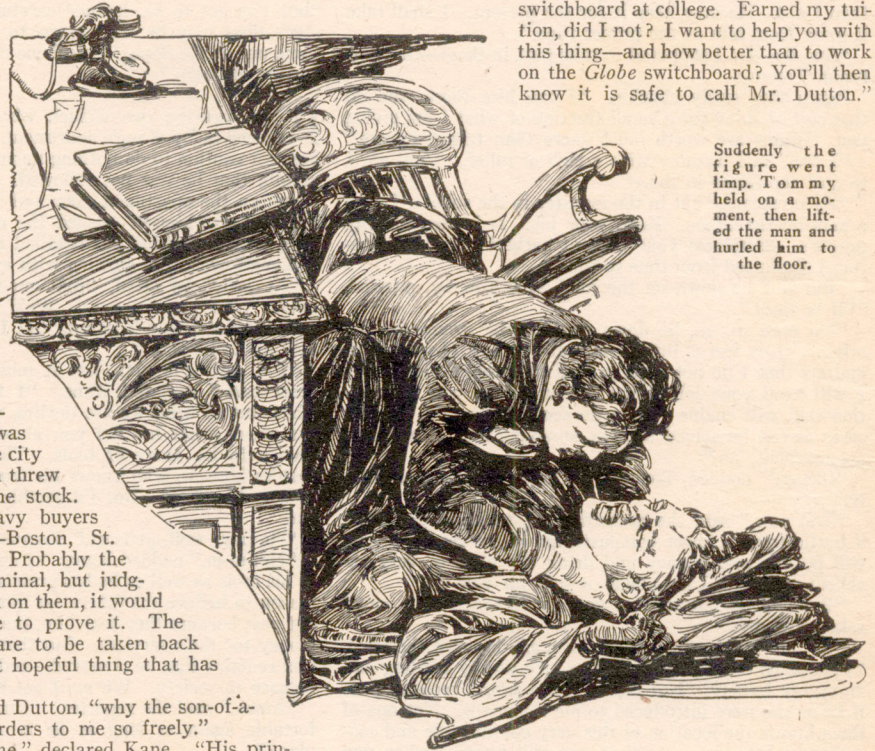
"No," replied Kane, "but this crook has hired and intimidated spies in all sorts of places, even in the district attorney's office—as we've seen. The switchboard opera-

tor at the *Globe* might be one of them. I tell you we can't be too careful."

"Listen, precious parent," cried Leah suddenly. "I have it! Behold the new switchboard operator of the *Globe*." She tapped her breast with her fingers.

"No," retorted Selby Kane, forgetting to banter. "That's out. I won't have it."

"Be sensible, ancestor," argued Leah. "I can do the work. You know I worked on the switchboard at college. Earned my tuition, did I not? I want to help you with this thing—and how better than to work on the *Globe* switchboard? You'll then know it is safe to call Mr. Dutton."



Suddenly the figure went limp. Tommy held on a moment, then lifted the man and hurled him to the floor.

"In the first place," demurred Kane, "you couldn't get the position, and—"

"You can get anything you want, parent," interrupted Leah. "We'll drop the subject for the time, but I am going to operate that switchboard."

"And I think you had better take your city editor into your confidence," said Kane. "I know Dale Farley. He can be trusted. Tell him the situation, and tell him I'll try to arrange an interview with him soon."

Fifteen minutes later, when he rose to leave, Tommy blurted out a request that he be allowed to take Kaiser home with him and keep the dog for a time. "I've got a reason," he explained. "Maybe it's just a crazy idea. If it works, I'll tell you about it. If it doesn't, I'll bring Kaiser home and keep my mouth shut."

"Take him along," smiled Leah. "But you'll find him expensive, I'm afraid. His appetite is prodigious."

And so Tommy Dutton left the building and trudged homeward with a delighted dog at his side. Kaiser slept on a blanket at the foot of Tommy's bed that night. In the morning his new master would find him quarters in the basement and arrange with the janitor to look after him in emergencies. . . .

Tommy left his home just before noon the following

day. He was followed to breakfast and from there to work by men so skilled in their work that their charge was not aware that his guard was already on the job. The first thing Dutton did upon arrival at the office was to take Dale Farley aside for a long talk. The city editor listened with an expressionless face.

"Something tells me," he said when Tommy had finished, "that I'm going to need another reporter. Boy, I'm glad I'm not in your boots. Go ahead with your game! I wish you luck. That costs me nothing. But I can't afford flowers on a newspaper salary."

Tommy laughed without much amusement and went to his desk to await an assignment. Presently the telephone at his elbow jingled. He answered the call to hear a voice which he recognized instantly.

"This is the new girl at the switchboard," said Leah. "So you made it?" asked Dutton.

"Didn't you know I would?" countered Leah. "I've been taking instructions from the other girl, who has been promoted. This is the first minute I've been alone at the board. We mustn't talk much here, but I'll be relieved for dinner at six. I'll eat in that little place they call Sam's Grill. And now good-bye. I must mind my work."

"THIS is nice," said Tommy, seated opposite Leah Kane. "Is it just a dinner, or is it a rendezvous on sinister business?"

"It's social, slightly tainted with business—not sinister," answered Leah. "And we are not to do it any more. If I have word for you, I will deliver it over the telephone or tell you to look for mail. In the latter case, you will come back to the switchboard and I'll hand you a letter. Any report you have for Father, you are to give to me. I'll relay it. And you're to tell me where you are going each time you're sent out. That ends the business."

"Good," nodded Tommy. "Now let's order dinner."

Half an hour later they walked back to the *Globe* together. On the way Leah told him that she had moved to a near-by hotel and was now using the name of Leah Cain. He could phone her at the hotel—but only in case of emergency. . . .

Sunday passed and Wednesday came again. A week had gone by since the murders of Max Gilchrist and the Cotner girl. Tommy Dutton had heard nothing from his mysterious "employer." The thousand dollars that was his first "wages" had been deposited in his bank. The reporter was playing his part to the best of his ability.

Every morning since the night he had brought the police dog home with him Dutton had taken the animal in his roadster and driven to a certain spot in the park where a boy of about eleven years was always waiting. There followed a couple of hours of a sort of game highly enjoyed by the dog and the boy—a game about which the reporter went with great earnestness. Shortly after eleven o'clock Tommy and Kaiser would depart for home, leaving the boy a quarter richer.

Constantly, tirelessly, Selby Kane's force of eighteen men shadowed Tommy Dutton. One or more of them witnessed the game in the park each morning. They reported it to their chief, but none of them made any point of it. Kane smiled thoughtfully.

Then came Wednesday, and the arch-criminal again demonstrated his cleverness. It was just a few minutes past nine o'clock in the evening when Tommy was summoned from his typewriter in the local room by a telephone call. The reporter answered and heard a male voice on the wire.

"Meet me down at the front door right away, Dutton," said the voice. "I have instructions for you."

The man hung up before Tommy could answer. The next second Leah Kane's voice sounded in Dutton's ear.

"I heard it," said the girl. "Delay about three minutes before you start downstairs."

Leah, like the male caller, was off the wire before Tommy could form a word in answer. The reporter shrugged his shoulders and hung up his receiver. He glanced at the wall-clock, lighted a cigarette and let the specified three minutes tick away. . . .

A slender, well-dressed young man was waiting just inside the entrance of the building when Tommy stepped from the elevator. He nodded as the reporter approached.

"I have a car at the curb," said the messenger in a low tone. "Come along."

The waiting car was a small roadster. Tommy climbed into it beside the other, and they shot away toward Broadway. The youth at the wheel said nothing, and the reporter took his cue. They rolled northward in silence. Dutton was wondering if Selby Kane's men were on the job—and hoping they were. The roadster turned west. Presently it halted before a dock shed.

"Follow me," said the driver crisply.

Two minutes later they were standing beside a trim and speedy-looking motorboat in which a man in rough garb sat at the wheel. The motor of the craft was idling.

"Get in," ordered the youth who had escorted Tommy.

The reporter stepped into the boat, which shot away from the small pier before he could sit down. It was a moonless night, but Tommy saw that they were heading directly for the opposite shore.

Tommy strained his eyes and ears for evidence that his shadows had been able to meet this emergency, but there was none. The craft fairly split the black water and presently slid up to a small landing in the black shadow of a large dock.

A man in dark garments was waiting on the landing. He stepped close as the boat scraped against the pilings.

"Come along, Dutton," growled the dark-clad man, "and make it snappy."

Tommy stepped from the boat and followed the man at a rapid walk to where a big closed car stood in the shadows of a dock shed. The fellow stopped beside the car and took a small bottle from his pocket.

"Guess you know what this is," growled the new guide.

"Drink it and get in the back."

The reporter took the bottle, drew the cork and drank the familiar-tasting wine while the dark-clad one stood watching him sharply. He handed the bottle back to the fellow, who tossed it carelessly away. Then Tommy climbed into the car and sank onto the cushions of the rear seat. His companion slid under the wheel and brought the motor to life. Dutton was already becoming drowsy as the car backed around and headed away from the river-front. His last thought as the unnatural slumber crept over him was that Kane's men could not possibly have kept him in sight.

AND he was right. At that very moment the man who had followed him to the dock on the New York side was reporting by telephone to Selby Kane that he had been forced to give up the chase or expose the fact that he had been following.

"You did the right thing, Carter," answered Kane. "Tough luck, but we can't help it. A break is bound to come. All we can do now is wait for word from Dutton. As soon as he turns up, we'll start all over again." . . .

Tommy Dutton awakened on the couch in the den of his sinister "employer." He sat up, rubbed his eyes and heard the grisly chuckle that he could not mistake. At the desk the green-robed figure sat with eyes behind the slitted white squares fixed upon him.

"Good evening, Dutton," came the silky voice from

behind the hood. "I sent for you to aid you in sewing up a big story for the *Globe*. The credit you will get for tonight's work will amply offset the fact that you will have to do nothing brilliant in connection with a story that will occupy the public attention about Saturday."

Tommy nodded his head and said nothing. He wondered what devilish thing was coming now.

"It is now a quarter past ten," went on the robed monster. "Dr. Levi Magnusson has been dead for fifteen minutes. At half-past eleven his body will be discovered in his apartment. By that time you will be back at the *Globe*. You will be able to solve the mystery and point out the murderer to the police within an hour after the body is discovered."

"Dr. Levi Magnusson is—has been murdered?" asked Tommy incredulously. Levi Magnusson was one of the best-known and most "fashionable" physicians in the city. "Yes," answered the robed one calmly. "He was shot and killed by a hop-head known as Drift Connor. Connor is a police character."

"I know him," said Tommy.

"Well," went on the other, "the gun and its silencer will be found under the mattress of Connor's bed in his room on Seventeenth Street. The gun can be traced and proved to have been sold to Connor recently. The dope which Connor killed Magnusson to get will also be found hidden in the room."

"For your enlightenment, I will explain. Magnusson has long been in my service. So has Drift Connor. Magnusson has, for reasons that I shall not state, not only ceased to be a useful tool but has become an annoyance and possible danger to me. So he is dead. I had him attended to by Connor, who, by reason of his addiction to drugs, has also become a liability."

"A neat little scheme, you see. A treacherous tool is removed by a weak one—and the law will obligingly dispose of the weak one for me. In addition to that, I kill another bird with the same stone. I give you the opportunity to do a brilliant bit of detective-reporter work that will send up your stock on the *Globe* so that nothing will be said if you do not function so well when another series of startling events happen, beginning Saturday."

"You will lead the cops to Connor by telling them that you saw the hop-head riding with the Doctor in the Doctor's car this afternoon. Naturally you wondered about it at the time. See how simple it will be?"

"You're clever," cried Tommy in feigned admiration. "From now on I'm going to be a devil of a good reporter without having to do any work at all."

"You're right," chuckled the hood. "You and I are going to be of much help to each other. I'm delighted with you—and sorry that I did not take you into my service sooner. And now, another thing: I was elaborately cautious, went to a good deal of trouble in bringing you here tonight. I did it to satisfy myself about certain things. I'm glad, for your sake as well as for my own, that everything proved to be as I would have it. Henceforth I shall be able to bring you here without so much bother, having proven that you are a sensible and obedient aid and have—shall we say—no foolish notions."

"I get you," answered Tommy. "You needn't worry. I'm not going to do anything to spoil a soft job."

"Excellent," hissed that reptilian voice. "As I intimated a bit ago, I shall launch another little scheme soon that will net millions. You will have an important part in the proceedings—and there will be something by way of a bonus. I am not ready yet to give you instructions but I will have you brought here Friday night. That night at eleven you will be at the corner of Seventy-seventh

Street and Alworth Avenue. At exactly eleven you will start walking north on the east side of the Avenue and keep walking until something happens. Now our interview must end. You must be back at the *Globe*. You will wake up in half an hour in a parked taxicab. Get out of it, find another. Go to the *Globe* and wait. And now, good-by, until I see you again."

A black-gloved hand brought out bottle and glass. . . .

When Tommy Dutton returned to the news-room of the *Globe* the place was in that turmoil which follows the "breaking" of a big story. Dr. Levi Magnusson had been found murdered in his apartment. Police, called on the telephone by a party who gave no name, had broken down the door and found the fashionable physician lying dead in his living-room. He had been shot twice through the heart.

Tommy Dutton drew Dale Farley aside and spoke swiftly to the city editor for several minutes. Then he turned and went out of the city-room, leaving Farley staring after him in stunned astonishment. An hour later one Drift Connor was under arrest for the murder of the physician. The *Globe* scored a clean scoop on the story, and Tommy Dutton received full credit.

When he had jerked the last sheet of the murder story from his typewriter and a copy-boy had rushed off with it, Tommy picked up his phone. Leah's voice answered. "Well?" asked Tommy.

"Write a complete report of what happened after you got into the motorboat," said Leah. "Don't overlook a single detail. Put it in an envelope and bring it back here to the board. I'll take care of it."

Tommy hung up the receiver and turned back to his typewriter. It was after one o'clock when he finished typing the seven-page report. He tucked the sheets into an envelope and walked back along a corridor that opened from the rear of the news-room. He paused before the alcove that housed the switchboard and handed the letter to Leah Kane. There was no one else about.

"The scheme I had in mind when I borrowed Kaiser has worked out," said Tommy. "I've made a bloodhound out of him. Can I talk to you after work? I want to tell you about it."

A FEW minutes before eleven o'clock on Friday night Tommy Dutton stepped from a taxicab at the corner of Seventy-seventh Street and Alworth Avenue. He glanced at his watch and then lighted a cigarette. There remained four minutes before time to start his northward walk.

The reporter glanced at his watch again, tossed away his fag and started up the Avenue. His hands were thrust into his pockets, and he strode steadily along without hurrying. Seven blocks fell behind him. Not for a moment had Tommy been out of sight of at least two of the members of Kane's secret police. And yet so carefully had the shadowing been done that Tommy had not noticed a single man whom he even suspected of being one of his guards.

Then he met a scrawny youth in a telegraph messenger's uniform. There was an unlighted cigarette in the messenger's mouth.

"Got a match, Mister?" inquired the youth.

The reporter produced a match. The messenger took it, touched off his smoke and then spoke rapidly: "In the next block you'll see a big car at the curb. Chauffeur will have the hood up and be tinkering with the carburetor. Say nothing to him. Get in the back of the car. Find a bottle on the cushion. Drink what's in it."

The messenger hurried away before Dutton had a chance to answer. Tommy thrust his hands back into his pockets and walked on. In the middle of the next block he saw

the car standing at the curb as described. The chauffeur was tinkering with something about the motor. He was on the street side of the car.

Keeping near the curb, Tommy approached the car. His left hand came out of his pocket, closed about an object a bit larger than an egg. It was a soft rubber syringe of the sort used to irrigate infected ears. As he came even with the rear of the car, the reporter looked quickly to see that his action was hidden from the chauffeur. Then his fingers contracted and a stream of liquid shot from the syringe to drench the nearest rear tire of the big auto. A moment later the syringe dropped with hardly a sound into the gutter. Tommy Dutton took another step, and opened the door of the car. In the dim light he saw the familiar small bottle on the seat.

"I'm getting damned tired of this stuff," he thought.

THE chauffeur had lowered the hood and was now climbing into the driver's seat. He wore a cap pulled low over his eyes. Tommy was aware that the fellow was watching him in the mirror. He uncorked the little bottle and drank its contents. The motor sprang into action, and the big car pulled smoothly away.

Four other cars began to execute a series of maneuvers along the Avenue and side-streets, with the result that their drivers kept the big car in sight without there being the slightest evidence of a chase. One of the shadowing cars was less than a block behind the machine in which Tommy Dutton now slumbered when it suddenly turned into the open door of a garage on a side-street about nine blocks from where the reporter found it.

The car was no more than inside the garage before the big doors closed behind it and all lights in the place went out. The following car came on and went past the closed door without stopping. The driver swore under his breath, drove on for a distance of perhaps a hundred yards and parked his car at the curb where he could watch the darkened and closed establishment into which his quarry had disappeared.

As the doors closed behind the mystery car, its driver turned a small switch on the dash and reached under the cowl to give something a sharp jerk. The car rolled right on through the garage and out a back door which opened into a parking lot. A mechanical trick had turned its license plates over, and they were now the plates of another State. Something had happened to the lamps. They now gave off a yellow light in place of their former brilliant white. The trick auto coasted across the parking lot and out into a deserted street and down an alley.

Five minutes later Selby Kane's men were ruefully admitting that they had again failed in their effort. Frank Seecord telephoned the bad news to Kane.

Ten minutes afterward a car rolled up to where Seecord's auto was parked near the dark garage.

"What now, Chief?" asked Seecord as the old detective jumped from the car followed by Leah and Kaiser.

"You've kept the place surrounded?"

"Yes sir, but there's a back way out. I'm afraid our bird got away by that route."

"Leave four of the boys to watch this place," ordered Kane. "Load the rest into the cars and follow me. How do we get to that back door?"

"What's the game, Chief?" asked Seecord.

"Kaiser's going to take up the trail where you fellows lost it, I hope," was the grim answer.

Selby Kane had attached a leash to the collar around Kaiser's neck. He now led the dog over to the back door. Leah was at her father's heels.

"Find Tommy, Kaiser," said Kane. "Hunt him, old fellow."

"Tommy, Kaiser," coaxed Leah. "Find Tommy."

The intelligent animal cocked his sharp ears and began to sniff at the ground. A moment later he was leaping across the parking space, almost dragging Selby Kane.

"He's got it!" cried Leah, racing after her father and the dog. "He's got it!"

"How in the devil can a dog follow an automobile's track?" demanded one of the men who rode with Seecord in the car that was tooling along after the dog and the Kanes.

"Search me," replied Seecord, "but that pooch seems to be following something, all right. I'm beginning to see what all the horseplay out in the park was about."

Kaiser had now crossed the street in front of the parking lot and was dragging Kane along the alley. Then he came out onto Riverford Drive.

Leah Kane had climbed into Seecord's car. North on the Drive went the dog, with Selby Kane hanging to the leash. For blocks he followed the Drive. Then, in the center of the third block, he turned into the private driveway that ran beside a huge stone mansion and back to a two-story garage. At the closed door of the garage Kaiser stopped, lifted his head and barked sharply.

Seecord's car had pulled into the drive. The others were parked at the curb, and their occupants now came up to where Selby Kane and the dog stood.

"End of the trail, it seems," snapped Kane. "Surround this house and garage, quickly. Leah, hold Kaiser. Seecord, come here. We'll have a look in this garage."

But entering the garage proved difficult. The closed doors were very solid and securely fastened. There were no windows in the lower part of the building. Hammering on the door produced no results.

"Raise somebody in the house and tell them we want to get into this garage," Selby Kane called to one of his men stationed down the drive.

BUT it proved impossible to raise anybody in the house. Apparently there was nobody at home. At Selby Kane's orders, Seecord's car was turned around and backed up to the garage. Kane climbed to the top of the car, and using a jack, smashed out the gable window. A moment later Kane and Seecord were standing in a chauffeur's sleeping quarters. Seecord stooped and flashed an electric torch under the bed.

"Come out from under there, you!" cried Seecord.

A frightened and shaking man crawled out from beneath the bed. It was the chauffeur who had driven the car that had picked up Tommy Dutton. Seecord thrust a gun against the man. The fellow was driven down a flight of wooden stairs into the garage, where a car stood, and ordered to open the doors.

More of Kane's men entered the garage. Leah Kane came with them, holding Kaiser in leash. Kane proceeded to examine the rear tires of the car with a torch. He soon located a dark splotch on one of them and he bent closer, sniffing.

"This is it—the car Dutton entered," Kane declared. "Tommy has trained Kaiser to follow the scent of oil of pennyroyal. He did it by first putting the pennyroyal on the soles of his shoes and going to a hiding-place on foot. Then he doped the tires of his car with the oil and drove off. The dog is very fond of Dutton and quickly learned to associate the odor of pennyroyal with him. He got so he would find Tommy's car after it had been driven more than a mile before he was released on its trail. This car brought Dutton to this garage. He must be near here.

"Shut those doors," Kane ordered one of his men. "All of you get out of here but Seecord. Don't let anybody get away from the house."

The doors closed, and Kane and Secord were left alone in the garage except for Leah and Kaiser. Kane had found a switch beside the door and turned on the lights.

"Now, fellow," he barked at the manacled chauffeur, "what has become of the man you brought here in this car? Talk fast and straight, or by heaven, I'll—"

Kane's words died on his lips. His eyes widened in surprise. There was a little frightened scream from where Leah stood beside the auto. Kaiser growled.

"What the hell?" gasped Frank Secord.

A very peculiar thing was happening!

TOMMY DUTTON awakened for the third time on the couch in the den of the monster in the green robe. He sat up, still a bit fuzzy with the unnatural sleep, and blinked at the hooded figure beyond the desk. He managed a smile, and memory of what had happened on the Avenue came back to him. Was it possible that that robed fiend would soon be a prisoner and his diabolical career ended? Then a shiver ran through the reporter as he thought of what was likely to happen to him if anything went wrong and this killer suspected the truth.

"Good evening, Dutton." The voice was oily. "Glad to see you. Feel badly?"

"A little foggy," answered Tommy.

"It will wear off in a minute," said the robed one. "Sit still. We have plenty of time, and you'll want a clear head to listen to the instructions I have for you."

Tommy stole a glance at his watch. It was forty minutes since he had stepped into the car. If the pursuit had been successful, Kane and his secret police must be somewhere near. Dutton made a resolution and his jaw tightened, just a little. He lifted his eyes.

The black gloved hands had brought a ledger from a drawer of the desk and were now turning the pages. The eyes behind the slitted squares were on the ledger. Now was the time! Tommy's long body tensed and then uncoiled like a steel spring suddenly released.

Like a missile from a catapult, the reporter shot across the desk. His extended hands reached for where the neck of the hooded monster should be. There was a cry of surprise from behind the mask, and a crash as the swivel chair went over backwards, and Tommy and the robed man crashed to the floor in a tangled heap.

The man of the mask fought like a cornered wildcat. Tommy managed to struggle to his feet, the robed enemy clinging like a leech to his back. He threw himself backward with all his might onto the heavy chair. There was a grunt of pain, and the arm about his neck loosened.

Like an eel Dutton twisted over and drove his right fist at those two white squares. The man grunted and wheezed a curse. Then his knee came up and struck Tommy in the groin. The pain was terrific. Groaning, the reporter flung his right arm about the neck of his foe. Again they rolled across the floor. Tommy's sickness was passing. The monster was fighting tooth and nail to twist out of that desperate hold. Dutton again lurched to his feet, dragging the robed man up with him, gasping for air. Tommy kept his hold and began to batter the other in the ribs with his left fist.

Suddenly the figure in his arms went limp. Tommy held on for a moment, recovering his breath. Then he lifted the man and hurled him to the floor. With a savage jerk he tore away the robe, hood and all, and looked upon the gray face of—Raymond Sugden!

FOR a moment the reporter stood dazed at the revelation. Sugden's head moved, and his eyes opened. Malignant hate glared from those eyes, and Sugden made a quick attempt to rise. Tommy kicked out savagely, and

his toe caught the murderer under the chin. With a gurgling cry, Sugden again measured his limp length on the rug. Tommy snatched up the torn robe and ripped it into strips. With these he trussed up the unconscious Sugden securely. Then he rose and took stock of the room.

There were no windows and only one door. The door was in the center of the wall against which the couch stood. Tommy walked to the desk and pulled open the top center drawer. His eyes gleamed as he saw Sugden's automatic. With the weapon in his hands he strode around the desk and jerked the door open. He stood staring into a vaultlike empty chamber.

The light from Sugden's hidden den filled the bare room with a dim yellowness. Walls, floor and ceiling were of smooth, unbroken concrete. There was absolutely nothing in the boxlike place except a thick, smooth pillar that extended from floor to ceiling in the exact center of the room. The ceiling, Dutton noted, was some six feet higher than that of the den.

For a minute Tommy stood pondering. There was no other door in the den. This concrete chamber without windows or doors must then be the way out. But how? Where? Then Tommy's eyes fell upon a push-button set in the casing of the door. The reporter inspected the automatic to make sure it was fully loaded and ready. Then he pressed the button firmly.

For a moment nothing happened. Then Tommy heard a sound like the hiss of escaping air mingled with the noise of smooth surfaces rubbing together. It came from within the concrete chamber. He peered into the place. Then he noticed that the ceiling was coming down!

The reporter moved back a step in amazement. Then he gave a sharp cry. The ceiling had slid down past the top of the door. He saw an automobile. Then he saw a pair of silk-clad legs and the bottom of a skirt. There was a sharp, joyful bark, and Kaiser leaped into the den. The slab of solid reinforced concrete that was the floor of the garage was also an elevator; the room into which Tommy had first looked was its pit. Kane and the others rushed into the room.

AN hour later Tommy Dutton was back in the news-room of the *Globe*, furiously pounding out his story. As he was finishing his ninth page Farley came to his desk.

"Selby Kane with those books and papers from Sugden's den sure woke up the law," said the city editor. "Here's a list of three hundred and twenty-one arrests already made—and there are more coming. There'll be a lot of public offices vacant in the morning. Boy, what a yarn!"

Nodding, Dutton continued to hammer the keys. There was a long run ahead of the *Globe* presses, and Tommy was the boy who must furnish the grist for the news-mill. There was plenty to keep his machine clattering!

Next day Selby Kane called at the news-room to see Tommy Dutton. Leah, relieved from the switchboard, was with her father. Kane laid a folded green slip in the reporter's hand.

"That," he said, "is a little token of appreciation for you from the gentlemen who were behind me and my crew."

Tommy was staring at a check made out to himself for fifty thousand dollars. Then he lifted his eyes to Leah's. "Come back in the reference-room for a minute, Miss Kane," he said. "I—I want to show you something."

In a quiet corner of the reference-room he asked Leah Kane a very important question. Leah lifted starry eyes to his anxious ones.

"I guess I'll have to," she said softly, "or lose my dog. And I couldn't live without Kaiser!"

The Cowboy Today

"The
Old Slicker"



THE old slicker reminds me a lot of the old six-shooter. You can pack 'em both for three hundred and sixty-five days straight, and never need 'em; but lay 'em away for half a day, and you're going to get soaked to the bone, and meet a grizzly on your way back to camp.

I've wore out a heap more slickers by packing 'em on my saddle than I did on my shoulders. . . . We have a way of tying it back of the cantle so it hangs all on the left side and near drags the ground. That's done to sort of take the spooks out of unbroke horses, and make 'em used to things. A wild horse kicks at it and stampedes away, but pretty soon he gets used to it a-hanging there by his hind leg, and calms down to get used to other things that might spook him.

By WILL JAMES

On horses that's hard to set, we sometimes tie the old slicker in front of the saddle to sort of have some chance with him. There's not so much swell-fork on our saddles, and on big tough horses, a feller has to have something to go by, so he can follow his horse in his winding jumps between the earth and the sky.

The old slicker does a cowboy a lot of good that way, besides being useful when the skies get cloudy and the rain pours down.

And if rain comes down heavy and a cowboy leaves his slicker in camp, he'll just cuss that slicker and use his horse for shelter, if his horse will let him. But for many uses, and if you're a wise cowboy, never leave your slicker in camp.

The Triumph of Tarzan

New and extraordinary adventures in the African jungle kingdom of the world's premier adventurer, Tarzan of the Apes.

By EDGAR
RICE BURROUGHS

Illustrated by Frank Hoban

The Story So Far:

MANY weary marches to the south of the Genzhi Mountains, Kabariga, chief of the Bangalo people, knelt before Tarzan of the Apes, imploring his aid against the raiding bands of slavers.

Alone in the cold wet clouds, far above an unknown African mountain range, Lady Barbara Collis found her petrol almost exhausted and her Cape-to-Cairo flight hopeless. She breathed a little prayer as she bailed out, and counted ten before jerking the rip-cord of her 'chute.

In Moscow, Leon Stabutch entered the office of the dictator of Red Russia.

Ignorant of the very existence of the black Bangalo chief, or of Leon Stabutch, or of Lady Barbara Collis, one Lafayette Smith, A.M., Ph.D., Sc.D., twenty-six years old, professor of geology at a military academy, boarded a steamship in the harbor of New York.

Far apart, these people! Yet Fate was weaving a web that brought them into close and dramatic conflict.

Weeks rolled by. Trains rattled and chugged. Steamships plowed. Black feet padded well-worn trails. Three safaris, headed by white men from far-separated parts of the earth, moved slowly along different trails that led toward the wild fastnesses of the Genzies. None knew of the presence of the others; nor were their missions in any way related. From the west came Lafayette Smith and Gunner Patrick; from the south an English big-game hunter, Lord Passmore; from the east, Leon Stabutch.

Stabutch had a definite mission to carry out for his Red employers—to kill Tarzan of the Apes, who had courageously thwarted Russia's attempt to embroil the other European nations in their African colonies. But a crew of raiding *shifras* or bandits under white leadership frightened off the Russian's safari, made Stabutch prisoner and carried him off to a guarded village beneath a rocky cliff, where he was confronted by a cruel-faced white man, who called himself Capietro. Stabutch divulged his mission against Tarzan, whereupon Capietro,



declaring his own enmity toward the ape-man, admitted leadership of the band of slave-raiders and promised aid to Stabutch.

Lafayette Smith had undertaken certain geological explorations in Africa; and on the steamer he had made the acquaintance of an amiable young racketeer known as Gunner Danny Patrick, who was taking a vacation from warfare with enemy gangsters. Patrick invited himself to accompany Smith and the scientist found him an amusing companion. But these two young men were sadly inexperienced travelers—especially so in this wild country. Smith undertook some independent exploration of this terrain so fascinating to a scientist—and promptly became lost. A lion trailed him for a time, and in his effort to escape the beast, Smith fled through a deep fissure in the rocks and emerged from it to find himself overlooking an uncharted valley. He saw firelight and figures of human beings in the distance and approaching them, came upon a horrifying sight.

For Lady Barbara, who had landed safely by means of her parachute, had found herself the captive of a queer degenerate people who for nearly two thousand years had lived, shut off from the rest of the world, in this valley of Midian. In the awed wonder induced by her mode of arrival, she was at first hailed as a goddess; but the fanatical high priest resented her usurpation of his prerogatives—when she tried to prevent his human sacrifices—and caused her to be cast into the lake, enveloped in a weighted net. From this Lady Barbara cut herself free with her pocket-knife, but upon rising to the surface, found that her only friend, the golden-haired Jezebel, had been sentenced to be burned to death, as punishment for protesting at the English girl's fate. In an effort to avert Jezebel's death, Lady Barbara followed to the place of execution—but succeeded only in being herself seized and bound to another stake.

As the torches were applied to the fagots, however, La-



Smith sprang to the girl's assistance just as Tarzan leveled the American's pistol at the guard.

fayette Smith opportunely arrived, shot down one of the Midianites who attacked him, and—in the brief space that the crowd stood spellbound—cut the bonds of the two girls. But they did not escape without a fight, in which Jobab, one of the apostles, was killed by a shot from Smith's revolver, in the hands of Lady Barbara—and the three fugitives fled into the darkness.

Gunner Patrick, armed with his cherished "tommy-gun," and searching for the lost scientist, chanced to see a giant white man, clad only in a leopard-skin, engaged in a fierce one-sided fight with Capietro's men. Danny recognized the white giant as Tarzan of the Apes, who had several days previously rescued Smith's party from the charge of an infuriated lion. From a vantage-point on a cliff above, Danny now intervened, and by use of his gun, was able to save Tarzan's life.

When Stabutch and Capietro later raided the Americans' camp, seized their porters and supplies, and demanded that Danny Patrick pay a ransom of ten thousand dollars to insure his own safety, Tarzan came to the rescue of the helpless Gunner, under cover of night, and they started out together to find Lafayette Smith. Though the young scientist's trail was indistinguishable to Danny, it was not difficult for Tarzan; they followed it through the deep rocky fissure, and came out upon the hitherto-unknown valley of Midian. During their journey through the rocks, Tarzan had far outdistanced his youthful companion; when Danny emerged from the fissure, Tarzan had disappeared, and in attempting to follow him, the Gunner took the wrong trail.

Meanwhile Lafayette Smith, with Lady Barbara and Jezebel, had traveled until exhausted; then, finding themselves free from pursuit, had decided to rest until daylight should enable them to find the opening in the cliffs whence Smith had come. When morning dawned they were famished, and by luck rather than skill—for Smith was no hunter—they procured a kid from a flock of goats in a near-

by forest. While roasting and eating this they were seen by the keeper of the goats—one Eshbaal, a Midianite from the north end of the valley. This tribe of North Midians, though ignorant and savage, were not of the wholly degenerate type characteristic of those living on the shores of Lake Chinnereth.

Eshbaal, angered, slipped away, and summoned a number of his fellows, who advanced upon the fugitives and seized them. But on the way to the North Midian village, the prisoners escaped their careless captors. Following Lady Barbara's order, Jezebel scurried off to the southwest,

while the English girl ran southeast. Smith, still striving to fill the rôle of protector, could not follow both; he therefore elected to overtake Lady Barbara. Hearing steps behind her, she wheeled about to defend herself; but when she saw her pursuer was Smith, she sank weakly to the ground.

"I thought I said we'd scatter," she reminded him, when she had regained her breath.

"I couldn't leave you alone," he replied. (*The story continues in detail:*)

"**B**UT how about Jezebel? You left her alone." "I couldn't go with both of you," he reminded her; "and you know Jezebel is really at home here. It means much more to you to escape than it means to her."

She shook her head. "Capture means the same thing to either of us," she said, "but of the two I am better able to take care of myself than Jezebel. She doesn't understand the nature of her danger."

"Nevertheless," he insisted, "you are the more important. You have relatives and friends who care for you. Poor little Jezebel has only one friend, and that is you, unless I may consider myself a friend, as I should like to do."

"I imagine we three have the unique distinction of being the closest corporation of friends in the world," she replied, with a wan smile.

"The Friendless Friends Corporation, Limited, eh?"

"Perhaps we'd best hold a directors' meeting and decide what we should do next to conserve the interests of the stockholders."

"I move we move," he said.

"Seconded." The girl rose to her feet.

"You're terribly tired, aren't you?" he asked. "But I suppose the only thing we can do is to get as far away from the territory of the North Midians as possible. It's almost certain they will try to capture us again as soon as they discover we are missing."

"If we can only find a place to hide until night!" she said. "Then we can go back to the cliffs under the cover of darkness and search for Jezebel and the place that she and I thought might be scaled."

"This forest is so open that it doesn't afford any good hiding-places, but at least we can look."

"Perhaps we shall find a place near the lake," said Lady Barbara. "We ought to come to it soon."

They walked on for a considerable distance without talking, each occupied with his own thoughts; and as no sign of pursuit seemed to develop, their spirits rose.

"Do you know," he said presently, "that I can't help but feel that we're going to get out of this all right in the end?"

"But what terrible experiences! It doesn't seem possible that such things could have happened to me. I can't forget Jobab." It was the first time mention had been made of the tragedy at the southern village.

"You must not give that a thought," he said. "You did the only thing possible under the circumstances. If you had not done what you did, both you and Jezebel would have been recaptured; and you know what that would have meant."

"But I've killed a human being," she said. There was an awed tone in her voice.

"I killed one too," he reminded her, "but I don't regret it in the least, notwithstanding the fact that I never killed anyone before. If I were not such a terrible marksman, I'd have killed another today, perhaps several. My regret is that I didn't."

"I— Listen! What was that sound behind us?"

She halted and turned her eyes apprehensively toward the rear.

"They have found us," said Lafayette Smith. "Go on—go as fast as you can! I'll try to delay them."

"No," she replied, "there is no use. I'll remain with you, whatever happens."

"Please!" he begged. "Why should I face them if you won't take advantage of it?"

"It wouldn't do any good," she said. "They'd only get me later, and your sacrifice would be useless. We might as well give ourselves up in the hope that we can persuade them to free us later, or perhaps find the opportunity to escape after dark."

"You had better run," he said, "because I am going to fight. I am not going to let them take you without raising a hand in your defense. If you get away now, perhaps I can get away later. We can meet at the foot of the cliffs. But don't wait for me if you find a way out."

The girl turned again and continued on in the direction of Chinnereth, but she went only a short distance, then stopped and turned again. She saw three of the North

Midians approaching Smith, who stood quietly awaiting them. Suddenly one of the three swung his club and hurled it at the American, at the same instant dashing forward with his fellows.

