BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE
NOVEMBER, 1949
25 Cents

THESE UNITED STATES . . . XXXV
Missouri—Painted by Benton Clark

THREE SHORT NOVELS

ONE NIGHT IN ALSACE *by Georges Surdez*

THE MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED RING *by William Brandon*

THE DANCING FLAME *by Kenneth Cassens*

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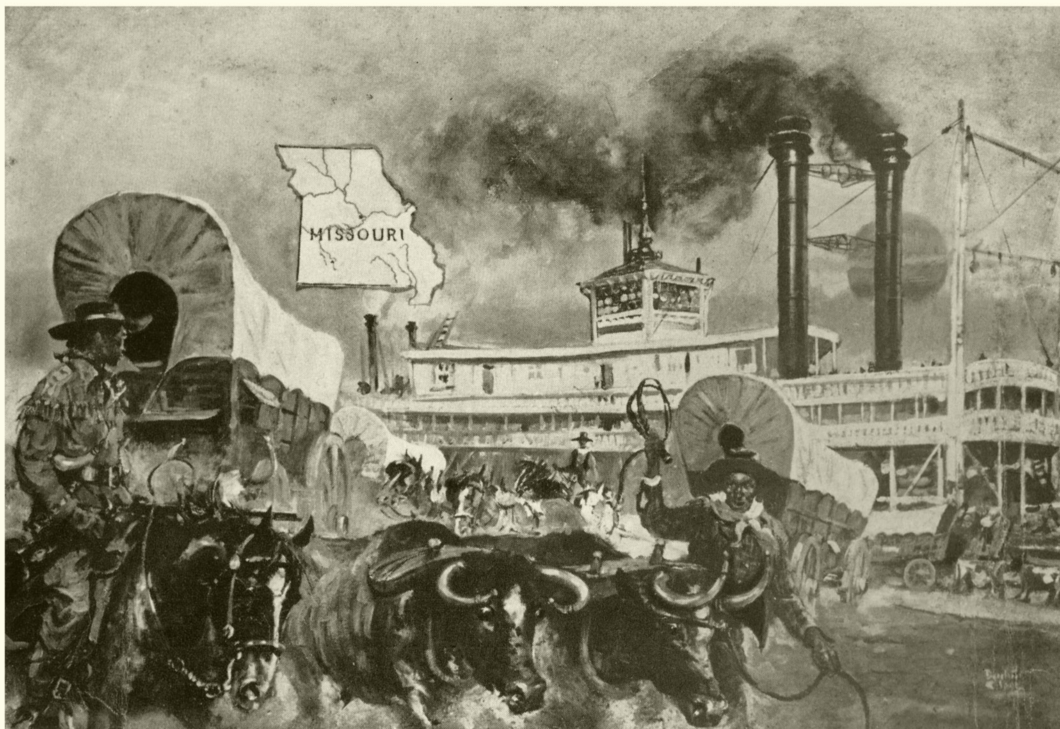
THE SOVIET AIR FORCE *by Peter Pirogov*

Ten Short Stories



THESE UNITED STATES....XXXV—MISSOURI

The Show-Me State

TWO great rivers and their important rôle in American history put the Missouri Territory on the map early as the gateway through which migration passed westward; and they have largely contributed to the economic stability of the "Show Me State."

Between 1673 and 1723 French explorers proceeding up the Mississippi traversed the territory extensively. By 1804, when the territory of Louisiana was transferred to the United States following the Louisiana Purchase, the area, including the present State of Missouri, was well known. Lead and salt mines had been discovered.

Trade with Santa Fe from western Missouri had been attempted in defiance of Spanish authorities. In 1812, the year in which the Territory of Missouri was established, twelve St. Louisians were arrested and imprisoned for nine years for their commercial invasion of Spanish domain. However, after Mexico overthrew Spanish rule, a welcome was extended to American traders, and the Santa Fe trail became a thriving artery of trade. Its eastern terminal—first at Franklin, then at Independence, then at the present site of Kansas City, all on the Missouri River—was a clearinghouse for eastern and southern trade with the southwest. From the West, into Missouri, poured much-needed silver, and along with it, the dependable Missouri mule.

Missouri's position between the slave-holding States to the south and the free States to the north was the cause of bitter controversy in Congress when the territory petitioned for statehood in 1820. Finally, after two historic compromises, the State, with its present boundaries, was admitted to the Union in 1821. Controversy continued to play a part in Missouri history. The Mormons, who settled in the State in 1831, were expelled eight years later. Immediately preceding the Civil War border wars with Kansas broke out. As a border State Missouri was the scene of eleven per cent of the combats of the Civil War, though few were major engagements.

Famous sons include Mark Twain, whose immortal characters *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* have made famous the area around his birthplace, Hannibal. Near Excelsior Springs the farm once owned by the bandit Jesse James is pointed out to visitors. Today's most famous Missourian is President Harry S. Truman, a native of Independence.

Industry and agriculture combine to make Missouri an economically sound State. Her sons can say "Show Me" with assurance. No one can show them much that Missouri does not already have.

Readers' Comment*

In Praise of Our Printers

For more than a quarter of a century I have been a never-miss-an-issue purchaser of Blue Book.

In that time I have read many a pat-on-the-back for your writers—but never do I remember any expressions of appreciation for the definitely superior art work—and even more important, the "art preservative of all arts"—the typography and printing.

It seems to me that you must use a much higher quality of printing ink than any other print paper magazine —because it is so black for the main body matter and so true-to-tone for the tints used. You must have printers who are true artists, with an understanding of high quality art effects, and pressmen who do their part by turning out an inspired quality of presswork, not only a few copies for the brass hats of your organization, but for all of us mere readers.

Why don't you pass on a word (or two) of praise to the men who handle the *mechanics* of your magazine? For after all, were it not for their skill, we readers who enjoy your editors' selections and the thoughtful work of your writers and artists, would find our sum total of pleasure greatly reduced.

—Gillette Lane

An Annual Omnibus?

Is it not about time that Blue Book published an annual omnibus of the outstanding and interesting stories it has issued during the past-too-many-years-to-recall that I have been reading it from cover-to-cover? Stories which Blue Book has published rival the Arabian Nights, Shakespeare's dissertations on human conduct, and the entire 57 foot shelf so widely advertised. The stories I would like to have in available publication include all of Nelson Bond's stories; a collection of the stories on national and international intrigue; H. Bedford-Jones stories; Wilbur Peacock's François Villon; and the collection of stories of the lad who acquired a bottle of pills to carry him back through the periods of his reincarnations.

And thanks for no advertising.

—Roy V. Rester, Lt. Colonel, A.F.R.

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BLUE BOOK

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Except for articles and stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used it is a coincidence

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The other voice was thick, coming from the doorway. "Okay, wise guy, what's the angle?"