The club fell short of its mark, dropping at Smith's feet. She saw him stoop and seize it, and then she saw another detachment of the Midians coming through the woods in the wake of the first three.

Smith's antagonists were upon him as he straightened up with the club in his hand, and he swung it heavily upon the skull of the man who had hurled it at him, and who had rushed forward in advance of his fellows with hands outstretched to seize the stranger.

Like a felled ox the man dropped; and then Lady Barbara saw Smith carry the unequal battle to the enemy as, swinging the club above his head, he rushed forward to meet them.

So unexpected was his attack that the men halted and turned to elude him; but one was too slow, and the girl heard the fellow's skull crush beneath the heavy blow of the bludgeon.

Then the reinforcements, advancing at a run, surrounded and overwhelmed their lone antagonist, and Smith went down beneath them.

Lady Barbara could not bring herself to desert the man who had thus bravely, however hopelessly, sought to defend her; and when the North Midians had disarmed and secured Smith, they saw her standing where she had stood during the brief engagement.

"I couldn't run away and leave you," she explained to Smith, as the two were being escorted toward the village of the North Midians. "I

thought they were going to kill you, and I couldn't help you. . . . Oh, it was awful. I couldn't leave you then, could I?"

He looked at her for a moment. "No," he answered. "You couldn't."

CHAPTER XIX

A GUY AND A SKIRT

DANNY GUNNER PATRICK was tired and disgusted. He had walked for several hours, imagining that he was following a spoor; but he had seen nothing of his erstwhile companion. He was thirsty, and so cast frequent glances in the direction of the lake.

"T'ell!" he muttered. "I aint goin' to tail that guy no longer till I get me a drink. My mouth feels like I'd been eating cotton for a week."

He turned away from the cliffs and started down in the direction of the lake, the inviting waters of which sparkled alluringly in the afternoon sun; but the beauties of the



"Geeze," said Danny. "I must have come to Africa for something, and I guess you're it."

scene were wasted upon the Gunner, who saw only a means of quenching his thirst.

The way led through a field of scattered boulders fallen from the towering rim far above. He had to pick his way carefully among the smaller ones, and his eyes were almost constantly upon the ground. Occasionally he was compelled to skirt some of the larger masses, many of which towered above his head.

He was damning Africa in general and this section of it in particular as he rounded the corner of an unusually large fragment of rock, when suddenly he stopped and his eyes went wide.

"Geeze!" he exclaimed aloud. "A skirt!"

Before him, and coming in his direction, was a golden-haired girl attired in a single scant piece of rough material. She saw him simultaneously, and halted.

"Oh," cried Jezebel with a happy smile. "Who art thou?" But as she spoke in the language of the land of Midian, the Gunner failed to understand her.

"Geeze," he said, "I knew I must of come to Africa for something, and I guess you're it. Say, kid, you're about all right. I'll tell the world you are all right."

"Thank you," said Jezebel in English. "I am so glad that you like me."

"Geeze," said Danny. "You talk United States, don't you? Where you from?"

"Midian," replied Jezebel. "Aint never heard of it. What you doin' here? Where're your people?"

"I am waiting for Lady Barbara," replied the girl, "—and Smith," she added.

"Smith! What Smith?" he demanded.

"Oh, he is beautiful!" confided Jezebel.

"Then he aint the Smith I'm lookin' for," said the Gunner. "What's he doin' here, and who's this Lady Barbara dame?"

"Abraham the son of Abraham would have killed Lady Barbara and Jezebel if Smith had not come and saved us. He is very brave."

"Now I know it aint my Smith," said Danny, "though I aint sayin' he aint got nerve. What I mean is, he wouldn't know enough to save no one—he's a geologist."

"Who are you?" demanded Jezebel.

"Call me Danny, kid."

"My name is not Kid," she explained sweetly. "It is Jezebel."

"Jezebel! Geeze, what a monicker! You look like it ought to be Gwendolyn."

"It is Jezebel," she assured him. "Do you know who I hoped you'd be?"

"No. Now, just tell me, kid, who you supposed I was. Probably President Hoover or Big Bill Thompson, eh?"

"I do not know them," said Jezebel. "I hoped that you were the Gunner."

"The Gunner? What do you know about the Gunner, kid?"

"My name is not Kid; it is Jezebel," she corrected him sweetly.

"Oke, Jez," conceded Danny. "But tell me who wised you up to the Gunner bozo."

"My name is not Jez; it is—"

"Oh, sure, kid; it's Jezebel—that's oke by me; but how about the Gunner?"

"What about him?"

"I just been a-askin' you." Danny grinned.

"But I don't understand your language," explained Jezebel. "Can you say it in English, please?"

"Geeze, what could be plain-er? I asked who told you about the Gunner and what did they tell you?"

"Smith told us. He said the Gunner was a friend of his; and when I saw you, I thought you must be Smith's friend, hunting for him."

"Now, what do you know about that!" exclaimed Danny.

"I have just told you what I know about it," explained the girl; "but perhaps you did not understand me. Perhaps you are what you call dumb."

"Are you trying to kid me, kid?" demanded the Gunner.

"My name is not—"

"Oh, all right, all right. I know what your name is."

"Then why do you not call me by my name? Do you not like it?"

"Sure, kid—I mean Jezebel; sure, I like it. It's a swell handle when you get used to it. But tell me, where is old Smithy?"

"I do not know such a person."

"But you just told me you did."

"Oh, I see," cried Jezebel.

"Smithy is the United States for Smith. But Smith is not old. He's quite young."

"Well, where is he?" demanded Danny resignedly. "We were captured by men from North Midian," explained Jezebel; "but we escaped and ran away. We ran in different directions, but we are going to meet tonight farther south along the cliffs."

"H'm! Well, then, let's me and you stick together till we find old Smithy. What say?"

"That will be nice, Gunner," she assured him.

"Say, call me Danny."

"Yes, Danny."

"Geeze, I never knew Danny was such a swell monicker till I heard you say it. What say we beat it for the big drink down there? I got me such a thirst my tongue's hanging out. Then we can come back to this here rock-pile and look for old Smithy."

"That will be nice," agreed Jezebel. "I too am thirsty." She sighed. "You cannot know how happy I am, Danny."

"Why?" he asked.

"Because you are with me."

"Geeze, k— Jezebel, but you're sure a fast worker."

"I do not know what you mean," she replied.

"Well, just tell me why you're happy because I'm with you."



"Thank you," said Jezebel, "I am so glad you like me."

"It is because I feel safe with you after what Smith told us. He said he always felt safe when you were around."

"So that's it? All you want is a protection guy, eh? You don't like me for myself at all, eh?"

"Oh, of course, I like you, Danny," cried the girl. "I think you are beautiful."

"Yeah? Well listen, sister. You may be a swell kidder—I dunno; or you may be just a dumb egg—but don't call me no names. I know what my pan looks like, and it aint beautiful, and I aint never wore a beret."

Jezebel, who only caught the occasional high spots of Danny's conversation, made no reply, and they walked on in the direction of the lake in silence for some time. The forest was some little distance away, on their left, and they had no knowledge of what was transpiring there; nor did any sound reach their ears to acquaint them with the misfortune that was befalling Lady Barbara and Lafayette Smith.

At the lake they quenched their thirst; then the Gunner announced that he was going to rest for a while before he started back toward the cliffs. "I wonder," he said, "just how far a guy can walk—because in the last two days, I've walked that far and back again."

"How far is that?" inquired Jezebel.

He looked at her a moment and then shook his head. "It's twice as far," he said; then he stretched himself at full length and closed his eyes. "Geeze, but I'm about all in," he murmured.

"In what?"

He deigned no reply, and presently the girl noted from his altered breathing that he was asleep. She sat with her eyes glued upon him, and occasionally a deep sigh broke from her lips. She was comparing Danny with Abraham the son of Abraham, with Lafayette Smith and with the beautiful men of North Midian; and the comparison was not uncomplimentary to Danny.

The hot sun was beating down upon them, for there was no shade here, and presently its effects, combined with her fatigue, made her drowsy. She lay down near the Gunner and stretched luxuriously. Then she too fell asleep.

The Gunner did not sleep very long; the sun was too hot. When he awoke, he raised himself on an elbow and looked around. His eyes fell on the girl, and there they rested for some time.

"The kid's sure some looker," soliloquized Danny. "I seen a lotta janes in my day, but I aint never seen nothin' could touch her. She'd sure be a swell number dolled up in them Boul' Mich' rags. Geeze, wouldn't she knock their lamps out! I wonder where this Midian burg is that she says she comes from. If they's all as swell lookin' as her, that's the burg for me."

Jezebel stirred; he reached over and shook her by the shoulder. "We'd better be beatin' it," he said. "We don't want to miss old Smithy and that dame."

JEZEBEL sat up and looked about her. "Oh," she exclaimed, "you frightened me! I thought something was coming."

"Why? Been dreaming?"

"No. You said we'd have to beat something."

"Aw, cheese it! I meant we'd have to be hittin' the trail for the big rocks."

Jezebel looked puzzled.

"Hike back to them cliffs where you said old Smithy and that Lady Barbara dame were going to meet you."

"Now I understand," said Jezebel. "All right, come on."

But when they reached the cliffs, there was no sign of Smith or Lady Barbara; and at Jezebel's suggestion, they

walked slowly southward in the direction of the place where she and the English girl had hoped to make a crossing to the outer world.

"How did you get into the valley, Danny?" asked the girl.

"I come through a big crack in the mountain," he replied.

"That must be the same place Smith came through," she said. "Could you find it again?"

"Sure. That's where I'm headed for now."

IT was only midafternoon when Danny located the opening into the fissure. They had seen nothing of Lady Barbara and Smith, and they were in a quandary as to what was best to do.

"Maybe they come along and made their get-away while we were hittin' the hay," suggested Danny.

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Jezebel, "but what I think is that they may have located the opening while we were asleep and gone out of the valley."

"Well, aint that what I said?" demanded Danny.

"It didn't sound like it."

"Say, you trying to high-hat me?"

"High hat?"

"Aw, what's the use?" growled the Gunner. "Let's me and you beat it out of this here dump and look for old Smithy and the skirt on the other side. What say?"

"But suppose they haven't gone out?"

"Well, then we'll have to come back again; but I'm sure they must have. See this footprint?" He indicated one of his own, made earlier in the day, which pointed toward the valley. "I guess I'm getting good," he said. "Pretty soon that Tarzan guy won't have no edge on me at all."

"I'd like to see what's on the other side of the cliffs," said Jezebel. "I have always wanted to do that."

"Well, you won't see nothin' much," he assured her. "Just some more scenery. They aint even a hot-dog stand or a single speak-easy."

"What are those?"

"Well you might call 'em filling-stations."

"What are filling-stations?"

"Geeze, kid, what do you think I am, a college professor? I never saw anyone who could ask so many questions in my whole life."

"My name—"

"Yes, I know what your name is. Now come on, and we'll crawl through this hole-in-the-wall. I'll go first. You follow right behind me."

The rough going along the rocky floor of the fissure taxed the Gunner's endurance and his patience; but Jezebel was all excitement and anticipation. All her life she had dreamed of what might lie in the wonder-world beyond the cliffs.

Her people had told her that it was a flat expanse filled with sin, heresy and iniquity, where, if one went too far, he would surely fall over the edge and alight in the roaring flames of an eternal hades; but Jezebel had been a doubter. She had preferred to picture it as a land of flowers and trees and running water, where beautiful people laughed and sang through long, sunny days. Soon she was to see for herself, and she was much excited by the prospect.

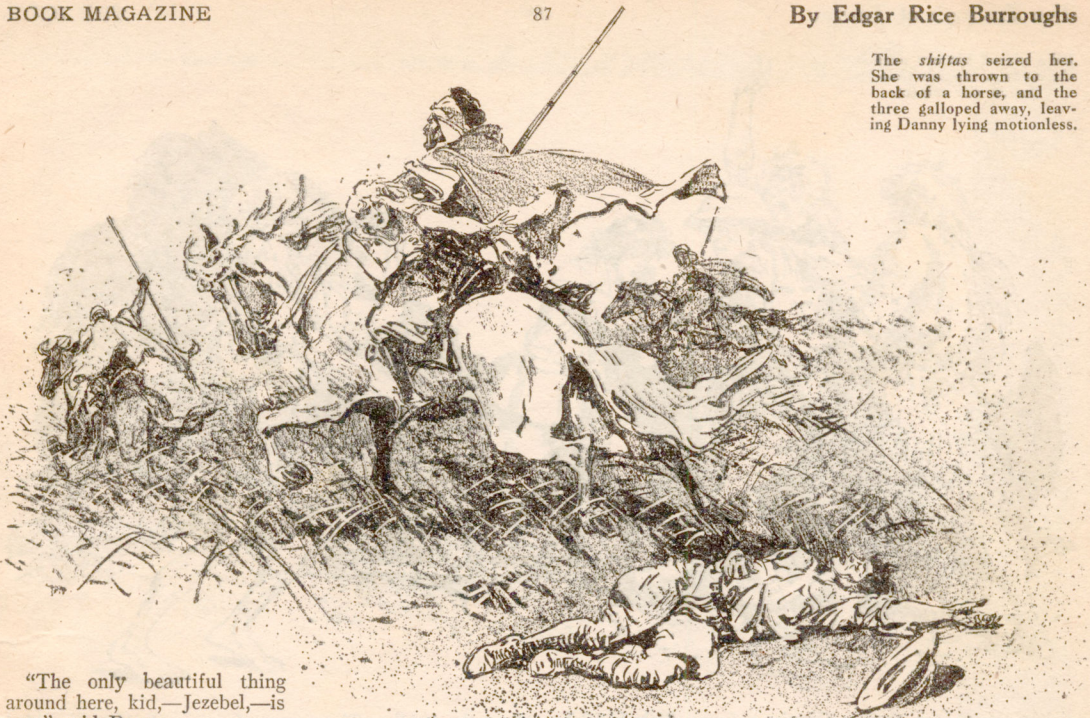
And now at last they came to the end of the great fissure and looked out across the rolling foothills toward a great forest in the distance.

Jezebel clasped her hands together in ecstasy. "Oh, Danny," she cried, "how beautiful it is!"

"What?" asked the Gunner.

"Oh, everything. Don't you too think that it is beautiful, Danny?"

The *shiftas* seized her. She was thrown to the back of a horse, and the three galloped away, leaving Danny lying motionless.



"The only beautiful thing around here, kid,—Jezebel,—is you," said Danny.

The girl turned and looked up at him with her great blue eyes. "Do you think that I am beautiful, Danny?" she asked.

"Sure I do."

"Do you think I am *too* beautiful?"

"There aint no such thing," he replied; "but if they was, you're it. What made you ask?"

"Lady Barbara said I was."

The Gunner considered this for some moments. "I guess she's right at that kid."

"You like to call me kid, don't you?" asked Jezebel.

"Well, it seems more friendly-like," he explained.

"All right, you may call me kid if you want to; but my name is Jezebel."

"That's a bet," said Danny. "When I don't think to call you Jezebel, I'll call you kid, sister."

The girl laughed. "You're a funny man, Danny. You like to say everything wrong. I'm not your sister, of course."

"And I'm damn' glad you aint, kid."

"Why? Don't you like me?"

Danny laughed. "I never seen a kid like you before," he said. "You sure got me guessin'. But at that," he added, a little seriously for him, "they's one thing I aint guessin' about, and that's that you're a good little kid."

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Jezebel.

"And at that I'll bet you don't," he replied. "And now kid, let's sit down and rest. I'm tired."

"I'm hungry," said Jezebel.

"I aint never see a skirt that wasn't; but why did you have to bring that up? I'm so hungry I could eat hay."

"Smith killed a kid, and we ate some of that," said Jezebel. "He wrapped the rest up in the skin, and I suppose he lost it when the North Midians attacked us. I wish—"

"Say," exclaimed Danny, "what a dumb-bell I am!" He reached down into one of his pockets and brought out

several strips of raw meat. "Here I been packin' this around all day and forgets all about it—and me starvin' to death."

"What is it?" asked Jezebel.

"It's pig," said Danny as he started searching for twigs and dry grass to build a fire. "And I know where they is a lot more that I thought I couldn't never eat, but I know now I could—even if I had to fight with the mag-gots for it."

Jezebel helped him gather wood, which was limited to dead branches of a small variety of artemisia that grew on the mountainside; but at length they had collected quite a supply, and presently they were grilling pieces of the boar meat over the flames.

So preoccupied were they that neither saw three horsemen draw rein at the top of a ridge a mile away and survey them.

"This is like housekeeping, aint it?" remarked the Gunner.

"What is that?" asked Jezebel.

"That's where a guy and his girl friend get hitched, and go to doin' their own cooking. Only in a way this is better—they aint goin' to be no dishes to wash."

"What is *hitched*, Danny?" asked Jezebel.

"Why—er—" Danny flushed. He had said many things to many girls in his life, many of them things that might have brought a blush to the cheek of a wooden Indian; but this was the first time, perhaps, that Danny had felt any embarrassment.

"Why," he repeated, "*hitched* means *married*."

"Oh," said Jezebel. She was silent for a while, watching the pork sizzling over the little flames. Then she looked up at Danny. "I think housekeeping is fun," she said.

"So do I," agreed Danny "—with you," he added; and his voice was just a trifle husky. His eyes were on her, and there was a strange light in them, that no other

Elija placed his eye against the muzzle, and this time he pulled the trigger.



girl had ever seen there. "You're a funny little kid," he said presently. "I never seen one like you before." Then the neglected pork fell off the end of the sharpened twig with which he had been holding it, and tumbled into the fire.

"Geeze!" exclaimed Danny. "Look at that!" He fished the unsavory-looking morsel from the ashes and flames, and surveyed it. "It don't look so good, but I'm goin' to fool it. I'm goin' to eat it, anyway. I wouldn't care if a elephant had sat on it for a week—I'd eat it, and the elephant, too."

"Oh, look!" cried Jezebel. "Here come some men, and they are all black. What strange beasts are they sitting on? Oh, Danny, I am afraid."

At her first exclamation the Gunner had turned and leaped to his feet. A single look told him who the strangers were—no strangers to him.

"Beat it, kid!" he cried. "Duck back into the crack and hit the trail for the valley. They can't follow you on gee-gees."

The three *shiftas* were already close; and when they saw that they had been discovered, they spurred forward at a gallop. Yet Jezebel stood beside the little fire, wide-eyed and frightened. She had not understood the strange *argot* that the Gunner employed in lieu of English. "Beat it" and "duck" and "hit the trail" had not been included in the English idiom she had gleaned from Lady Barbara Collis. But even had she understood him, it would have made no difference, for Jezebel was not of the clay that is soft in the face of danger; nor were her little feet of the kind that run away, leaving a companion in distress.

The Gunner glanced behind him and saw her. "For God's sake run, kid," he cried. "These are tough guys. I know 'em!" And then—the *shiftas* were upon him.

To conserve ammunition, which was always scarce and difficult to obtain, they tried to ride him down, striking at him with their rifles. He dodged the leading horseman, and as the fellow reined in to wheel his mount back to the attack, the Gunner leaped to his side and dragged him

from the saddle. The mount of a second *shifta* stumbled over the two men and fell, unhorsing its rider.

The Gunner seized the long rifle that had fallen from the hands of the man he had dragged down, and scrambled to his feet. Jezebel watched him in wide-eyed wonder and admiration. She saw him swing the rifle like a club and strike at the third horseman, and then she saw the one he had first grappled lunge forward and, seizing him around the legs, drag him down, while the second to be unhorsed ran in now, and leaped upon him just as the remaining *shifta* struck him a heavy blow on the head.

As she saw him fall, blood gushing from an ugly wound in his head, Jezebel ran forward to him, but the *shiftas* seized her. She was thrown to the back of a horse in front of one of them; the others mounted, and the three galloped away with their prisoner, leaving Danny Gunner Patrick lying motionless in a welter of his own blood.

CHAPTER XX

IN THE VILLAGE OF ELIJA

AS Tarzan approached the village of Abraham the son of Abraham, he was seen by a watcher, who immediately warned his fellows—with the result that when the ape-man arrived, the huts were deserted, for the villagers had taken refuge in the caves in the face of the cliff.

Abraham the son of Abraham, from the safety of the highest cave, exhorted his people to repel the advance of this strange creature, whose partial nakedness and strange armament filled him with alarm. So when Tarzan came near the base of the cliff, the villagers, with much shouting, rolled rocks down the steep declivity in an effort to destroy him.

The Lord of the Jungle looked up at the howling creatures above him. Whatever his emotions, his face did not reveal them. Doubtless contempt was predominant, for he read in their reception of him only fear and cowardice.

As naught but curiosity had prompted his visit to this

strange village, since he knew that Smith already had quitted it, he remained only long enough for a brief survey of the people and their culture, neither of which was sufficiently attractive to detain him; then he turned and retraced his steps toward the place on the shore of Chinnereth where he had picked up the north-bound spoor of Smith and Lady Barbara and Jezebel.

He made his way in a leisurely manner, stopping beside the lake to quench his thirst and eat from his small store of boar meat; then he lay down to rest, after the manner of beasts who have fed and are not hurried.

IN the village he had quitted, Abraham the son of Abraham gave thanks to Jehovah for their deliverance from the barbarian, though reserving proper credit to himself for his masterly defense of his flock. . . .

And how fared it with Lady Barbara and Lafayette Smith? Following their recapture, they were permitted no second opportunity to escape, as, heavily guarded, they were conducted northward toward the village of Elija the son of Noah.

The girl was much depressed, and Smith sought to reassure her, though upon what grounds he himself could scarcely explain.

"I cannot believe that they intend to harm us," he said. "We have done nothing worse than kill one of their goats, and that only because we were starving. I can pay them whatever price they name for the animal, and thus they will be recompensed and have no further cause for complaint against us."

"With what will you pay them?" asked Lady Barbara.

"I have money," replied Smith.

"Of what good would it be to them?"

"Of what good would it be to them! Why, they could buy another goat if they wanted to," he replied.

"These people know nothing of money," she said. "It would be worthless to them."

"I suppose you are right," he admitted. "I hadn't thought of that. Well, I could give them my pistol, then."

"They already have it."

"But it's mine!" he exclaimed. "They'll have to give it back to me."

She shook her head. "You are not dealing with civilized people guided by the codes and customs of civilization, or responsible to the law-enforcing agencies with which we are familiar—and which, perhaps, are all that keep us civilized."

"We escaped once," he ventured; "perhaps we can escape again."

"That, I think, is our only hope."

The village of the North Midians, where they presently arrived, was more pretentious than that of the people at the southern end of the valley. While there were many crude huts, there were also several of stone, and the entire appearance of the village was more cleanly and prosperous.

Several hundred villagers came to meet the party as soon as it was sighted; and the prisoners noted that there was no evidence of the degeneracy which marked the South Midians. On the contrary, these people appeared endowed with abundant health, and physically were a splendid race. All were golden-haired and blue-eyed.

The women and children pushed and jostled one another and the men in their efforts to get close to the prisoners. They jabbered and laughed incessantly, the clothing of the prisoners seeming to arouse the greatest wonder and mirth.

Their language being practically the same as that of the South Midians, Lady Barbara had no difficulty in understanding what they were saying; and from scraps

of their conversation which she overheard, she realized that her worst fears might be realized. However, the crowd offered them no personal injury, and it was apparent that in themselves they were not inherently a cruel people, though their customs evidently prescribed harsh treatment for enemies who fell into their hands.

Upon arrival in the village Lady Barbara and Smith were separated. She was taken to a hut and put in charge of a young woman; Smith was confined, under guard of several men, in another.

Lady Barbara's jailer, far from being ill favored, was quite beautiful; she bore a strong resemblance to Jezebel, and she proved to be quite as loquacious as the men who had captured them.

"You are the strangest-looking South Midian I ever saw," she remarked; "and the man does not look at all like one. Your hair is neither the color of those they keep, nor of those they destroy—it is just between; and your garments are such as no one ever saw before."

"We are not Midians," said Lady Barbara.

"But that is impossible!" cried the woman. "There are none but Midians in the land of Midian, and no way to get in or out. Some say there are people beyond the great cliffs, and some say there are only devils. If you are not a Midian, perhaps you are a devil; but then, of course, you are a Midian."

"We come from a country beyond the cliffs," Lady Barbara told her; "and all we want is to go back to our own country."

"I do not think Elija will let you. He will treat you as we always treat South Midians."

"I am not a Midian, I told you," said Lady Barbara.

The woman shook her head. "It is true that you do not look like them, but if Elija ever believes you are not, you are lost."

"Why?" asked Lady Barbara.

"Elija is one of those who believe that the world beyond the cliffs is inhabited by demons; so if you are not a South Midian, you must be a demon, and he would certainly destroy you, as he will destroy the man; but for my part, I am one of those who say they do not know. We say that perhaps this world around Midian is inhabited by angels. Are you an angel?"

"I am not a demon," replied Lady Barbara.

"Then you must be a South Midian or an angel."

"I am no South Midian," insisted the English girl.

"Then you are an angel," reasoned the woman. "And if you are, you will have no difficulty in proving it."

"How?"

"Just perform a miracle."

"Oh," said Lady Barbara.

"Is the man an angel?" demanded the woman.

"He is an American?"

"I never heard of that—is it some kind of angel?"

"Europeans do not call them that."

"But really, I think Elija will say he is a South Midian, and he will be destroyed."

Just then a man came to the door of the hut and summoned Lady Barbara.

"Come with me," he commanded.

THE English girl followed the messenger, and the woman who had been guarding her accompanied them. Before a large stone hut they found Elija surrounded by a number of the older men of the village; the balance of the population was grouped in a semicircle facing them. Lafayette Smith stood before Elija, and Lady Barbara was conducted to the side of the American.

Elija the Prophet was a middle-aged man of not unprepossessing appearance. He was short and stocky, ex-

trremely muscular in build, and his face was adorned with a wealth of blond whiskers. Like the other North Midians he was garbed in a single garment of goatskin, his only ornament being the pistol he had taken from Smith, which he wore on a leather thong that encircled his neck.

"This man," said Elija, addressing Lady Barbara, "will not talk. He makes noises, but they mean nothing. Why will he not talk?"

"He does not understand the language of the land of Midian," replied the English girl.

"He must understand it," insisted Elija. "Everyone understands it."

"He is not from Midian," said Lady Barbara.

"Then he must be a demon," said Elija.

"Perhaps he is an angel," suggested Lady Barbara.

"The man cannot be an angel because he has no wings!" retorted Elija after a moment's consideration. "Therefore he must be either a North Midian or a demon, and in either case he must be destroyed."

Lady Barbara turned a pale face toward Lafayette Smith—pale even through its coating of tan. Her lip trembled, just a little. It was the first indication of a weaker, feminine emotion that Smith had seen this remarkable girl display.

"What is it?" he asked. "Are they going to harm you?"

"It is you, my dear friend," she replied. "You must escape."

"But how?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know—I don't know," she cried. "There is only one way. You will have to make a break for it—now. It is dark. They will not expect it. I will do something to engage their attention, and then you make a dash for the forest."

He shook his head. "No," he said. "We shall go together, or I do not go."

"Please," she begged, "or it will be too late."

Elija had been talking to one of his apostles, and now he raised his voice again so that all might hear. "Lest we have mistaken the divine instructions of Jehovah," he said, "we shall place this man in the mercy of Jehovah; and as Jehovah wills, so shall it be. Make ready the grave. If he is indeed an angel, he will arise unharmed."

"Oh, go—please go!" cried Lady Barbara.

"What did he say?" demanded Smith.

"They are going to bury you alive," she cried.

"And you," he asked, "what are they going to do to you?"

"I am to be held in slavery."

With sharpened sticks and instruments of bone and stone, a number of men were already engaged in excavating a grave in the center of the village street before the hut of Elija, who stood waiting its completion, surrounded by his apostles. The Prophet was still toying with his new-found ornament, concerning the purpose and mechanism of which he was wholly ignorant.

Lady Barbara was urging Smith to attempt escape while there was yet an opportunity, and the American was considering the best plan to adopt.

"You will have to come with me," he said. "I think if we make a sudden break right back through the village toward the cliffs, we will find our best chance for success. There are fewer people congregated on that side."

Lady Barbara nodded. . . .

From the darkness beyond the village on the forest side, a pair of eyes watched the proceedings taking place before the hut of Elija. Slowly, silently, the owner

of the eyes crept closer until he stood at last in the shadow of a hut at the edge of the village.

Suddenly Smith, seizing Lady Barbara's hand, started at a run toward the north side of the village; and so unexpected was his break for liberty, that for a moment no hand was raised to stay him. But an instant later, at a cry from Elija, the entire band leaped in pursuit—while from the shadow of the hut where he had stood concealed, the watcher slipped forward into the village. There he stood near the hut of Elija, watching the pursuit of the escaped prisoners; he was alone, for the little central compound of the village had emptied as by magic, and even the women and children had joined in the chase.

Smith ran swiftly, holding tightly to the girl's hand; and close on their heels came the leaders of the pursuit. No longer did the village fires light their way, and only darkness loomed ahead, for the moon had not yet risen.

Gradually the American bore to the left, intending to swing in a half-circle toward the south. There was yet a chance that they might make good their escape, if they could outdistance the nearer of their pursuers until they reached the forest, for their strait gave them both speed and endurance far above normal.

But just as success seemed near, they entered a patch of broken lava rock, invisible in the darkness, and Smith stumbled and fell, dragging Lady Barbara down with him. Before they could scramble to their feet, the leading Midian was upon them.

The American freed himself for a moment and struggled to his feet, and again the fellow sought to seize him, but Smith swung a heavy blow to his chin and felled him.

Brief, however, was this respite; for almost immediately both the American and the English girl were overwhelmed by superior numbers, and once again found themselves captives, though Smith fought until he was overpowered, knocking his antagonists to right and left.

Miserably dejected, they were dragged back to the village compound, their last hope gone, and again the Midians gathered around the open grave to witness the torture of their victim.

Smith was conducted to the edge of the excavation, where he was held by two stalwart men, while Elija raised his voice in prayer, and the balance of the assemblage knelt, bursting forth occasionally with hallelujahs.

When he had concluded his long prayer, the prophet paused. Evidently there was something on his mind which vexed him. In fact, it was the pistol which dangled from the thong about his neck. He was not quite sure of its purpose, and he was about to destroy the only person who might tell him.

To Elija the pistol was quite the most remarkable possession that had ever fallen into his hands, and he was filled with a great curiosity concerning it. It might be, he argued, some magic talisman for averting evil; or, upon

the other hand, it might be the charm of a demon or a sorcerer, that would work evil upon him. At that thought he quickly removed the thong from about his neck, but he still held the weapon in his hand.

"What is this?" he demanded, turning to Lady Barbara.

"It is a weapon," she said. "Be careful, or it will kill some one."

"How does it kill?" asked Elija.

"What is he saying?" demanded Smith.

"He is asking how the pistol kills," replied the girl.

An idea occurred to the American. "Tell him to give it to me and I will show him," he said.



But when she translated the offer to Elija, he demurred. "He could then kill me with it," he said shrewdly.

"He won't give it to you," the girl told Smith. "He is afraid you want to kill him."

"I do," replied the man.

"Tell him," said Elija, "to explain to me how I may kill some one with it."

"Repeat my instructions to him very carefully," said Smith, after Lady Barbara had translated the demand of the prophet. "Tell him how to grasp the pistol." And when Lady Barbara had done so and Elija held the weapon by the grip in his right hand: "Now tell him to place his index finger through the guard, but warn him not to pull the trigger."

Elija did as he was bid. "Now," continued Smith, "explain to him that in order to see exactly how the weapon operates he should put one eye to the muzzle and look down the barrel."

"But I can see nothing," expostulated Elija when he had done as Lady Barbara directed. "It is quite dark down the little hole."

"He says it is too dark in the barrel for him to see anything," repeated Lady Barbara to the American.

"Explain to him that if he pulls the trigger, there will be a light in the barrel," said Smith.

"But—but that will be murder!" exclaimed the girl in horror.

"It is war," said Smith. "And in the subsequent confusion we may escape."

Lady Barbara steeled herself. "You could see nothing because you did not press the little piece of metal beneath your index finger," she explained to Elija.

"What will that do?" demanded the prophet.

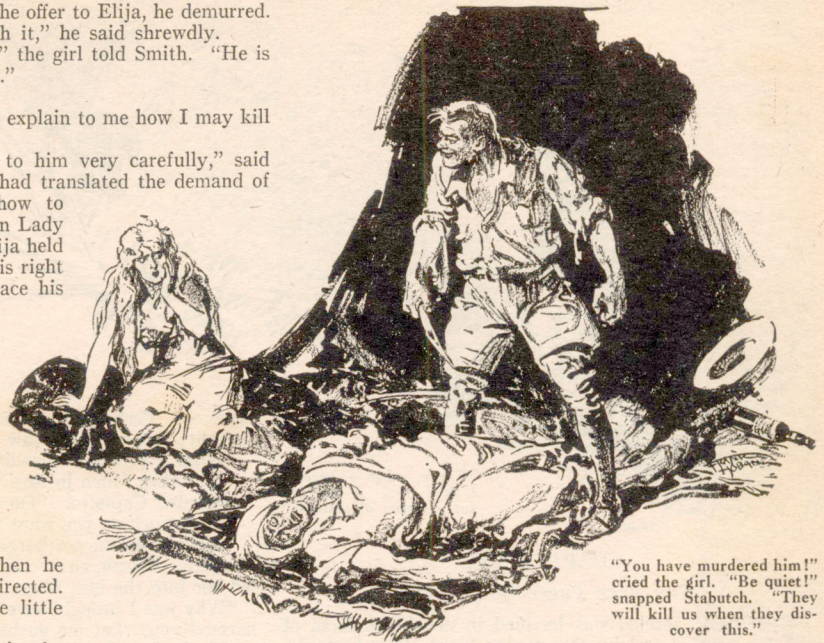
"It will make a light in the little hole," said Lady Barbara.

Elija again placed his eye against the muzzle; and this time he pulled the trigger. And as the report cracked the tense silence of the watching villagers, Elija the son of Noah pitched forward upon his face. . . .

Instantly Lady Barbara sprang toward Smith, who simultaneously sought to break away from the grip of the men who held him; but they, although astonished at what had occurred, were not to be caught off their guard, and though he struggled desperately, they held him.

For an instant there was a hushed silence, and then pandemonium broke loose as the villagers realized that their prophet was dead, slain by the wicked charm of a demon. But at the very outset of their demands for vengeance, their attention was distracted by a strange and remarkable figure that sprang from the hut of Elija, stooped and picked up the pistol that had fallen from the hands of the dead man, and leaped to the side of the prisoner struggling with his guards.

This was such a man as none of them had ever seen before—a giant white man with a tousled shock of black hair, and with gray eyes that sent a shiver through them, so fierce and implacable were they. Naked he was, but for a loin-cloth of yellow skin spotted with black; and the muscles that rolled beneath his brown hide were muscles such as they never had seen before.



"You have murdered him!" cried the girl. "Be quiet!" snapped Stabutch. "They will kill us when they discover this."

As the newcomer sprang toward the American, one of the men guarding Smith, sensing that an attempt was being made to rescue the prisoner, swung his club in readiness to deal a blow against the strange creature advancing upon him. At the same time the other guard sought to drag Smith from the compound.

The American did not at first recognize Tarzan of the Apes; yet though he was not aware that the stranger was bent upon his rescue, he sensed that he was an enemy of the Midians, and so struggled to prevent his guard from forcing him away.

Another Midian seized Lady Barbara with the intention of carrying her from the scene, for all the villagers believed that the strange giant was a friend of the prisoners, who had come to effect their release.

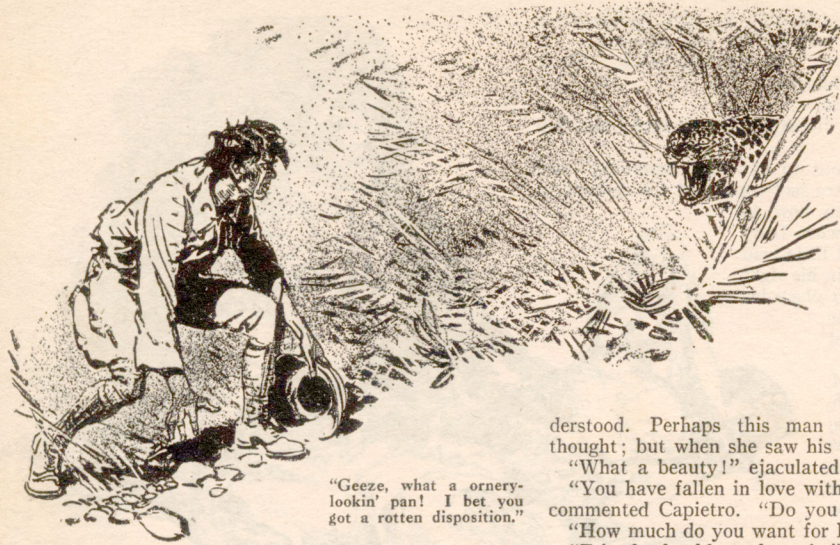
Smith was successful in tearing himself free from the man who held him, and immediately sprang to the girl's assistance, felling her captor with a single blow, just as Tarzan leveled the American's pistol at the guard who was preparing to cudgel him.

THE sound of this second shot, and the sight of their fellow dropping to the ground as had Elija, filled the Midians with consternation; and for a moment they fell back from the three, leaving them alone in the center of the compound.

"Quick!" called Tarzan to Smith. "You and the girl get out of here before they recover from their surprise. I will follow you. . . . That way!" he added, pointing toward the south.