BEYOND the classroom windows snow had begun again, the first snowfall of the year. The sky darkened. Inside the room Professor Cyprien Bordeleau stepped from the platform and walked slowly down one aisle, pulling light-cords, without stopping his flow of speech.

"What we have discussed this afternoon is a simple idea—so simple that the first man to state it took five thousand words to describe it. We shall see, later in the term, what Plato did with it—and what Spinoza did with it. Today we are concerned with its first expression—the law of Tao by the sage of ancient China, Lao-tse."

He stepped up to the platform again and looked quickly at his watch on the desk. Six minutes to four. The Professor let his glance skip back and forth across the faces turned up toward him: the girls' faces intent, some on him and some on their inner drama of wishes played out by actors of dream.

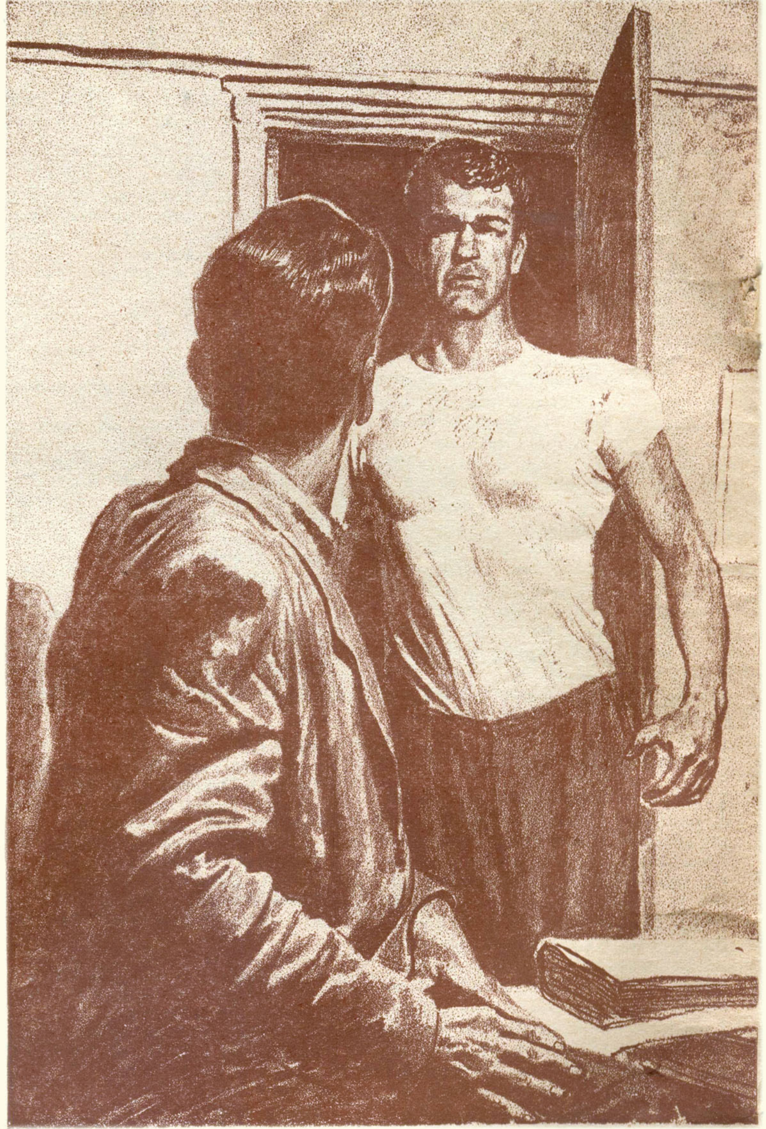
Of the young men, those with the heaviest shoulders doodled on pads or gazed over his head at the wall behind him. At the back of the room the sensitive face—there is always one —of Paul Gilchrist was twisted into a frown.

"*Tao* has been translated as *the Path,*" the Professor went on, "but it is also *the Way, the Law, the basic fabric of time and space, the mighty Rhythm of the Universe.* Violence in action or thought puts us out of rhythm with Tao."

Young Gilchrist's hand went up, and Cyprien Bordeleau nodded to him.

"Suppose you're in a war. There's a bunch of Krauts—I mean a heavy concentration of the enemy—still holed up in a town. The tanks have chased out a lot of 'em, and now your job is to mop up.... Well, I mean—" Gilchrist paused, and his frown deepened. Cyprien waited. "I mean, then violence is the job. What would Lao-tse say about that?"

Professor Bordeleau picked up his watch, snapped shut its gold hunting-case, and dropped it into his vest pocket. "Lao-tse said: 'You should govern a large country as you would fry a small fish.' Tao is the opposite of useless hurry and bustle. If the job at hand makes violent physical action a necessity, the man in possession of Tao performs it more efficiently than the man who is at odds with Tao. The mopping-up operation you describe results in a restoration of balance and order in the



VIOLENCE

PROFESSOR BORDELEAU WAS A DISCIPLE OF THE ANCIENT CHINESE SAGE LAO-TSE AND HIS LAW OF TAO—"THE BASIC FABRIC OF TIME AND SPACE, THE MIGHTY RHYTHM OF THE UNIVERSE." BUT WHEN THE CHIPS WERE DOWN AND A YOUNG MAN'S HAPPINESS WAS AT STAKE, HE PROVED HIMSELF ALSO AN ABLE MAN OF HIS HANDS.

Illustrated by

JOHN McDERMOTT

IS THE JOB

by WILLIAM LINDSAY GRESHAM

world, if it succeeds. Correct? Tao's balance is gained by the eternal conflict of opposing forces. By recognizing this basic truth about the functioning of man's mind and the natural forces around him, an inner sense of balance can be achieved, and man can find a relative calm in the center of the whirlwind."

The clamor of the bell put a period to the sentence. Cyprien Bordeleau smiled, waved his hand and walked from the room, neither hurrying nor loitering, his short, thick-set figure moving with a peculiar grace all of its own. In repose his face was unlined, though he was close to fifty, and the lock of hair which occasionally fell over his left eyebrow, reminding art students of early photographs of Pablo Picasso, was coarse, straight and still jet black.

He turned down the winding path which led across the campus to Westfield Hall, where he had his office on the top floor. Then he paused under a lamp on its high post, and gazed up at the falling flakes of snow which sparkled like tiny stars as they sifted down through the cone of golden light-rays. Professor Bordeleau wore neither hat nor overcoat. The large flakes settled and melted on his sallow, upturned face.

A figure passed him, hands deep in the pockets of a trench-coat, and the Professor started on, falling in beside the other man. It was Paul Gilchrist.

"We'll lose at least a third of them," the Professor said calmly, "before mid-term. The class is much too large. The ones who signed up for a snap course will drop out."