As Lafayette Smith and Lady Barbara hurried from the village, Tarzan backed slowly after them, keeping the little pistol in full view of the frightened villagers—who, having seen two of their number die beneath its terrifying magic, were loath to approach it too closely.

Until out of range of a thrown club Tarzan continued his slow retreat; then he wheeled and bounded off into the night in pursuit of the fleeing Lafayette Smith and Lady Barbara Collis.



"Geeze, what a ornery-lookin' pan! I bet you got a rotten disposition."

CHAPTER XXI

THE BEST THREE OUT OF FIVE

THOUGH Jezebel was terrified by the black faces of her captors and by the strange beasts they bestrode, the like of which she had never even imagined before, her fear for herself was outweighed by her sorrow. Her one thought was to escape and return to the side of the Gunner, even though she believed him dead from the terrific blow his assailant had struck him.

She struggled violently to free herself from the grasp of the man in front of whom she rode, but the fellow was far too powerful, and though she was difficult to hold, at no time was there the slightest likelihood that she might escape. Her efforts, however, angered him; and at last he struck her, bringing to the girl a realization of the futility of pitting her puny strength against his. She must wait, then, until she could accomplish by stealth what she could not effect by force.

The village of the raiders lay but a short distance from the point at which she had been captured; and but a few minutes had elapsed since that event when they rode up to its gates and into the central compound.

The shouts that greeted the arrival of a new and beautiful prisoner brought Capietro and Stabutch to the doorway of their hut.

"Now what have the black devils brought in?" exclaimed Capietro.

"It looks like a young woman," said Stabutch.

"It is," cried Capietro, as the *shifas* approached the hut with their prisoner. "We shall have company—eh, Stabutch? Who have you there, my children?" he demanded of the three who were accompanying Jezebel.

"The price of a chief's ransom, perhaps," replied one of the blacks.

"Where did you find her?"

"Above the village a short distance, when we were returning from scouting. A man was with her—the man who escaped with the help of the ape-man."

"Where is he? Why did you not bring him also?" demanded Capietro.

"He fought us, and we were forced to kill him."

"You have done well," said Capietro. "She is worth two of him. Come, girl, hold up your head—let us have

a look at that pretty face. Come, you need not fear anything—if you are a good girl, you will find Dominic Capietro a good fellow."

"Perhaps she does not understand Italian," suggested Stabutch.

"You are right, my friend; I shall speak to her in English."

Jezebel had looked up at Stabutch when she heard him speak a language she un-

derstood. Perhaps this man would be a friend, she thought; but when she saw his face, her heart sank.

"What a beauty!" ejaculated the Russian.

"You have fallen in love with her quickly, my friend," commented Capietro. "Do you want to buy her?"

"How much do you want for her?"

"Friends should not bargain," said the Italian. "Wait, I have it! Come, girl!" He took Jezebel by the arm and led her into the hut, where Stabutch followed them.

"Why was I brought here?" asked Jezebel. "I have not harmed you. Let me go back to Danny; he is hurt."

"He is dead," said Capietro. "But don't you grieve, little one. You now have two friends in place of the one you have lost. Soon you will forget him."

"I shall never forget him," cried Jezebel. "I want to go back to him—perhaps he is not dead." Then she broke down and cried.

Stabutch stood eying the girl hungrily. Her youth and her beauty aroused a devil within him, and he made a mental vow that he would possess her. "Do not cry," he said kindly. "I am your friend. Everything will be all right."

The new tone in his voice gave hope to Jezebel, and she looked up at him gratefully. "If you are my friend," she said, "take me away from here and back to Danny."

"After a while," replied Stabutch; and then to Capietro: "How much?"

"I shall not sell her to my good friend," replied the Italian. "Let us have a drink, and then I shall explain my plan."

The two drank from a bottle standing on the earth floor of the hut. "Sit down," said Capietro, waving Jezebel to a seat on the dirty rug. Then he searched for a moment in his duffle-bag and brought out a deck of soiled and grimy cards. "Be seated, my friend," he said to Stabutch. "Let us have another drink, and then you shall hear my plan."

Stabutch drank from the bottle and wiped his lips with the back of his hand. "Well," he said, "what is it?"

"We shall play for her," exclaimed the Italian, shuffling the deck, "and whoever wins, keeps her."

"Let us drink to that," said Stabutch. "Five games, eh, and the first to win three takes her?"

"Another drink to seal the bargain!" exclaimed the Russian. "The best three out of five!"

Stabutch won the first game, while Jezebel sat looking on in ignorance of the purpose of the bits of pasteboard, only knowing that in some way they were to decide her fate. She hoped the younger man would win, but only because he had said that he was her friend. Perhaps she could persuade him to take her back to Danny. She wondered what kind of water was in the bottle from which

they drank, for she noticed that it wrought a change in them. They talked much louder now, and shouted strange words when the little cards were thrown upon the rug, and then one would appear very angry, while the other always laughed immoderately. Also they swayed and lurched in a peculiar manner that she had not noticed before.

Capietro won the second game, and the third. Stabutch was furious, but now he became very quiet. He exerted all his powers of concentration upon the game, and he seemed almost sober as the cards were dealt for the fourth game.

"She is as good as mine!" cried Capietro as he looked at his hand.

"She will never be yours!" growled the Russian.

"What do you mean?"

"I shall win the next two games."

The Italian laughed loudly. "That is good!" he cried. "We should drink to that." He raised the bottle to his lips, then passed it to Stabutch.

"I do not want a drink," said the Russian in a surly tone, pushing the bottle aside.

"Ah-ha! My friend is getting nervous. He is afraid he is going to lose, and so he will not drink. *Sapristi!* It is all the same to me. I get the brandy and the girl too."

"Play!" snapped Stabutch.

"You are in a hurry to lose," taunted Capietro.

"To win," corrected Stabutch—and he did.

Now it was the Italian's turn to curse and rage at luck; once again the cards were dealt and the players picked up their hands.

"It is the last game," said Stabutch.

"We have each won two," replied Capietro. "Let us drink to the winner—although I dislike proposing a toast to myself." And he laughed again, but this time there was an ugly note in his laughter.

In silence now, they resumed their play. One by one the little pasteboards fell upon the rug. The girl looked on in wondering silence. There was a tenseness in the situation that she felt, without understanding. Poor little Jezebel, she understood so little!

Suddenly, with a triumphant oath, Capietro sprang to his feet.

"I win!" he cried. "Come, friend, drink with me to my good fortune."

Sullenly the Russian drank—a long draft this time. There was a sinister gleam in his eye as he handed the bottle back to Capietro. Leon Stabutch was a poor loser.

The Italian emptied the bottle and flung it to the ground. Then he turned toward Jezebel, and stooping, lifted her to her feet. "Come, my dear," he said, his coarse voice thick from drink, "give me a kiss."

Jezebel drew back, but the Italian jerked her roughly to him and tried to draw her lips to his.

"Leave the girl alone," growled Stabutch threateningly. "Can't you see she is afraid of you?"

"What did I win her for?" demanded Capietro. "To leave her alone? Mind your own business."

"I'll make it my business," said Stabutch. "Take your hands off her." He stepped forward and laid a hand on Jezebel's arm. "She is mine by rights, anyway."

"What do you mean?"

"You cheated. I caught you at it in the last game."

"You lie!" shouted Capietro, and simultaneously he struck. The Russian dodged the blow, and clinched.

BOTH were drunk and none too steady. It required much of their attention to keep from falling down. But as they wrestled about the interior of the hut, a few blows were struck—enough to arouse their rage to fury and partly to sober them. Then the duel became deadly, as each sought the throat of the other.

Jezebel, wide-eyed and terrified, had difficulty in keeping out of their way as they fought to and fro across the floor of the hut; and so centered was the attention of the two men upon one another that the girl might have escaped, had she not been more afraid of the black men without than of the whites within.

Several times Stabutch released his hold with his right hand and sought for something beneath his coat; and at last he found it—a slim dagger.

They were standing in the center of the hut now, their arms locked about one another, and resting thus as though by mutual consent. Slowly the Russian's right hand crept up the back of his adversary. Jezebel saw, but only her eyes reflected her horror. Though she had seen many people killed, she yet had a horror of killing. She saw the Russian feel for a spot on the other's back with the point of his thumb. Then she saw him turn his hand and place the dagger point where his thumb had been.

There was a smile upon Stabutch's face as he drove the blade home. Capietro stiffened, screamed and died. As the body slumped to the ground and rolled over on its back, the murderer stood over the corpse of his victim, a smile upon his lips, and his eyes upon the girl.

But suddenly the smile died as a new thought came to the cunning mind of the slayer, and his eyes snapped from the face of Jezebel to the doorway of the hut, where a filthy blanket answered the purpose of a door.

He had forgotten the horde of cut-throats who had called this thing upon the floor their chief! But now he recalled them, and his soul was filled with terror. He did not need to ask himself what his fate would be when they discovered his crime.

"You have murdered him!" cried the girl suddenly, a note of horror in her voice.

"Be quiet!" snapped Stabutch. "Do you want to die? They will kill us when they discover this."

"I did not do it," protested Jezebel.

"They will kill you just the same—afterwards. They are beasts."

Suddenly he stooped, seized the corpse by the ankles, and dragging it to the far end of the hut, covered it with rugs and clothing.

"Now keep quiet until I come back," he said to Jezebel. "If you give an alarm, I'll kill you myself before they have a chance to."

He rummaged in a dark corner of the hut and brought forth a revolver with its holster and belt, which he buckled about his hips, and a rifle which he leaned beside the doorway.

"When I return, be ready to come with me," he snapped; and raising the rug that covered the doorway, he stepped out into the village.

Quickly he made his way to where the ponies of the band were tethered. Several of the blacks were loitering near.

By means of signs, he tried to tell them to saddle two horses, but they only shook their heads.

At this juncture the headman, attracted from a nearby hut, approached. He understood pidgin English, and Stabutch had no difficulty in making him understand that he wanted two horses saddled; but the headman wanted to know more. Did the Chief want them?



"Yes, he wants them," replied Stabutch. "He sent me to get them. The chief is sick. Drink too much." Stabutch laughed, and the headman seemed to understand.

"Who go with you?" asked the headman. Stabutch hesitated. Well, he might as well tell him—everyone would see the girl ride out with him, anyway. "The girl," he said.

The headman's eyes narrowed. "The Chief say?" "Yes. The girl thinks the white man not dead. The Chief send me to look for him."

The other nodded understandingly and ordered two horses saddled and bridled. "Him dead," he offered.

Stabutch shrugged. "We see," he replied, as he led the two animals toward the hut where Jezebel awaited him.

The headman accompanied him, and Stabutch was in terror. What if the man insisted on entering the hut to see his chief? He stopped, and the headman also halted.

"Do not come to the hut yet," said Stabutch. "Why?" asked the headman.

"The girl is afraid. If she sees you, she will think we are deceiving her, and she may refuse to show me where the man is. We promised her no black man would come."

The headman hesitated. Then he shrugged and turned. "And tell them to leave the gates open till we have gone," called Stabutch.

At the hut door he called to the girl. "All ready," he said, he reached hastily inside for his rifle.

Jezebel looked at the horses with dismay.

At the thought of riding one of these strange beasts alone, she was terrified. "I cannot do it," she told Stabutch.

"You will have to—or die," he whispered. "I'll lead the one you ride. Here, hurry."

He lifted her into the saddle and showed her how to use the stirrups and hold the reins. Then he put a rope about the neck of her horse, and mounting his own, he led hers out through the village gateway, while half a hundred *shiftas* stolidly watched them depart.

CHAPTER XXII

AN AWAKENING

DANNY GUNNER PATRICK opened his eyes and stared up at the blue African sky. Slowly consciousness returned, and with it the realization that his head pained severely. He raised a hand and felt of it—then he looked at his hand, and saw that it was bloody.

"Geeze!" he muttered. "They got me!" He tried to recall how it had happened. "I knew the finger was on me, but how did they get me? Where was I?"

Then he turned his head slightly and saw lofty mountains looming near. Memory, partial and fragmentary, returned. "I must have fell off them mountains," he mused, "while I was lookin' for camp."

Gingerly he rose to his feet, and was relieved to find that at least his arms and legs were intact. "My head never was much good. Geeze, it hurts, though."

A single urge dominated him: he must find camp. Old Smithy would be worrying about him if he did not return. Where was Obambi? "I wonder if the dinge fell off too," he muttered, looking about him. But dead or alive, Obambi was not in sight, and so the Gunner alone started upon his fruitless search for camp.

In a ravine Danny found water, and with the discovery came a realization of his thirst and his hunger. He drank at the same pool at which Tarzan had slain Horta the boar, and he also washed the blood from his head and face as well as he could. Then he continued his aimless wan-

dering in a southeasterly direction; but he was headed at last toward the location of the now abandoned camp. Chance had set him upon the right trail.

In a short time he reached a spot that seemed familiar, and here he stopped and looked around in an effort to recall his wandering mental faculties.

"That bat on the bean sure knocked me cuckoo," he remarked, half aloud. . . . "Geeze, what's that?" Something was moving in the tall grass through which he had just come. He watched intently, and a moment later saw the head of Sheeta the panther parting the grasses.

"I gotcha, Steve!" exclaimed the Gunner. "Me and that Tarzan guy flopped here last night—now I remember."

He also remembered how Tarzan had chased the panther away by "running a bluff on him," and he wondered if he could do the same thing.

"Geeze, what a ornery-lookin' pan! I'll bet you got a rotten disposition—and that Tarzan guy just growled and ran at you, and you beat it. Say, I don't believe it, if I did see it myself. Whyinell don't you go on about your business, you big stiff? You give me the heeby-jeebies." He stooped and picked up a fragment of rock. "Beat it!" he yelled, as he hurled the missile at Sheeta.

The great cat wheeled and bounded away. "Well, what do you know about that?" ejaculated Danny. "I done it! Geeze, these lions aint so much."

HUNGER now claimed his attention, and his returning memory suggested a means of appeasing it. "I wonder could I do it?" he mused, as he hunted around on the ground until he had found a thin fragment of rock, with which he commenced to scrape away the dirt from a loose heap that rose a few inches above the surrounding ground.

His digging soon revealed the remains of the boar Tarzan had cached against their possible return. With his pocket-knife the Gunner hacked off several pieces, after which he scraped the dirt back over the body and busied himself in the preparation of a fire, where he grilled the meat in a sketchy fashion.

His memory had returned now up to the point of the meal he had eaten at this same spot with Tarzan. He knew now that he could find his way back to camp from a point above the raider's village, and so he turned his footsteps in that direction.

When he had found the place, he crept on down to the edge of the cliff where it overlooked the village, and here he lay down to rest and to spy upon the raiders.

"The bums!" he ejaculated beneath his breath, as he saw the *shiftas* moving about the village. "I wish I had my typewriter—I'd clean up that dump."

He saw Stabutch emerge from a hut and walk down to the horses. He watched him while he talked to the blacks there and to the headman. Then he saw the Russian leading two saddled horses back to the hut.

"That guy don't know it," he muttered, "but the finger is sure on him. I'll get him on the spot some day, if it takes the rest of my natural life. Geeze, gлом the skirt!"

Stabutch had summoned Jezebel from the hut. Suddenly a strange thing happened inside the head of Gunner Patrick. With the sight of Jezebel, his memory returned!

It was with difficulty that he restrained an urge to call out and tell her that he was there; but caution stilled his tongue, and he lay watching while the two mounted and rode out of the gateway.

He rose to his feet and ran along the ridge toward the north, parallel to the course they were taking. In a few minutes it would be dark. If he could only keep them in sight until he knew in what direction they finally went!

These diverse characters, brought together by circumstances unique indeed, find still more surprises in store for them—in the next, the March, issue.

One Night in Agadir

A specially exciting adventure of Secret Service operatives with their old enemy the Man with the Clubfoot.

By

VALENTINE
WILLIAMS

Illustrated by
Edward Ryan



"Hands up!" De Montclair ordered in French.

WHEN, in mid-July, 1914, I left London for Casablanca, I had no idea that the loan of my services to the French Intelligence would take me farther afield than Rabat, the administrative capital of French Morocco. As the result of the murder of the Archduke a fortnight before, the air was full of rumors of war. The French were, above all other things, concerned for the tranquillity of their North African Empire—especially in Southern Morocco, which was far from being pacified.

Colonel Leroy was head of the Deuxième Bureau, the Intelligence Branch of the French General Staff, and he had applied privately to my Chief for my assistance in investigating the presence off the Moroccan coast of a mysterious yacht, the *Thelma*, flying the Swedish flag. When I mention that the *Thelma's* owner, one Hilquist, was described by persons who had met him ashore at Ceuta and Tangier as an unusually burly individual who walked with a pronounced limp, you who have read of my sundry encounters with that ace of German espionage, Dr. Grundt, more familiarly known as the Man with the Clubfoot, will understand Colonel Leroy's request.

Though reasonably confident of being able to penetrate through any disguise my old adversary might adopt, as Leroy knew, I was rather skeptical about the whole business. It seemed to me that Hilquist might well be *piébot*, as the French reports designated him, and at the same time be, as he claimed to be, a Swedish scientist interested in oceanography—clubfooted men are not so uncommon. But the French Government was particularly anxious to avoid complications in Morocco at that juncture—hence Leroy's application for me. The *Thelma* had left Tangier headed south, presumably for a cruise in Moroccan waters. The idea was that, if she called at one of the ports of French Morocco, she should be detained long enough for me to appear and run the rule over her owner. If I failed to identify him, so much the better:

on the other hand, should he prove to be my old enemy, the French would be warned in time.

The trip impressed me as being a good deal of a wild-goose chase. But I had never been in North Africa and, as a joy-ride, the mission attracted me. It was not until I reached Rabat that I discovered what I had let myself in for. The *Thelma* had been sighted off the mouth of the Sous, in the far south of Morocco, and was rumored to have landed a man at dead of night on those desolate shores before vanishing into the blue. I was to proceed to Agadir in disguise and there place myself at the disposal of a French intelligence officer called René de Montclair, who under the name of Abu Moussa, was living as a native in a house in the oil bazaar. The utmost secrecy was enjoined upon me.

Now I am a fair linguist as linguists go—and that's not very far, in my experience. But Eastern tongues are not my long suit. A smattering of kitchen Arabic, and enough Turkish as suffices to buy a dish of pilau in a Stamboul cook-shop about see me through. For the rest, the vast and complicated structure of Islam is a sealed book to me. I endeavored to explain this to the Chief of Intelligence at Rabat, but without success. De Montclair, he assured me, would supply what I lacked—*un vrai numéro, celui-là*, who could impersonate with verisimilitude and precision a whole galaxy of native African types from a learned sheik to a veiled Tuareg. My pride forbade me to insist.

The Sous, the rich hinterland of which Agadir is the port, is now pacified. But at the time of which I write



My ear now caught footfalls, the sound of women's voices.

Agadir was ringed round with rebellion. Fanaticism was in the air. Like a scorching breath it rose up at me as, wrapped in my burnous, a humble camp-follower in the train of a military caravan, I rode south from Meknes.

I have little recollection of the three days I spent in the house of Abu Moussa, my semi-Orientalized French host. De Montclair maintained the strictest incognito and not even the military, he informed me, were aware of his real identity. His particular job was to keep track, by means of the Chleu informers who were always coming and going at his ramshackle abode, of the hillmen chiefs who sometime slipped into Agadir after dark.

If I had entertained any doubts as to the truth of the story of the *Thelma's* call at the mouth of the Sous, the talks I had with my host dispelled them. One of De Montclair's spies had seen the boat come ashore and the figure enveloped in a burnous that had stepped from it. The arrival of a party of hillmen clattering down the cliff had prevented the watcher from ascertaining what had become of the stranger; but De Montclair believed he had remained on land. . . .

My host declined to let me out of doors even for exercise. But on the third evening after my arrival, he handed me a dark burnous, and bade me accompany him.

"We go tonight," said he, "to the house of Ibn Ben Muley Mohassib, a gentleman on whom I've had my eye for some time. He claims to be a merchant, but he certainly doesn't do enough business to account for the footing on which he lives. Moreover, he has recently taken a fourth wife, a hillwoman, which suggests sudden affluence. And last night three sheiks of the Ait Ou Tanaan, one of the most powerful and refractory of the tribes about here, were at his house. He explains that they're kinsmen of his bride's, but I think rather that they brought him word

of a certain emissary now snugly lodged in some mountain stronghold."

"The man landed from the *Thelma*, do you mean?"

My host shrugged his shoulders. "Who shall say? But if I were an emissary landed for the purpose of fomenting trouble for the French I know to whom I should address myself."

"But why Mohassib?"

"He spent many years as the Sultan's diplomatic representative in Germany and Austria-Hungary. He speaks and writes German fluently."

"A German agent, is he?"

"People who were here at the time of the *Panther* incident hint as much. Also, as I have said, he has recently become inexplicably prosperous. Tonight I'm going to show you where Mohassib lives. I want you to note the way, for tomorrow night you'll have to find the house alone. I shall not be able to join you until later."

"And what's happening tomorrow night?" I asked.

"Tomorrow night Mohassib will have an urgent rendezvous in the hills. You and I are going to profit by his absence to have a look round his house. He will take all his men folk, save the house porter, with him, and only his women will be left. Between midnight and the first call to prayer we should have ample leisure to examine his correspondence. That's where you'll come in useful, for I know no German. *Allons, en route!*"

The next night I was punctual at the rendezvous which was in a narrow lane beside Mohassib's house on the hillside above the city. De Montclair was late. I had not seen him since breakfast; I wondered what had happened to him. Our appointment was for midnight and I gave him half an hour before deciding to act for myself. The prospect appalled me: a child, I felt sure, would see through my disguise the moment I opened my mouth. But it was tonight or never. Mohassib would be away until dawn.

A small, domed shrine—the tomb of a local saint, De Montclair had explained—was built against the high wall surrounding the house where the wall turned back from the lane. By mounting the low ramp enclosing the tomb I gained the roof of the shrine, whence a perilous leap landed me on top of the wall. A little tiled court, with orange and lemon trees planted about a central fountain, was below me. An open loggia formed the ground floor of the house on this side with doors folded back upon a dark and deserted room.

Now that I was halfway launched upon my enterprise I paused to reflect that, while descending to the court was a comparatively simple operation, getting out again might prove to be a much more complicated business. The patter of feet and the glimmer of a light in the lane decided me to embark upon what I still consider to have been the most foolhardy action of my entire career. I could go back or forward. I went forward. The footsteps passed by without stopping and presently were lost in the night.

All remaining quiet in the house, I crossed the court and entered the loggia. There was enough light for me to make out, in the apartment beyond, the sort of incongruous junk the Moor of property accumulates—a preposterous number of clocks, an automatic piano, a bright brass bedstead. I saw no desk or any receptacle for papers.

I had a pistol slung on the belt I wore next my body and an electric torch in the cowl of my burnous. With the

gun in my right hand and the torch in my left I tiptoed to a small door I perceived in a corner of the room. In the darkness beyond it I had to use my light. Its beam revealed a sort of antechamber with doors.

From the direction of the right-hand door my ear now caught footfalls, the chatter of women's voices. Blindly I turned to the other door, on the left of the one by which I had entered. It was fastened. My pistol hampered me and I thrust it in my sash, the better to grope for the latch. As I found it, the curving hook caught in my sash and with a crash my heavy automatic fell to the ground. A piercing scream which seemed to awaken every echo of that accursed house rang out behind me. I lost my head; abandoning my gun, I fled through the door and along a stuffy, dark passage that lay beyond it.

A fearful clamor resounded in my wake. At the end of the passage an iron grill barred the way. But it did not reach to the ceiling by a good six feet and somehow I contrived to scramble over. The corridor turned to the right and I knew that at least I was out of sight of the baying pack at my heels. I could hear them rattling at the iron-work of the gate. A door loomed up before me. Heedlessly I plucked it open.

A LIGHTED lantern suspended from the roof cast a soft light upon gleaming tiled walls, gilded arabesques. In front of a broad divan heaped with cushions of colored leather, from which it was clear that he had just sprung up, a huge man in a robe of crimson silk was standing, his face to the door. At the sight of him I recoiled instinctively—not, however, before the automatic he grasped in his hairy fist, or the uncompromising ferocity of his expression. What brought me up short was the glimpse of a massive, distorted boot which the hem of his rich gabardine disclosed.

But now came a distraction. A door at the far end of the apartment was violently flung open and a stocky figure in white whirled in. I guessed it was the porter. He was quick to grasp the situation and halted, irresolute. Impatiently Clubfoot waved the fellow away. The man cried out excitedly in Arabic; but such an air of authority did the giant cripple radiate that the other did not persist, but shrugging, went out again.

Then only did my old adversary break his tense silence. "An indifferent artist, Clavering," he sneered. "You have not sacrificed your mustache as I have done!" In truth, as I now observed, he was clean-shaven. The clump of wiry, iron-gray bristles which formerly barred his upper lip had disappeared. "And are you aware," he pursued relentlessly, "of what awaits the European who violates the sanctity of an Oriental harem?"

Believe me or believe me not, but it was not until that moment, in my unfamiliarity with the East, that I grasped the purport of the women's screams I had heard, and realized what I had done.

"The penalty is death," the stern voice went on. "And your French friends won't save you: they're most scrupulous in respecting the customs of the country."

I knew that he spoke truth. The din had died down now and the hush of the sleeping city was heavy on the air. I was cold with terror. Instinctively my eyes sought the unglazed window which, high up on the wall, framed an oblong of the jeweled night and discerned there first streaks of the dawn which would bring Mohassib home to his vengeance.

"You've incriminated me too long, my friend," Grundt rasped out. "It's time a stop was put to your meddlesome activities."

"Last year in Macedonia I spared your life," I said, making an effort to banish the fear from my voice. "In

Paris the other day you told me you were still in my debt. Have you forgotten it?"

He laughed noiselessly. "On the contrary, it's precisely because I do remember the obligation that I'm relieved to find the business of disposing of you taken out of my hands."

"You wouldn't stand by and see a fellow-man put to death in cold blood?"

"By no means. You see, in half an hour I shall be gone. I have an urgent appointment on the seashore at daybreak."

"The *Thelma* is calling for you—is that it?"

He simmered gently. "*Der gute Clavering!* How well informed he always is of my movements!" His laugh was strident. "If it were not that I should get my host into trouble, I'd leave a note for your French friends, just to let them know that for the past week I've been living here, in this house, right under their noses. What a pity that you won't be able to tell them about it!" He chuckled triumphantly. "Knowledge, young man, is the greatest asset in this peculiar profession of ours!"

I had not given up hope. Unless De Montclair had met with an accident, he would surely come. Could I gain time? From experience I knew the redoubtable Dr. Grundt was seldom unresponsive to flattery. "I wouldn't gain-say an expert like yourself, *Herr Doktor*," I answered suavely, "especially as my Chief has the highest opinion of your ability. But what has knowledge to do with your presence here, may I ask?"

He rumbled with laughter. "Merely that I'm acquainted with the French colonial system. You fools of Englishmen impose your civilization on the native; the French respect his manners and customs. In their eyes a harem is inviolate—as you, I fear, will very shortly discover." He chortled. "And I knew that no Christian hand would dare to part the curtains of the litter that bore Mohassib's Chleu bride to her new abode."

I stared at him incredulously. "You mean—"

He guffawed uproariously. "I mean that I was the bride. Ho, ho! The joke's too good to keep, *nicht wahr?* But I must be getting on. Where's that porter? *Ya, Hassan!*"

A shrill, gurgling scream from somewhere in the depths of the house cut across his shout, followed by a perfect uproar of shouts and shrieks and pounding feet. Grundt whirled about to face the door on the far side of the room. But a stern voice rang out from the window-opening above him. A figure in native dress stood there, pistol in hand. It was De Montclair. "Hands up!" he ordered sternly in French. A handful of turbaned men—Mohaznis, Moorish gendarmes—came tumbling into the room.

THE rest is soon told. De Montclair had been detained in the mountains where a trap had been laid for Mohassib. That worthy, in company with sundry astonished and crestfallen chieftains, was safely lodged in jail. The scream we had heard was the dying cry of the porter, who had shown flight.

I expected that Grundt would receive short shrift from my rescuers. But, as De Montclair explained later, orders from Paris were to avoid an international incident at all costs. The last I saw of my old acquaintance he was being unceremoniously bundled into the motorcar which was to take him to where the *Thelma* was waiting to pick him up. De Montclair and I remained behind to go through a large collection of papers, some of them of a highly incriminating order, which we discovered in a valise.

The cross of the Legion of Honor which figures in my individual collection of military ironmongery is my souvenir of that evening's entertainment.

My Arctic Outpost

The remarkable true record of America's most northerly pioneer. . . . He has told you of his first adventurous winter in the Arctic. Here he describes the great spring hunt for the bow-head whale.

By CHARLES D. BROWER

THAT night before the whale-hunt the old devil-drivers were to have a session. But before going I asked At-tung-ow-rah if I could be present. At first he did not think the other doctors would like to have me, but when I asked them, they seemed to feel as though it was an honor. They informed me that in the evening three of them would go in the Chief's house and do their stunt, that no one else would be allowed to be inside except myself, and I was not to talk or make any sound, as the devil, or *Toond-rah*, as they said, would not like it.

When we went in the house, all the openings were stopped; the gut window was covered with a deer-skin, and all the stone lamps were out except just a tiny flame in one. The three devil-doctors were stripped to the waist and sat around on the floor, each with his native drum. I was told to get up on the platform, and to watch; and if I saw the devil, not to be afraid, as they were all powerful doctors and I would receive no injury. The three of them started singing some of their medicine songs, slowly at first; then gradually sang faster and faster, and at the last were shouting and making all kinds of outlandish noises, until they finally worked themselves into a sort of trance. They rolled around the floor, never letting go of their drums, but kept on beating them all in unison and keeping good time together. The last performance was to drop their drums and lie in different positions on the floor, as though they were dead; then one would prophesy something would happen, and then another would take his turn, until all three had several tries at it.

One of the things that they prophesied was that the *omalik*, the headman, would get three whales that spring. This was done by my old friend Unocoluto; another said the Toondrah had told him there would be a good whaling season, and everyone would have plenty to eat the next winter. When it came to At-tung-ow-

rah's turn, one of the things he said was that the devil told him that all my clothes were to be taken from me, and that I was to have a new lot. So my sealskin pants, squirrel-skin shirt and all my boots were pronounced taboo, as he said the whales would not come near the ice if I wore them. . . .

It was warm in the igloo. I was wearing nothing but light clothing, and all my skin clothes had been left in the hall where I was to sleep. All that the Chief had said that I could not use on the ice disappeared that night. I never saw any of them again. In the morning the Chief's head wife gave me a whole new outfit of deerskin clothing, made better than any that I had owned before.

If I said that I was not scared, I would be lying; for a while I thought the whole lot had gone crazy. And though I have seen a lot of their devil-driving since then,

I had never seen anything as weird as what happened that night. After all was over, the women came back in the house. All lamps were filled with oil and lighted. This is the women's job. They were experts and could light and trim their stone lamps so there was positively no smoke. When the lamps were all lighted, At-tung-ow-rah and the other medicine men sat around for several hours, eating and telling me of the many different things that were *Ag-a-leg-a-rook*—meaning things that I could not do on the ice, things that were forbidden by their doctors. Among them were that I could not have any white man's food on the ice, that I would not be allowed to take any sleeping-gear, not even to take a change of socks. No tents were allowed, and the only shelter we could have was a snow wall to use as a windbreak.

All this seemed rather strenuous, but I wanted to see the Eskimos whaling, and so I would not give up, and in the morning was ready to start with the rest. As I dressed in my new clothes, I looked more like an Eskimo than I ever ex-



Photo by A. M. Bailey

CHARLES D. BROWER, the Grand Old Man of the North.

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pected to. The Eskimo said that I was no more a *Cablu-na*, their name for white man, but from then I was an Inuit. Getting ready did not take long. The oomiak was covered and all ready to lash on the sled used for hauling it on the ice. These sleds were a special kind: the runners were made of solid pieces of driftwood, eight inches deep; the cross-pieces were twenty-five inches long, and the runners were eighteen or nineteen inches apart. The cross-pieces were lashed on with seal-hide thongs through holes in the runners, which had ivory shoeing, made from walrus ivory cut in strips two inches wide, and some pieces were as long as two feet. The ivory is the best shoeing that can be used on salt-water ice, as it slips along easily. These sleds (*com-mo-tin*, the Eskimos call them,) are never left behind when out whaling, as there is no telling where the whaling may be; often it is necessary to move quickly. The ice is usually rough, and when the pack comes in with a bang, as it frequently does, the boats are hard to haul back.

Our boat-crew consisted of eight men, including myself. Taking the boat from the rack where it had been all winter, it was lashed on the sled; then the crew lined up on both sides of it with harnesses over their shoulders, and hauled it out over the ice to the edge of the flaw, which in this case was four miles from the land. The omalik did no work, walking along behind with both arms inside his attiga. One of his wives walked along behind carrying a small bucket of water. At first I thought it was for drinking, but when I wanted a drink she would not give it to me, saying it was for the purpose of pouring water on the bow of our oomiak before launching it. Reaching the edge, the boat was made ready for launching. In the bow was a small ivory crotch made of two pieces and lashed firmly between the rails where they met. This was to rest the harpoon-shaft in.

All our whaling gear was prehistoric—dating back from the Stone Age. Nothing that we now use was at that time used by Eskimos. The harpoon was made of ivory, with a cutting edge of slate about ten inches long fitted in the end of the harpoon shaft. The shaft, about seven feet long, was made of driftwood. Our whale-line was a piece of walrus-hide thong cut around the skin, and was at the least fifteen fathoms in length. One end was fastened to the harpoon head, and led back along the shaft, being hauled tight and stoppered with a small lashing of sinew to the middle of the shaft, in such a way that when a strain came on the line, it was pulled clear, so that when a whale was struck, the head of the harpoon was all that was imbedded in the animal; the shaft, floating on the water, was picked up and was ready for use again.

At the other end of the line were the floats, made from the entire skin of a seal. These were filled with air, three

being attached to the line by their flippers. Enough line was left in the bow of the boat so that the harpooner could throw the harpoon. The rest was coiled around the float at the end of the line. The skins used in making these floats were prepared by cutting around the head of the animal, then skinning the rest of the body through this incision. Care was taken not to puncture the hide; as the skin was cut from the body, it was hauled back and finally turned inside out. The skin was then carefully cleaned of all blubber, and the bones of hind and front flippers

removed; an ivory plug with a round hole in it was then lashed in the skin, usually under one of the front flippers, and all the other holes in the skin were then carefully sewed up. The last thing done was to fit a small piece of wood into the opening at the head, around which the skin was lashed tightly. All this done, the float was then blown full of air and the wooden cork tightly jammed into the ivory plug. When a number of these were fastened to a whale, they were a considerable drag, bothering him so



Photo by Ewing Galloway.

Natives making whoopee at Point Barrow.

that at times he would hardly run for any distance.

The lance-heads were made of flint, as large as a man's hand, beautifully made, and sharp as a knife. A cut from one of them was the most painful thing I have ever had in the way of a cut. These lances were attached to a shaft, often as much as twelve feet long. They were never thrown. When used, the boat was always right on top of the whale. The man using them jabbed the lance where he thought it would do the most damage.

The knives used in cutting the whale, after it was killed, were flint chips set in a piece of bone; usually the bone was over a foot long. These flint cutters, an inch or more wide, were set in, and looked something like teeth in a saw. They were also chipped very sharp. The handle to this affair was eight to ten feet long. In cutting blubber from the whale, it was used as we use a saw. It was wonderful to see the way the natives could cut up a whale with these flint knives.

Another implement was the nixie, a piece of ivory or bone lashed to a pole to haul meat or whale-skin out of the water after it was cut up, as well as holding on to it while the cutting-up process was taking place. The only other gear in the boat were the paddles and the charms used during their whaling.

Reaching the "flaw," the boat was taken off the sled and placed on the edge of the ice; then the harpoon was set in its place, resting in the ivory crotch. The floats were all blown up, the line in place, and we were ready to go. The last thing done was to pour over the bow, the water At-tung-ow-rah's wife had carried, wetting all the stem of the oomiak. This was because the seals whose skins covered our oomiak were killed in salt water; every-



Photo by Ewing Galloway

An Eskimo family enjoying a dinner of crabs in their igloo on the ice of the Arctic Ocean.

thing living in the ocean, according to their superstitions, needed fresh water, and, if it was not given them after death, they would tell their kind, and no more seals or whales would ever be taken.

We were now ready to look for a good place along the ice where the whales were likely to come, and launching the boat, each one took the place he was assigned. The harpooner was the first man to get in. The others were seated, two on each thwart. I was told to seat myself way aft; being, as the Chief said, new at the whaling, he was afraid I would do something that would endanger the chance of their getting near a whale. I think he was still afraid that the devil would take advantage of my being in the crew to send them bad luck. As we were working along the ice, I got my first lesson in the use of a paddle. I was making too much noise by dipping my paddle too deep, so I had to learn to dip without making a sound and without leaving a ripple on the water. I think I did fairly well, as it was not long before no one bothered me about it.

After going south for two miles, the old fellow found a place that suited him in a small bight where there was a level stretch of ice extending several miles along the edge of the flaw, and quite well back. Whales coming along the flaw would run under this level ice and rise to spout in the bight.

The first thing after landing, we cleaned the ice off of the canoe and paddles before it had a chance to harden. The boat was placed on the edge of the ice, the bow overhanging about three feet. A small piece of ice was placed under the stern, raising the bottom of the boat so that it would not freeze fast; then all hands cut blocks of snow, which were built into a wall four feet high around the stern of the canoe, in a semicircle. This was a shelter from the wind, and all the protection we had while whaling. The canoe-sled was hauled in behind the wall, and here we sat and watched for whales. Some one was on watch all the time, and when a whale was sighted, whoever was on watch called the others. I wondered what we were going to eat, as the only food we took along with

us was a piece of *muctuc* and some frozen deer meat. This was all right for a while, but as a steady diet not so good. It was not as bad as expected, however, for every day some woman would come from the village and bring cooked meat of some kind on her back.

We had not been in our place very long when we began to see whales, but they were all offshore too far away for us to get at. The whales migrate north in the spring. If the wind and ice are favorable many come along the ice, and then the chances are that some one will get a whale without waiting very long. But if the ice is not right, then the boats go off from the flaw and try for one in the water; the Eskimos wait until one comes just in the right place, and then paddle quietly toward him. That is the time one has to know how to paddle quickly.

We waited two long, cold days without having anything come our way. At the end of the second day, while we were all awake, a whale came under the ice in our bight. It spouted a number of times. I was all excitement as the crew lined up along the sides of the boat, waiting for it to come close enough for our harpooner to strike. We were not to get that one, however, for just before it reached the canoe, it went down. I thought we would have to chase it, but the *omalik* said not, as that whale would not come up again for a long way, and he could not be sure where it would spout next time.

It was not more than an hour after the first whale had visited us when another came out from under the ice in exactly the same place. This was a larger one than the first had been. Immediately *Ca-pok-ti* got in the bow, and grabbed the harpoon. The others, as before, got along the sides of the boat, with *At-tung-ow-rah* at the stern. This time we were fortunate. The whale came along leisurely, spouting every little way, raising his head two feet out of the water and blowing a cloud of steam into the air. He did not seem to make a great deal of noise, and he looked like a mountain to me, for it was the first whale I had ever been close to. When it was just in front of the *oomiak*, the old man said something to the crew; and as the Chief spoke, they just picked the boat up and practically threw it at the whale, harpooner and all. He was holding the harpoon with both hands and did not attempt to throw it. The weight of the boat behind

him made the old stone-and-ivory harpoon-head sink into that whale over a foot.

The whale had not been far from the edge of the ice, and so not more than half of the boat was in the water when it struck the old monster; we all pulled the canoe back as the whale gave a tremendous kick and dived with flukes towering in the air, taking our line and floats into the depths. We were no time in getting into the boat to chase after our whale; but before we left the ice, At-tung-ow-rah started to sing his whale-song. He told me afterward that it was a very powerful charm and had been handed down to him by his father, and was never known to fail. Hav-i-tux-i-ruk is the name of these songs. Every man running a whaling "chance" had one, and each was different. As soon as the song was finished, we picked up the harpoon-shaft, which had floated clear, and started offshore. All the other boats near had heard the song, and were on the watch.

Our whale did not run very far, not more than a mile, before coming up to spout. He stayed out in clear water for a while. The floats seemed to bother him. Of course he was not hurt badly, and could easily have escaped had he traveled in a straight line, but he just ran around in circles, "gallied," as whale-men call it. Before long there were other boats around him, and first one, then another, jabbed their harpoons into him. It did not seem to make any difference in the rate of his speed for a while. It may have been an hour we had been chasing him, when he finally made up his mind to run under the flaw ice for a change, and he took all the floats down along with him as though they were nothing. He was gone so long that I thought he was never coming out again, but the Eskimos knew better; and when he did come out, he seemed tired. Hardly had he appeared when our boat, which happened to be the nearest him, went alongside, and we harpooned him again, making twenty-one floats that were fast to the critter. This whale did not fight any; he just seemed to want to get away, for he did not even kick this time, but went down and under the ice again. This was what the Eskimos wanted. He had no chance to spout, and tired himself out dragging those floats around under the ice. Twice more this whale came out, each time seeming more tired, always going back, after some boat had fastened more drags on him.

The last time he came out, he was so tired that he never left the top of the water, just swam around and around in circles. This was what we had been waiting for, and now our boat had to kill him. We had, as one of our crew, an elderly man who was an expert with the lance. He now went to the bow of the oomiak; all hands were paddling, At-tung-ow-rah steering. We went right up to the whale, and it surely was exciting. First Tat-pan-na tried lancing him in the small or near the flukes, trying to hamstring him. This he succeeded only partially in doing, though enough to

keep the whale from going down. Then the boat went right up on the whale's back, and Tat-pan-na showed us what he could do. I never thought that a stone lance could do the cutting that I saw that evening—first in one place, then in another, he lanced that poor fellow; but he was hard to kill. At last the boat was right across the neck of the whale, and our expert lanced him several times there, finally cutting the large artery, which is like the jugular vein in a man; then the blood spurted out like water from a fountain. It was not long before the whale bled to death.

Just before he died, we had to move away from him, as he went in what is called his death-flurry, thrashing around with both fins and flukes. If a boat had been near, they surely would have been stove in, and no doubt some one injured. As soon as the whale was dead, his fins were lashed together across his belly so he would tow easier; then a line was made fast to his nib end (the end of his head), and all the boats started towing him to the flaw ice, not very far away. At no time were we more than two miles from the edge; and when we finally killed him, we had been only a quarter of a mile off. As soon as we started towing, the harpooner went aft and took At-tung-ow-rah's place in the stern; the Chief sat in the middle of the oomiak with the dried skin of a raven hung over his back, doing nothing. This skin he never took off until after the whale had been entirely cut up and we were ready to go home for a rest and dry clothes.

When we went alongside the flaw, the boats were all hauled out of the water on the ice; then a messenger went ashore, carrying a small piece of the whale's skin attached to a paddle, to inform the women and have one of At-tung-ow-rah's wives bring out fresh water to give the whale a drink.

As soon as the boats were all in position on the ice, everyone that could get around started cutting a slip on the edge so we could haul the carcass partially out of the water, making it easier to work around. The slip was as wide as the widest part of the whale, and slanted down under water at least three feet. The cutting was all done with their ivory ice-picks on the end of poles eight to ten feet long; "*togues*," is the Eskimo name for the instru-



Picture writing on a bow, telling of the owner's hunting experiences.

ment. The pick part was made of walrus-tusks. The part of the tusk in the jaw was used as the cutting point, being harder than the other end. It was wonderful the way the men would break ice with them.

In less than two hours the slip was finished, and by that time the women had arrived with their dogs and sleds. All the women and kids were there. Such a mix-up! Dogs and sleds everywhere, women yelling, dogs fighting, everyone excited. It seemed as if bedlam had broken loose. It was not long, however, before the dogs were tied up back from the edge, and work was started on the whale. Water was poured on the spout-hole of the animal the first thing; then the whale was taken tail first, and the flukes hauled up as far on the ice as possible. Walrus lines were made fast around the small; all hands then pulled, women and all. When they had pulled out as much as possible, the flukes were cut off and dragged back on the ice out of the way; then the cutting started for fair. Everyone that could get a chance to work was sawing away at the whale. Pieces of "blackskin" with blubber attached two feet square were cut from the body, care taken not to cut the under part, that being left intact and used as a sled to haul or slide the carcass farther up from time to time.

When at least half of the carcass had been cut in, the whale was turned end for end, and the whalebone taken out.

This was a long hard job. First the lips were cut off, exposing the bone, and the whalebone taken out a few slabs at a time. Here their flint knives were not so efficient. The skin and blubber around the head is tough and the head was heavy, sinking deeply in the water. I did not see how they were going to get at it; but they had their own way of doing things, and all I had to do was watch.

As soon as the lips were off, two slits were cut through the skin on the back of the head; then two toggles were made in the ice, back ten feet or so from the edge. Two pieces of ice four feet high were then placed near the flaw. Walrus line was rove through the slits in the head, over the blocks of ice, and through the toggles in the ice, back and forth several times. A piece of driftwood was used as a heaver, and both lines were twisted at once. Anyone who knows what a Spanish windlass is will understand what a purchase this rig will give. With it the whale's head was raised clear of the water, and although it took some time, the bone was eventually all taken out. First on one side; then the whale was lowered, turned end for end, rolled over and the same thing done all over again.

As soon as the head was off, two boats were put into the water, one on each side of the whale. They cut all the blubber and meat they could, lightening the front of the carcass; they took out all the intestines, heart, liver and lungs, also cutting away the fins, and in fact every particle that could be reached under water or out. When this had been done, the whale was again taken to the slip and hauled up as far as they

could get it. Now the meat was cut away from the backbone, nothing being left except the strip underneath and the backbone. As the whale was stripped, it was getting lighter all the time; but when it got too heavy to haul without purchase, their ingenuity was again in evidence.

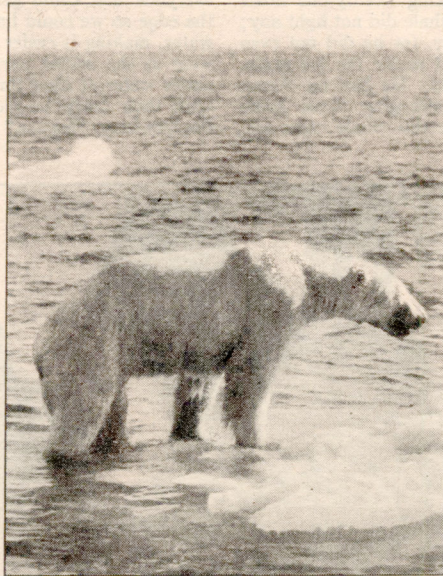
More toggles were cut in the ice, a strap made fast to the backbone, and a sort of a tackle rigged; the line was rove through the toggle in the ice, as before. A piece of wood was made fast to the strap on the backbone, and around this the line was rove; several of these together made quite a purchase. As the lines were wet, they slipped nicely; and the body, what was left of it, was gradually pulled onto the ice, the ribs disarticulated, the shoulder-blades saved and the jawbones also, as they wanted them for sled-runners. The last was the backbone, and that was left for the old women to disjoint with their big *oo-lu-ras* or women's knives.

Nothing was lost. Every scrap of meat was cut from the bones, all done by the women, who had skin sacks that they filled. It was a wonder that they did not cut each other, as there often were two or three trying to get the same piece at once. As the whale was cut, those that were not able to get around with knives had nixies; and as fast as the meat and blubber was cut away from the whale, they hooked onto the pieces, dragging them back some distance on the ice, where they were all put in one place. The whalebone was also put in a pile by itself. As soon as we were finished cutting, the meat and blubber was divided equally between each boat's crew; the only boat that received a larger share was ours, and we had the flukes and small, extra. Each boat then divided their share equally among the crew, so everyone that had worked on the whale got something. The old women seemed to have the privilege of keeping all they could steal or cut from the whale. No one seemed to bother them, though they were always underfoot, and in fact were making themselves a nuisance.

After the meat had been disposed of, the whalebone was divided. Our boat took a fourth, and the rest was divided share and share alike among the rest of the oomiaks. Besides our quarter, our boat got all the short bone from the nib end of the whale. While we were working the whale, the old chief came to me and said as he was a great devil-driver, that he thought it would be all right if I sent in to the village and had my oil-stove and some tea and hardbread sent out; that we had already killed a whale, and if we lit the stove and made tea back some distance in the rough ice, the whales would not know it. This was all right with me, so he sent one of his wives in for what we wanted. They were not gone long, and that tea

surely tasted fine. However, the old fraud would let none of the others have any, making them believe that he alone had enough influence with the evil spirit to do these things that were *pelias* or forbidden.

When the whale was entirely cut up, the women started sledding the meat and blubber ashore. This was their



work, and it was a hard job; some had a number of dogs, and others had only two or three. Those with only a few had to harness themselves alongside their sleds and help pull their loads. After getting it all ashore, it was their duty to stow all the meat in their icehouses. Each family had one of these, some as deep as fifteen feet, dug in the frozen ground. Some that I saw were two stories deep, a floor having been built halfway down, fastened to corner posts. The blubber with the black-skin attached was lowered to the bottom, the pieces always laid in pairs, with the blubber or blackskin together to keep them from freezing so hard that they could not be separated when wanted later for food. The meat was put in, each piece separate, and allowed to freeze hard; then it was all put in one pile. It took only a short time to freeze so hard that it had to be cut up with their stone adzes and pried apart with a bone instrument made for that purpose. This was made from a short piece of a whale's rib.

When the women started hauling, our boat's-crew cleaned up our oomiak, and then cut two pieces of ice, each four feet one way by two the other. These we stood on end, and on top of them we placed our boat so the dogs could not get at it. We were going ashore to dry our clothes and clean up, but before going we had a lot to do. First we had to clean the ice from the canoe; then the ice had all to be removed from the paddles; these had all to be placed in a line across the stern of the boat. Then an eagle-skin charm was tied to a small stick and stuck up in the canoe. We took a small slab of whalebone from each side of the head near the rib end, and these we put one on each side of the boat under the lashings. They were left there all the rest of the whaling season. The Eskimos said that the whales would not come near the boat if it was omitted.

All this being done, we still had the most important thing to do: that was to assemble the whale's end-pieces in the form of a whale. The corners of his flukes were first cut off and laid together forming the tail; then a piece of blackskin with the blubber on was laid on the ice next to the tail. This represented the body. A small piece of each fin was next laid alongside the body-piece; then the whale's spout-hole was put in front of the body, and in front of all this was a small piece of the whale's nib end. When all was assembled, it was no mean representation of a whale lying on the ice. This was left there all the time the women were hauling the meat ashore.

All this finished, our crew went to the village and had a sleep; Ce-low-ya, who was At-tung-ow-rah's head wife, took care of our footgear, so that in the morning we were all ready to go on the ice again. . . .

Next day, after we had something to eat, we again went out to the boat. Everything was just as we left it the day before, except that most of the meat and black-skin was gone; so we pulled the effigy of our whale apart, and the women took that away. This time we kept some of the fresh whale-meat and *mactuc* for food in the canoe. Getting the boat into the water, we went to our old camping-place, and hauled up. Here we stayed several days. We ourselves did not have a chance at a whale, but the

boats to the north of us caught three. These were so far from us that we did not ring in on them, and it was only when one of the chief's wives came to the boat with some cooked meat that we heard of the killing.

At once At-tung-ow-rah was jealous of their luck, and we had to get everything in the boat quickly, and started up the flaw looking for another place to haul out. He told me he thought that maybe the devil was angry with him for letting me have the tea on the ice. At any rate, we had not been in our new place more than four hours before we had another whale come right close to the canoe. He finished his spouting and went down just out of our reach.

The following day there was quite a run of whales offshore, and as we did not see any near the ice, the old chief bundled us all in the boat, and away we went after them. That day we chased whales until I thought my arms would fall off. We paddled first one way and then another, but at last got close enough so that Capoon, who was in the head of the canoe, got a chance to harpoon one. This he did just by

standing up in the bow as we paddled right up on the whale's back; he gave a great thrust downward, and jabbed his old stone harpoon right into him, so that the whole thing was out of sight.

This whale was a good large one; and when he kicked, our boat was full of water. Those old Eskimos were great whalemen and did not seem to know what fear was; it was wonderful, the way they could handle their canoes, using their steering paddles. At-tung-ow-rah in the stern gave his orders, and every man in the crew seemed to work as one. No matter how hard we paddled, there was not a ripple on the water, and not a sound that I could hear. When the whale was down, all hands stopped, and waited for it to come up and spout. I afterward learned that when the whale was on top of the water, he could not hear nearly as well as when he was down.

As soon as we had stuck this one, and the death-song had been sung, we had to wait about half an hour to see where the whale would come up. When it sounded, it had been headed north. Sometimes a whale will continue on the same course after being struck as it was before; at others it will turn back; or again it may not go anywhere, just sound and lie on the bottom. Our whale had kept on the way he had been going, but had only gone a short distance. When it had come up, there were three other boats close to it. For some reason it did not run very far, and seemed as though it was so galled that it could go nowhere.

The next boat that got close to it must have cut some of the tendons attached to its flukes, for as soon as it had been lanced by the closest canoe, it never moved ahead, and there did not seem to be any fight in it.

We did not get close to this one until the three other boats had all had a chance to lance it; and when we did arrive on the scene, it did not take long to finish it off. Then we had all the towing and cutting over again, the same as we had on the first one, the only difference being that since this was a larger whale, it took some time longer to finish the work. When all was over we again



went ashore to have all our clothing attended to. This time, however, we stayed three days. . . .

The first night ashore, a woman died in the village. As soon as she was dead, the body was placed on a sled and taken about two miles up the sandspit. At-tung-ow-rah was all worked up over the death of this woman, and he told me that it was a bad thing to have her die just at that time. However, as he was a great *an-net-kok*, he thought he might be able to do something, if he went into a trance and heard what the devil had to say.

Every superstition that these people had seemed to me to have some bearing on their whaling. During whaling no one was allowed to hammer or pound. If I forgot myself and did hammer on anything, some one would be sure to stop me. The women were out in the boats the same as the men, doing the same work as the men, and they seemed just as efficient.

At the end of three days all our crew went back to our boat; the season was almost over, and many of the canoes would soon be coming ashore for good. The snow was melting fast, and water all over the sea ice made bad traveling. At-tung-ow-rah said we would only stay out a few days more—that he expected to get another whale, as the devil had promised that he should get three this spring, at the time the four devil-drivers had their seance in the house.

While we had been ashore, three more whales had been taken. Unocoluto had killed two bears also. These were the only bears taken while we were out that spring. I thought I would try some of the meat. It was tough and rank. I have heard Arctic explorers tell how good bear-meat is, but for me they can have all they want. I don't like it, and never eat it if there is any other meat to be had. The only bear-meat that is really good is a three- or four-months'-old cub, and that is fine.

When we made our last trip out, we were quite close to Unocoluto's boat. After we had made our camp and were all ready for a whale to come along, I walked over to his place. Some of the bear-meat was laying around, and with it was the liver. It looked all right to me, so I wanted some to take with me when we went ashore the next time, but the Eskimos would not let me have it. They told me that if I ate any of it, I would get sick, that no one ever did eat bear-liver. I afterward heard from the captains of the whalers that it was so. Many times, after eating bear-liver, persons were sick, and parts of their bodies would swell, but I never heard of any one dying. . . .

It was the 20th day of May. The ice was melting fast, all the snow was gone, and pools of water were standing all over the ice. There was no place where it was possible to lie down, as it had been when we first went out. Every time the wind fell light, the king eider ducks came along in millions, and when the wind was in the south, everywhere you looked there was nothing but ducks, all flying north to their breeding-grounds. No one attempted to shoot them, as we wanted whales, and all were afraid to take any chances of scaring a whale if it happened to be coming along.

I think it was the fourth day out this time when we got our last whale. All hands were sitting in the boat to keep our feet as dry as possible. I think most of us were



asleep in the sun, when this whale came out from under the ice and spouted. It was only a short distance from us, and he cruised right along the ice, almost scratching himself. We were out of the canoe in a hurry, and all hands lined up alongside, waiting for him to come close enough for the harpooner to get a chance at him.

It was only a small whale, but at that time it looked large enough to me. I was all excited, but the others took it as a matter of course, and when the whale was in front of the boat, all hands just lifted the stern of that boat and threw it at the whale. As the harpoon went into the animal, it kicked and almost filled the canoe with water. The man behind the harpooner threw over the sealskin floats, and the whale was gone like a flash, taking the three floats down as if they were nothing.

As soon as we could, all hands piled in the boat and paddled a short distance from the ice. Here we stopped while At-tung-ow-rah sang his death-song. Then away we went looking for our whale. It had only gone in under the smooth ice where we had been lying. In a few minutes it came out right where it had gone under. When the whale had come to the surface, it spouted a number of times, near the flaw. We paddled toward it, but the whale seemed to know it, for down he went, but not for long. This time when he came to the surface to spout he stood with head down, and his flukes thrashing every which way. No one could get close to him. At least no one seemed inclined to, as there was a good chance of getting the boats stove if anyone got in the way of that tail. All we could do was lie off some distance and hope he would get tired of thrashing around, and then maybe straighten out on top of the water. After churning around for a time, he did come up and spout, but as soon as a boat started to come near him, down would go his head, and the same performance would start all over again.

I thought the Eskimos would have to give up on this one; they knew their business, however. The whale had been struck well aft, and the harpoon must have cut some tendon, for although the whale could kick, it did not seem able to sound, and if it did manage to get under water, it was only for a few minutes, and then he did not go very far. We waited for two hours, and when he did stay still for a few minutes, our boat made a quick dash at him. The old man with the stone lance got just one cut, and that was done near the small. He was trying to hamstring the whale, and must have hurt it, the way it swung its powerful flukes, just missing us by a few feet. The wind from the whale's tail was strong enough almost to knock me out of the boat. Fortunately for us, the whale did not kick sidewise, or we would all have gone overboard. The cut from the lance just made him come to life some more, and we had a long wait before anyone got another chance at him.

At last, for some reason or other, the whale quieted down, and two of the canoes went for him. This time when they lanced him he was hurt badly, for after a few tantrums, he quit. Then our canoe went up to him and we finished him, lancing him in the neck, and as in the first whale, cutting his large vein, and he quickly bled to death. He had put up a game fight, and had kept us guessing the most of the day.

As soon as he was dead, we towed him to the ice, and

soon had him cut up. As soon as the work was over, At-tung-ow-rah said we were finished for the season and would now go ashore for good, taking the canoe with us. I was not sorry; I had enough whaling for that season. I wanted a chance to clean myself and get a wash, if that was possible, and also a chance to get some of my own food. Living on whale-meat and seal may be all right if you have to, but it is better if you can change it once in a while. We were the first oomiak to quit. We put the canoe on a sled, the same as coming out and hauled it all the way in without dogs. When we reached shore, the beach was entirely free from snow. We put the canoe on two sleds turned on edge, high enough to keep the dogs from getting at the hide and lashings, and At-tung-ow-rah put his eagle-skin in the stern and left the small pieces of whalebone in the bow. These could not be taken out of the oomiak until after the dance that was always held to celebrate a successful whaling season.

As soon as the boat was all fixed, our crew went home. They were finished with At-tung-ow-rah for the season. Next spring they might work for him again, or they might work for some one else. If there was any ambitious young man in the crew, he would sometimes want to run a whaling chance himself. There was honor and prestige in being a successful whaleman, even if they only lasted one season.

I got cleaned up, managing to make some hot water, and had a bath in one of the igloos. These were all deserted now, everybody living in tents scattered over the sandpits. No other boats had come in, and for two days I roamed about the village, walking all over the spit to have a look at the graveyard. It looked altogether different now to what it did in winter, and I could see where many bodies had never been placed on the racks. The ground was covered with bones. Skulls were lying everywhere; most of the other bones had been dragged away by dogs or other animals. Wherever there was a dry knoll, it was occupied by a ground squirrel. I shot several with my shotgun and carried them to the village. But the women would not cook them for me, saying that these squirrels were not good to eat, as they fed on the dead bodies in the graveyard. I had lost my taste for squirrels just about then, so I did not care.

All our crew except At-tung-ow-rah went back on the ice in other boats. When I asked him about it, he told me that as he was a big omalik, and had enough whale-meat and blubber for the next winter, he did not have to go, especially as he stood in well with the devil, who was good to him, and had already given him three whales. He also had four men and boys hunting for him, and they always got enough, so he did not have to worry. I did not like staying around by myself, so took my rifle and started for the ice. The pack was in and the whaling from the ice was over for the season.

The small seals, however, had started to run north, and they came in uncounted thousands, day after day, coming up through the ice in every crack or hole where they could get their heads up to breathe. Every one who had a rifle and cartridges was shooting, and everyone had piles of seals, and would have had more if many had not sunk. At this time of year more than half the seals shot will sink immediately. The

Eskimos say it is because they are getting poor, not having as much blubber on them as during the winter.

I am inclined to think the same as the Eskimos, for all summer similar conditions obtain in every part of the Arctic Ocean.

There are several Eskimo men at Tigera who did not own rifles, and they were getting seals with their spears. I went from one place to another watching them. They were experts with the *oo-nak*, as they called their spears. Those who had no guns would go off by themselves, and after finding a place to their liking, would build a wall of ice about two feet high close to the water's edge. This was used as a blind, and at the same time to rest their spears and coiled line on. When a seal came close, the man would throw his spear, and he very seldom missed his game. It was not considered a good time to throw the spear when the seal was swimming on top of the water. Sometimes, as a seal came up or just before going down, it would raise its head and part of its body clear out of the water. While doing this, the seal's body was perpendicular, and it was at this time that the Eskimo would hurl his harpoon, aiming to strike the seal's body just under the water, where the weapon would have a good chance to hold.

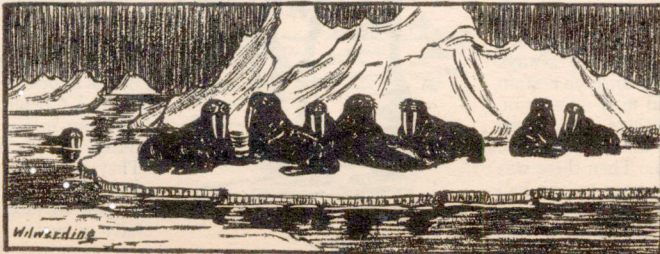
The end of the line attached to the harpoon-head was sometimes made fast to the ice, but more often the man wrapped it around his waist, there being no danger of going overboard, unless he speared a bearded seal, of which there were not many at this time, as they migrate later. After spearing his seal, it was hauled to the edge of the ice and killed with his ice-pick, or by breaking its neck by bending the head forward and dislocating the neck joint; care had to be taken to keep from being bitten. Their teeth are extremely sharp, each being three pointed, and a person can get a nasty bite from them.

The sealing kept up for several days. While the men were killing seal, the women were skinning many of them, using some to make their oil bags. These are skinned through the head, and great care is taken not to cut the skin. Others are looked over carefully for water-boot skins; those with no scratches on them, and not too heavy, light brown in color, were considered the best. Some of the small seals with silky hair are also picked out for pants, for they are excellent for summer wear. The women also had the job of carting the seals ashore on their sleds, and later the meat was dried and carefully packed in pokes, with oil for winter use. Also many seals were put away whole in their icehouses or buried in the sand on the beach to sour; these were considered a delicacy, but the stench was too much for me, and when they dug them up, I always left.

Soon the ice was so rotten on the end of the point and north side that everyone went ashore, hauling their boats with them. These oomiaks were all taken to the beach, the same as ours had been taken, and put up on sleds. Everyone who had caught a whale had their eagle- or

raven-skins hanging in their boats.

Twelve whales had been taken that spring; but no one had taken more than one except our crew; so At-tung-ow-rah was feeling fine and strutted around the village, all his beads strung across his chest and arms



carried inside his attiga. Now was the celebration. Everyone that had caught a whale had to give a dance at the *nel-u-ka-tak*. This took place two days after all had come ashore. The young folks were all excited and expected a high time, this being the great event in their year. A fine smooth place was chosen; then the split skin of a large walrus was dug up somewhere; a lace-line threaded all around the edge was of walrus hide. At each corner there was a small becket, and crosswise on the bottom of the skin were two long lines of walrus hide crossing each other in the middle of the skin and lashed at the corners. These led away from the corners of the skin for seventy-five feet, and were stretched tight and fastened to logs buried in the sand. Twenty-five feet from the corners of the skin were two pieces of driftwood lashed together, forming a crotch five feet from the ground, and in these were laid the long ropes, raising the skin between four and five feet from the sand. When all was ready, three old oomiaks were put on edge for a windbreak. Old canoe covers were put on the sand behind the canoes for the band to sit upon—the orchestra consisting of all the real old men in the village, who sang very slow songs and beat three drums all through the dance.

As each man who had caught a whale gave his dance, the small and flukes of his victim were brought out to the dancing place and cut up. Everyone feasted, and some of the older ones carried home with them all they could grab. There was other food also, but it was all from the whale the men had caught. His family had whale-meat in pokes, fermented, and entrails of the whale cooked. The heart also was eaten, and all were considered great delicacies.

The dance itself was what the younger ones were waiting for. The morning it started, every one in Tigera was there. The young men and women gathered around the skin, and everyone that could grabbed hold of the lace-line with at least one hand. Then, when the song started, some girl or boy would climb in the skin, and the rest would toss them up until they were unable to stand upright. As long as they could land on their feet and stand, they were tossed up in the air.

Some of the young girls were the best, shooting upward twenty feet or more. If a boy got in the skin and lost his balance, it was great fun for the crowd. It was almost impossible for one to regain his upright position. Once he was down, he was tossed until he was either thrown out of the hide or the crowd grew tired of him. Some of the young fellows looked comical as they came down head-first and all sprawled out. Certainly they had a good time, and they kept it up for three days and nights. Of course, there was no darkness, and as it was fine weather, they just slept where they were on the sandspit, when they were tired.

As each Eskimo boat-header that had caught a whale gave his dance, he got in the skin and was tossed up a few times. While in the skin, he always made some small present to some certain person, generally an old man or woman, but not always, for others just threw their presents into the air as they were being tossed in the skin. Then there was a general scramble. At-tung-ow-rah had his dance the second day. Being an omalik, he was supposed to give considerably more than the others. All the

old women were waiting for him, as he had let it be known he was going to give away a wolverine skin, and a good one at that. When he got in the walrus skin, he was handled rather carefully. He had the wolverine skin tucked away under his attiga, away out of sight. After being thrown up in the air a few times, he pulled out his present and sent it flying up in the air among the crowd. Such a time! All the women had their *oo-lu-ras* with them. The wolverine never touched the sand. Some one caught it, and immediately a dozen had hold of it, and with their knives cut it to pieces. Before they were through, no one had a piece larger than his hand. Strange to say, no one was cut, and all seemed satisfied.

On his second whale dance, the old chief did the same stunt, but this time he had some Russian tobacco under his attiga. This was indeed a prize, for all the old folks, and they were the only ones to get it, as now At-tung-ow-rah called out the names of those he wanted to receive each piece. As evening approached on the third day, the *nel-u-ka-tak* skin was taken down, all the ropes were removed and it was laid flat on the sand in front of the drums.

That night there was another kind of dancing. The *ke-louns* changed hands to younger men, and now some women also banked in behind the drums, joining in the singing. Two or more men would dance at a time, and invariably they would be joined by some of the women. They would always dance two times before leaving the walrus skin. The men would go through all kinds of motions with their hands and arms, shaking their heads and stamping their feet, legs mostly held stiff at the knees. They kept wonderful time to the rhythm of the song and drum. As it was the first time I had seen dancing of this kind, it was very interesting to me.

Ky-ooc-too, who had been to Point Barrow with me, had been whaling at Tigera, and was now going back to We-vok in a few days, just as soon as the ice had melted enough on the north side of the Point, so he could get a boat along the beach. I arranged to go along, as I wanted to get to the station for some things I needed, and he promised to tell me in a few days when he would be ready to leave.

The snow was all gone from the sandpit, and everything was getting green. Some small flowers were just coming to bloom. It was now the tenth of June, the sun was continually above the horizon, and all the lakes and ponds were free of ice. Every morning I would take my shotgun and walk up past the graveyard on the north side of the sandpit, looking to see if there was a chance for us to get away. The sea ice was melting, but slowly, and that only along the shore.

One day on my way back to the village two young women came to meet me. I had shot a few stellar eiders, and they insisted on carrying them. When almost to the tents, they asked me if I did not want to go away with them up in the mountains. They had things all planned to suit themselves. They were to carry on their backs all tent and camp equipment, with a dog or two to help pack, and we were to have a wonderful time. This was a sudden proposal and I had a hard job

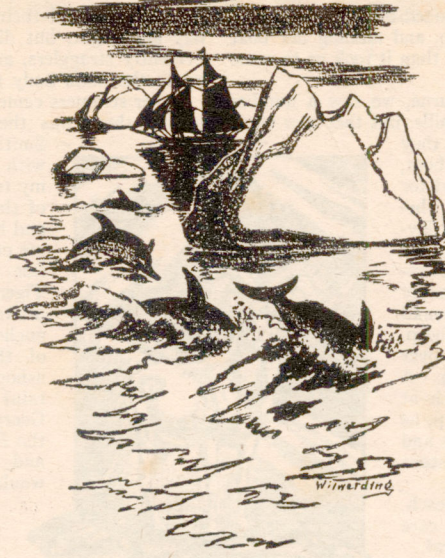


getting them to understand that such a thing was impossible for me. They finally gave up, but asked me not to tell any of the Eskimos what they had wanted to do. Both of them were of marriagable age and much sought after by the men in Tigera, but for some reason they did not want to be tied down to any one.

Early in the month of June, I went hunting with Ky-ooc-too and another Eskimo to see if I could get a bearded seal. They were becoming fairly numerous, and many were coming out on the ice, sleeping and sunning themselves. When about six miles from the village, on the south side of the Point, we saw three polar bears coming from the direction of Cape Thompson. One was quite well inshore, and the two smaller ones were a mile further out. Ky-ooc-too and I were at a hole some distance away from the third in our party, and we thought we could easily get the two bears coming close to us. In hunting for seals on the ice, it is customary to wear a white attiga made of drilling. This is almost the color of the sea ice in spring. It was not hard to hide ourselves, as there was some rough ice near us, and the wind was northeast, so there was no fear of the bears getting our scent.

At any rate, they came near, not over fifty feet away, before we started to shoot, and at the first volley we each killed our bear. Mine was a year-old cub. Ky-ooc-too shot the mother. The third and larger bear did not seem to hear, or at least if he did, did not mind the shots, but kept on between us and the land. He came close to the other Eskimo, who was lying still near the hole he had been watching. He evidently did not want to shoot, but the bear came almost on top of him; then he shot, but only wounded the animal. The bear reared up, and we saw he was a monster. Wheeling toward the native, the great brute charged as the fellow shot again. But the Eskimo only had an old-fashioned smooth-bore muzzle-loading double-barreled gun, and only one side was loaded with a bullet, the other side being loaded with shot in case he saw ducks. As the bear came closer, he shot the second barrel with shot into the bear's head; trying to blind it, we supposed. Apparently it had no effect except to make him more angry. The man then started to run, but was soon overtaken. It looked to us as though the bear just reared up on his hind legs and with one paw struck the man on the head, and the poor Eskimo crumbled as though poleaxed. His skull was crushed, and he was killed instantly. As he fell, the bear bit him in the left side under the arm and crushed some of his ribs. Nannuk did not maul the body any more, but started offshore toward where Ky-ooc-too and I were, coming quite close to us. We shot at it several times and finally killed it. After skinning the three bears, we started back for Tigera, dragging the two skins from the first bears killed. The other we left behind, as Ky-ooc-too said the man had shot it first, and it belonged to his family.

When we arrived at the village and told what had happened, the fellow's wife and some others took a sled and carried the body to the graveyard, and brought the skin



home. The meat they would not use. Ky-ooc-too's wife and daughter took their sled and brought in the meat of our two bears, which was eaten by all the villagers. The Eskimos said that men were seldom killed by polar bears.

About the twelfth of June, Ky-ooc-too said we could start in the evening. He and his family, as well as Unocoluto, were going to Cape Lisburne, and from there I could easily get to the station about twenty-four miles away. Starting from Tigera, we put the oomiak on a sled, and with a team of dogs made good time going along the smooth ice. Everything had been packed in the canoe, and it was piled high with gear of all kinds. We also had a small sled as a trailer, carrying whale-blubber and blackskin for summer use. When we reached the bight just north of Point Hope, where

the river empties through the lagoon into the ocean, we found water, so we launched the oomiak and paddled up along the coast, camping the first time a little more than halfway to the Cape, after traveling about twenty-five miles.

The second day, as we neared Cape Lisburne, the ice bothered us, and finally we hauled the oomiak up on the beach in the entrance to a small gully or break in the cliffs and left it there. Harnessing the dogs to one sled, we came along over the ice. At one place, eight or ten miles south of the Cape, there was a stream of water gushing from under the cliffs. This never freezes, even in the winter, and tastes of some kind of mineral. Cape Lisburne is high and very steep, and there are immense bird-rookeries in two or three places where murre and gulls nest in thousands. The ledges were white with birds, as we passed along, but they had not commenced to lay their eggs. It was like an immense shadow on the ice as the unnumbered thousands flew to and from the ledges. When I fired a shot from my rifle, it was a great sight to see them all leave at once, flying out over the ice, but quickly returning to the cliff. The noise of their wings and their harsh cry made it impossible to hear anything that was said. When the murre left the ledges, many of them fell on the ice and could not rise in the air, as they are not able to fly unless they can get a start by flapping along in the water.

The Eskimos from Tigera come here every summer and gather great quantities of murre eggs; men climb down lines from the top of the cliff and they fill sealskin pokes with them. These are lowered to the beach and other bags are sent up to be filled. It is impossible to climb up from the beach in most places, but there is one spot on Cape Thompson, south of Point Hope, where there are more rookeries, where this can be done. The birds are used as food, but are not very palatable to a white person. We killed a number of those that fell on the ice, and carried them with us to We-vok for our supper. After sleeping at this village, we started for the station with our sled and traveled the twenty-four miles in six hours.

George and Black were glad to see me, as were the Baby and his sister Toc-too. I stayed only one day, get-

ting a few things I needed, and started back with Ky-oo-too, camping at We-vok one sleep, and making our boat the next day in much shorter time than it took us to come up.