PAUL GILCHRIST walked on in silence for several paces; then he said suddenly: "I'll be leaving, myself."

"Nonsense!"

"It's true, Professor."

"I didn't say it wasn't true. I said it was nonsense. You have the adventurous mind, Gilchrist. You're not scared off by Lao-tse, nor by having to think what he meant by the Tao."

The tall young man shivered a little, and buttoned the top button of his coat. "No. I'm leaving college."

They were in front of Westfield Hall when Cyprien stopped, watching the other in the light from above the door. Gilchrist was twenty-four or -five, but his face was lined, his hair frosty at the edges.

"What was your rank, Gilchrist?"

"I was a captain when I got out."

"Infantry?"

"Yes sir."

"She's afraid of him. That's one of the toughest things about it—my not being able to protect her. If he was any ordinary fellow—"

"And you're leaving us! Do you have a few minutes? I'd like you to come up and talk about it a little. I want to get to know some of you fellows better."

They climbed the stairs, passing other faculty members on their way out. The hall was empty when they paused before an oak door on which a copper plate announced:

PROF. CYPRIEN BORDELEAU

When the Professor snapped on the light switch, Paul Gilchrist paused. Beyond the polished oak panels of the door was a room which was hard to connect with so staid a structure as Westfield Hall: It was the interior of a trapper's cabin, the walls seemingly made of logs with the bark left on, chinked with clay and moss. A rough stone chimney was set in one wall. A pair of snowshoes hung on deer-horn brackets.

Bordeleau laughed. "A reproduction of my birthplace," he explained. "On the shores of a lake called Hole-in-the-Forest. Ninety miles northwest of Quebec."

The student sat in a chair made of peeled birch and tanned moose-hide. He did not take off his trench-coat or even unbutton it.

Professor Bordeleau took off his jacket, rolled up his sleeves, seized a stick of firewood, and with a double-bitted axe delicately shaved off a handful of splinters and laid them in the fireplace. More strokes of the axe split the wood into larger strips, and these he laid in a neat "hog-pen."

"Ever see this one?" He grinned up at the younger man, placed a kitchen match in a notch in another log, lifted the axe by the end of its helve and let it drop neatly into the notch beside the match. The head of the match flared, and Bordeleau took it delicately between finger and thumb, touching it to the splinters.

Gilchrist smiled for the first time....

Beyond the window darkness lay like soot against the pane. The room was hazy with the smoke from the Professor's squat briar pipe. Paul Gilchrist tore open a second pack of cigarettes. The fire, burning low, shone on the broad face of the professor of philosophy. He had never taken his glance from the fire while the student was telling his story.

"So that is how it is," Gilchrist concluded. "I love her. Dad was an engineer, and always wanted me to be one. But that plan is all washed up now. Lili means more to me than anything—but anything!"

Cyprien Bordeleau sighed, and rapped out his pipe. "I'm glad you told me, Paul. If I may make a suggestion—"

"Certainly, Professor."

"Wait."

The young man shook his head. "I can wait. But she can't. Not much longer. Not with a man like him. She's afraid of him. And I—well, I guess I am too, a little. He was a pro boxer and all that. I'm no slugger."

"These things follow a natural rhythm, Paul. Sometimes they work themselves out. The girl is not in any actual danger right now?"

Gilchrist stood up and slipped on his trench-coat. In the firelight his face seemed old, tired and gaunt. "I don't know. She's afraid of him—I know that. That's one of the toughest things about it—my not being able to protect her. If he was any ordinary fellow—"

Cyprien smiled gently to himself. Youth must always wear a white plume, a panache, he thought. Later they will think in terms of police, of injunctions and writs. But youth is *Cyrano*. He stood up.

"You have confided in me, Paul. And I respect it. But I have one eccentricity: I must have names to pin on concepts. I know from you that Lili is beautiful, that she is a talented dancer, that she is desperate. But she has no name—"

"Lili Stepanova," said the former captain of infantry. As he buttoned his coat, the Professor noticed that his hands were shaking. Malaria? Battle fatigue? Cyprien decided not to inquire.

"You may have seen her in the *Ballet des Trois Corbeaux*," Paul Gilchrist said. "And as for waiting—well, I can't. I'm going to take action—the only action I *can* take. So I'll be leaving school. Thanks for listening."

His hand-clasp was firm in Cyprien's. Then the door closed behind him.

On the rough stone hearth a log fell, flamed brightly and darkened again.

Cyprien Bordeleau threw up a window, looking down to where the lights of the campus were fuzzy with falling snow. Far away, across rooftops, the lights of upper Broadway blazed against the moist sky like a forest fire across a ridge.

Turning from the window, the Professor switched on a lamp at a table made of hand-hewn boards. He slid open a drawer and took from it a telephone and an address book, found a number and dialed.

Allo. Allo, Eugénie," he said in French which bore but the slightest trace of *patois* accent. "Tell madame it is the Professor Bordeleau. I know she rests for the performance, Eugénie. Tell her I will help her to rest by buying her a cognac at the bar downstairs. . . . *Tout à l' heure.*"

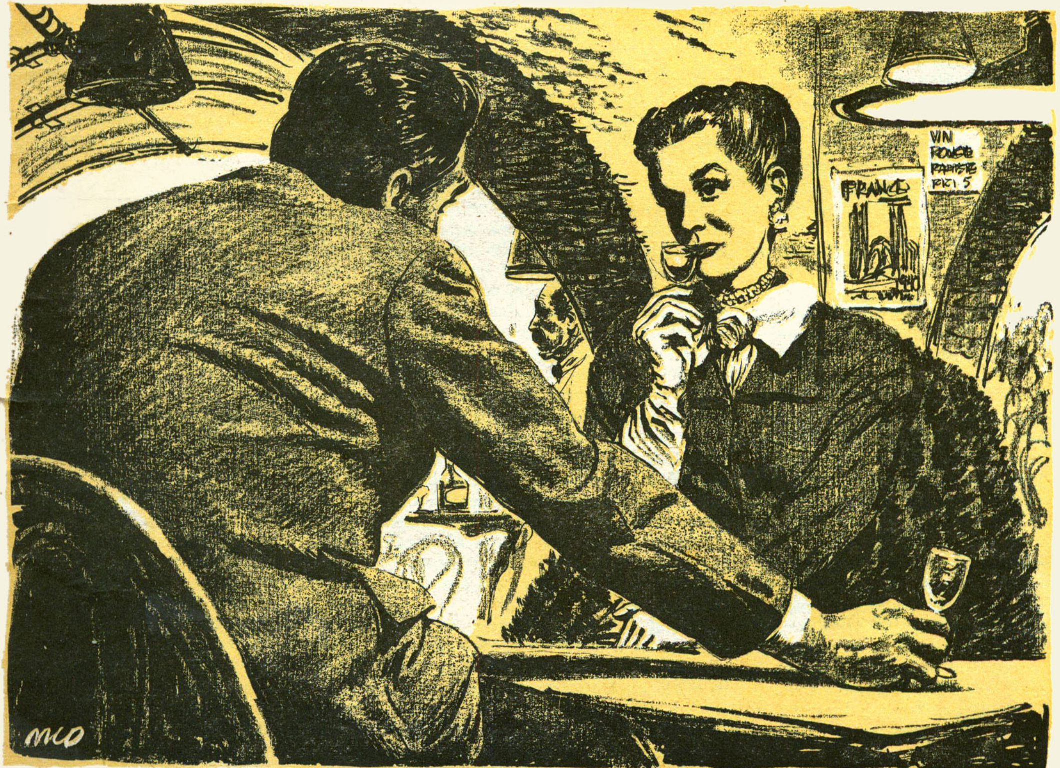
THE bar at the Hotel Beaumarchais is a dim grotto walled with mirrors which throw back an image in deep tones of color.