Just after rounding Cape Lisburne, we saw a number of mountain sheep on one of the hills, but they saw us at about the same time and away they went. We did not camp at the boat, but put it in the water and started for Tigera. Unocoluto had stayed behind at We-vok, so there was only Ky-oo-too and his family with me. As there was a light fair wind, we expected to sail back, but had hardly gone two miles, when rounding a small cape, we raised another lot of sheep. There were hundreds of them all over the side and top of the mountain. A small valley dropped to the beach at this place, and we decided to camp, as the sheep evidently had not seen us and the wind was not carrying our scent towards them.

Hauling the oomiak on the beach, we left the two women to take care of the dogs, so they would not howl or fight and disturb our game. It took us several hours to stalk the sheep, but Ky-oo-too knew the hills, and after a while we got to within a quarter-mile of them; it did not seem to me as if we could get a mite nearer. We decided to wait for a while and see what the animals would do; they might come closer to our cover, and then we could get a shot at them. We waited an hour or so without any action; then we heard the dogs fighting, and the sheep started up to some higher hills back of us.

Ky-oo-too said this was our only chance, so we started to shoot, and that made them run the faster. They could not see us, and seemed confused, some of them coming quite close. At any rate, we did kill three, and the one I shot was my first white sheep. After skinning our game, we cut up the meat and taking a small portion only, started for camp. The women had to take the dogs and pack all the rest to camp. It took several hours to do this, and while they were gone, Ky-oo-too and I boiled the small portion we had carried home, and feasted.

After we were all rested, we started for Tigera under sail and made the point in one day. When the Eskimos heard that we had sheep-meat everyone crowded around, and most of it was cooked then and there. We only kept a small portion of the best one for ourselves. Two days after we arrived at the point, Woolfe, George, the Baby and two other Eskimos got in with a whaleboat. The ice had moved away from the shore, giving them a clear lead along the beach. They had come the seventy-five miles without camping. Woolfe had some trade and wanted to buy whalebone. They camped near me, and I gave them most of what sheep-meat we had left. Woolfe stayed two days and carried back a boatload of bone. I had given him all of my share in the three whales I had helped catch, as my agreement with the company called for shares in everything I got while I was in Alaska.

The ice left the south side of Point Hope on June 27th, and whaling steamers made their appearance immediately six or seven miles offshore; two of them worked through the drift ice on the 28th, and that same day a number of whales came inside the ice quite close to the beach. The

ships lowered all their boats and chased whales all that day and night, but did not get any. The whales were evidently stragglers, and were going fast, trying to catch up to the main body that had gone through that spring.

Other steamers came in and anchored the next day, and among them was the *Belvedere*, with Captain George

Smith. He asked me if I cared to go with him as one of his crew; but on my telling him I was in the employment of the Pacific Steam Whaling Company and had to report at the station, he gave me passage to that place, and treated me fine while I was with him. We left Tigera on July 2nd, and three days later broke our way through the ice and anchored off the station, alongside some of the company's boats. After going ashore and meeting several of the captains of these boats, it was decided that George, Black and I should go aboard the *Baleana* with Captain Everett Smith and finish the season with him. We would have to sleep in the fore-castle and eat in the cabin, there being no room aft for us to sleep. I was not sorry to get away, as I thought I had seen enough of Alaska and wanted to go somewhere else for a change. Woolfe was to stay another year and hold the house in case the Company wanted to keep on with the coal.

Leaving in the *Baleana*, we followed the coast to Icy Cape. Here the ice was still on the Blossom shoals, and the Arctic pack was jammed hard and fast against it. We waited for a north-east wind to swing the pack offshore.

Finally, we got our northeast wind and rounded the shoals, working through the ice to Wainwright, where we were again held up. I again met the natives of this place, who seemed delighted to see me. Eskimos always meet old acquaintances like long-lost brothers. While here, the wind hauled to the southwest and blew a gale, but the ice-pack had gone so far north it did not come in. If it had, no doubt a large number of the whaling fleet would have been lost, as had happened a number of years before, when thirty-two sailing-ships were caught at one time between Wainwright and the Sea Horse Islands. Fortunately two of the fleet had stayed outside the ice, and they rescued the crews of the abandoned ships.

The fleet did not get by this time without loss, however, for our southwest gale got worse, and the heavy sea in the shallow water made bad holding-ground. All the ships had both anchors down and were steaming ahead. The steamers came out all right, but two of the crow-bills, as sailing-ships were called, came to grief. Both pounded over a bar which there extends along the coast, and were thrown high and dry on the beach. As soon as they were ashore, they were abandoned, and the crews were distributed among the other ships in the fleet.

When the gale was over, the wind hauled to the north-east and we were on our way; the Sea Horse Islands were clear and we made for Point Barrow. The ice pack was still in, south of Ut-ke-a-vie, so, as there was an open lead of water inside the ridge, the *Baleana* and two other steamers got inside and proceeded slowly along the coast, keeping the lead-line going all the time. Finally we tied up to the ice abreast of the old Government Station, where Captain Herendeen had wintered.



They had caught no whales at the station. Everyone was dissatisfied and wanted to leave, so most of the men were taken on board the steamers. Only Herendeen and two others remained to hold the house and to do some trading the coming winter. The crowd at the station were most dissatisfied, because the Eskimos at Ut-ke-avie had caught several whales, while they, with all their equipment, had nothing, although they had shot and killed one large whale, which they were unable to save.

The *Baleana* did not linger long at Cape Smythe, leaving in a few hours and going around Point Barrow inside the ridge where it is deep water close to the beach. Here we stayed a day, and then started east to see how far we could get. We kept in seven fathoms of water, with one man always swinging the lead, and two in the crow's-nest night and day. As we went east, the ice became heavier, and at Return Reef we had to stop. Seeing no whales, and no chance of getting farther to the east, the fleet decided to return to Point Barrow and then go west along the ice. Off Harrison Bay, however, we ran into a body of whales feeding in the tide-rips off the mouth of Coleville River.

Our second mate, a Portuguese named May, was soon fast to one, and we had quite a ride before killing it. Three other steamers got one each, and then the whales disappeared, and we saw no more of them. It did not take long before the *Baleana* had her whale alongside, and all hands were busy cutting it, their operation being much more speedy than ours at Point Hope that spring. As soon as the whale was alongside and its flukes made fast to the forward part of the steamer by a chain, the cutting-stage was lowered from the waist. Two of the officers did the cutting with a sharp spade. The first cut was around the fin, to which was attached a fin-chain; then strain was taken on this with the windlass and tackles, lifting a portion of the body out of the water, and rolling the whale so that the head was right side up. The head was then taken off (the mates cutting away the blackskin and blubber from just back of the spout-hole), and was hoisted aboard the ship, where the whalebone was soon removed and stowed away. The head being cleared away, the tackle attached to the fin was hove in on the windlass, causing the whale to roll over and over until all the blubber was cut off in strips fifteen to twenty feet long and about five feet wide. These were lowered in the hold, or blubber-room, and afterward cut in small pieces, minced and boned to extract the oil. The carcass was then cut adrift, sometimes sinking, but as often drifting away. After finishing our whale, we steamed back to Point Barrow and stayed a few days.

The 20th of September the steamers left for the west to cruise along the ice. The sailing-ships had gone some days before. We stayed in these waters until October 10th, and during that time took seven more large whales.

IT was extremely cold over to the west, with young ice making every night and the wind blowing hard most of the time; so on the 10th of October we left the ice for home, and no one was sorry as we passed out through the Bering Strait. In the Bering Sea we saw some large whales and lowered for them, but did not get any. A few days later we steamed into Unalaska Harbor, and went alongside the wharf belonging to the Alaska Commercial Company. Here we got some water and cleaned whalebone and started for San Francisco.

All the way down we had fine weather and finished cleaning our bone. The oil had all been tried out as we caught it, and we cleaned the ship the last thing before coming to port. Ninety miles from the Farallon Islands we raised a school of large sperm whales, and although

everything was put away and the boats unrigged, Mr. Dexter and the third mate wanted to go down for them, so two boats were hurriedly fitted with gear and away we went. Mr. Dexter sailed right on top of a large bull, and his boat-steerer killed it with his darting guns. The whale never moved after it was struck. We took this huge beast alongside, and instead of cutting it, towed it all the way to San Francisco, Captain Smith thinking to put it on exhibition, and then cut it up and try out the oil.

By the time we got it to the city and up to where the company had its oil works, it was pretty well blasted and could be smelled a mile. It was taken to the Union Iron Works, where we tried to lift it onto a scow with a large derrick, but the weight of the whale was so great that after getting it half out of the water, its flukes were pulled off. Then we towed it to Hunters Point Drydock, and it was on exhibition just one day, when the health authorities made us take it away. The whale was taken alongside the steam whaler *Orca*, cut up and tried out, but such a mess I hope never to be in again. When the cutting of this whale was finished, I wanted to quit and start somewhere else—Africa by preference! When I told the Company, Captain Knowles and Captain Griffith would not hear of it. They said they wanted me in their business, and the more I wished to go, the more they insisted in my staying and working for them. They gave me a good easy job taking care of their ships for the winter, and for the time I let matters rest.

ALONG in January of 1886 Captain Knowles asked if I would go to Point Barrow and take charge of a whaling-station at that place. I told him that if my chum George Leavitt would go, and would take charge of the station, I would go along as assistant. I never thought he would accept, as he always said one year had been enough for him. But the first time Captain Knowles asked him to go, he accepted the offer, leaving me not a leg to stand on, for I would not back out after he had agreed to go. We were to sail in the latter part of March.

In January there came a blow that made things hum on the bay. It started one afternoon about three o'clock; I was all alone aboard the *Thrasher*, anchored behind Mission Rock, with only one anchor down. About thirty-three the *Thrasher* started to drag her anchor; it was up to me to get another anchor down, and this in itself was some job, as I had to overhaul a lot of chain around an old-fashioned windlass before I could let go the anchor. This I finally managed to do, but not until she had dragged outside Mission Rock. We just managed to clear the steamer *Willamette* without doing any damage.

Once past her, I managed to let the second anchor go, but being all alone, I had to let all the chain I had overhauled run out at once. The chain fouled the anchor, so we went on our way down the bay. The only thing I could do was to try and steer the *Thrasher* down the bay, doing my best not to foul some of the ships. This I did very successfully for a time. Finally, however, I had the misfortune to drift alongside of an American ship, fouling his fore yardarm with our flying jib stay. There was no damage done, as the mate aboard the other ship let go their port braces, and I went drifting by. Only our feelings were hurt; the mate used some language, and I, too.

Just before reaching the cable crossing to Goat Island, a towboat sent out by the Company picked me up and put some men aboard, and I was towed back where I started from. This time we let go both anchors, and I watched aboard of her. More than ten years later the *Thrasher* saved my life, along with fifteen other men, when we were marooned on the Arctic ice.

More of these fascinating authentic adventures follow—in the forthcoming March issue.

Free Lances in Diplomacy

"The Buildings that Vanished" details certain specially exciting episodes in this longest and best-sustained series ever written.

By CLARENCE HERBERT NEW

Illustrated by A. E. Briggs

A RICH and pleasant laugh drifted through the momentary silence in appreciation of a humorous point. The four other Ministers around the long Cabinet table in the well-known room at Number Ten Downing Street glanced at the Home Secretary with expectant smiles. The general situation, it is true, was no laughing matter, but—pshaw! One can't talk "end of civilization" all of the time! After all, we do eat—even the hungry, occasionally. And ere we actually must go naked before the world, somebody donates a much-worn pair of what-you-may-call 'ems—for sheer decency's sake.

The Home Secretary started to explain: "What struck me as ridiculous was— I say! What the deuce!"

A picture on the opposite wall swung to the left, and then to the right, like a pendulum. The floor seemed acting like the deck of a ship—transmitting the slow motion of a long, glassy ocean billow. There was an echo of far-off rumbling, somewhere, though they couldn't locate the direction.

"Well—I'll be dashed! Earthquake—presumably. But in all the years of London hist'ry it's never happened before. What? I say!"

The motion stopped—the Ministers grinned across the table at each other. Earthquakes in London were not to be taken seriously. In a moment, there was the sound of running feet outside in Downing Street—apparently the clerks in the Foreign Office and other Government departments were pouring out *en masse* to gaze at something. The Premier's dignified butler knocked discreetly upon the door and then deprecatingly entered, closing it behind him.

"Beg pardon, Excellencies, but something quite remarkable is occurring around the corner in Whitehall—opposite the top end of the Horse-guards. One of the older buildings, sirs—temporarily occupied as Govern'm't offices. It seems to be crumbling, gentlemen—but nothing is falling into the street! Not burning, sirs, if you get what I mean; just crumblin'—an' goin' up in a brown dust."

The movement toward hats and sticks was immediate. Two of the Ministers were not built for speed, but they ran puffing around the corner with the others, to see the most amazing sight ever witnessed in that great city of wonders. . . .

One of the typists in a room on the top floor of the crumbling building had first noticed something peculiar about the plaster molding around the ceiling. It was melting into apparent nothing, as sugar does when water is poured upon it. The bricks behind it melted in the same way—the roof-timbers disappeared as if roasted in a furnace. In three minutes, she saw blue sky through the opening—it was one of London's occasional rare days, overhead. A partly stifled shriek came through her lips:

"Oh, look, will you—*look at what's happening!* Let's get out of this while we can! Tell everyone on the way down! Whatever it is, it's happening slowly—we've plenty of time to get out if we keep our heads! Take your hats and jackets, girls—they won't be here long if you don't. Now then! One at a time on those stairs—and don't get the wind up!"

It was due entirely to this girl's presence of mind that only one life was lost in the scramble to get out of the building—the life of one cocksure man who never had seen a building crumble to nothing without any visible cause, and therefore knew it couldn't be done. Once out, the firemen and police escorted them safely through the lines; then they were placing ladders against the upper windows, when the level-headed girl halted them.

"What's happening to the building, I don't know—nobody ever saw anything like this before!" she exclaimed. "But if the ends of your ladders touch it, up there, they will simply disappear. The men on them will get frightful falls—may even be killed. And I'm almost positive there'll be nobody left in the building."

The strangest part of the impossible spectacle was that the walls of the buildings on either side appeared to be unharmed. The building was simply cut out of that block as if with an acetylene torch—only incredibly faster. Whatever Government property, papers or safes had been in it, simply disappeared. There was no smoke, no fire, no ashes—merely a hole in the ground to a depth of three cellar- and vault-levels—a fine, impalpable brown dust which settled slightly here and there. That was all.

The camera-men of the press had arrived before the roof entirely disappeared—before anything of a crowd had collected—and were standing with tripods on the roofs of their motorcars, grinding with the painstaking accuracy of men who realized they were registering the biggest scoop of the century. They got all there was to get in less than three reels.

When there was nothing more to see, the five Ministers made their way silently back to the Cabinet room in Downing Street. They had seen something both frightful and alarming—the application of some hitherto unknown force which in the hands of unscrupulous individuals might destroy the entire city before a defense could be worked out against it. Yet so phlegmatic is the British temperament that when the Home Secretary again seated himself at the long table in his official swivel-chair, he deliberately took out and lighted a thick, richly flavored cigar, which he as deliberately puffed upon. The others followed his example.

"Anyone with an explanation to suggest, as to how that was done—an', more particularly, *why?*" he said at last. "Not bothering about the 'why,' old chap—fancy we'll

learn about that in due time," replied one of his confreres. "As to *how*—well—some new application of chemistry or possibly the higher radio-frequencies, I suppose."

"Hmph! . . . Just a shade cold-blooded about it, aren't you, Jamieson? Hasn't it yet occurred to you that what-ever agency pulled that off in Whitehall can just as easily send every building in London crumblin' about our ears—an' if we happen to be asleep at the time there'll not be even enough left to bury!"

"Oh, aye. . . . No gettin' around that, I fancy—unless, of course, we manage to work out the defense against it before matters get that far. Don't overlook the fact, old chap, that anything one set of human brains evolves another set can duplicate, sooner or later—an' that for every frightful means of destruction the world has ever seen, a remedy has been found to counteract it. For example—how many years is it since practically an entire city has been wiped out by fire, as London once was? Or how many uncontrollable epidemics has the world seen in recent years? As we go through life we meet frightful things time after time. Some of us are unlucky—but it's really amazin' how many of us die in our beds from ordinary causes rather than from the outside menaces we've passed through. What? I fancy Crummins is fetchin' something in, John!"

"What is it, Crummins?" asked the Premier, John McChesney.

"A special letter which has just been handed in by a Commissionaire, Your Excellency."

"One of the regulars who usually fetches 'em from the telegraph office around the corner?"

"I couldn't rightly say as to that, sir—I wasn't observin' 'im special at the moment. But I rather fancy 'e may not 'ave been, sir."

"H-m-m—not your fault, of course, Crummins. But make it a point hereafter, please, to get a close look, an' find out all you can, about anyone leaving a message here or asking any questions whatsoever. —Excuse me a moment, you chaps, while I have a look-see at this!"

McChesney picked up a Venetian stiletto which he used for an opener and ran it under the flap of the envelope. The stationery was of a rich creamy texture—not the sort usually selected by any of the Left Wing. The note was typewritten in a small elite size. He glanced through it to get the general trend—then read it slowly from beginning to end—and laid the sheet on his blotter while he took a few reflective puffs at his cigar. "Fancy I'd best read this to you chaps," he said finally, and thereupon read aloud:

"Gentlemen of the Government: The Junta which has been formed to take over the management of the country's affairs if it should be decided that Parliamentary rule has been demonstrated a complete failure, has determined upon a preliminary measure while that question is still debatable. Between this and noon of Saturday, next, you will publish in the news-sheets a Cabinet decision

ordering the Chancellor of the Exchequer to pay one shilling for a decent night's lodging and two shillings for the meals of each day to every man and woman in the country who has no money to pay for them—the branch post offices to issue coupons to every unemployed person, not on the dole, who registers—post offices to redeem said coupons in cash when presented by restaurant- and lodging-house keepers. In order to facilitate the handling of such large numbers of coupons, any shopkeeper or broker who wishes to purchase them from the users until he has a thousand or more may redeem them in bulk and receive a bonus of two per cent. While it will be necessary to increase taxation upon the capitalists and impose commodity taxes in order to provide the funds needed for this measure, they most assuredly can be raised without much difficulty.

"It will be obvious to you gentlemen that such an order would not be given you unless the Junta had ample means at its disposal to enforce it. You have just been given an illustration of one method in the destruction of the building in Whitehall. And to emphasize our entire seriousness in this matter, one of you five is to die before leaving that Cabinet room—we are now deciding which of you appears to be most purely ornamental. If there is any disposition among you to temporize or to defy us, a large hotel in the heart of the city will be destroyed at five minutes after noon on Saturday and another Cabinet Minister will die Sunday morning. Do not force us to use far more serious measures after that—because the next hotel to be destroyed would go in the dead of night with every soul who was in it at the time. Take warning! —The Junta."

They smoked in thoughtful silence for a few minutes. Not one of them had the slightest doubt the threat would be carried out if it were actually in the power of these mysterious and crazy men to do it.

Presently a chuckle came from the rather chubby Home Secretary:

"I say, you chaps! Let me ease your minds upon one point in all this, at least. If one of us actually does die before leavin' this room, it'll be I—so the rest of you can be quite at your ease upon that point. How the devil those bounders found it out I'm dashed if I know—but my physician told me less than a month ago that the old heart was a bit wonky. Well—that's that! Gettin' back to this communication—point's this: If it's published in the news-sheets, we musn't blind ourselves to the fact that it will be popular all over the country with every person who

hasn't the brains to see how impossible it is. There are said to be five million people unemployed in the United Kingdom at this moment. At three shillings each, that's fifteen million shillings, or three-quarters of a million pounds every day of the year. With the incidental expense of handling such a proposition and the two-per-cent bonus, over three hundred millions a year would be added to the present staggerin' deficit—laid upon the necks of a nation already taxed beyond endurance. What's puzzling me is where this 'Junta' stands to make anything for its



A dark figure was coming over the roofs below. . . . Jean told them to pull the curtains aside. This they did.

own pockets—an' that's just what'll make it so damned popular!"

"There's a catch in it somewhere—no fear. Question is—what are we to do about it?"

"Oh, I wasn't aware of any such question as that! You can't bully the British Governm't, d'ye see—not an' have it go on functionin' as a governm't. We'll give all the relief to unemploy'm't we can in the regular way—through Parliam't—where Labor has all the influence it can elect. But as for this ultimatum—we're not havin' any, of course! Best call a special meetin' of the Cabinet to discuss protective measures. Meanwhile, I must be goin'!"

They picked up hats, sticks, and top-coats, and were moving toward the door when they noticed that Sir Randall Crofts, President of the Board of Trade, had remained standing by his chair—a peculiar expression on his face.

"I say, Crofts, aren't you comin' around to the Club with us for dinner?"

"Why—I had that in mind—certainly. But for the moment I'm—just a bit—off. Something I ate, prob'ly. Deuced odd, y'know. Don't bother to wait—I shall be quite all right in a few moments! Deuce take it—legs seem to be a bit numb! Can't understand—Go ahead, you chaps! . . . Join you presently! Er—"

With a twitching of his facial muscles, Sir Randall attempted to sit down—but instead sprawled across the long table, his fingers clutching at the blotters. When they got to him his heart wasn't beating. A moment later Crummins was hurriedly telephoning for Sir Basil Proteyn, one of England's most famous physicians—who agreed to come at once and was at Number Ten within fifteen minutes.

After a careful examination in the presence of the other Ministers, he shook his head in a puzzled way.

"The man was in magnificent condition for one of fifty-eight years—there's no indication of a wound on him. From your description of what he said, the trouble appears to have been in his stomach. We'll let Scotland Yard examine him and this room, first—then have him taken around to my operating-room. I'll perform an autopsy, possibly. Does anyone know where he lunched?"

"Prob'ly at a restaurant in the Strand, not far from the Board of Trade—that is, he frequ'tly did go there. I fancy none of us knows just where he lunched today—"

AFTER the Deputy Commissioner, with two of his Inspectors, had been around to inspect the room and body, and talk with their Chief, the Home Secretary, as to the details of the occurrence, the body was removed and the house cleared of all outsiders. The Premier, John McChesney, sat at the head of the long table with the Junta's ultimatum on the blotter before him—puzzling over the missing element in the whole proposition which still evaded him. The danger to the city and to the lives of prominent men was most serious—but until he got at what was behind it all he knew he could form no estimate as to how far the Junta was prepared to go. To suppose the people concerned in it would persist in such extreme measures if unemployment relief was all there was to the matter, was simply ridiculous—the very men supposed to get the benefit would be among the first to decry anything of the sort.

As he sat pondering this, Crummins knocked upon the door and then fetched in the card of the Right Honorable the Marquess of Lyonesse.

"Show him in, Crummins. (One of the dashed few men I'm willing to see—at the moment!) Hello, Marquess! I don't know how you happened to drop in just now—but I'll be dashed glad to go over something with Your Lordship! Here, read this communication—while Crummins is fetchin' in a spot of something. Eh?"

Trevor glanced at the note; then he said:

"I had this in code, half an hour ago, from Stringer—managin' editor of the *Daily Bulletin*. Copies were sent to every prominent news-sheet in the city, I fancy. Heard anything more about poor Crofts, as yet? Stringer told me about him."

"Aye—Sir Basil has just phoned me that he was killed by one of those obscure vegetable poisons from the Orient—works in about two hours after bein' taken into the stomach."

"Then there's nothing mysterious or supernatural about his death. Poison was put in his food wherever he got his lunch—presumably one of the Strand restaurants—by some outsider at the next table. The restaurant people are above suspicion in such a case. It couldn't have been given him before that, or it would have taken effect quicker. An' he couldn't have got it in this house—your household is above suspicion in any matter like this. So—we need spend no time in ferretin' out Crofts' murderer. When you spot the rest of the gang you get *him*. Now describe what you saw in Whitehall—as an eye-witness."

THE Premier did as requested—most graphically. "I never saw or heard of anything like it, Marquess!" he concluded. "Frankly, you know, those bounders can easily destroy London with that terrific force at their command, unless we can round them up an' arrest 'em first—which will take a bit of doing, y'know!"

"Possibly. Depends a lot upon how one goes about it. Shoutin' 'Police!' an' runnin' around in circles won't get you very far. Personally, I'd choose a diff'rent method."

"Such as—"

"Well—let's consider the Whitehall building a bit. You saw no sign whatever of a plane overhead. You saw no movem't in the houses at either side to indicate that the force was bein' directed from one of 'em. But you may wager it was bein' directed from *somewhere*—else the building wouldn't have been systematically eaten down from the top. Which leaves only the rear, overlookin' the Embankm't—or some window on the top floor of the Horse-guards. It's entirely possible that the generator an' electrodes—if it happens to be a radio-freque'ncy contrivance—may be concealed at this moment in some chest or trunk on that upper floor supposed to contain Army reports or equipm't. The whole occurrence has similar ear-marks to something Wilhelmstrasse did with a couple of planes over the big flyin'-field near Moscow over a year ago—an' tried again to do over the Kremlin a month later, when an unidentified plane suddenly volplaned down out of a cloud an' destroyed them. That's guess-work, mind you, but it's the basis upon which I'd start first to run these bounders down before they can do much further damage."

"What lines of investigation? I don't get it!"

"The German brain that worked out those disintegrating-rays over the Russian flying-field is miles ahead of the ord'nry electrical or chemical brain—so far ahead that there wouldn't be more than one or two of 'em in any country. An' the scientists of other countries would know at least how far they'd gone in several directions. Well—d'ye see—I've surrounded myself, down in Devon, with perhaps the most brilliant minds in their own particular lines of any men in the United Kingdom—an' they're almost certain to know who prob'ly might be the man behind some spectacular stunt in another country. So my first suggestion is that we pick up Prince Abdool of Afridistan, and possibly some other member of our household—fly down from Croydon in one of our own planes—spend the night at Trevor Hall in South Devon, an' thrash the affair out with our scientists—see what occurs to 'em. What?"

"But, my dear Marquess—are you seriously implying that you consider it possible actually to run down these bounders within a reasonable time—an' stop them before they can carry out their threats? Have you that much confidence in the resources at your disposal? Frankly, you know, I've decided that I shall prob'ly be the next Cabinet man to be eliminated Sunday morning—when it's found that we'll not pay any attention to this attempt at terrorism!"

"Hmph! If you're willing to spend Sunday an' a few more days at Trevor Hall, I'll guarantee your safety while there! I'll *not* guarantee to stop this mysterious Junta before it destroys more lives an' property—because I'm not altogether a fool! But there'll be no question, will there, that this unknown force simply must be a scientific development of some sort? No damned nons'ense about its bein' possibly supernatural—what?"

"The crowd who saw it in the street, would swear that it was no human agency, I fancy—but of course I'm not ass enough to believe that! Admit for the sake of argum't that it's scientific—an' go on from there."

"Then there must be a scientific remedy, when it's worked out—mustn't there? So we're startin' from the scientific end instead of messin' about with fool police methods not adapted to this sort of crime—that's all! Why, man, we can show you things at Trevor Hall that you'd not believe when your own eyes saw 'em! The public brain hasn't been educated far enough to grasp 'em as yet—so we've sense enough to keep 'em dark."

When the Premier accompanied His Lordship to Park Lane they found Prince Abdool studying a decoded transcript of the Junta's ultimatum. A dark curly head was bent over his shoulder, as a girl sat on the arm of his chair and also tried to puzzle out something which seemed eluding her. This was the Honorable Jean Wallington, daughter of Earl Falknyss; she was usually to be found in the approximate vicinity of Ivo Trevor (Viscount Salcombe), and spent more time in one or another of the Trevor mansions than she did in those of the Earl. At first the Trevors had tried to keep her out of their underground political adventures—but her qualifying as a first-class mechanic and aviatrix had thrown her into the Viscount's activities until the two had become almost inseparable, and recently she had demonstrated an unusual streak of diplomatic ability.

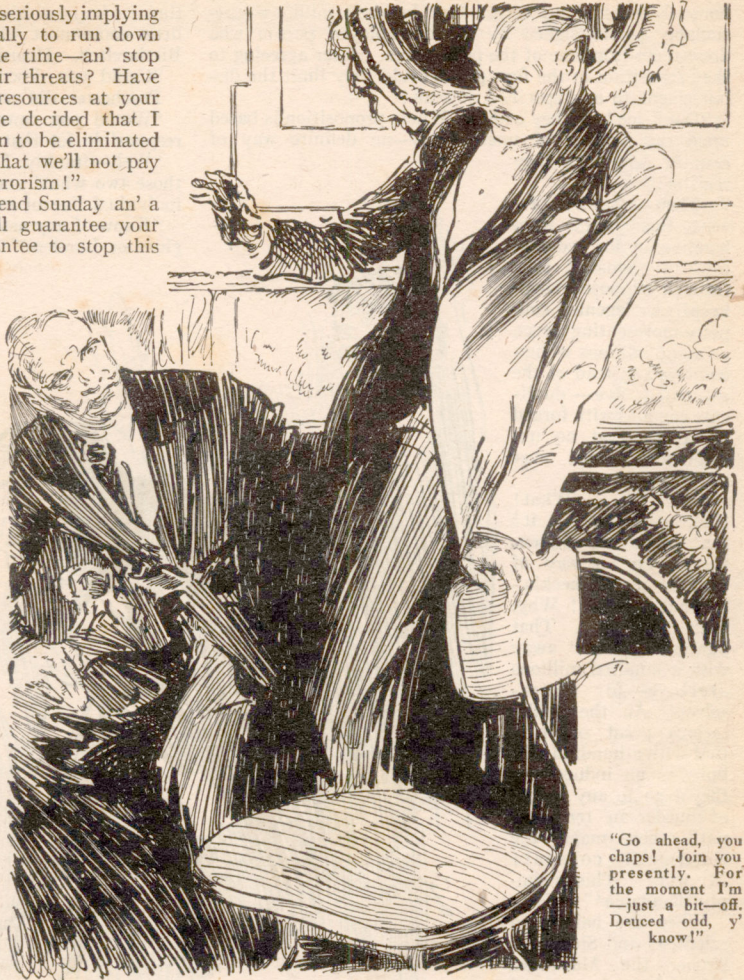
When the Marquess came in with McChesney and suggested Prince Abdool accompany them, she looked up.

"You're not leaving *me* out of it, I hope, Uncle George?"

"Why? Got any ideas, infant?"

"W-e-l-l—one might have, you know—if encouraged a bit."

"Ch, very good—get your flyin'-togs!" Then—turning to the Premier: "The girl may surprise you sometime with what she stores under that curly bob. Come along! We should be down there in less than two hours. I phoned to have 'em all waitin' for a conference."



"Go ahead, you chaps! Join you presently. For the moment I'm—just a bit—off. Deuced odd, y' know!"

As a political, McChesney had little knowledge of the really big names in the world of science—but he grasped the fact that these men with degrees from the best-known universities on the globe must stand at the top in their various lines of investigation.

Before they got down to the meat of the conference, the Honorable Jean remarked to the Premier:

"In this ultimatum of the Junta, sir, there is a provision that shopkeepers or agents—of what, not specified—may redeem those coupons in lots of a thousand or more at the Treasury, receiving a bonus of two per cent. That means, of course, that they get one shilling for each lodging-coupon and two shillings for each restaurant one, and then two per cent on the whole amount. Isn't that Your Excellency's understanding of the clause?"

"Er—quite so, Miss Wallington. Face value of the coupon plus two per cent."

"And you roughly estimate five millions unemployed in the country at present—running to a possible three hundred million pounds each year. Suppose the Treasury found that it was redeeming *four* hundred millions instead of three? What would be done? They'd have the coupons showing a disburse'm't by restaurant- an' lodging-

house-keepers of an actual four hundred millions—presumably countersigned by the unemployed person who drew them from one of the post offices. After agreeing to the proposition in the first place, could they limit the disbursement to any specified amount?"

"Don't see how they could! Whole proposition is based upon the number of unemployed—no definite way of countin' 'em until they register!"

"Then—what's to prevent this Junta from handing in for redemption in thousand lots, through supposed shopkeepers or 'agents,' coupons representing seven or eight millions of unemployed instead of the estimated five—duplicate coupons with forged signatures that no unemployed person ever saw?"

"Eh? . . . What! That's the catch, is it? An' once we agree, there'd be no way of stoppin' it, or checkin'-up, that I can see! Why, dash it all! . . . That Junta could get away with a hundred millions sterling—for themselves! An' the deadly serious point of it is that with a hundred millions as an inducement they'd go to any length of murder an' terrorism until they make the Governm't consent! My word! This is simply damnable!"

When the half-dozen scientists and Sir Harry Archer—the Marquess' chief electrician—had grasped all the facts, Archer said at once that the mysterious force used to destroy the house in Whitehall was unquestionably some more recently developed application of the same disintegrating-ray used by the German planes over the Russian flying-field when they destroyed the entire squadron of Muscovite planes. He described for the scientists exactly the effects of that ray as seen from a plane higher up—and his own subsequent destruction of the German planes by directing a high-frequency discharge from an electrode which sent it directly under the other planes and short-circuited their own disintegrating-ray. He then asked who, among the German scientists, they considered capable of working out such a ray.

After a moment's consideration Doctor Porchester replied:

"I'd say Schnitzler, of Leipzig! It's quite in his own particular line—in fact, to the best of my knowledge, there's no other radio-frequency electrician on the Con-

tinental who is within miles of him—unless it would be the little communist who was his assistant for some years, Bischovitch. Heard they had a row last year."

"Could you describe him closely, Doctor?"

Porchester did so, in detail.

"Would you consider either Schnitzler or Bischovitch responsible for that Whitehall demonstration?"

"Well—frankly, I can't imagine any scientist outside of those two who'd stand much chance of doin' it—entirely individual line of experimentation, d'ye see!"

"Know of any associates Bischovitch might have in Belgium or London?" inquired the Marquess.

"Not among the scientists, no. But there's an equally unscrupulous Belgian who's advanced him a good bit of money from time to time for rather dangerous experiments. I'll describe him also."

"Is this other man a capitalist?"

"I was given to understand that he had a controlling int'rest in some Antwerp banking house which handles a good bit of Russian and Eastern business. Presumably, he would be living somewhere in the suburbs of Antwerp—he's named Francois Seligneur."

"H-m-m! Man of that sort would have a telephone, wouldn't he?" The Marquess walked over to one of the bookshelves and took down a suburban telephone directory of Antwerp. "Here's his number an' address—only person of that name in the book. Let's see if we can stir up something."

He put through the call—with a couple of code-words to the operator in the London Trunk Exchange which accelerated her activities a good deal. In eight minutes, the call was through; at the other end a woman's voice answered.

In beautiful French the Marquess courteously inquired if M. Seligneur was at home.

"*Mais non, m'sieu'*. One regrets exceedingly. Who is it that calls, if one may ask?"

"One doubts if he would recall the name, madame—a banker of Paris, in England for a day. It is many years since M'sieur and I met. Could you inform me whether I might possibly locate him in Paris—at what hotel, for example? Or if he happens to be in London, where he usually stops?"

"But yes, m'sieu'!" And she mentioned the names of several hosteleries in Paris and in London.

After profuse thanks and compliments, Trevor hung up—and immediately jotted down the names she had given him.

Then he turned delightedly to his companions.



They watched ghostly images gradually appearing on the films in the toning-bath.

"That's what I call almost undeserved good luck! There was no certainty whatever that the Seligneur living just outside of Antwerp is the man we're after—an' nothing whatever to show that this one mixes in any shady activities that a high-class banker would not, until she mentioned that little hotel in the Rue Vaneau—which all of us happen to know contains at least four houses which are the rendezvous of extreme reds an' communists. Also—the London hotel in Leicester Square will be one frequented by theatrical folk an' others of limited income. Those two names alone would nail this Seligneur as exactly the bird we're lookin' for. In the morning Abdool an' I will take rooms there for a transient stay—might take Jean along too, an' see if she can spot anything in the lobby or restaurant."

The Premier had been following these proceedings in puzzled amazement.

"I say, Marquess! . . . Does one understand that you've already made some progress in runnin' down these fiends? Seems like a rather impossible job—to me!" he exclaimed.

The Marquess nodded gravely.

"Well—what you may understand, so far, John, amounts to about this: I'm by no means minimizin' the diffic'lty, d'ye see—we're dealin' with dangerous, unscrupulous boudners who have all the resources of science to cover up their tracks if one goes after 'em in the ord'n'ry police way. But what they can't cover up is the cold fact that you can almost count upon your fingers the number of men in Europe who have sufficient command of applied science to handle anything like this mysterious force they're usin'. An' that's just about the one bet such brutes would be the most likely to overlook in their activities.

"Prob'ly it wouldn't occur to this Seligneur that it'd be possible for anyone to connect him with this proposition—or that, if they did so, they'd think of gettin' a trunk-call through to his home for information. I'd say at a guess that the woman I talked to was his wife or daughter—whom he'd never think of warnin' about unexpected calls. Not a servant—too much education. I fancy all of us are practically convinced that the scientist behind your ultimatum must be either Schnitzler or Bischovitch. Personally, I'd rule Schnitzler out because, as a scientist, he's known to be rather decently scrupulous. The others will agree upon that point also? Very good! . . . That's some progress.

"But any idea we may have of provin' complicity upon the part of Seligneur is prob'ly impossible, even though he's in this up to his neck. Again, knowin' Bischovitch is a fiend who is destroyin' lives an' property cold-bloodedly is a vastly different matter from *provin'* it against him! Even if you convicted him of murder he might escape and destroy whole boroughs of the city before you stopped him again. When he's dead, the danger is over—not before!"

During the next day, at the hotel in Leicester Square, neither Jean nor her companions discovered the slightest evidence that the men they were after ever patronized the place—there was no name on the register which resembled that of Seligneur nor Bischovitch, and they didn't dare make any inquiries.

BUT after dinner, Jean—who had a side room on an upper floor—looked out of her window before switching on the lights, and dimly made out a dark figure coming over the roofs of adjoining buildings just below, with what looked like a ten-foot pole in one hand. As he stopped under the window of the room next to hers, she decided it must be a fireman's climbing-pole, with a long

right-angled hook at one end and short cross-pieces for hand- and foot-holds. The Marquess and Prince Abdool had rooms on the floor above her—one of them directly over the adjoining room and the other next to it, with a communicating door.

Hurrying out of her room, Jean went up the stairs to the floor above without meeting anyone. Slipping inside their door when it was opened, she suggested they switch off the light and slam the door as if going out—then gently pull the curtains aside and look down. This they did. The man below evidently expected a wait of some little time, for he had comfortably seated himself and was smoking a pipe, with one hand over the bowl to keep the glow from showing he was there, in case anyone should look out of a window.

PRINCE ABDOOL of Afridistan is the photographing expert of the Park Lane household. What he can do with a camera and various lights, screens or lenses savors of wizardry.

So, although there was thus far no definite indication as to how he might use such things in tracking down the terrorists, there was no disputing the fact that if good photographs could be obtained of one or two individuals they would prove exceedingly valuable in the end. In the two suitcases which accompanied him, there was a five-by-seven camera with several different screens and lenses, and a powerful five-hundred-watt flood-light in an aluminum box ventilated to prevent over-heating but with the vents hooded so that no ray of light escaped, if total darkness was desirable.

This flood-light had a plug connection provided to fit any sort of wall outlet or electroliner in use, and thirty feet of double cord. Enough clothing was packed around these to conceal the articles themselves. In His Lordship's suitcase, there were two articles which invariably accompanied him on slumming expeditions where he expected to do some risky shadowing involving climbing about roofs and walls of old buildings: a service automatic, and fifty feet of three-fourth-inch braided silk rope, many times stronger than hemp and not much over a quarter the weight. If it were possible to carry a suitcase, so much the better—if not, the rope was wound about his waist under his waistcoat, where once or twice it had served to prevent would-be assassins' knives or bullets from penetrating too deeply.

Neither of them had seen any person, man or woman, going into or coming out of the room adjoining Jean's—there was no name on the register with that particular room number entered opposite it. They had seen nobody about the hotel resembling the description of Bischovitch or Seligneur. But both the Marquess and Prince Abdool were basing a theory upon Seligneur's different uses of the two hotels at which he was known to stop when in London. One, in Sloane Square, was a recently reconstructed modern hotel where a person of the Bischovitch type never would go even for a conference. In Leicester Square, the conditions were vastly more in line with his temperament and personality. Therefore, if there were any connection in this terrorist business between Seligneur and Bischovitch, it could be set down as a certainty that the latter would come to Leicester Square, unobtrusively if possible.

When the two men looked out of the window after dousing the light, it was all they could do to distinguish the dark spot on the roof that they knew to be a waiting man.

A fog, coming up the river, was thickening rapidly; less than five minutes later, neither of them could see the other the width of the window away. Stepping back to

where they could touch Jean, they whispered to her that one of them—with the flood-light hanging from his foot and connected to the box which stepped up the voltage from the house-current to the required five hundred or six hundred—would lower himself from the window directly over the one adjoining hers, with part of the silk rope, so the screened lens in the front of the flood-light box was pointing directly into the room below at the top of the window.

When everything was ready, with the current turned on, Prince Abdool would lower himself from the adjoining window with his camera and keep hold of a sheet which she would lower to him from over His Lordship's head. If he heard voices in the room beneath, he could pull on the sheet, swing himself over to that window-sill and, standing in a loop of the silk rope, and resting the camera on the sill, get an exposure of two seconds, which he thought would be sufficient.

WHILE the two men were suspended, each with a foot in a loop, as every sailor knows how to do, they heard a scraping of the hook upon the sill of the window below, and sensed rather than heard a man climbing into the room—the fog evidently gave him a feeling of security against being seen by anyone. Then followed a low murmur of voices, growing slightly more confident and louder until Prince Abdool was able to make out enough words to get the general trend of the conversation. Without losing another second, he made an exposure, silently, by taking the cap off the lens and counting—then pulled the film-tag out of the pack and tried again. After the tenth shot he decided that with a range from two to four seconds in timing, he should have some fairly successful negatives—and noiselessly went up the rope hand-over-hand until he could get into his own window. A couple of taps on the Marquess' rope brought him up, also. Then the three of them packed their bags, went down in the old-fashioned lift and took a taxi to Marble Arch, where they got out and walked the rest of the way. In the Prince's house at the rear of the Trevor property on Park Lane, they went up to his laboratory and dark-room on the top floor. Both His Lordship and Jean were wondering what had induced the Prince to abandon his attempt at photography, as they thought.

"You two have so many other things on your mind that you don't keep up with some of the latest developments—that's all!" Abdool laughed. "Didn't see the slightest glow from the flood-light George was holdin' from his foot, did you? Jolly well knew that if there had been any we'd at once have been 'for it' in a deuce of a mix-up! But the light was floodin' that room all the same—a good five hundred watts of it—goin' through an infra-red screen that takes out every vestige of white light an' cuts through darkness or even thick fog as if they didn't exist. In the camera I was usin' special film, extremely sensitive to the infra-red rays. And now, come into the developin'-room. About twenty minutes of pitch-black darkness—then a bit of greenish light such as you never saw before. An' we'll see what happens."

Presently they watched ghostly images gradually appearing on the films in the toning-bath. Two figures became as clear as in the average daylight picture: a small, sloppy man with a bulging forehead, thick spectacles, untidy hair, beard and clothes was sitting on the edge of a chair facing a larger, shaggy sort of man—very well turned out—sitting on the edge of the bed. Both were smoking cigarettes.

The room was meagerly furnished with a bed, bureau and one chair. Near the window, there was a chest—larger than a steamer-trunk but not as big as a woman's

wardrobe-trunk. It was strapped and locked; a tag on the lock had a name and address printed on it in ink. The end with the name was bent, but the address could be read with a magnifying glass: *134 Brommerville St. W.C.2.*

"Prob'ly a house where the bounder lodged before he came to Leicester Square. Until I saw this, I fancied that it would be the Belgian who occupied that room—and the little brute who had the other; but it seems to have been the reverse of that," said the Marquess, after a thorough study of the prints. "Of course," he continued thoughtfully, "we've obtained no positive evidence that the pair are really Bischovitch an' Seligneur, but they were talkin' in Russian—I caught enough of the words to know that they're connected with that ultimatum, if not the whole show. Seems to me we'd best fly down to Devon at once an' see if Porchester or Harry Archer recognize either of these men. What? They were chucklin' over takin' full-page advertisements in six or eight of the London news-sheets, today—the ultimatum will be spread upon them in the morning. We may stop news-publication, but it's a bit diffic'lt to prevent the business office of a news-sheet from acceptin' ad's. An' if anything does happen Saturday that means ructions—a general howl for Govern'm't to agree to the brutes' terms. I say, you two—we've no time to waste!"

When they reached Trevor Hall Prince Abdool's prints were passed around among the scientists. Porchester and Sir Harry studied them with puzzled expressions on their faces, until the Doctor held a scrap of paper over the beard of the big man—whom he then pronounced to be Seligneur, without question. Masking the smaller man's tousled hair and visualizing him without the spectacles effected a similar recognition of him.

Dr. Porchester nodded.

"Bischovitch is supposed to have rather phenomenal eyesight. I never saw him with spectacles, though it's quite possible he may wear them in the lab. Fancy there's no mistake—his bein' with Seligneur is good circumstantial evidence, anyhow. The little bounder is Bischovitch—an' you've heard 'em discussin' what they're up to. But I fancy you'll not find it so easy to catch an' arrest 'em! What's to be done in the matter?"

Archer quietly put in a word.

"If Abdool an' His Lordship will find out, one way or another, what building they mean to destroy next, you can leave the rest to me. I'll deal with 'em—make a clean job of it, too. You chaps had best get back to London as soon as you can, an' stick on the job—Saturday's day after tomorrow, you know!"

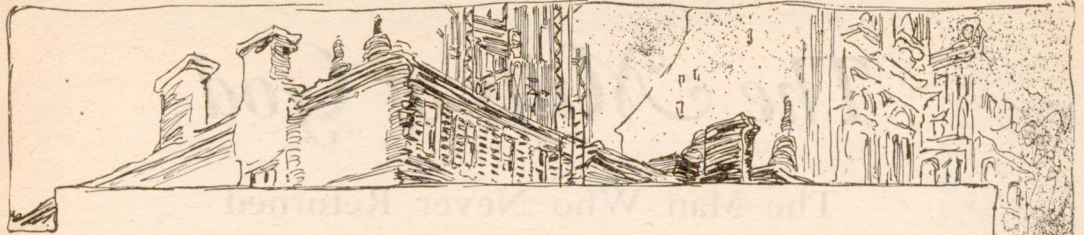
ON Saturday, immediately after noon, a medium-sized West End hotel was completely wiped out—so rapidly that there was panic in the congested corridors and some twenty individuals were reported missing when the checking up was finished.

Of the bodies, not even a vestige remained. And of the hotel there was not a brick—not an iron girder; it had simply vanished.

Vague terror spread through the city. Crowds packed the approaches to Whitehall and Westminster, demanding instant agreement or compromise of some sort with the fiends behind these outrages. It took all of the police reserves to maintain any sort of order, and troops were held in readiness at the barracks.

On Sunday morning, the well-known figure of the Secretary for War was seen by a number of persons getting out of his car in Whitehall.

A sudden cry of pain from him focused their attention. Even as they looked, his right hand and arm began liter-



ally to melt off and disappear, up to his shoulder—then his left arm. As he tried to run into the nearest building a shuddering moan of horror ran through the crowd at what they saw, and they staggered back as the Secretary's top-hat and the skull under it began to melt off.

For an instant the body still remained upon its feet—then, with head and arms entirely gone, it collapsed upon the pavement, only to disappear rapidly, until there was nothing left of it but a few grains of brown dust on the stones.

In Park Lane, the occurrence was telephoned in almost while it was occurring. The Marquess, Marchioness, Earl Lammerford and Prince Abdool had been discussing the situation in the big library, while the Honorable Jean sat absorbed in concentrated study of the Bartholomew London maps and two sheets of larger-scale Municipal Survey maps. Suddenly—the girl pulled one of the telephones toward her, asking to be put through to Sir Harry Archer at Trevor Hall. When his voice came over the wire she said:

"Fly up with all your equip'm't, Harry, as soon as you can possibly make it! Hurry! I fancy I've struck something!"

The others whirled about with various questions—but she would not explain until Sir Harry came in some ninety minutes later, having taken the risk of coming down in Hyde Park on one of the broader roads. Taking one of the large-scale sheets and a pencil, she pointed out the location of 134 Brommerville Street in the West End.

"Residential block—as you'll see by consultin' the telephone directory—nothing in the least interesting for several streets each way. I drove through there in a taxi this afternoon. Number 134 is a lodging-house—white card pasted on bricks at side of front door. But three houses directly opposite have been torn down for the erection of a service-apartm't building. And looking through the open space left by this you see the whole of the St. Francis Hotel on Wappington Street, which runs parallel with Brommerville. The St. Francis was not one of the most modern hotels—but a very select one, patronized extensively by Colonials of good social position.

"We fancied that the tag we saw on that chest was the address from which that little brute had just come to Leicester Square; but I'm gambling it's the other way around—an' that from the window of that upper front room the St. Francis will be destroyed in the middle of almost any night—soon—when all the guests are asleep! Catch the point?"

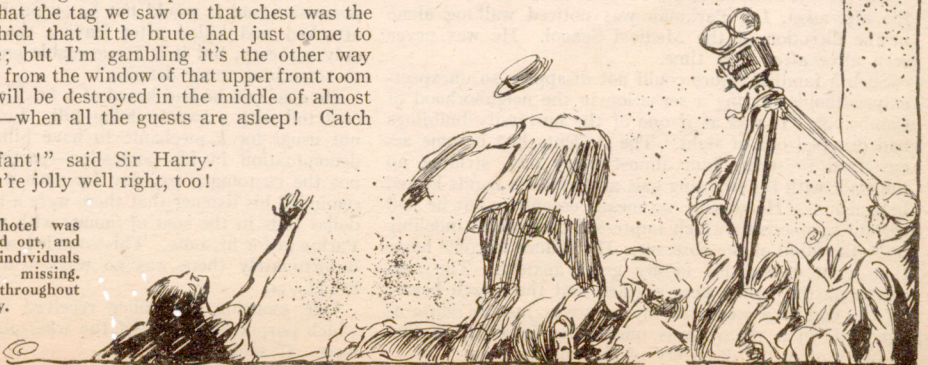
"Perfectly, infant!" said Sir Harry.
"And I fancy you're jolly well right, too!"

Have one of the cars sent along to where a couple of bobbies are watchin' my plane an' I'll transfer my equip'm't. Are the buildings opposite to Number 134 lodgin'-houses also? Aye? Not wired for current, I fancy? Never mind—the St. Francis manager will give me juice from one of his upper floors when I tell him what's in store for him—I've cable long enough to reach across the intervening block!"

IT was a long wait—day after day—night after night. But at two o'clock on the eighth morning, the cornice of the St. Francis began to crumble. In the house opposite Sir Harry spotted the open window at the top of Number 134 and directed toward it a very carefully insulated electrode in a soft rubber sleeve—then turned on a current which he had stepped up to over twenty-eight thousand kilocycles. Instantly there was a blinding flash from the window opposite, a dull muffled boom—and—silence. The melting of the St. Francis cornice stopped and no further damage was discovered. When the emergency truck from the Light & Power company came tearing around to Number 134, followed by a racing patrol-wagon full of police, they couldn't get above the second floor until they had literally hacked their way up. Walls were partly down—détris, apparently of some unrecognizable machine, had been partially destroyed—while the upper half of an under-sized man was jammed into one corner like a sack of meal.

There were no further ultimatums or mysterious happenings. Ask a Londoner today about the occurrences, and he'll vaguely remember there was a temporary scare some time ago—over a lot of nons'ense, y'know!

A West End hotel was completely wiped out, and some twenty individuals were reported missing. Terror spread throughout the city.



The Mills of God

The Man Who Never Returned

DR. GEORGE PARKMAN was as well known in his day and generation in Boston as the Back Bay or the Old South Meeting-house. He was such a gentle soul that the boys on the street stopped to greet him and talk with him. He was not only known in a professional way, but was a public-spirited citizen giving of his time and money to worthy objects. He donated the ground on which the Medical School of Harvard University was built. Not content with that, he founded the professorship of anatomy in the institution. At the time of which we write that post was held by no less a person than Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Harvard was one of Parkman's hobbies and most of his spare time was spent in or around the institution. It was a treat when he and Holmes met, because the genial author of "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" could be depended upon to match dry wit when he encountered this shrewd Scot. Another of his friends was Dr. John White Webster, professor of chemistry in the Medical School. Like Parkman, Webster was popular in Harvard circles; he was a quiet, domesticated man with a wife and three unmarried daughters. He had a modest income but managed to hold up his end with the group with which he mingled. He entertained and was entertained, and managed to get a great deal of joy out of a life which is usually cloistered.

Webster could hardly be described as a hail-fellow, well-met, sort of person, but he had personal magnetism and made a favorable impression on those with whom he came in contact. There were a few who did not "take" to him, however, and one of them was John Littlefield, caretaker of the school, a man inclined to be taciturn and dour. He made no secret of his dislike for Webster, though seemingly he had no definite cause for it. We have called particular attention to Parkman, Webster and Littlefield because they were the star actors in the little drama which now begins.

On Friday, November 23, 1849, at about one o'clock in the afternoon, Dr. Parkman was noticed walking alone in the direction of the Medical School. He was never seen alive after that time.

Such a familiar figure could not disappear so unexpectedly without creating a sensation in the neighborhood of Cambridge. It was as if one of the university buildings had dropped out of sight. The students had become accustomed to seeing him almost every day, striding up the walk with his swinging gait and with his hands locked behind him. He was by no means eccentric, but he had certain mannerisms which impressed themselves indelibly upon the mind of the observer. His failure to come home that night caused his family great anxiety. The next afternoon the police were notified and the search began. At the end of a week the mystery was just as dense as ever. Then a reward was offered for information that would lead to the discovery of the missing man.

A fact detective story

By **GEORGE BARTON**

Illustrated by Page Trotter

Next to the members of the family no one seemed more concerned than Dr. John White Webster, the professor of chemistry of whom we have spoken. At the end of the seventh day Dr. Webster called on the brother of Dr. Parkman and expressed a de-

sire to help in the search for his friend. He told this relative that he had last seen Dr. Parkman at one-thirty, on the afternoon of the disappearance. He spoke feelingly of their intimacy, and said that a year or so before, Dr. Parkman had been good enough to make him a personal loan. No collateral was asked for, but Dr. Webster insisted on giving his friend a note for the amount and said he would accept the money only on condition that he might pay the usual rate of interest. Parkman laughingly agreed to this, but assured Webster he would not find him a harsh creditor.

On the day before the disappearance Dr. Webster had sent word to Dr. Parkman that he would be ready to pay his debt the following afternoon. At the appointed time on that fatal Friday, Parkman called and received from his friend \$483.64, representing the principal and interest on the note. Webster said that Parkman was in a jovial mood, but in a hurry—so much so that Webster had called after him to remind him that he had not canceled the note. "Parkman," declared Webster, "rushed back, picked up a pen and ran a line through the signature, and as he hurried down the stairs said he would formally cancel the charge at East Cambridge the next day."

Dr. Webster said he had related this incident in full in the hope it might be a clue in locating the missing man. The brother thanked him for the interest he was showing in the matter, and asked him if he had any theory regarding the probable fate of Dr. Parkman.

"Well," Webster ventured, "it looks to me as if he might have been robbed and murdered. You must bear in mind that he had an unusual amount of money in his possession and it would not be surprising if he had been attacked and killed after leaving the school. That is only a theory, but it is a reasonable one and it may lead to something more definite."

He also said he had heard of a bricklayer paying a five-cent toll with a twenty-dollar bill. In those days it was not usual for a mechanic to have bills of such a large denomination in his possession—particularly as it was not the customary pay-day for such a person. Webster reminded his listener that there were a number of twenty-dollar bills in the sum of money with which he had paid Parkman for his note. This sounded sensible enough, but unfortunately there was no way of tracing the affluent bricklayer.

One morning the police received an illiterate letter which purported to tell of the whereabouts of Dr. Parkman. It said:

Dr. Parkman was took on bord the ship herculum and this is all I dare say as I shall be kiled Est Cambridge one of the men gave me his wait but I was fered to keep it and throwd it in the water right side the road to the Cambridge to Bost.

Nothing ever came of this note, which was characteristic of the scores of "crank notes" which come to the police whenever they are engaged in investigating a murder mystery. Dr. Webster professed to think it important, but his view was not shared by the authorities. Their skepticism did not discourage Webster and he turned in other directions "in hope of getting some tiny detail" that might lead to something greater.

In the meanwhile the dislike which John Littlefield, caretaker of the Medical School, had for Webster began to manifest itself in a more pronounced form. He went so far as to say that Webster knew more about the disappearance of Dr. Parkman than he was willing to tell. This angered the physician and he retorted hotly:

"How do I know but that you have murdered Dr. Parkman?"

The lean face of Littlefield turned pale; the mere suggestion of such a thing shocked him inexpressibly.

"What do you mean?" he challenged.

"I mean just what I say. You were alone in the Medical School with Parkman; you alone had the opportunity of bringing about his death if you had desired it. It seems to me it would be well for you to sing low, unless you are looking for trouble."

From that time forth the two men were at daggers' points. In most investigations of this kind the police take the leading part; in the Parkman tragedy John Littlefield occupied the center of the stage. The murder preyed on his mind; he thought of it day and night and his one desire was to find the person who was responsible for the disappearance of George Parkman. It is likely that his affection for the missing man had something to do with his enthusiasm. Parkman had been kind to Littlefield, as he had been to everybody connected with the Medical School.

Naturally the first step in the investigation had been to make a thorough search of the Medical School. Every apartment was visited. John Littlefield acted as the guide for the police, and it was by his insistence that particular attention was paid to Webster's room. But nothing of an incriminating nature was found there, nor, indeed, in any part of the building. Littlefield's suspicions of Webster were so apparent that they could not be ignored. After the search of the Medical School the officer in charge of the police interviewed Littlefield. The substance of their talk follows:

"What makes you think Dr. Webster has any knowledge of this affair?"

"Because of a conversation I overheard between the two men," was the reply.

"When was that?"

"On the Monday before Parkman disappeared."

"What was said during this conversation?"

"Dr. Parkman said: 'Dr. Webster, are you ready for me tonight?'"

"What did he say?"

"He said: 'No, I am not ready for you tonight, Doctor.'"

"So you think there was something significant in that?"

"I certainly do—and that is why I consider it important to make Dr. Webster explain all of his movements on the day that Dr. Parkman disappeared."

But Dr. Webster, upon being questioned, upset all calculations by frankly admitting that this conversation had taken place.

"Certainly; there is nothing in it that cannot be told. It had to do with the loan I obtained from Dr. Parkman.

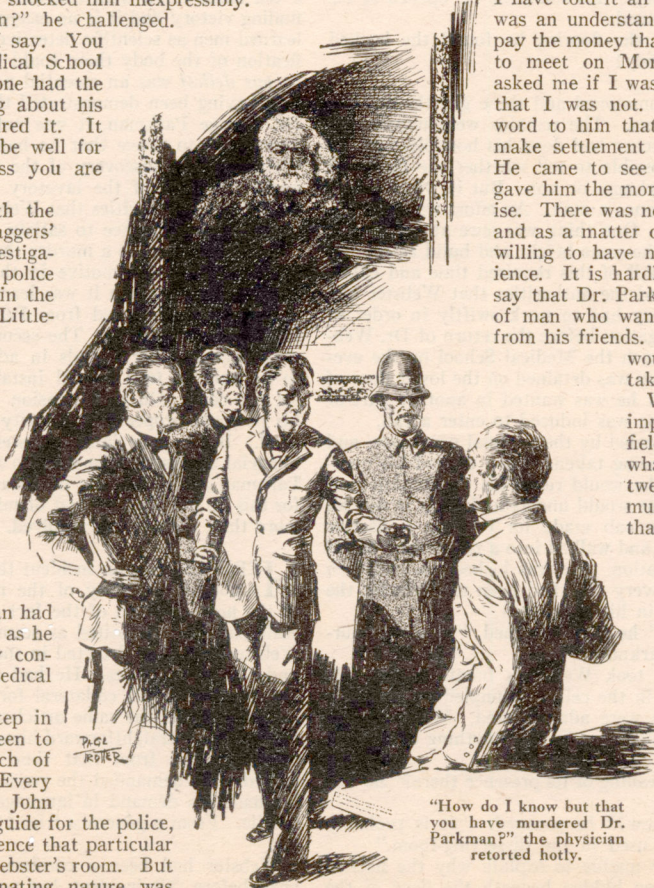
I have told it all to his brother. There was an understanding that I was to repay the money that week. We happened to meet on Monday and the Doctor asked me if I was ready and I told him that I was not. On Thursday I sent word to him that I would be ready to make settlement on the following day. He came to see me on Friday and I gave him the money according to promise. There was no feeling on either side and as a matter of fact he was entirely willing to have me pay at my convenience. It is hardly necessary for me to say that Dr. Parkman was not the kind of man who wanted to make anything from his friends. He was the kind who would rather give than take."

Webster conveyed the impression that as Littlefield was so familiar with what had taken place between the two doctors, he must have been aware that the money was to be paid on Friday. In other words he knew that Parkman would have money in his possession on that day. Might he not have robbed Parkman? And might there not have been a struggle during which Parkman was killed?

The accusation had the effect of stimulating the zeal of John Littlefield. He worked harder than ever. He

became the Nemesis of Webster—he felt that he was the agent of retributive justice.

All of this, be it remembered, was before there was any proof whatever that Webster had anything to do with the disappearance of Dr. Parkman.



"How do I know but that you have murdered Dr. Parkman?" the physician retorted hotly.

It is curious how very small things furnish the clues which lead to the discovery of more important evidence. Littlefield prowled about the building constantly, hoping against hope that he would find something that would lead to a solution. And then, one day, he found a small button. It was a shirt button and it belonged to Dr. Parkman. To some persons this would have meant nothing at all; to John Littlefield it meant everything. It confirmed the suspicions that had been in his mind from the very beginning of the case. It satisfied him that Parkman had been murdered. It was said of a famous French detective that if you gave him a button he could construct a suit of clothes around it. That was what happened in this famous New England case.

He bided his time, and one day learned that Webster was to be out of the city for at least twenty-four hours. Early the next morning Littlefield made his way into Webster's room with a hatchet and chisel. He recalled that every part of this room had been inspected except the lavatory. That had been given but a cursory glance.

It was on November 30th, just seven days after the disappearance, that John Littlefield began to pry up the flooring of the lavatory. The moment he opened it his suspicions were confirmed.

In the vault under the flooring he found the hacked remains of a human body!

THE police were summoned and these ghastly exhibits turned over to them. The remains were unrecognizable; the victim's butcher had done his horrible work so well that it was impossible to tell whether the flesh and bones belonged to Parkman or not. But it was all that was left of what was once a man. An effort was made to reconstruct the body. One thing was sure at the outset. The remains were of the same height and build as the unfortunate Parkman. All of this required time and effort, but the results satisfied the authorities that Webster had much to explain. They had to work swiftly in order to complete their investigation before the return of Dr. Webster. When he did reach the Medical School on the evening of the discovery he was detained on the lower floor of the building, told that he was wanted in another part of the city, and by a ruse was induced to enter a cab.

The suspect was puzzled by the unusual procedure, and asked where he was being taken. They evaded his questions by saying that he would reach his destination in a little while and then he would understand what it was all about. Presently the cab made its way up a narrow alley, and he alighted and walked into a room—and found himself in a police-station. He was locked up, and then informed of the discovery that had been made under the floor of the lavatory in his apartment.

"You are charged," he was informed, "with the murder of Dr. George Parkman."

The announcement took Webster's breath away. He sank on the iron cot in the cell, a crumpled mass of humanity. Restoratives were administered. When he was revived, he feebly denied that he had anything to do with the hacked body.

"But what is the meaning of its presence there?" he was asked.

"How should I know?" he moaned. "It is probably some body that was used in the dissecting-room."

But he was utterly unable to explain why the hacked body should have been hidden beneath the floor of the lavatory. The idea that he had been "framed" was too far-fetched to be seriously considered.

In the meantime Littlefield, having made a ten-strike by finding the remains in the apartment of Webster, was in search of other evidence. He went to the cellar of the

Medical School and in the furnace found a number of calcined bones, the remains of a set of false teeth and another shirt button. It was evident that an attempt had been made to burn the remains—and that it was only partially successful. Once again came proof of the old belief that there is always some detail which helps to fix the guilt of murder on its perpetrator.

Dr. George Parkman was known to have used false teeth, and the dentist who looked after his dental work was called. He was shown the remains of the set of false teeth and positively identified the exhibit as part of a set that he had made for Dr. Parkman. He said he knew his own work and could not possibly be mistaken. It was testified that Parkman had an abnormal peculiarity in the lower jaw which required an unusual form of block. The set found corresponded precisely with his molds. Thus the conclusion was reached that this was the body of Dr. Parkman. It was probably the first time in this country that a group of scientists were called upon to prove that the dismembered parts of a corpse were part of a certain body—and that, the body of a certain man. The head was missing entirely; one of the legs was found in a tea chest filled with tanbark. It was a notable fact-finding victory and it is no exaggeration to describe these learned men as scientific detectives. Without their identification of the body there could have been no trial. The *corpus delicti* was an essential part of this case.

It having been demonstrated that this was the body of Dr. George Parkman, it was now the task of the Commonwealth to prove that he had been murdered by Dr. Webster. The discovery of the remains in the vault beneath the floor of the lavatory in Webster's apartment satisfied the authorities that Webster was guilty, but they needed more evidence to satisfy a jury.

Whenever there is a murder there must be a motive for it. What was the motive in this case? An inkling of the truth came when it was learned that the \$400 which Webster had borrowed from Parkman was not the only loan he had obtained. The second time Parkman joined with several other friends in advancing Webster \$2432, to be paid in four annual installments with interest at six per cent. On this occasion Dr. Webster gave all of his personal property as security on the loan. So far, so good. But a year later Webster found himself in such financial straits that he went to the brother-in-law of Dr. Parkman and obtained a new loan of \$1,200. As security for this he put up a cabinet of minerals which were worth more than the amount involved.

HERE then was an incident that threw a flood of light upon the mystery of the motive. Parkman heard of the new loan and of the fact that the cabinet of minerals had been deposited as security, and he was furious. Webster had been detected in the act of obtaining money under false pretenses. He had already put up the cabinet of minerals as collateral for the first loan, and now he had pledged the same articles for the last one. Parkman was too straightforward himself to tolerate dishonesty in others and from that time his regard for Webster ceased. He demanded the payment of his own loan and he made his demand in language that was unmistakably hostile. From a generous friend he became a nasty creditor.

Webster had been a careless, happy-go-lucky sort of chap before this incident, but now he became a harassed man, trying to escape the importunities of a relentless persecutor. The thing got on his nerves and—perhaps unconsciously to himself—he was approaching the edge of the cliff of tragedy.

As these facts came to the knowledge of the police, bit

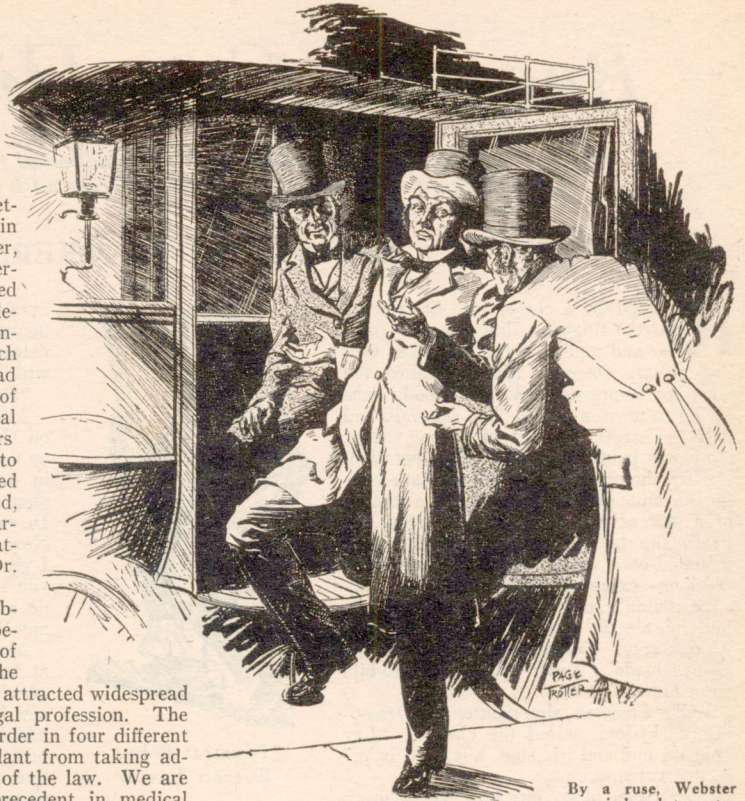
by bit, they furnished a perfect motive for the awful crime which had shocked the professors and students of Harvard.

With Webster in jail the authorities found other incidents which helped to make the mountain of evidence that was being piled up against him. For instance, Webster sent his daughter a letter instructing her to keep a certain package which he had left with her, but not to open it. The police intercepted this letter and then proceeded to the home of the Websters and demanded the package. The bundle contained the original note for \$400 which Webster owed to Parkman. It had not been canceled and that was proof of the falsity of part of his original statement. Also they found papers giving evidence of indebtedness to Parkman on other items. It was learned that Webster had bought oxalic acid, fish-hooks and string, and other articles that had been utilized in the attempt to conceal the remains of Dr. Parkman.

The case against John White Webster was very strong when it went before the jury. The trial was one of the most notable in the history of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It attracted widespread attention from members of the legal profession. The counts in the indictment charged murder in four different ways in order to prevent the defendant from taking advantage of any of the technicalities of the law. We are told that the trial established a precedent in medical jurisprudence. Chief Justice Shaw presided and the Attorney-General conducted the prosecution. Webster was represented by Pliny Merrick, one of the noted lawyers of his day and generation. He fought hard, but he must have realized that he was fighting against the impossible odds. The Earl of Birkenhead, one of the great jurists of England, thus comments on this phase of the case:

"The trial lasted for twelve days, and during the whole period the prisoner was comforted by the presence of some members of his family. His wife and daughters were whole-hearted believers in his innocence, and came to sustain him. For eight days witness after witness came into the box, and gradually the case against the prisoner strengthened. Then Mr. Sohier, the junior for the defense, opened their case. It is sufficient to recall the attorney's comment that on such a charge and on the facts in evidence, he devoted two hours and five minutes to the law and ten minutes only to the facts. Many witnesses were called as to Webster's high character and reputation. There was no question as to that: he could not have held his chair otherwise.

"Other witnesses were called mainly on two points: to throw doubt on the identification of the remains and to prove that Dr. Parkman had been seen alive and well after his call at the Medical School. On the tenth day rebutting evidence was admitted, and then Mr. Merrick made the final effort for the defense. He spoke at great length and with florid eloquence, but he was severely handicapped by the strength of the case made against his client. The great defect was that he did not take any clear line, but suggested a number of defenses inconsistent with one another. It is, of course, often the duty of



By a ruse, Webster was induced to enter a cab.

counsel to suggest alternative defenses, and it may be a potent criticism of the prosecution's case to show that a number of explanations, consistent with that case, are possible without involving the conclusion that the prisoner is guilty. But the jury is apt to consider the use of alternative arguments as a confession of weakness, and for this reason great caution is needed when using them. But Mr. Merrick made observations which were only intelligible on the assumption that the remains were those of Dr. Parkman, though he strongly challenged this conclusion."

It has been said that the summing up of Chief Justice Shaw was "one of the classic expositions of the nature and use of circumstantial evidence." This was highly important because the whole case against Dr. Webster rested on circumstantial evidence.

The jury deliberated less than three hours and then brought in an unanimous verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree.

There was a nerve-racking scene when the prisoner was sentenced to death. Later he made a plea for mercy, and in doing it fully admitted his guilt. He said that, maddened by the sneers of Parkman, he had struck him down—and then, panic-stricken, had tried to hide the evidence of his crime.

His plea for mercy was refused. When all hope was gone, Webster sent for John Littlefield and begged his forgiveness for what he had said about him. He declared the sentence was a just one, and on August 30, 1850, he died, resigned to his fate.

Bugwine Gets His Man

A dark detective and his faithful bloodhound tree a bank-president and make the local welkin ring with excitement.

By ARTHUR K. AKERS

ROUNDING a corner into Strawberry Street, Bugwine Breck, junior partner and janitor in the Columbus Collins private detective agency, gained the startling impression that somebody was trying to move a fence. The sidewalk and half the street in front of a long-vacant store was being blocked by the operation.

Then the presence of a disconsolate-looking one-mule dray at the curb, and a glimpse of a pair of oversized feet staggering beneath the burden of a huge cloth sign mounted on a wooden frame, explained everything—except what the sign said. Bugwine couldn't read. "Old sign bigger'n de buildin', aint it, Willie?" volunteered Bugwine affably. Talking shop with an artist always made it easier to borrow two-bits from him later.

Willie Freeman, sign-painter for Demopolis darykdom, seized the chance. "Lay hold on one end dis sign, boy, and he'p," he instructed, adding:

"Hit's some of yo' own business, nohow."

Mr. Breck was surprised in a new place. As junior partner, he was generally the last to hear of events in the agency, but word of anything as big as this sign should have reached even him by now.

"Huccome *my* business?" He backed off, showing an increasing amount of white in eyes that already wore the put-upon expression which a year's business association with the domineering Columbus Collins naturally engendered in a sawed-off little darky wearing overalls, a straw hat with its crown stepped-through, and two flap-soled left shoes.

"You de big detectin'-boy, aint you?"

Bugwine shifted a tin star the size of a young piepan into view.

"Well, dis some mo' of yo' head-man's foolishment. Columbus done awder dis sign, and heah 'tis. Git yo' back under it, and he'p me h'ist it up 'cross de secumdstory front of de new bank heah."

The surplus of ideas presented choked the intake on Mr. Breck's intellect, while curiosity mounted as to the nature of the business that required so large a sign. If the detective agency was going into some new field of endeavor, it was time even Bugwine was hearing of it. And what was this talk of banks?

"Whut kind of business me and Columbus gwine run in dis heah place?"

"You aint gwine run nothin' in heah!" Willie knocked a globe crashing from a white-way lighting standard, in an awkward effort to clear an automobile top and Mr. Breck's fog-bound mental processes. "—Jest de *sign* be yoorn; de business be de bank's."