When the great lady swept in, her mink coat over her arm, Cyprien rose, took the coat and placed it on a chair. Then he enclosed both the ballerina's hands in his, shook them three times and planted a loud kiss on her tiny, pointed chin. *"Eh, la p'tite, t'vo ben,"* he growled in the thick *patois* of a Quebec *habitant.*

Her laugh was like the breaking of thin ice, a tinkle lower than the sound of silver bells. "How charming it is to see you again, *mon cher.* My favorite philosopher of the savages!"

"And favorite savage of philosophers, eh?" Cyprien finished for her. "Tell me, my fawn, my fawn from the Bois de Boulogne—what do you know about a girl named Lili Stepanova?"

She sipped from the slender cognac glass; and then, watching his face from beneath her lashes, she said slowly; "Lili Stepanova? She is an unwashed *gamine.*" She sipped again. Then she threw back her head, and the laugh made others in the room look



"Tell me, my fawn from the Bois de Boulogne—what do you know about a girl named Lili Stepanova?"

toward her and then back at their companions, smiling and whispering her name.

"Ah, Cyprien, my little woodcutter! I was so afraid for you. But I see by your face that it is not you. So a student of yours is involved, no?"

"She is an unwashed *gamine*. Go on. Fierce? Formidable? Talented? Serious? Tell me."

This time her voice was a low-pitched torrent of Parisian. "Her name was Lily Stevens. She is from Jersey City. And she is unwashed only of the soul. Though I suspect that by this time her hair needs combing. That was the general direction in which she voyaged. Yes, Lili is indeed formidable. But with great talent. Who would ask that a ballerina be pure of heart or ignorant of the language of a taxi chauffeur? But to cut open another girl's head with a jar of cold-cream is frightening, no?"

Cyprien's eyes were closed. He nodded gently.

"Also it is not unheard-of for a ballerina to have a lover who is a professional boxer—"

One of the Professor's eyes came open with a dark gleam.

"Certainly. She is devoted to him. I have heard that she actually married him. A pity. The child is tireless. And she is wise—not in life, but in her art. But suddenly she becomes impossible. The cold-cream jar might have been forgiven. But then she tries to blackmail one of the boys of the company. Finished! Now for six months no one has seen her at all. She probably wears a sweater and shoes like those of a *poilu,* and goes running, running, running along behind her boxer like a little dog, while he does his road work."

Cyprien set down his glass with a sharp snap. *"Le blaireau!"*

"Pardon?"

He smiled. *"Le blaireau*—the badger. It is the name of an animal—among other things. It is not important."

With an impulsive little cry which was a work of art in itself, she looked at her watch, finished her cognac, swept up her coat, kissed her fingertip, placed it on the lobe of Cyprien's left ear, and was gone, the dim grotto buzzing behind her.

THE building had once been a slum tenement. It had been remodeled some ten years back, its walls replastered, and a cheap iron-scroll door installed. Then, after a brief period of higher rents and occupancy by young business couples who wished to live near Times Square or Wall Street, it had settled back into being a slum tenement again.

The mail-boxes were battered and grimy, with names scribbled on slips of paper and sometimes scratched into the tarnished faces of the metal. One slot held a card on which was typed the name STEPANOVA. Beneath it was lettered with a heavy pencil MAZZARI.

At the second push Cyprien held his finger on the button. At last the door latch clattered. The hall smelled of turpentine, cabbage and small dogs. He took the steps two at a time. At the top landing there was a crack of light from a door.

"Yes? Who is it?" A girl's voice; young, taut, tough and exciting.

"Miss Stepanova? We have a mutual friend—Captain Gilchrist. That is, *Mister* Gilchrist, now. I have taken the liberty of calling on you—" The smile was broad and innocent.

"Oh. . . . Paul." She glanced back into the flat and then said: "Well—come in, I guess."

The flat was dull with grime, the cover of the wide studio couch faded. If he had struck it with his hand, a cloud of dust would have billowed up. At one end of the couch was a stair-step bookcase crammed with thick glossy-paper magazines devoted to the dance, and little wood-pulp magazines devoted to the dance. On the wall was a large photograph of Pavlova. The glass had a diagonal crack in it. Four clam shells spilled ashes and cigarette butts, stained crimson from lipstick. A marionette Pierrot dangled limply by his threads, his control sticks tucked behind a wall-bracket light. A door led into a darkened room. The fireplace was choked with crumpled paper bags and old newspapers.

Cyprien sat on the edge of a chair, resting his hands on his knees. "I am a friend of Paul's," he stated.

The girl sat gracefully on the corner of the couch. She was wearing a pair of faded denim pants and soiled scarlet sandals. Some of her toenails had flecks of red enamel on them and some did not. Her dark hair fell lankly to her shoulders, and was secured, by a flesh-colored nylon stocking tied with its ends tucked under. Her black pull-over sweater had long sleeves. She looked at him curiously from eyes of pale gray; her mouth, wide and thin-lipped, had one corner turned down with the expression of a girl waiting for a telephone call that never comes. Her folded arms seemed trying to warm her body, although the room, to Cyprien, was stifling.

"How is Paul?" she said for something to say.

"Good. Good. Doing well in school. It is hard for a man his age, who has seen as much action as Paul, to settle back to campus life."

"Yes. I know."

"I understand that you and Paul are engaged," he went on. "I am glad to hear of young people becoming engaged—"

"He told you that?"

"I—ah—inferred as much. A very gifted boy. But he tells me he is leaving school."

Silence. She gazed at him with the unwavering, blank stare of a cat.

"I was wondering if it would not be possible for him to continue his education. Would it not be better for you both?"

She looked down at her knees. "Isn't that Paul's business?"