Bugwine's mouth opened to help his ears, but to no



Illustrated by
Everett Lowry

avail. Willie kept on saying *bank*; and banks were—like restaurants—something detectives never had had anything to do with since Bugwine entered the profession.

"Huccome 'bank'?" he struggled.

Mr. Freeman looked down pityingly upon the barren waste which Bugwine kept on using for a face. "Bank," he elucidated in words of one syllable, "is whut de big man whut rent dis place gwine run in it. De sign is Columbus' part of de business. Now, you start haulin' on dis rope when I gits hit through de block up yander. Is you strawing in de back as you is weak in de mind, have old sign hung in no time now!"

Mr. Breck hauled, but in a daze, until at length a vast expanse of black letters on white cloth practically overshadowed the new banking-house. And the admiring but addled Bugwine was three blocks up Strawberry Street, in the direction of the detective agency's alley headquarters, before it occurred to him that he still did not know

what the sign said or portended.

At headquarters Columbus was waiting sternly for him. Columbus was a long, gangling darky in a battered greenish derby, plaid plus-fours, and a grouch.

"Whar at dat bloodhound of yoorn, boy?" he rasped.

Bugwine winced. When Columbus said "bloodhound" he meant a more or less distant relative of all the dogs in Alabama, which Mr. Breck had obstinately added to their staff, over the savage protests of Mr. Collins his chief that there were too many big appetites in the agency already.

"Old Coney Island out rabbitin' wid Mist' Snews' dawg," defended Bugwine truculently. "Dawg same as me—he git so hongry workin' for you he 'bleeged to take a day off from detectin' and run: hisse'f down some eatin'-vittles."

Columbus ignored innuendoes. "Jest wants tell you," he snapped, "dat dat dawg got stay away from heah now. From now on. Us done got class."

Bugwine blinked uneasily. Any changes were always for the worse. "Huccome 'class'?" he hazarded hopelessly.

"Jest awdered a sign so can't nobody miss hit," expanded Columbus obscurely. "Yo' gal, Geranium Snews, help me git hit up."

Bugwine's lower lip began to stick out like a dock. "Keeps tellin' you stay away from my gal!" he muttered belligerently. A boy who looked like Bugwine had trouble enough making any headway with the women, without having competition from his business superior.

"Her papa, Mist' Big Ugly Snews, invite me round," retorted Columbus complacently. "Say he gwine have a mess of money to put in de bank, so he crave hisse'f

a son-in-law wid some sense. Lookin' right at me when he say hit. I advises him financial."

Fresh mutterings from Mr. Breck indicated a bull's-eye for Mr. Collins. Big Ugly Snews was well-named: a man of means and might. And whoever got the refulgent Geranium had to please the muscular Big Ugly first—which was where Columbus had already stolen a march on Bugwine with this financial-advice business. This made it time, Mr. Breck realized, for a smaller boy to change the subject while he tried for a fresh hand-hold on luck.

"You means de big sign Willie Freeman is puttin' up across de store whut de new bank rented?" he got on less dangerous ground.

"Yeah. De big one at de top's oun; it say: 'Dis bank protected by de Columbus Collins Detectin' Agency—Columbus Collins, Pres'dent and Gin'ral Manager. A Criminal wid Every Case.'"

Bugwine looked respectful in spite of himself. Old sign sounded noble! Then he thought of something else. "Whar at de bank's sign be? You done took up all de room!"

"Down at de bottom, on de winder. Say 'Bank of G'awgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. A. Carbon Hill, Pres'dent.'"

"Big noise yourn; little noise de bank's—dat it?"

"So as to skeer off de crooks. Dey see who guardin' de bank first, and aint even wait around to read who de bank is."

"So as to skeer off de crooks. Dey see who guardin' old bank, is us?" Bugwine made unauthorized use of the plural. "Hot dawg! Struts myse'f copious 'mongst de money, maybe old dollar-bill fall off on de floor, and us eats, me and old Coney Island—"

Mr. Collins blighted Mr.

Breck and a new wrong notion in the bud, as it were. "Struts youse'f among de money!" he scoffed. "Boy, hold me while I hollers! Why, is folks jest see you around dat bank, hit starts a run on hit. Aint I jest finish tellin' you us done got class? Dat leave you and dat pooch of yourn out. Mess up eve'y case you gits on now, widout messin' up de bank—"

"Gits classy," interrupted Bugwine mournfully, "is I had nothin' to eat, and some clothes—"

"Clothes is right! Dey's a unifawm goes wid de job. Bank furnish hit and I w'ars hit. Green coat, pu'ple pants, gold braid and no brim on de cap. Letters on de coat—say 'Bank of G'awgia, Alabama, and Miss'ippi—Special Off'cer.'"

Bugwine's mental mouth watered. If Geranium could see him—Bugwine—in a unifor'n like that! Then the dream faded, reversed itself. Geranium was going to see it—but on the manly form of her father's new financial adviser and Bugwine's rival, Columbus.

Columbus read his look of longing aright—and stepped

on Mr. Breck in a new place. "Runt like you," he patronized his partner, "cut down de bank's territory, account can't git all dat writin' on your coat. Dat huccome I guards de bank and advises financial wid Geranium's papa, and 'sociates prominent wid de bank pres'dent. Don't you come stickin' yo' nose up against de bank-winder lookin' in at me, neither!"

Mr. Breck sighed.

"—And don't forgit what I says about dat dawg of yourn, too," Mr. Collins ground his aide deeper in the spiritual dust. "You let dat slat-ribbed pooch come round about one time, tryin' to tree a coon or bury one dem beef-bones in de bank lobby, and whar is you? On yo' ear—dat whar you is, nigger, on yo' ear! So, you stay way from de bank, you and dat cheese-hound of yourn! I's gwine to be too busy to be embarrassed by you."

"Who dis A. Carbon Hill boy, nohow?" dissembled Mr. Breck sullenly.

"Come over heah from Montgomery and 'ranges to git de new bank started," outlined Columbus loftily. "Den he go back home to lay de cawnerstone of a church. Be back heah later."

"Lay a aig, is he want to!" mumbled Mr. Breck, but discreetly, under his breath.

"So, from now on," continued Mr. Collins caustically, "you aint even go by de bank. I speaks to you *after* bankin' hours; durin' 'em, I aint know you."

AROUND the newly opened institution, Columbus Collins was at last in his glory—but glory with a fly in it. True, he had the brilliant green coat, the purple pants, the gold-braided brimless cap once worn by a movie-usher in Montgomery. But the fly was the pompous president. Associating with bank presidents wasn't proving the unmixed joy it had seemed in prospect.

"Dat A. Carbon Hill nigger so tight he has to unbutton he vest to breathe!" quareled Mr. Collins one evening shortly after, in the privacy of his agency.

"All time figurin' de interest on a nickle makes dem bankin' boys dat way," offered Mr. Breck helpfully though mistakenly.

"Not dis heah A. Carbon Hill boy! He aint git his mind off de princ'pal long enough to study 'bout no interest—"

"Banker whut aint study 'bout interest done daid," interjected Mr. Breck reminiscently.

"Shet up! Dis heah

de first week of me guardin' de bank, and how you reckon dat unburned Scotchman done pay off?"

Bugwine's detecting experience didn't include anybody paying off at all. His expression mournfully indicated as much.

"He puts my money in a savin's-account for me!"



"Bugwine makes me nervous, all time lookin' longin' in my bowl while I nourishes."

snorted Columbus. "Dat way, he pay off and keep de money too!"

Mr. Breck's eyes widened admiringly. Anyone that could give Columbus lessons in parsimony was good!

"Aint even spend gittin' for he lunch!" grumbled Mr. Collins. "Fotch hit wid him, in a suitcase, eve'y day. Nourishes noble but cheap. All time suitcase settin' about in de bank."

"How de bankin' business gittin' on?" queried Bugwine hesitantly.

Columbus snapped erect. He had overlooked a chance to boast. "Busier'n movin'-day in a ant-hill!" he repaired the omission. "Dat A. Carbon Hill boy tight but bright, when hit come to gittin' de business. He say place to git de business is on de outside whar de business is. All time circulatin' mongst de boys. Done got four lodges, two barber-shops, and dat new blind tiger depositin' money in de bank yest'day. Also, Mist' Big Ugly Snews puts in hundred and two dollars, on account of me guardin' de bank and advisin' him financial."

The last shot told. Bugwine's bottom lip got to casting a longer shadow than ever; Columbus was undermining him with Geranium some more, by building himself up with Geranium's father.

"All dat bank needs now is for you and dat dawg to keep away from hit," concluded Mr. Collins. "Lousy wid class, is you do dat."

"Stays anywhars us can git some'n to eat—dat keep us away from you!" countered Mr. Breck inadequately. He was getting not only out-generated but out-talked in this Snews banking matter: Geranium's father hadn't asked *his* advice about anything!

"Whut de pres'dent-boy look like?" demanded Bugwine resentfully.

"Million dollars. Spec's, vest, frocktail coat, no patches on his breeches. Dat boy de snake's spats around Montgomery, too. He de head-man in eve'ything. You git crossed up wid him, and you aint *nowhar* in Montgomery; you's done sunk! Gittin' dat way over heah pow'ful fast,

too—only you aint able 'sociate wid him and find it out. Dat one man you got to suit, boy, or dey aint rabbits enough in Alabama to furnish you wid all de hind-foots you gwine need. Lucked-powders jest lays down and quits on you, is you git messed up wid dat man!"

Bugwine couldn't help being impressed. He drifted discouragely down Fish Alley. High society and high finance had shut their doors in his face, but his nose was still working, and old Fish Alley atmosphere sure smelled noble! Fish, barbecue, and oxygen in approximately equal parts constituted and distinguished it. Mr. Breck shuffled through it, entered the barbecue-stand of Mr. "Bees'-Knees" Thompson—and plumped squarely into news of the third member of the detective agency.

"Why aint you feed dat dawg of yourn, Bugwine?" quarreled the proprietor on sight.

"On whut?" Bugwine was open to suggestions.

"Vittles. Cain't nobody carry a pohk-chop down de alley no mo' widout dat Coney Island hound treein' 'em!" elaborated the aggrieved Mr. Thompson. "Dat huccome I's half-houah late openin' up dis mawnin'."

"Keeps on tellin' de mess-faced li'l runt not to git dat dawg in de agency!" a new voice aligned itself with that of Bees'-Knees. "All time gummin' up de cases now, wid-out gittin' no pooch to make it wuss."

Bugwine didn't have to look. His master's voice sounded—and said—the same, wherever he heard it.

"Gimme bowl of Brunswick stew—and open de door so Bugwine can git out," further demanded Columbus. "Makes me nervous, all time lookin' longin' in my bowl while I nourishes."

Due to this latest insult, the dismissed Bugwine missed still bigger news.

Willie Freeman, poring over a newspaper and a week's work for a hen, in a far corner, was responsible for it.

"Dawg-gone!" shrilled Willie excitedly.

"Dawg-gone whut?" Columbus attended to his stew and a crease in his movie-usher's uniform.

"Old bank robbers headin' dis way—"

Columbus' jaw dropped into his stew, and practically had to be hoisted back into place by hand. "B-better detour deys'eves befo' dey gits to Demopolis," he tried to make his voice sound bold.

"Five bandits drives up in front of de Fourth National Bank of Linden, colored," read Willie aloud and avidly. "And looted hit, after lockin' de cashier and two customers in de vault. De bank *guard*, who wuz shot four times in de back while leavin', may recover but will not—"

Willie's reading was suddenly ruined by the crash and clatter of Columbus' bowl on the floor. Mr. Collins was not himself. His face had paled to the color of a piece of fried liver, and he was making scabbling motions with his feet while his eyes rolled uneasily. Linden, his expression indicated, wasn't far from Demopolis, but Columbus Collins was going to be, if he didn't get a grip on his feet quickly.

"Gwine be some'n to de bankin' job for Columbus *now*, 'sides struttin' hisse'f in dem pu'ple pants!" an auditor put matters in their worst light.

A new quivering in the knees of Detective Collins showed exactly how he felt about that—leaving a big detective all out of bold fronts, right when he needed one most! Bank-guarding had never looked



"Come on, so I can introduce you to de pres'dent of bank. Mingle yo'self mongst de big boys now."

less attractive; yet how was he to get out of it?

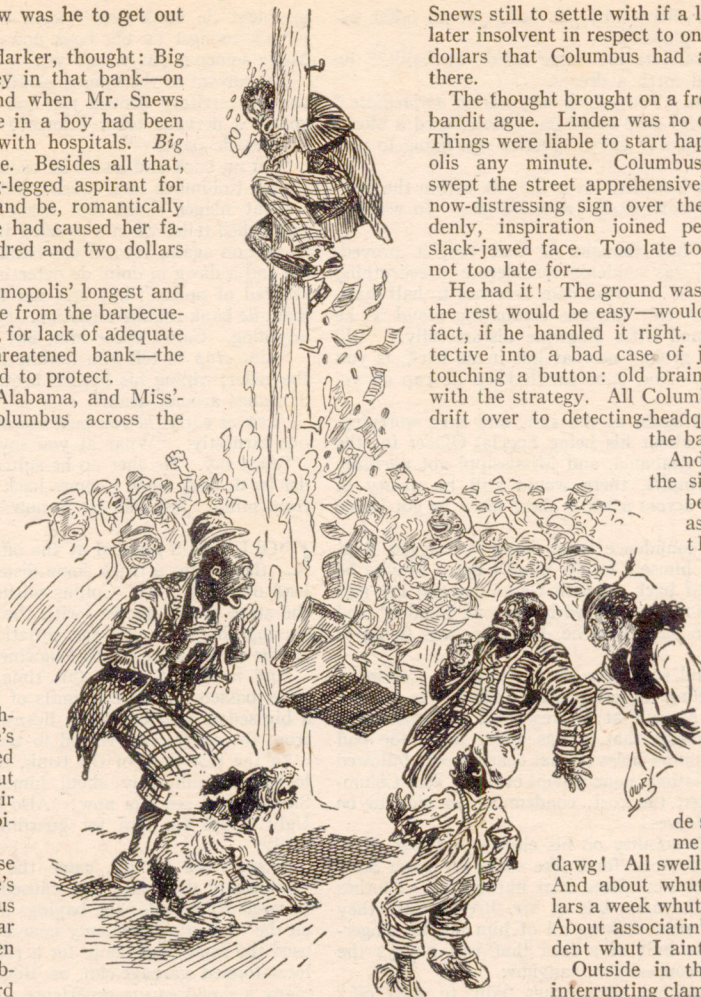
Then another, and darker, thought: Big Ugly Snews had money in that bank—on Columbus' advice. And when Mr. Snews felt that his confidence in a boy had been misplaced he said it with hospitals. *Big Ugly* was no idle name. Besides all that, where would any long-legged aspirant for the fair Geranium's hand be, romantically speaking, just after he had caused her father a loss of one hundred and two dollars in a looted bank?

Leaden feet took Demopolis' longest and sickest private detective from the barbecue-stand; and carried him, for lack of adequate alibi, back to the threatened bank—the bank that he was hired to protect.

"Bank of G'awgia, Alabama, and Miss'ippi," spelled out Columbus across the street from it. Old name sure took in a heap of territory—and old ointment was *all* fly now! Doubts as to the defensive powers of his huge sign across the bank's upper story mounted menacingly; it was likely to attract rather than repel bank robbers of the caliber and ruthlessness which Willie's reading had revealed them—likely to point out to them just where their quarry—and its palpitating detective—was!

Then another phase and phrase of Willie's account froze Columbus in the region of the solar plexus: nobody had been hurt in the Linden robbery but the bank guard—but *that* gentleman had been ruined on the hoof, even while retreat-

ing. Bank-guarding looked worse to Columbus all the time. Mr. Collins shuffled nervously around the block, to see if his business would get any better. It didn't. He was right back where he had started, in more senses than one, when he had finished circling the newest danger-zone for detectives. His sign "This Bank Protected by the Columbus Collins Detective Agency—Columbus Collins, President and General Manager," made him too prominent; it pointed him right out, put everything up to him—who wasn't even getting paid for it. That grievance re-arose in new magnitude and a new light. Getting shot for four dollars a week might be all right—if you got the four dollars. But Columbus didn't: all he got was a book with writing in it, which fact was now making him more fed up with financiers every minute. Old A. Carbon Hill had a boy hog-tied, too: if he quit without notice, try and get it would be the president's parsimonious policy, so far as back-pay was concerned. But, if he stayed on the job, old purple pants were liable to get full of lead slug-holes—with Columbus inside of them! And Big Ugly



With the wowl of a doomed soul, he lost his hold upon his suitcase. The rest was swift and startling.

Snews still to settle with if a looted bank proved later insolvent in respect to one hundred and two dollars that Columbus had advised depositing there.

The thought brought on a fresh attack of bank-bandit ague. Linden was no distance off, either. Things were liable to start happening in Demopolis any minute. Columbus' anguished gaze swept the street apprehensively, alighted on his now-distressing sign over the bank—and, suddenly, inspiration joined perspiration on his slack-jawed face. Too late to take it down, but not too late for—

He had it! The ground was already prepared; the rest would be easy—would be jumped at, in fact, if he handled it right. Scaring a big detective into a bad case of jitters was merely touching a button: old brain came right back with the strategy. All Columbus had to do was drift over to detecting-headquarters, and start the ball to rolling.

And at headquarters the signs couldn't have been better if an astrologer had been the stage-manager, in that Bugwine was present, also peevish.

"Struts yo'se'f about in dem fine clothes!" he upbraided his superior. "Push your palm in my face when I axes you for two-bits on my wages on de street! Aint know me! Aint know my dawg! All swell' up twel you pops. And about whut? About fo' dollars a week whut you aint even git! About associatin' wid a bank-pres' dent whut I aint even seen—"

Outside in the street arose an interrupting clamor—a lusty-lunged newsboy in: "*Wuxtree! Wuxtree! Big bank rob—*"

Fast work on Mr. Collins' part cut a dangerous word in two in the middle, as he slammed the agency's one open window shut. Kicking over an empty coal-scuttle further insured Bugwine's not hearing the wrong thing at the wrong time.

"Jest whut I comes hear to talk to you about," Columbus turned back on his assistant. "—On account of me and Mist' Snews gittin' on so good wid me advisin' him financial, I got to reawg'nize de agency. Dat, and me not treatin' you right—"

Mr. Breck swallowed his cigarette-stub, an accident made worse by the fact that it was lighted.

"Says *huh?*" he betrayed his amazement at the last statement, when resuscitation of self and cigarette had been achieved by him.

"Says aint treat you right, maybe—doin' all de work myse'f, and not lettin' you circulate amongst de classy clients none."

Bugwine's eyes stuck out still farther in his efforts to envision the African in this woodpile. He rubbed his ears incredulously. The weather was too cool for Colum-

bus to have been affected by the heat, yet no other explanation seemed plausible—

"You means you lets *me* come inside de bank?" he hastily dragged forth a dream.

"In dis unifawm. You guards hit, startin' *immediate*."

Bugwine's grateful gasp could have been heard a block. Here was glory that *was* glory. Justice was fixing to prevail at last!

Then a problem intruded—ever the rift within the lute: Columbus was approximately twice his size. So was the uniform.

But Columbus had thought of that too, it proved. Columbus, indeed, was suddenly considerate of everything—even Bugwine. So:—"Roll dem breeches to half-mast, and you kin wear 'em," he was estimating aloud as he eyed the slab-footed little Bugwine distastefully. "Old coat aint drag de ground nowhar but in de back, is you stand up straight. And your ears'll keep de cap off yo' nose."

Bugwine looked again at the suit, and quit worrying. Even if that line about his being Special Officer for the Bank of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi got partially lost under his armpits, there would still be plenty of language showing across a boy's chest when he got inside that coat.

"Builds up de confidence in de bank!" bragged Bugwine on sight of himself in his mind's eye. Maybe he could build himself back up with Geranium and her rich parent too, now—the parent with the one hundred and two dollars in the bank that he, Bugwine, was fixing to guard!

"Make haste and snap into de unifawm!" Columbus was already shedding the green coat. There was no way for his helper to know that his regretful look was occasioned by the thought that it was going to be too bad to have a mess of bullet-holes in that coat—regret followed by a noble renunciation: none should ever say that Columbus Collins counted the cost, condemned an aide to be shot in his shirt-sleeves!

Following which nobility on his chief's part, Mr. Bugwine Breck shortly stood forth like some shrunken Solomon, in a uniform that fitted him like a tent. Clothes might not make the man, but in Mr. Breck's case they came dangerously near making all of him but his fingertips and the lower half of a face that was always the better for partial concealment, anyhow.

"Signal dem breeches when you's fixin' to start off," counseled Columbus, "so dey aint git too fur back of you. Now, make haste and shows you how to guard de bank."

Bugwine had never seen a boy in such haste to change jobs and clothes, and said so. "Waits now twel gits my gun," he further delayed the impatient Columbus.

"Huccome 'gun'?" asked his superior.

"Ducktooth Carnes lends me his'n," Bugwine bragged.

WHICH accounted for more delay—and at last the appearance of the enshrouded Bugwine upon the public pavements with a bell-mouthed fowling-piece, muzzle-loaded with glass, screws, gravel, and other idiosyncrasies of Mr. Carnes' in the ammunition line.

Then he halted again at a memory. "Whar at Coney Island?" he dealt in last straws.

"Settin' outside de meat-store all mawnin'," recalled Mr. Collins nervously. "Better leave him dar, too; you and him all time gummin' up eve'ything you gits into."

"Wuxtree! Wuxtree! All-l-l about de big bank—" sounded faintly, incompletely, far down the street.

"Come on! Git gwine!" broke in Columbus loudly, as an extra precaution. "—So I can in'tduce you to de

pres'dent de bank befo' closin'-time. Mix and mingles yo'se'f 'mongst de big boys now—same as I been doin'. Make somep'n out yo'se'f yit."

But advent of the famous sleuths at the little bank with the big territory proved just too late. "Mist' Hill done gone," a nervous teller informed the expedition, "before he seen de paper—"

"Git on back and guard de back door, Bugwine!" interrupted Columbus in a rousing bellow.

"Dat nigger dumb but brave," he explained to the astonished teller when a puzzled Bugwine had his trousers in motion again, toward the bank's rear exit. "He 'sists me and a dawg in doin' de detectin'. He so dumb he aint skeered of nothin', but best not to let him know nothin' 'bout de bank-robbin' situation. Stir him up and he shoots anything. Caint' *skeer* him, but powerful easy excited."

"Aint *stop* to tell him nothin' my ownse'f," acquiesced the teller, wiping his beaded brow. "I aint like de looks of things around heah."

"Leaves early, is you beat *me* out," contributed Columbus earnestly. "Whar at you say Mist' Hill gone?"

"Aint say. He shet up he suitcase after lunch. Settin' dar by de desk when I comes back from de barbecue-stand from mine. Jest like hit is now."

COLUMBUS glanced at the offending suitcase—but at the instant a truck some distance up street dumped a load of bricks. Mr. Collins misunderstood the sound, in the state of his nerves—with the teller no mean second, leaving the bank and the situation in more or less sole charge of assistant sleuth Bugwine Breck.

And it was at about this time, as Columbus and the teller passed the eastern limits of Demopolis in high, that a big sedan with Louisiana license-plates raced into town from the south, and veered to the northeast.

In the rear door of the bank, the resplendent Bugwine looked magnificently about him. He wished Geranium Snews could see him now! Also her father. Maybe Big Ugly would tip him for guarding the family funds so nobly.

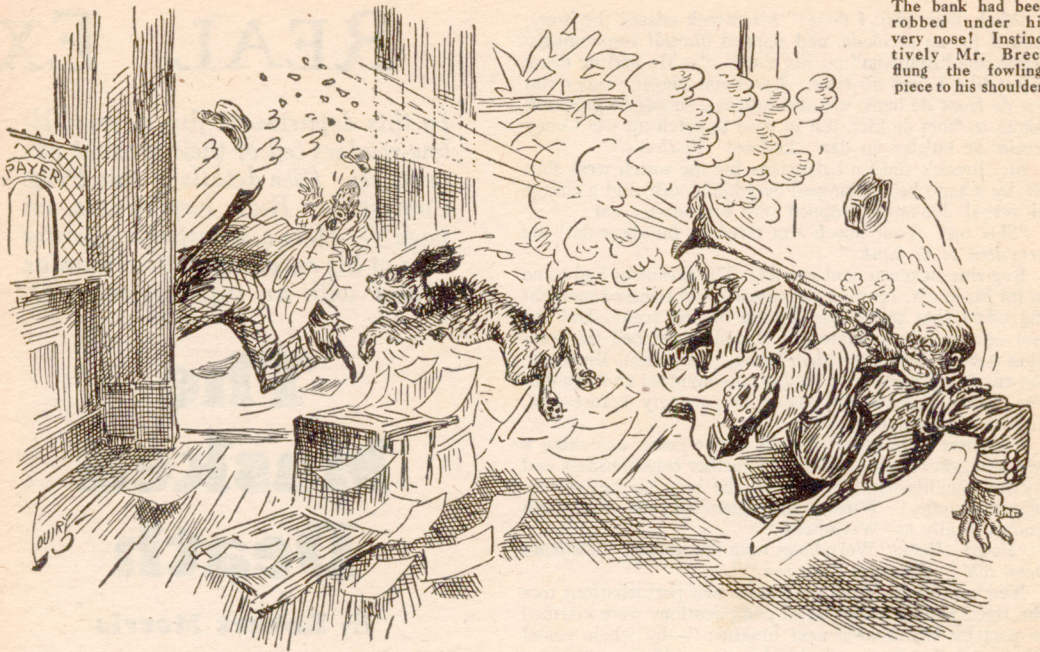
Then, from far off, came the sound of another disturbance of the peace that caused the bosom of Bugwine to swell with pride: the bayings of his dog Coney Island, on the trail of what quarry none could tell. Coney Island used the same eager note for a rabbit, a crook, or a good loose-topped garbage-can, as Bugwine had learned from many a shoe-wearing experience. Nevertheless, there was a dog that *was* a dog! "All time treenin' hisse'f somep'n!" mused his master proudly.

His gaze strayed downward to the one-man arsenal loaned him by Ducktooth. Mr. Carnes had warned him that it would shoot around a corner. But, like Prosperity, Bugwine was mixed up on which corner.

Coney Island's bayings swept nearer, to end deafeningly in the treeing of a cat just back of the bank. A clamor so great that the disappointed Bugwine, who had expected at least a hippopotamus, missed something vital because of it. There was no way for the bank's newest guardian, contemplating a treed cat and a belling howl in the institution's rear areaway without, to hear soft steps within the bank itself, followed by fumbling, sweeping sounds. Coney Island couldn't hear either, for the noise of his own mouth. But another sense suddenly caught him in mid-bay. He threw his nose sharply upward, sniffed, and broke into a lope and bayings worthy of *Eliza* crossing the ice. Not into the distance, but into the bank!

Bugwine's twin left shoes threw him for an instant loss of one yard. The new situation within the bank did the same for him intellectually. The full-throated clamor of Coney Island was mingling there with crash of furniture

The bank had been robbed under his very nose! Instinctively Mr. Breck flung the fowling-piece to his shoulder.



and yells for mercy. Then there was a wilder crash of glass, redoubled vocalization on the part of Coney and his prey, and some sort of chase was on!

The startled Bugwine threw himself into the breach, but not in time. As guardian of the bank, all he glimpsed by the time he had recovered his scattered wits was a suitcase being snatched through the door in front, with Coney Island in full cry after its speeding bearer. The bank had been robbed under his very nose! Instinctively Mr. Breck flung the ancient fowling-piece to his shoulder and pulled the trigger.

The result was a cross between a head-on collision of freight trains and an explosion in a powder factory, with Bugwine the main victim. Bugwine had clearly been on the more dangerous end of the weapon—for whoever got up the famous slogan that a man might be down but never out, hadn't seen Mr. Breck! Bugwine was both, in a big way. Knocked for a row of oil-tanks in the rear areaway of a bank, just as the entire populace, aroused by his shot, had deserted the spot in favor of the chase being led by Coney Island. —All of which was just five minutes before a large sedan with Louisiana license-plates slid swiftly to a halt in front of the same bank, where it disgorged five masked men, who stopped for nothing as they dived for vault and counter—silently at first, then profanely—while a sixth sat at the wheel, a "tommy-gun" in his lap.

Slowly Bugwine made out that he was listening to two earthly sparrows, and not to celestial canaries. Then it came sickeningly back to him—the bank he was guarding had been robbed. Deeper, distant sounds mingled with the sparrow's songs, and his heart lifted even as he rubbed the agony that was his right shoulder. The bank had been robbed, but Coney Island had treed the robber!

Limping through the wrecked and looted bank, Mr. Breck made out in one direction a cloud of dust, a glimpse of blue, as of hard driving; but in the other quarter lay the big noise, of Coney and his quarry. Vindication had come at last for Coney as a man-trailer and Bugwine as

his proprietor. Let Columbus rave henceforth—Bugwine had only to point to the facts; here was one bank-robber that Coney Island had treed practically red-handed. Indeed, only a deaf man could miss it. Geranium Snews, and her Samsonian father Big Ugly *wouldn't* miss it—not after Bugwine got through pointing out his prowess to them, recovering the one hundred and two dollars that Mr. Snews prized like one of his own eyes. Already Mr. Breck could hear Big Ugly's "Bless you, my children!" so far as he and Geranium was concerned.

Stumbling, tripping, falling over the unrolling legs of his purple pants, the gallant Bugwine set forth for the scene of treeing and triumph. As he ran, headlines ran before his eyes: "*Bugwine Breck Captures Robber.*" "*Bugwine Gets His Man!*" Bugwine and Coney Island—*sorte* pair! Curlers-up of Columbus, bulwarks of banks!

Then Mr. Breck rounded a corner, and his future was at his feet. First glance showed the stage set, the audience either there or still arriving at a run from every converging street—all but Columbus and the teller.

And halfway up a telephone-pole, the villain of the piece; baying excitedly at its foot, the assistant hero, Coney Island.

Bugwine lost his haste. It was all over now but capture for the crook, acclaim for Bugwine. While never would he have a bigger audience, a better chance to strut in uniform.

But, as ever, it was a returning Columbus who stole the spotlight and broke up the show—by galloping unexpectedly to the center of the stage, casting a puzzled glance upward at the treed prey of Coney, and bursting into some species of hydrophobia, apparently, at what he beheld there.

"Now look whut you is done! You and dat blamed dawg of yours!" howled Mr. Collins.

Bugwine, serene in his triumph, looked aloft—and still didn't see anything but a frog-faced colored man in some kind of convulsions, clinging to the spikes halfway up the telephone-pole, and—oddly—still clutching a suitcase.

"Yeah, look whut I done!" Mr. Breck missed the irony, took it for an accolade, and slapped himself resoundingly across the "Alabama" on his chest. "—Me and de dawg—jest like I says all time. I sees dat nigger yander run out de front de bank wid dat suitcase, shoots de gun, and comes to from de kick jest in time to catch up wid Coney treenin' de bu'glar up dar. Po-lice! Po-lice—"

Mr. Breck's sudden bellowings for the watch were shut off, by a hand being clamped over his mouth, and a charge of verbal dynamite dropped into his nearest ear:

"Shet up! Your pooch aint treed no burglar—dat's de *pres'dent of de bank!*"

Bugwine sickened, and saw all. The president had come in for his lunch; opening the suitcase had released nourishing odors that put Coney Island on the scent—and the rest—too late—was history! Bugwine watched the spinning scenery turn gray, then black. Geranium, Big Ugly, the enmity of a powerful banker, the hundred and two dollars, Coney Island—all passed despairingly before him, and he passed out.

Yet there were other troubles yet to come, snatching a wrecked and ruined boy back to further consciousness and further humiliation. In playing the hero he had merely played thunder! Witness the oncoming yells of a youth known locally as "Wormholes."

"Help! Help!" Wormholes rang the welkin. "*De bank been rob!* *De bank been rob!*"

New confusion stirred the crowd, new perturbations tore the treed banker above, until complications were clarified in part by Wormholes' next lungful: "—by whole passel of men whut drives up in big blue car. Mammy say dey all over de bank in no time. Come out cussin' and drive off so fast she aint see nothin' but de *Louisiana* on de tag!"

The throng drew back at this double blow, leaving a ring about the telephone-pole, the flattened Bugwine amid the wreckage of his mighty *coup*; with Columbus towering over his wretched form. "*Now* look at you!" Columbus was yelling across the three feet that separated them. "Puts you to guard de bank, and whut is you and dat half-wit' pooch do? Trees de president and his lunch! Wid robbers emptyin' de bank of eve'y dime Mist' Sneus got in hit while you's out on a wild suitcase chase!"

Dully Bugwine drew patterns in the dust with one slip-soled shoe. Columbus couldn't make it any clearer, he mourned, if he hollered a lung loose. Bugwine's present was only exceeded in blackness now by his future. He couldn't have picked a worse person to humiliate than this A. Carbon Hill personage, who would shortly descend from his perch—following which, in due time, there would be an ambulance for Bugwine and the dog-wagon for Coney.

Indeed, Mr. Hill was making disturbed and disturbing motions aloft now. Motions that suddenly seemed to miscarry somehow, as with the yowl of a doomed soul he lost his hold—not upon the pole but upon his suitcase.

The rest was swift and startling. Squarely before the open jaws of Coney the dog it landed, broke open—to reveal damningly the currency, silver, and securities that had packed it—whole contents of a bank that stood revealed now as having been looted by its president from within, just five bitter minutes before the Linden bandits had arrived to loot it from without!

And then, loud and clear, as enlightened depositors closed grimly about the base of the presidential pole, the voice of Geranium Sneus, directed scathingly at the slack-jawed Columbus:

"*Now* Bugwine gits my papa's money back! An' you, Columbus Collins—all you gits is de hoss-laugh—but Bugwine always gits his man!"

REAL EX-

In this department five of your fellow-readers tell of their greatest adventures. (See details of this Prize Contest for Real Experiences, on page 3) Here a newspaper reporter tells of his encounter with a maniac armed with an infernal machine.

The Masked Death

By Robert Morris

SOMETHING was happening in the jail. The streets for blocks had been closed off and a cordon of police thrown around them. The prisoners were being marched out under a heavily armed guard and automobiles were being ruthlessly commandeered to take them from the zone of danger.

My newspaper-pass got me by the police cordon, but I had to fight my way through a jam of spectators.

What was the matter? That was what I could not find out. Every cop I questioned declared he did not know. I learned later that they kept the truth from leaking out for fear of a riot.

Almost alone, I traversed the last block. What had happened? Fire—riot? There was no sign of either of these, and yet, as I approached the jail and entered the building, I began to feel queerly apprehensive.

On the second floor I heard voices coming from the Chief's office. Somewhat cheered, I hurried forward and opened the door—only to stand rooted on the threshold, staring at the weirdest tableau I shall ever see.

The office was old-fashioned, with a fading green carpet on the floor, bright oak furniture and framed pictures of past police chiefs in an imposing array around the walls. The sun streamed in through the windows in quite an ordinary fashion, showing the graying hair of the Chief himself, a raw-boned, hawk-nosed man; the flaming top of Mahoney, a plainclothes detective; and the sandy head of MacTaggart, a small freckled Scot. All three were staring across the room toward the far corner, an angle of wall between a closed door and a high window, where sat the odd figure of a man, with his face blotted out by a hood-like mask of leather. A leather cape-apron had hung down from his shoulders, but was now thrown back to reveal a small cabinet of beautiful workmanship resting on his knees. A glass-enclosed cabinet—and through the glass could be plainly seen an infernal machine!

The man had walked into the station about an hour before. No one had paid much attention to him. Even his mask had caused little comment, due to a recent mine

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explosion in which more than a score of men had been hideously disfigured. Some had come down to Los Angeles, their faces similarly covered, seeking a peddler's license. Officials believed that this fellow was another victim of that occurrence and so he passed on unmolested, until he came to the office of the Chief of Police.

Here he gradually worked his way inside and unostentatiously took the chair he now occupied, in the most advantageous corner of the room. He sat there quietly until the Chief, finishing more pressing business, at last turned to him and asked, "Well, what do you want?"

For answer the man merely flung back his leather cape and showed the machine. "I am going," he said, "to blow up this jail."

It was a startling announcement, but not so terrifying, at first. The Chief thought himself equal to the occasion. He took out his gun, more as a gesture than anything else, and said, "I could kill you before you made a move."

"I don't have to make a move," said the man. "My very death would release the trigger—see?" And he showed that his right hand was thrust *inside* the cabinet, and that his forefinger held taut a fine piece of wire. "If I relax even so little," he explained, "the hammer goes down and the building goes up." His eyes, behind the hood, gleamed sardonically. "Of course, if you shoot—"

The Chief put the gun away. He saw that the man was dangerously mad—and diabolically clever.

"Do you realize," he said slowly, "that if you blow up this building you will be killed, too? Have you thought of that?"

The man nodded. "What do I care," he said, "as long as I can rid the city of this plague-spot?"

The Chief argued with him, then tried to cross over to him but was sharply warned away. Detectives and policemen filled the office, only to stand around helplessly. While the fellow sat there in his corner, enjoying every minute of his triumph, knowing that he held the whip-hand by reason of that one finger holding a tiny strand of wire.

He was vain, as so many insane people are. When the reality of the dynamite sticks was questioned, he took one out and gave it to an expert to test it. He permitted newspaper photographers to take flashlight pictures of him, but he would not remove his hood. His identity, he said, would remain forever a secret. Reporters interviewed him and he talked to them pleasantly—not knowing, of course, that all this was merely to gain time, time to clear the building of workers and prisoners.