"My dear girl—we must take the long view. After he gets his degree—"

She stood up, keeping her arms folded, and looked down at Cyprien, her face wary and hostile, yet lovely. "Paul knows what he's doing."

The Professor nodded, smiling. "Of course. Of course. But he intends to cash in his terminal leave bonds—"

"I think you'd better skip it. You'd better go now. I don't want to talk about it."

CYPRIEN sat back in his chair. He shook his head. "Now that I am here, I will take up a little more of your time. I do not think that Paul fully realizes the seriousness—"

This time her voice grated. "Get out! Whoever you are, get out! Paul is my dish—"

The Professor's voice was soft. "And you intend to gobble him up and leave nothing but the bones!"

She took a step back, and her glance traveled to the dark bedroom door and then returned to him. "Paul wasn't supposed to tell anybody. He's going to catch merry hell from me."

"He's going to catch merry hell from you in any event, Lili."

On the mantel was a squat Navajo vase holding pencils, their ends chewed. She crossed to it, and stretching out her hand, moved it a few inches. Cyprien lifted his right hand and slowly rubbed his chin.

The girl turned and leaned back against the mantel, her arms stretched wide along it in an odd, masculine gesture. "I don't know who you are. I don't know anything about you. I don't know what you want, crashing in here. But let me tell you something, Mister: Whatever your story is, it had better be good."

"Let me sum up the case as I have inferred the facts," Cyprien said, raising his voice as if making sure the last row in a classroom could hear him. "With the money you get from Paul, you are supposed to go to Reno and there divorce your husband. That is what Paul believes. But it is not what I believe. Mind you, I am just guessing. But my guess is that with that money you intend to head for Hollywood, and that Paul will never see you again if you can help it."

From the darkened room came the faint creaking of a bed's springs, as

The Professor seemed to fall forward. And Nino's chin met a knee on the way up. He sat down heavily.

of someone cautiously stretching his cramped muscles.

Cyprien nodded toward the other room. "Mazzari?"

Her mouth stretched back over her teeth. She called: "Nino!"

The other voice was thick, coming from the doorway. "Okay, wise guy, what's the angle?"

Nino Mazzari was in his late twenties. He wore a pair of dark trousers cut narrow around the cuffs. He was shirtless, his undershirt white against the dark, smoothly hard torso. His nose was a little off center; his eyes, under scarred eyebrows, were smoldering.

"I heard it," he said, coming into the room. "You got a piece of tin to show?"

Cyprien laughed. "A badge? Certainly not. I am only a friend of Paul's."

"Okay. You've unloaded. Now scram."

The Professor folded his hands across his chest and looked from one to the other of them. At last, when the silence seemed ready to crackle, he said gently: "I smell the old badger shake, Nino. Give it up. It's curdled."

Without seeming to move, the young pugilist was standing over him, his big hands half-closed and held near his hips. "You got no tin. And you don't show me no private eye's card."

"No. I'm not a detective. I'm a teacher in a college—one of Paul's teachers. And his friend. I come here to persuade you two to let the boy alone. It is not simple, for he loves your wife. I wish her to write Paul a letter, saying it has all been a mistake. That she cannot marry him—that she has taken you back—"

Nino Mazzari laughed, and looking at Lili, jerked his head toward the speaker. "Get it, babe? You got to write a letter to this chump. The chump's rumbled the play. Only, he ain't got nerve enough to call you himself—he's got to send a schoolteacher. I'm laughing. I'm knocking myself out laughing."

He paused, still standing over Cyprien. "Look, chum. Maybe you coming up here ain't such a bad idea. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to work you over just a little bit. I'm going to decorate your face with a mouse under your eye. And then if you go running off at the mouth to the chump, I'm going to angle it that you come up here and made passes at my wife, and I had to hang the mouse on you. That wouldn't sound so sweet in the papers, chum."

The Professor's smile widened. "I remember you now, Nino. I saw you fight Buzz Callahan. You outpointed him for eight rounds, and then took a dive in the ninth, the way the smart money told you to. Yes, Nino, even college teachers get around a little." He closed his eyes. The boxer stepped back warily. "This may not register with you, Nino, but I shall say it anyhow. You are out of step. This world beats with a certain rhythm. You are like a dancer who is off the beat. Lili knows what I mean." He opened his eyes again. "I have done my best in my own way. Now I must cross over to your side of the street—"

Nino reached for him. But the Professor moved with surprising agility. He seized the fighter's thumb and twisted it until Nino was facing away from him. Then he placed one foot on the other's seat and sent him sprawling on the couch. By the time Mazzari had leaped up, snarling, Cyprien had buttoned his jacket and was standing with his feet apart, left foot slightly advanced, his hands waist-high.

"I must warn you, Nino, that I am no boxer. Where I come from, in Quebec, we don't box. We fight."

The girl sucked in her breath. "Don't hurt him, Nino. Just throw him out. Get him out of here."

"Shut up, babe."

Mazzari flowed forward, sliding his feet. His left hand snapped up, but Cyprien Bordeleau's head was not there. When Nino crossed with his right, it met the older man's elbow, with a sound like someone smacking a side of beef with a cleaver.

The Professor seemed to fall forward. His arms swept up; his hands met behind the boxer's head, drawing it down. And as it came down, Nino's chin met a knee on the way up. He sat down heavily on the floor. Cyprien was behind him, holding his right arm in a hammerlock. Nino cursed and tried to spin free, but the Professor now had both his legs twined around him. The younger man's breath went out in a grunt. His face paled, and sweat began to stand out on his forehead and upper lip.

"Don't force me to break your arm, Nino," the Professor said softly. Something crashed against his scalp and bounded off, and Cyprien saw it was the Navajo vase from the mantel, spraying pencil stubs as it rolled. He reached out his free hand and gripped Lili's ankle. She cried out hoarsely and toppled.

"I can break your arm, son. Don't make me."

"Okay. Okay," gritted from between the fighter's clenched teeth. "So you're tough. What's the angle?"

"I'm going to let you up. Now play it smart."

"Yeah. Yeah."

Bordeleau unlocked his feet and cautiously spun free. Mazzari sat with his legs stretching in front of him, rubbing his shoulder. "Okay, hard guy. So the shake is curdled. You got nothing on us. The curtain is down."

Cyprien Bordeleau returned to the chair. Lili had risen, and was now lying face-down on the couch.

"I shall leave you children in a moment," the Professor said. "But the curtain is not down—not yet. I want Lili to write a letter to Paul. I have a fountain pen. Mrs. Mazzari—will you please get a sheet of notepaper?"

The girl moaned and sat up, flicking back her hair. She glanced at her husband.

"Yeah, babe. He's telling it."

"You will put it in your own words, Lili. Begin simply, *'Dear Paul.'* You will tell him that you have been unfair both to him and to Nino. You will tell Paul that you lied about Nino. He doesn't beat you. He doesn't threaten you—"

The fighter grinned sickly.