Finally this was done, and the only ones left were the three I found in the office when I opened the door. From the way they looked at me I gathered that they thought I was another nut, but I was duly presented to the weird figure in the corner and then the Chief politely asked for a moment in which to explain to me just what had happened. The fellow seemed in no special hurry and so I was drawn aside with the two detectives, into a huddle. The Chief had an idea. He had noticed that an inch or two of the man's skull showed above the window-ledge. Now if Mahoney and MacTaggart could take rifles and go up on the roof of the building across the street—

"But what will you be doing?" demanded Mahoney.

"Oh, I'll stay here and entertain his nibs," said the Chief casually. We stared at him in blank amazement.

"You'll do nothing of the kind," said Mahoney grimly. "I've got another idea." He whispered it to us cautiously. It was desperate, but plausible. If it worked, all would be well. If not, there would be no need for any more plans, at least in this world. But they decided to try it.

The Chief started the game by slowly raising his voice until the insane man could plainly hear him telling me how it all happened. Then he interrupted himself to request MacTaggart: "Just step outside and see if there are any other newspaper boys waiting to see this gentleman."

MacTaggart stepped outside.

I followed up by asking if I might interview the visitor and the Chief began to protest. They really did not have time. I argued with him—at least I think I did, though my recollection of what was said is none too clear—and our tones got louder and louder.

Mahoney, apparently disgusted, went over and squatted in front of the maniac and began asking him questions about the cabinet, of which he was justly proud.

And while this was going on, the door on the fellow's right began opening by almost imperceptible degrees, opening so slowly that it seemed an eternity before MacTaggart's scared white face was revealed. In his hand was a black-jack. Suddenly he stepped into the room and brought the weapon down with terrific force on the hooded head.

At the same instant Mahoney plunged his fists through the glass walls of the cabinet and tore out the entire mechanism—just as the madman's forefinger relaxed its hold on the tiny strand of wire!

Then Mahoney went momentarily crazy himself. Screaming like an hysterical woman, he raced through the building and out into the street where he began pounding the infernal machine to pieces on the car-tracks, dynamite sticks and all! It was a wonder the idiot didn't blow himself up. The police got to him at last and quieted him down—and the danger was over.

The prisoners were marched back into the jail, with only three missing; and two of these returned voluntarily.

I went back to my desk and wrote up the story.

A wild-animal trainer here tells of his experience with a savage caged lioness that nearly cost him his life.

Hand to Claw

By **Captain Robert Baillie**



THE most thrilling adventure of my career as a wild animal trainer was a near-tragic incident that occurred in Elmira, New York, in the year of 1928.

I had just completed a season with a large Western circus and had decided to buy a group of lions and train them into an act of my own. Jimmy Strates, owner of the Southern Tier Shows, had two lions for sale at his winter quarters in Elmira. I went to look them over.

The female, Tess by name, was known from coast to coast as a bad actor. I had once been acquainted with a trainer she later killed in Binghamton, New York, and knew of two others she had ripped to death.

Tess was a beautiful specimen weighing about three hundred pounds, with a finely shaped head and as powerful a set of body-muscles as I have ever seen on a lioness.

Sultan, the male, was a little larger and slightly heavier than Tess. Although he was only about four years old he had a full-grown mane that gave him the appearance and dignity of an old monarch.

Now, when a trainer is buying an animal that has been handled before, he not only looks it over from outside the cage; he steps into the arena and puts it through its routine to see how it performs. Both animals looked great to me and if they worked well I intended to buy them then and there.

My revolver and whips were with the rest of my outfit in my trunk which hadn't arrived yet. I decided to go through the try-out without my regular equipment.

I found a wooden kitchen chair—this is a trainer's first line of defense—and an old whip that was lying around the quarters. I made a popper for the whip and was all set for business. The cageman gave me the routine of these cats; I memorized it and was ready to begin.

When the lions were let out into the big arena and caught sight of the chair and whip in my hands they knew what was coming. They began to weave about and growl.

After watching their actions for a minute or two I signaled to the cageman to open the door, and stepped in.

The male came at me with a rush as soon as I was inside. I stopped him with the chair and cracked my whip close to his nose. This meant "Keep away!" After a little arguing I succeeded in getting him to sit upon his pedestal.

As I turned my attention to the lioness she replied with a savage roar and came at me with a rush that backed me

to the bars but my chair stuck with me and I backed her onto her pedestal.

After I had gone through half of the routine I stepped out to give myself and the lions a rest. I didn't want to "rile" them too much during my first work-out.

An hour later I stepped in again and things started off splendidly. The real trouble started when I tried to get the lioness to leap over a five-foot pedestal. When the time came for this trick, she ignored her cue and refused to move. I tried a few more times and then got on one side of her and nudged her with the chair, at the same time cracking my whip sharply.

Her reply to this was a furious attack that I warded off with the chair, though not until I had received several claw-slashes on my hands and arms.

Knowing her reputation as a killer, I had no desire to excite her too much and yet I wasn't going to let her bluff me out of going through with the trick. If I did, I'd never be able to handle her again.

Once more I prodded her gently and the result was the same, except that her attack was more savage. She caught me on the wrist and gave me a nasty dig, at the same moment chewing a leg of the chair to splinters.

I could see that she was working herself into a fury and did my best to calm her, but it was useless. She was off the pedestal now, backing away from me, preparing for a rush. I steadied myself and waited. On she came, while the male sat upon his pedestal and added a roar of approval to her angry growls.

Again she found the chair between her and her objective—my throat—and she proceeded to remove this obstacle by chewing and clawing at it until I saw the chair wasn't going to last much longer.

The men outside were becoming alarmed; some were shouting. This only excited the enraged lioness more. One of the men had the presence of mind to slip a broomstick through the bars into my hand. I dropped the whip and grabbed it.

A sharp blow on the nose made the male loosen her grip on the chair—which was about demolished—and run to the other side of the arena.

One look at her face, as she turned and came at me, told me that she was coming to finish me. All I could do was stand there with my back to the bars and wait with a

length of broomstick clenched in my hand. I had dropped the smashed chair.

She covered the twenty feet that separated us in three leaps; the last sent her straight through the air at me with claws outstretched and fangs bared.

As she landed on me, several of the men yelled. They told me later that three who couldn't stand the sight had run away. I was pretty well ripped up by this time.

My first sensation as those three hundred pounds of bone and muscle struck me was an awful pain in my right arm. I had thrown it up to protect my throat and she had it in her mouth now, gnawing on it. Then I felt two sets of claws bury themselves in my back with a burning pain that shot all over my body.

Only the fact that I had my back to the bars kept her from knocking me down and finishing me right there.

Her paws were wrapped around me, with their claws sunk into my back, pinning to my side my left arm that held the broomstick. My right was still in her mouth getting terrific punishment from those teeth.

Jimmy Strates shoved a stick through the bars in an attempt to knock her off me, but it broke on the side of her head and I doubt if she even felt it.

I had been trying to work my left arm loose to get the broomstick into action but those great leg-muscles held it in a grip that made it ache with pain. Finally, she loosened the paw that held my arm in an effort to get a better grip on my back.

This was what I had been waiting for. In that instant I yanked my arm free and caught her a sharp crack on the nose that would have knocked a man flat.

She sneezed with the pain and tears blinded her for the moment. She let go of my arm and backed off. My right arm dropped to my side, useless and racked with pain.

As she backed off I worked my way around to the door, keeping the broomstick between her and myself. I had just reached the door as she prepared to leap again. I flung the stick at her, and in the second that she delayed her rush to dodge the stick I felt the cageman grab my left arm and pull me out of the arena.

I was badly chewed up, and still carry the scars of that battle. But three weeks later I worked these two lions again, after I had bought them, and everything went well.

A little over a year later Tess developed pneumonia and died. Believe it or not, I felt all broken up over it, for we were pretty good friends by that time.

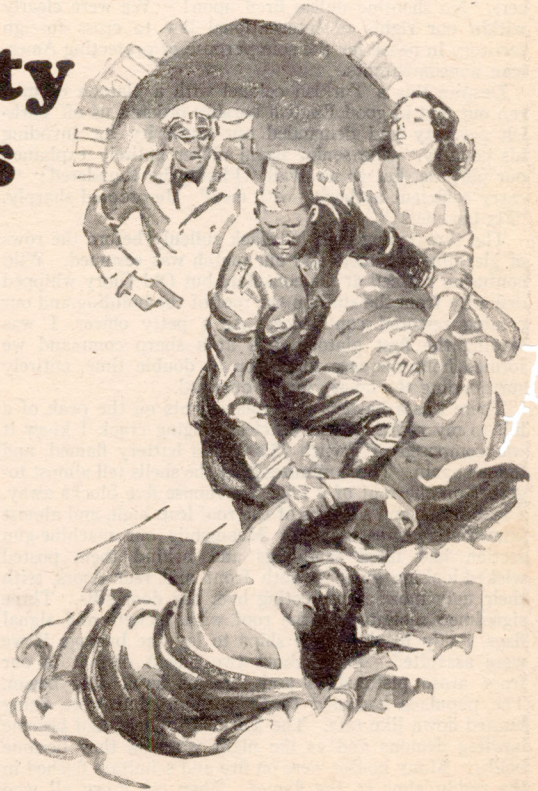
The Authority of Bayonets

This American bluejacket bore a valiant part in rescue-work at the Smyrna massacre.

By **Milton M. Craig**

THE silence was broken by four sharp strokes of the ship's bell, announcing the end of the first dogwatch. I finished supper and hurried on deck to relieve the wheel. The time was six p. m. on September 26, 1922. The course was south-southwest, the place was the Black Sea. A rakish destroyer led the formation. From her mainmast flew the Stars and Stripes. She was followed by six trim similar fighting craft. The Thirty-eighth Division was *en route* from Odessa to Constantinople. The radio spat tiny blue flame and a typewriter rattled like a machine-gun. Two minutes later a radio messenger came from the office and made a dash for the cabin. Two minutes more, and signal flags took the evening breeze from the flagship; smoke belched from her low funnels; the decks began to tremble to a speed of twenty-eight knots per hour. Smyrna was being sacked—Americans there were in peril.

The narrow entrance of the Bosphorus seemed to leap at us and an hour later the huge golden dome of the matchless mosque of St. Sophia loomed into sight. We had priority orders and passed Constantinople and Stamboul like a fever, but not a trim British cruiser followed by destroyers hoist their red battle ensigns and get under way. We tore southward through the night and at noon sighted two heavy cruisers bearing south-southeast across our bows. They hoisted the tricolor of France. They were making high speed to Smyrna to protect their nationals.



Toward sunset we entered the outer harbor. The growl of guns was plainly audible and I noted the flash of falling shells. The Turkish batteries on the hills were shelling the Greek section of the city. There was an obsolete Turkish fort on the point to our left. Our bugles blew "general quarters" and our guns swung to port and trained on it as grim gunners calmly waited for the thunder of ar-

tillery from this fortification. But no spurts of flame licked out from the sides of the frowning fortress. Discretion is oftentimes better than valor.

The van of the Turkish army entered the doomed city from the east, protected by a heavy screen of cavalry. A small force of Armenian militia fought for homes and families. Two squadrons of cavalry attempted to brush them aside and were met with fixed bayonets. I have never before or since seen cavalry close with infantry. The militia stood their ground and met the charge of horse with a sustained rifle-fire which emptied a score of saddles; the riderless horses came on, mad with fear. Long curved scimitars fell like lightning to left and right, and bayonets were plunged impartially into horse and man alike. But the advantage was with the cavalry and the struggle was soon over; the infantry lay in the bloody streets of the city they had battled so vainly to save.

WE landed, fell into ranks on the docks and began marching to the American consulate. American teachers and business-men had fled to the consul's home for refuge when the assault on the city began. Our ships lay in formation with gunners at battle quarters. A green rocket followed by a red one would bring a barrage and the party would be on. There were stern commands by officers, "No shooting unless fired upon!" We were clearly within our rights of international law to cross foreign territory in peace for the sole purpose of protecting American noncombatants.

Despite this a Turkish colonel with a platoon of men ran out and in good English harshly ordered us off Turkish property and demanded our authority for invading his country. The senior naval officer politely explained our purpose, but to no avail. Finally he thundered: "I carry sufficient authority with me!" He ordered sharply, "Fix bayonets!"

The threatening mob fell back sullenly before the rows of gleaming bayonets and our march was resumed. Wild confusion reigned at the consulate but Old Glory whipped defiantly from the staff on the roof of the building and our coming restored confidence. As a petty officer, I was leading the first platoon, and at a sharp command we formed hollow-square formation at double time, entirely surrounding the house, facing outward.

There was a battery in emplacements on the peak of a hill to my right. From its clear ringing crack I knew it was composed of French 75's. This battery flamed, and flamed again. Three minutes later the shells fell almost together on the roof of a huge warehouse five blocks away. I saw bricks and sections of the roof leap high, and almost immediately fires started. Meanwhile our machine-gun section had filled sand-bags and behind them posted wicked-looking guns in both front and rear doors, with their ugly muzzles projecting over the door sills. Three signalmen mounted to the roof with rockets and signal flags, ready to signal the ships to lay the barrage if we were assaulted. From about two blocks distant in our front arose pistol-shots and screams as looting began. The populace had fled to their cellars but were being hunted down like rats. The Turkish soldiery had become howling demons and as the night wore on they became bolder. Many houses were on fire and scimitars flashed in the ruddy glow of the flames. They cut down all who opposed them and captured scores of young girls. In many cases entire families were trapped in their homes. Most of the men shot their families and then died fighting to the last breath.

Many young girls were seen attempting to escape over the roofs, which in the Near East are flat. On being pursued by the soldiers, and finding escape cut off, they un-

hesitatingly leaped to destruction on the ancient cobblestones four stories below. The modern world has never witnessed a more horrible spectacle of wholesale murder than on that red night in Smyrna. Some of the women nearest us seemed suddenly to realize that America protected the helpless and where the Stars and Stripes waved there was succor and refuge for the oppressed. A small group ran from their homes with terror-stricken children clinging to their skirts and came on the run to the consulate. Our ranks opened slightly and let them pass. Others saw them, and very soon the building was crowded to the doors with refugees.

The Turks pursued them with wild yells, but were barred by bluejackets with rows of lowered bayonets. The Turk is no fool. He had no fighting craft and knew well his light field-guns were no match for the avalanche of steel that would instantly spout from the flaming mouths of bellowing cannon if a signal went up for a barrage.

An hour later this section grew more quiet, with only occasional sniping and pistol-shots. I was ordered to take four men and advance one block and see if there appeared to be any living Armenians. We halted at the first intersection. There was a piercing scream from an alley to my left. Flames from a burning building lit the scene with a fitful glare. From a cellar came a Turkish officer. I noted his tight-fitting tailored uniform with gleaming epaulets. He was dragging two Armenian girls who were screaming and fighting desperately. As he swung them clear his left side was toward me. . . . My draw would have been a credit to Billy the Kid. Strangely enough, the officer wore a medal for valor, of another country. I still keep it as a souvenir of the wildest night of my life.

We returned to the consulate with the girls and the bluejacket-guard was served with hot coffee and sandwiches by the American ladies whose courage that awful night cannot be praised too highly. From then on until dawn the massacre shifted to the vicinity of the waterfront where the streets were strewn with the slain. Hundreds of women and girls, driven to despair, discarded clothing and leaped into the sea. All boats from the men-of-war cruised in as near as they dared and picked up many of the strong swimmers. Bronzed and hardened sailors cursed as they pulled young Armenian girls aboard the cutters by the score, returned to their respective ships and came back for another cargo.

THE sun arose on the blackened ruins of a sacked city. The Turkish army retreated at dawn to the eastward, carrying spoils, captives and priceless treasures from the banks and church. It left ruin and desolation in its wake. Scores of bodies floated in the bay and the dead lay unburied in the streets. There was no food other than navy rations, but the American navy had saved a total of four thousand refugees and every ship was crowded. Even standing-room was at a premium, so we steamed out and swung north up the coast of Syria to get out of the desert country. The refugees were landed at Bostanlik and housed temporarily in a huge obsolete prison where the navy fed them until the Near East Relief took charge.

I regret to say that an epidemic of influenza broke out in this large camp and thirty per cent of these poor people lost their lives. However, most of them were so crushed and depressed by the loss of home and loved ones that life in a strange land meant little to them at best.

The one bright spot was a group of young college girls of about seventeen, who spoke English and came from the aristocracy of Smyrna. Up to the time I was transferred back to the States, our Chaplain had sent eighteen of them to America where they were legally adopted by wealthy Americans. May they salute Old Glory with reverence.

A Hanging Matter

A young cow-puncher trades horses with a stranger—and to his sorrow learns his new mount was stolen!

By **J. F. Bledsoe**



STANDING in the shadow of the noose is not a pleasant sensation. I know at first hand how it feels. . . . It was many years ago. The "West" was anywhere between the Missouri River and the Pacific Ocean, and in this section, to steal a horse was a much greater crime than to take a man's life.

Growing rather weary of being just "the kid" up on a Wyoming ranch, one afternoon found me in northern Colorado—not going anywhere in particular, just drifting. It was while I was trying to determine which branch of the trail to follow that a stranger appeared. He was mounted on a fine blooded horse, so it was no wonder that I was amazed when, drawing rein slightly, and allowing me to come alongside, he remarked:

"That's a likely looking hoss you have there, young feller. How'd you like to trade? Got any money to boot?"

The temptation was great, for his mount certainly put my cow-pony Pete in the shade. But though I had a few dollars, I knew I might need them before I got another job.

"No, I have no money. But I'd like to trade all right."

The stranger snorted, and looked off in the distance. Following the direction of his gaze, I caught sight of a double row of shacks and a few larger buildings. This must be the town, about three miles away. The man appeared to come to a sudden decision.

"Tell you what, young feller," he said, "I just remembered there's a man in that town I don't want to see just yet—little trouble, and he has friends in there, and I don't know anyone much. Do me a favor. Take this ten-spot. Ride in and bring me out that much grub—bacon, beans, coffee, and the makings—and I'll trade hosses with you, even Stephen. What say?"

I was down off Pete and loosening the cinch before my new acquaintance was through fishing for the ten-spot. He went a little farther into details as to the grub required, and I rode off.

The new horse was a beauty—a quick stepper, and kind as a rocking-chair in his gait. I was a proud young man as I rode into the little town, dismounted, and stepped into the saloon to celebrate my lucky trade.

When I reached the outside, another stranger oozed into my young life. He wore some kind of leather coat,

blue overalls thrust into high-top boots, and— Just then a six-shooter which only needed wheels to understudy for a fieldpiece swung into sight, and I forgot to take in the remainder of his make-up.

"That your hoss?" was his first greeting.

As his leather coat fell open a little I caught sight of a star-shaped badge. Here was Authority, and I checked the snappy retort on the tip of my tongue.

"Yes sir," and as an afterthought: "What about it?"

"How long you had him?"—crisper than before.

"Huh? About an hour," I replied. "Just traded my cow-hoss for him."

"About an hour, hey? Who did you get that hoss from, kid?"

Amazed comprehension began to penetrate. This did not look so good. The best way out of the mess was to tell the truth, and in a short time the man with the badge and the artillery was in possession of all the facts of the case. He had been looking over the animal closely, and listening without comment until the end of the story.

"Where did you leave this man," he questioned dryly, "this feller who trades blooded stock for cow-ponies? He said he would wait for grub. How far away?"

"Up the trail about three miles, on the bank of a stream," I replied. "It might be that one running there past the town. He told me," I continued, "to try to get back before dark with a bunch of grub, which he gave me ten dollars to pay for."

"Well, youngster, it will be after dark when we get there. Untie that hoss, and come along with me. No, you don't,"—as I started to mount. "Just keep afoot—you're likely to live longer that way."

The new horse was turned over to a shock-headed man who appeared to run a livery-stable, and a few minutes later I found myself facing the Marshal in an office which, I found out later, had a single cell in the rear.

"Now, young feller," he began, "unless you are a plumb fool, you must know by this time that hoss was stole. You may be telling me the truth as to how you got him, and then again you may be just a slick young liar. In any event, I'm going to give you a chance. Do you think you can take me back to where you left your partner, in such a way he will not see us coming?"

"Yes, I think I can."

"Better make sure," was the cold reply, "for if anything goes wrong I'll get you anyway—you keep that in mind if you feel like busting a stick, or anything, at the wrong time."

There is no need to dwell on the next few hours. After a long stalk we came on my chance acquaintance, smoking a cigarette and watching a small fire over which he was broiling a slice of bacon on a stick.

He promptly elevated his hands on the Marshal's invitation—backed by the six-shooter—and submitted to the handcuffs without any signs of a struggle.

It was only when we were riding down the trail, having recovered my Pete horse from his picket, that the "trader" recognized me, and broke into his first words.

"Well—you blasted double-crosser," he exclaimed. "So I can thank you for this? A fine way to treat a man who has rode the trails with you for two years."

Even in the dark I could sense that the Marshal stiffened.

"Yes—and I suppose it was that damned hoss I told you to let alone that all the trouble is about! Well, I never touched that hoss, and you know it. Thought it was smart to lift him, didn't you?"

The Marshal appeared to be doing some deep thinking, but that was all. He removed the handcuffs from my companion, and turned the key on the two of us.

"Grub in the morning," he muttered. "Send it in." These were the first words he had spoken in about an hour. He then left the building.

THERE was a lamp burning in the office and the cell door had a barred opening big enough to let in quite a bit of light. I looked at the horse-thief, but before I could find words to express my opinion of him he cut in.

"Now, young feller," he hastened to say, "never mind all that. Forget it!" As if I could.

"A man has a right to try when his neck is in danger. I took a chance you could prove where you were when the hoss was stole, and that might let the two of us out."

This was a line of reasoning which had not occurred to me, but it did not lessen my resentment at the manner in which I had been linked with a man, entirely unknown, and picked up on the trail only a few hours ago.

As I was shaping this fact in my mind, and preparing to give it the strong expression which the occasion demanded, we heard voices outside the little window in the back of the cell. Creeping to the bars, we listened.

"Jes' a couple of hoss-thieves Bill done brung in," came a whisky-laden voice. "Tell ye what—let's round up shum the boys, 'n' hang 'em. Wha' shay?"

This pleasant suggestion appeared to fall on willing ears, for we heard various details discussed as the men moved away. We glanced around. The shack was built of small logs. There was a floor of the old puncheon variety, made of smaller logs than the sides, and roughly flattened with an ax. There was a double bunk in one corner, and the outer edge of each bunk consisted of a two-by-four-inch scantling, nailed there to keep in place the loose straw filling.

My friend of the equine acquirements set his back against the wall and pushed strongly against one of these strips of wood with both feet. The whole structure was evidently old and bone-dry, for the scantling snapped at the first try. Here were two chunks of wood, two-by-four inches in size, and about three feet long. The break had been far enough off the square to leave a short point on one end of each. With these we pried up two or three logs in the floor, which was about two feet off the ground. The outside sill log had been placed in a shallow trench. Down I jumped into the hole and started to dig under that

outside log as if all the treasures of Solomon were just ahead. In fact, I think I dug a little harder than any treasure would have commanded.

Sweat was streaming from me, when my partner offered to take a spell at the digging. I climbed out and let him have my place. There was no means of knowing how long it took. The ground was soft until we reached the shell outside and started to break through. Then my companion, who was in the hole, frantically pawed the dirt back, and several times tried to force his way through, but the hole was too small for him.

"Jump in, kid," he whispered, "and try to make it—then we can work from both sides."

The hole was small, but I was slim in those far-off days, and it was not long before I found that I could wriggle through. In a few moments I was outside. Fortunately the end of the jail on which we had been working was away from the street and there was no lighting-system. A highly comforting darkness spread all around. I turned to my work. In a few moments the hole was wider, but not wide enough for the body of the man frantically trying to force his way out. He stuck, and then—

There was the head of the man who had caused all my trouble. He had taken advantage of the trusting nature of a green youth, and had not hesitated to drag him into the mire along with the real thief. Things had crowded into the past few hours in such a jumble that there was no time to sort them out. Had a chance been given for me to express my feelings verbally I do not doubt I would have let it go at that, especially if the horse-thief had cleared out of that hole first. But he did not—and I did not—and there was his head, well out of the hole.

Almost without thought, and certainly with no conscious volition, the strip of wood in my hand came up, and then down—hard. There was utter silence.

Still grasping the strip of wood, I stumbled away as softly as I could toward the end of the town where the livery-stable was located. When we came into town my Pete horse had been placed in a corral back of the barn which held the stolen animal, but I believed I could find it in the dark. A little detour took me back of the houses in the single street. There was a sound of loud laughter from the saloon where I had taken my first drink. Out boiled a gang evidently on mischief bent. I crept away as fast as I could. My horse was not hard to find, nor was the saddle and bridle, carelessly thrown over the top rail of the corral. Evidently people were not in the habit of meddling with things known to be in the custody of that particular Marshal.

There was no sign of the shock-headed man. He was probably out to see the "fun" along with the crowd. I drew up the cinch and led my horse through the dropped bars of the corral.

WHEN daylight came there was a sweat-lathered horse many miles away from that town. The boy who rode him was just beginning to breathe in a normal manner for the first time in many hours. There may have been a trail left, but no one appeared to be following it. It may be that the hard-bitten Marshal took some stock in my story and concluded that I was not worth following.

My partner in crime? It was several years later, and quite by accident, that I learned of his fate.

Discovered by the gang, still sticking in the hole, he was dragged out, only half-recovered from the blow on the top of the head, and strung up, still protesting that, "It was the kid done it."

Such was my first and only venture into the ranks of the horse-thief fraternity which made history all over the West, years ago.

An ably written episode which shows why a man may regard his dog as his best friend.



Dogs Are Like That

By **T. Howard Kelly**

TWO years ago the lure of a storm-lashed ocean led me into a thrilling and mysterious adventure.

At that time I was camping on a small uninhabited island off the Maine coast. One night a heavy northeaster struck, and when the wind rose to hurricane force I decided to go down to the beach. Pulling on my oilskins and jamming on a sou'wester, I slipped a flashlight in my pocket and went out into the wild night. The wind, howling like a legion of lost souls, blew the cabin door out of my grip; it took all the power and weight of my two hundred pounds to shut that door.

I had to cross a wide stretch of wet and slippery rocks to reach the shingle. I had a very weak right ankle, due to a football injury in college days, and I knew from experience that I would be painfully crippled if I sprained it; consequently I made my way very carefully to the beach.

A wild primitive feeling swept over me as I stood in the screaming gale with the surf roaring at me like liquid thunder. All that I could see through the storm's swirling dark were great patches of white water rushing and snapping shoreward like vicious foaming fangs.

As the moments passed, the unaccountable belief grew upon me that I was not alone. I tried to shake off this uncanny idea, for I knew I was the only living creature on the island. But the mysterious sense of another presence continued to grip me. At last I fished the light from my pocket, flashed it over the beach, and was startled to see something lying on the sand at the edge of the boiling surf.

I mustered my nerve to investigate, and advanced with only my retrieved light for a weapon. After taking about ten steps I flashed the lamp. I was only a few feet from a great furry creature that lay like the dead. Yet I sensed that it was alive, and focused my light on the mysterious crouching thing.

At first I could not believe my eyes. A dog was lying on the shingle, shivering in the wind and rain! His long muzzle rested on his wet paws, and he seemed to be peering into the surging surf. He was a big white-and-gold collie, and his wavy coat of hair was matted by long exposure in briny water.

In a moment I pondered the puzzle of his presence. There was only one explanation in my mind: The dog was a sign that something had happened out yonder in the storm! A ship had met her doom, I concluded, and the collie, swept overboard, had in some miraculous manner

reached shore. Now he was too exhausted even to move at my approach. I decided to take him to my cabin.

I got down on my hands and knees and crawled to him, speaking in the language of men who know dogs. But the gale whisked my words away. I leaned down and touched him gently. A weary sort of shudder passed through him. Once more I played my light on him. This time he turned his head weakly and looked at me; then he returned his gaze to the sea. But in that one wistful look of his brown eyes I saw something that touched my heart. It was an expression such as I had never seen in any human eyes—and understanding came to me. The collie was watching and waiting for some one, or something, to come out of the turbulent ocean.

The dog's devotion thrilled me. But I was afraid he would die if he stayed on watch in this condition. He was too brave and fine to die; I wanted to lure him home and save him. Again I stroked his wet back. At his neck my fingers came in contact with a leather collar. I flashed my light on it and on a brass tag I read, *Buddy*.

Hoping his name would rouse him, I shouted "Buddy!" The collie raised his head, and his ears pointed alertly. I called his name again. But already his head was drooping again on his wet paws. My voice was not the sound for which he was listening and waiting.

I determined to resort to trickery to get the exhausted dog to my cabin. Since he was undoubtedly waiting for some one he believed was still in the water, I thought that he would follow a leader back into the surf. My plan was to lure him into the shallows, then strike out parallel to the beach for the shack.

I waded into the foaming sea, and played the light so Buddy could see me standing in the water. Then I shouted his name. The wind must have flung my voice down to his ears. He looked at me, struggled to his feet, and stood wavering in the gale like a gold-and-white shadow. Pointing his long muzzle at the booming waves, he barked, then waded into the white fury.

I watched the unfair struggle of the dog against gale and sea as if I were looking at a human battling for his life. Every step the collie took tortured me. Every time Buddy staggered to a stop, buffeted by the breakers, I wanted to rush in and pick him up. But I realized that I must not—the collie was coming on because he thought he was going to help the one he had waited for.

As soon as Buddy's forepaws and haunches were in the

water, I swung to the southward through the shallows. The collie came on without suspecting my trickery. I watched the breakers as best I could for fear one might crash down on us. But a big roller suddenly caught me unawares. It struck my knees full force, and they bent for a moment. As I recovered I looked for the dog. He had been knocked under by the same wave. I rushed toward the spot where I had last seen the collie's head and plunged my hands into the swirling sea. They grazed something furry. I pulled Buddy out, and staggered ashore with him lying against me like a great ball of matted fur. I kept on up the shingle with Buddy lying motionless in my arms. After covering about one hundred yards I had hopes of carrying him all the way to the cabin. But the collie suddenly came back to life; with an incredible return of strength he burst from my grasp. I called him but he paid no heed. Flashing the light, I saw him trotting back over our trail to the sea.

I found the collie shivering violently in the raw wet sand. Once more his long muzzle was down on his paws, and he was staring wistfully into the sea. I realized he would stay there, but I determined to protect him as best I could and that he should have food. I took off my oil-skin jacket and flung it over Buddy, fastening it down on each side by the weight of near-by stones. Then I made my way over the treacherous rocks to the cabin.

On the way back to Buddy with a blanket, food, and a can of water, I felt that something was shortly to happen on my beach, something explaining why a collie dog was standing watch with his last few ounces of strength. I decided to stand by with Buddy and see this mystery solved.

The dog sniffed at the meat I brought. I watched him eat a little weakly, and lick at the can of water. Then I arranged the blanket around him, and taking the look he gave me for my thanks, I sat down on a log to share the dog's vigil with him.

AS the false dawn drifted through the storm like a gray wraith, Buddy's ears suddenly pointed sharply upward, and his long nose poked the damp air. His nostrils quivered, sniffing a scent only a dog's nose could catch. I rose, trembling with excitement, and watched the dog like a person under a spell. His matted hair tried to bristle with life, while his weary haunches tightened, and his long plumelike tail quivered.

I knew the moment had come for which we had both waited. Buddy suddenly sent a plaintive cry into the wind, and dashed to the southward with a show of strength I knew was inspired. I ran after him as fast as I could, but my heavy sea-boots encumbered me. I was panting hard when a long mournful wail rose on the wind. I was sure Buddy had found whatever he had waited for—but found it dead.

But now there was a volley of barks. They were like staccato calls for help, and reminded me of "Man Overboard!" cries I had heard at sea. Although I had reached a part of the shingle that was strewn with big rocks I put on speed. My feet skidded on a slimy rock; I lost my balance and crashed down. My right ankle was full of sharp, stabbing pain. I forced myself to my feet, but when I put my weight on my right foot, I fell again. For a few seconds I lay there on the rocks insensible to everything except the sensation of fiery rapiers plunging through my torn ankle.

An outburst of frenzied, desperate barking from Buddy made me remember something was wrong down the beach.

"I'm coming, Buddy!" I yelled hoarsely, and started to crawl forward on my hands and left knee.

The strain and pain of crawling was becoming unbearable just as I sighted a vague shadow in the lifting gray light. It was Buddy. Facing the encroaching sea, the collie was standing over an object which seemed only a blur on the sand. I called the dog.

Buddy turned, and began to act strangely. I have since concluded that the stress he was under had momentarily cast him into a panic. It seemed as if his sure canine instinct had deserted him. Like a terrorized man he seemed to think everything was his enemy. I suggested danger to him and whatever it was he was guarding from the incoming tide.

He advanced at me with his ears flat against his head—a bad sign, I knew. As he came closer I saw that his eyes were no longer wistful; they were flashing with the fear that the wild and half-wild feel for the unknown.

I TRIED to coax him. But something—bitter discovery, fear, bereavement, I didn't know exactly what—had changed Buddy. He came on, growling. Suddenly he leaped at me, and snapped. I jerked my left hand back, and raised my flashlight to strike the collie if he bit at me again. But suddenly Buddy fell back on the shingle, as if a miracle had been wrought in him. I looked into his brown eyes. Their animal fear of the unknown was gone; in its place there was a dumb plea for my forgiveness.

"It's all right, Buddy, you were just in a panic," I said. "Come on—tell me what it's all about. I'll help you."

Buddy crept over and tugged at my sleeve. He turned and trotted back to the object on the shingle. My entire right leg was burning with pain now but I toiled after the collie, determined he should not find me wanting.

About ten yards from where Buddy was barking defiantly at the intruding tide, I saw what he was guarding. Lying at his feet was another gold-and-white collie!

"Dead—drowned!" I groaned, my heart going out to poor Buddy in the belief that he had kept faith with his mate in vain.

But a moment later I saw that the sea had not yet fully claimed the second dog. Just as it was about to wash over Buddy's prostrate mate and finish her, I got in motion. Buddy leaped at the water as if to hold it at bay. But it foamed ruthlessly past the desperate collie, and licked at the helpless one on the beach.

And then I saw something I will never forget.

Buddy leaped through the swirling water and took hold of his mate's collar. He tugged with all the canine strength left in him. But this was not strength enough. He could not budge the unconscious dog; she remained helpless in the frothing tide. Buddy desperately set himself for a last great effort. It ended in collapse. He raised his pitiful brown eyes to me, beseeching me to hurry. That appeal rendered me insensible to the pain in my ankle. I leaped to my feet, drove forward, and snatched Buddy's half-drowned mate from the frothing fangs of the sea. Somehow I managed to carry her to a place of safety. . . .

Buddy's barking roused me from unconsciousness. The three of us managed to drag ourselves to the cabin. When the northeaster died out two days later, and the man came over from the mainland with my supplies he told me about the dogs. The coastguard patrol had given him the story. The two collies had been on a pleasure-yacht which was caught in the blow off my island. Buddy's mate had been swept overboard, and he had leaped after her. Dogs are like that!

Comrades of Chaos

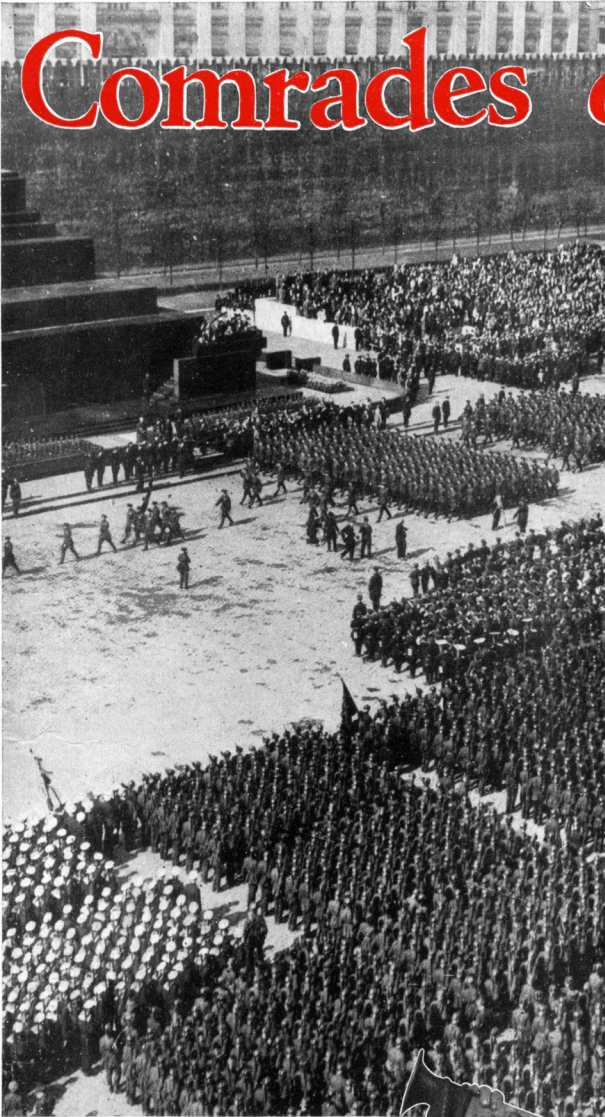
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by S. ANDREW
WOOD

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