"Perhaps you had better say that Nino had made you jealous with another girl—"

"That's a lie. I never made no passes—"

"I know. I know, son. But it's a white lie. Just for this letter."

The girl wrote rapidly, brushing back tears of frustration and rage.

"You will say that Paul fascinated you. And that if things had been different, something very fine might have been built out of your life with Paul."

The sound of the pen was a whisper. Lili held a magazine on her knees and wrote bending over it, her hair falling beside her face.

"Did you spend any time in the Army, Nino?"

The fighter glared.

Lili tossed her head, shaking back her hair. "He was 4-F on account of his eyes. Do you have to know everything?"

"Them fruit-salad guys give me a pain. I had over thirty professional bouts. You think that was any picnic, you're crazy."

"You can put in," Cyprien told the girl, "that Nino has been very depressed ever since he was rejected by the Army. Say that he loves you. And that you will stay by him." It was done at last. "I have a stamp," said Professor Bordeleau.

He read the letter carefully. "A postscript, please. You will always remember Paul with affection. You ask him to forgive you. And Nino, who knows about what happened, says Paul must be a right guy in spite of everything."

He sealed the letter, checked the address, and put it carefully in his pocket. "And now, children, I bid you good evening."

They glared at him as he moved softly to the door, opened it and closed it behind him.

When he had gone, the girl fell back on the couch with her forearm over her eyes. She said in a strangled voice: "All right, brain guy. Where do we go from here?"

Nino sat beside her, the couch sagging under him. "Something's sour about that guy. I can't make him. He says he's a schoolteacher. I might of conned him. Only I had to try and take him, and the guy turns out to be a grappler. I seen them French Canucks fight before. You got no chance without you're a grappler."

"Don't apologize, brain guy. Where do we go from here?" The tears were sliding down her cheeks.

The fighter beat one fist into the open palm of his other hand, twisting the fist as it connected, over and over. "Gees, babe," he muttered. "Maybe —maybe Al Coughlin can line up a couple bouts—"

She sat up. "Nino—you can't do it. *You're half blind now!"*

They felt a sudden draft of cold air, and looked toward the door.

Professor Bordeleau said: "I heard it, Nino. I'm putting in my oar for the last time. But listen to me—listen to me. It's not about Paul. It's about you—and Lili. I know what she used to be. And why she quit. Neither of you two are cut out for the rackets."

She stood up, storming: "You quit snooping around here—you get your nose out of our business! All right, so you heard it. You got any smart ideas what I'm going to do with this guy? The next stop for him is a handful of pencils and a tin cup, and you come in here blatting to me about staying out of rackets. You think the fight game isn't a racket? You think show business isn't a racket? How much chance has either of us had to keep on the sweet-smelling lily-white legit side? You tell me!"

Bordeleau's face was grave.

"There's something neither of you kids has ever thought of, I think. It's so obvious you wouldn't see it. Nino's got the build, the speed, the timing. He moves like a cat. You poor hot-headed fools! Teach the boy to dance, Lili. Make him your partner, and go on from there!"

He left them looking into each other's eyes in wonder.

"They might make it, at that," Cyprien murmured to himself as he went down the stairs smelling of turpentine, cabbage and small dogs. "Yes, I think they'll make it." After all, a boy from the backwoods of Quebec had become—well, a schoolteacher.

The snow was falling again. Cyprien walked quickly, glad to be out again in the clean air. At the corner he posted Lili's letter to Paul. A street lamp shed its cone of gold where the snow, in great feathery flakes, glided down silently. A single flake fell on the back of his hand; and before it melted, he could make out, in its crystalline design, the intricate but flawless rhythm of its structure, reflecting the Law, the Way, the Tao of the ancient sage.

Black Gang Boss

A ship's chief engineer tells the facts of his life and his responsible job.

by VICTOR H. JOHNSON

Illustrated by RAYMOND SISLEY

OUTSIDE, the moon is large and bright. The China Sea is washing with a lulling murmur under the portholes of my quarters.

I am seated at a large green-topped desk; and on the bulkhead in front of me are tables for every fuel- and fresh-water tank on this 10,172-ton tanker. On my left is a double filing-cabinet of commodious size. It contains piles of blueprints, stacks of machinery manuals, files of correspondence concerning the operation of this ship for the past five years. A telephone on my right has these stations on the selector: *"Wheel House. . . . Captain's Office. . . . Engine Room. . . . Steering-gear Room. . . . After Steering Station."*

The ship is quivering with the power of her screw, and I hear the steady hum of the turbine. This is fine, this monotonous drone, and were it to change pitch in the slightest, I would grab my flashlight and with a worried expression on my face, dash swiftly to the region of 450 pounds of steam, 2300 volts and 6600 horsepower. From a sound sleep at night I would be instantly awakened if this monotonous drone ceased.

My quarters are large and comfortable. Over the door of the room in which I am writing is stenciled, "CHIEF ENGINEER'S OFFICE." Behind me is a large cabin with shower bath, locker, two dressers, settee and an easy chair. My sea-chest, filled with technical books on engineering, and a toolbox of private tools, reposes in the privacy of the cabin. Ship's things—the canvas-covered log book, a tachometer that takes up to 10,000 revolutions, samples of boiler-water and of fuel-oil, special telemotor packing, a gallon of methylated spirits, voltmeters and ammeters, a Weston current transformer, and two short lengths of one-inch pipe—are in place in the cabinet and on the table of the office. Both pieces of pipe are so badly rusted that you could crush them in your fingers; both pieces are tagged and marked, like exhibits in a courtroom. Farther on, I'll tell you why I'm dragging these rusty pipes across the China Sea.

On top of the cabinet are a piece of rag, a screwdriver, a ten-inch crescent wrench and a flashlight of approved non-sparking design. These things are by the door so I can grab them in a hurry. Very seldom do I venture from my quarters without carrying my flashlight; never do I go into the engine-room without it.

This is not because things are dark and dismal in what we call "below." It is a place of color, glossy white, aluminum, buff and deep red; almost every corner above the floorplates is lit by a flood of light. The engine-room is cheerful and bright; yet every engineer invariably packs a light in his back pocket.

This is not without reason. Many of our lines are below the floorplates, and the engineer's torch is like a doctor's probing scalpel when trouble occurs. An engineer must examine machinery minutely, not just the bright lighted outside. Moreover, when our lights go out, it is not like a fuse letting go in the basement. We carry our own powerhouse; and when that fails, our fuel pumps and forced draft blowers fail; unless there is some quick action in the dark, the ship would quickly be without steam. A flashlight is each engineer's private little lighting system. It is as indispensable—and as much of a habit—as the stethoscope of a doctor.

LIKE the captain, I have no watch to stand nor any particular working hours. Actually, from the time you've looked over the safety-valves, checked the inspection certificate, the amount of fuel and water on hand, and made a general inspection of boilers, engine, auxiliaries, fire-fighting equipment and the rest of the three-fourths of a million dollars' worth of machinery for which you are responsible, there is no peace until you have been relieved and the new chief engineer hangs his license in the rack. It is said that not a sparrow falls without God knowing about it; on a ship not a gasket blows but what the steam scorches the Chief's eyebrows.

People may think when they see a fine big ship majestically steaming: "My, what a beauty she is! My, what power!" They are right, too—as far

as they can see. But let it be said that from the time a ship comes new from the wet-basin until she is sent up fresh-water to die, there has never been a time when everything on her worked one hundred per cent perfect, or anywhere near it. I have been on them spanking new and withered old, in the oiled flush of youth and in the rustiness of middle-age; and there is no such thing as perfection.

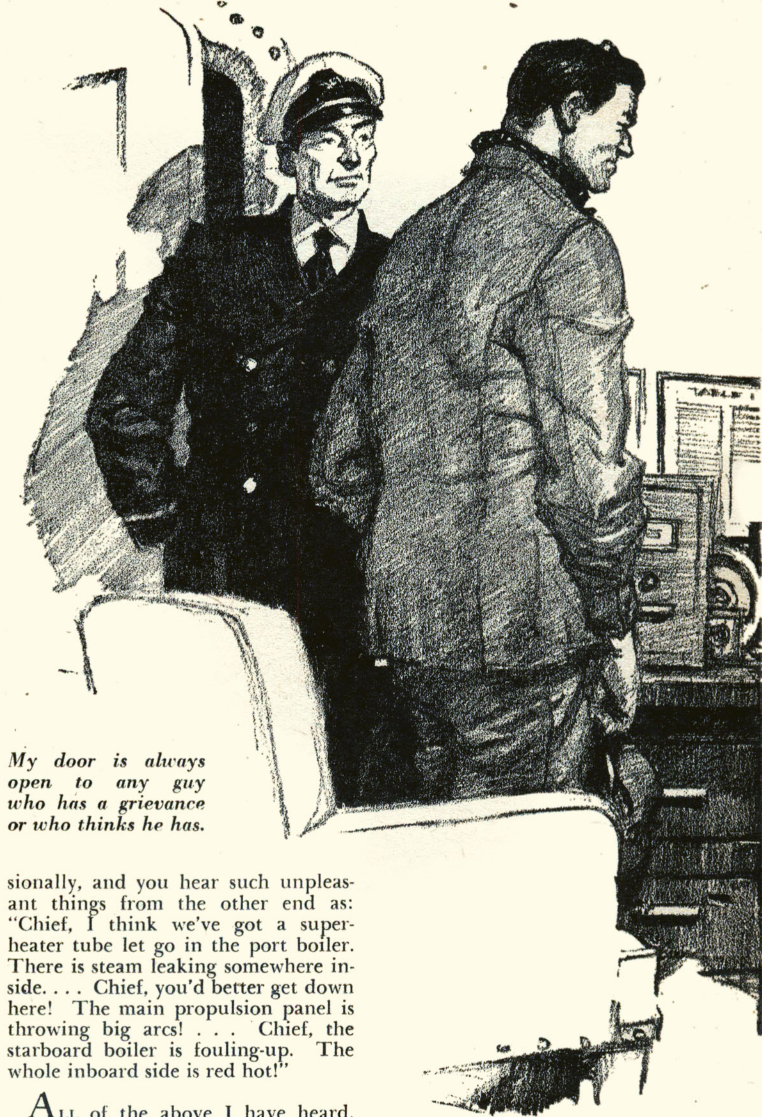
Coming out of the builder's yard, they will have what we call "bugs"—non-return valves put in backward, steam-lines hooked up wrong, electric circuits missing, beer bottles and shipyard workers' shirts in the fuel lines. By the time the bugs are eliminated, salt-water corrosion and electrolysis will have started to work and material defects will be showing. Crews at sea will patch and repair, and at least once a year a shipyard will make an overhaul. Sometimes a ship is in better operating condition when she is laid up than when she came off the ways; but it is safe to say that several single-spaced pages could be spent in writing up the ills of any one of them.

My quarters have two methods of communication with the engine-room: the telephone and the speaking-tube. Whoever designed the layout must have expected me to spend a lot of time in the sack, because the speaking-tube is hooked up right over my bunk, and an extension of the phone is also by my pillow. The chief purpose of both of these is to tell me that something is fouled-up.

Most of the calls are not serious. Perhaps the ice-machine is not behaving properly, or the coupling of one of the steering motors is making an odd noise; the watch engineer wants me to look at the trouble. Once the assistant engineer has reported any difficulty to the Chief, the watch stander is pretty well absolved of further responsibility. Naturally, I get a lot of phone calls.

I encourage my assistants to call me whenever they have trouble, by answering promptly and pleasantly and never beefing about being called, no matter what time or how trivial the difficulty. If I barked at a man or reprimanded him for bad judgment in calling me over what turns out to be a trifle, there might come a time when he had something serious and would be afraid of getting a growl instead of sympathetic help. Thereby a boiler could burn up or a main bearing let go, and the ship be partly or totally disabled—because the chief engineer was a grouchy old skeesicks on wheels.

But the fact that serious difficulty is likely to be communicated to you at any moment makes the instrument a seafaring sound-powered Damocles sword. The hair does break occasionally, and you hear such unpleasant things from the other end as: "Chief, I think we've got a superheater tube let go in the port boiler. There is steam leaking somewhere inside. . . . Chief, you'd better get down here! The main propulsion panel is throwing big arcs! . . . Chief, the starboard boiler is fouling-up. The whole inboard side is red hot!"



My door is always open to any guy who has a grievance or who thinks he has.

All of the above I have heard, and worse. Whenever I enter the engine-room in answer to such a call, I always carry with me the hope that we won't have to slow down or stop. Not only are all instances of reduced speed or stoppages entered in the engine-room logbook, but also they have to be shown in abstracts and passage reports sent to the office. While there are times when stoppages are unavoidable, a chief engineer will shun them like a family doctor ducking an abortion. The worst thing that can befall a chief is to have a breakdown at sea which he can't repair. It is about equivalent, in our profession, to the Old Man putting the ship on the rocks. There can be extenuating circumstances in both cases, but even if you come clear in keeping your license, there is bound to be an ugly hearing with the Coast Guard inspectors.

It may be thought by those not familiar with the detailed operation of a ship that your course across the sea is made merely by cocking the throttle back and letting her go. Actually, there is a constant struggle between man and the myriad forces which man must control in a modern engine-room. Take for example the matter of maintaining the water-level in the boilers: too much pressure on a pump, and too much water, and out would go generators and turbine blading; too little pressure on a pump and too little water, and the boilers would become melted and twisted chunks of steel. Too little fuel fed to the boil-

ers, and down goes the steam; too much fuel, and off go the safety-valves. Too much draft, and inefficient white smoke issues from the funnel; too little draft, and clouds of black smoke come from the stack, with danger of stack or uptake fires. This procession of balanced forces, of regulation and control—or failure and disaster if they are not controlled—runs through all the workings of the engine-room.

Besides making each force do what it is supposed to do and in the right degree, there is the necessity of containing it. Steam, particularly when it is used at higher pressures—say 450 pounds, as on this ship—is everlastingly cutting away the seats of valves and raising havoc with gaskets. Feed water, necessarily of higher pressure than the boilers, splits heater tubes and chews up valves and packing.

Electricity is inclined to sneak through insulation; and where there is dampness—and a ship is normally damp—its sneaking off is aided and abetted. Freon, the stuff of refrigeration, breaks through brazed joints or soldered repairs. The vibrations and stresses of a ship are much more severe than in a shoreside plant.

As top man of what is still commonly called the "black gang," I must be able to take all these matters in stride. The Coast Guard examiners before whom you sit for a license give you a pretty good going-over before they give you a certificate entitling you to steam away an ocean-going steamship of any horsepower.

Ordinarily, one becomes a chief engineer by having served as a fireman, oiler, watertender, third assistant, second assistant and first assistant engineer, with examinations all the way up the line. You start out with simple questions, and the examinations become progressively harder and longer until you wind up with isometric drawings and formulas concerning the construction of boilers. My examination for chief required eighty-five pages of answering, seven days of steady writing, calculating and drawing.

My own background has been sea and ships since 1929, shortly after I finished high school, with an occasional year or two ashore. My experience, besides service in the rates and ranks previously mentioned, takes in work ashore as a machinist and electrician; a six-month course in marine electric installation, and two thirty-day courses in Government-operated schools. One of the latter specialized in turbo-electric operation, the propulsion method of this ship. Thirty-six years old, I value highly the six months I put in on a coal-burner as a kid. The occasional old coal-burning fireman who strays into my fire-room can't bullhorn me—I know the mechanics and language of burning his beloved coal. And the blisters!

My salary is $736.41 per month, plus quarters and food. There is also an extra five dollars tossed in when I shift ship in American ports under certain conditions. After six months of service with a line, I can collect vacation pay. I belong to the New York local of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association.

Afloat and around the waterfronts, my rank carries prestige next to the Old Man's. At meals the skipper sits at the head of the table, flanked by his mates; I sit at the foot, flanked by my engineering officers. Our quarters run about the same, with little added touches of luxury not found elsewhere on the ship. We are both commanders in the United States Maritime Service.

On a typical day at sea, I have breakfast at seven-thirty and make a thorough round of the engine-room from eight to perhaps eight-forty-five. I start by the galley with the temperature of the big iceboxes, make the fire- and engine-room, and inspect all running machinery to the last bearing in the shaft-alley. I check the performance of the night watches in the rough logbook, paying particular attention to revolutions, fuel consumption and the chemical condition of boiler water.

If I have any special work for the day, I have spoken to the first engineer and chief pumpman on the previous afternoon; these men, the second pumpman, electrician and two wipers, all day-workers, will be working on various repair jobs, besides the three men of the watch—the engineer, fireman-watertender and oiler.

A layman accompanying me would see nothing but a flock of gauges and meters and a pile of machinery beautifully humming along. But when I get back to my office I note in pencil on a scratch-pad:

1. *Acid treat evaporator.*
2. *Strap feed pump water service lines.*

3. *Tighten up on atmospheric drain tank pump discharge.*
4. *Segregate oils in paint locker.*
5. *Overhaul reducing valve to auxiliary generator gland steam.*
6. *Clean inspection tank.*

None of these jobs calls for immediate attention; I don't pester the men with them until they have finished their present work. Chances are, the first assistant engineer will pick up some of the jobs anyhow.

The chief pumpman, whose duty it is to pump our cargo ashore in port and to keep the pumps and deck machinery in order, most likely will be working in one of the pumprooms or about the decks. I may give him a hand—"Pumps" can usually use some help, and I like to keep my hand in on the feel of tools.

I have dinner—and that's what it is on the menu, not lunch—at eleven-thirty, and at noon sharp the day's paper work begins. A ship's day does not end at midnight, but at noon. It is then that the bridge gets its noon sight, then that I figure out my revolutions and fuel consumption for the past twenty-four hours. The navigating officer, the second mate, sends me down latitude and longitude, the number of nautical miles covered by observation in the past twenty-four hours. I figure out the number of engine miles covered and the percentage of slip. Along with figures on fuel and fresh water, I give him my report for noon, to be entered in his log. At the time I take this report to the bridge, I make my daily check of the bridge steering telemotor.

Copying the rough log to the smooth (the latter is kept in my office, the rough log in the engine-room), the filling in of abstracts and other paper work takes about two hours daily. Abstracts and passage reports at the end of each passage require about eight hours of work.

Perhaps in the afternoon the electrician is stuck on a problem. When the M coil of the degaussing system—yes, we still use the degaussing system, for there are still mines around in places—is turned on, the magnetic compass goes off. I tell "Juice" to open up the boxes of the compensating coils while I'm finishing up the log and paper work. Later we find the trouble—not enough juice to the M coil compensating coils. By lowering the amount of resistance in the circuit, the magnetic compass is brought back where it belongs. The man at the wheel, checking with the gyro compass, says: "There—you've got it! She's right on now." The bridge likes to have the magnetic compass as a standby, to check the gyro compass, to maintain a course in case the gyro compass should fail.

Four-thirty is time for my shave and shower, unless something comes up to break the routine. Supper is at five, and after that I have a two-hour nap, to awake refreshed for reading or writing. Some chiefs while away their time at cards, making gadgets on the lathes, inventions, or just fanning the breeze. I have run the time-passing hobby of writing into nineteen published articles and stories, one poem and one novel. The novel was published while I was in Saudi Arabia. It had nothing to do with the sea, naturally. I see too much water to want to write a book about it.

Midnight or after, I make my last round of the engine-room for the day—and turn in, hoping that the phone won't ring during the night.

In port, there are almost always repairs to be made, bunkers and fresh water to be taken on, and since I don't believe in leaving a ship until everything is in order, it sometimes works out that I don't get a chance to get ashore for a haircut. My men often work through the night, and it would be no good if I went off playboying. When the lights of the city shine over the rail and you can almost hear the tinkle of glasses and the chatter of the girls at the bars, it is quite something to ask sea-lonely men to turn-to on a hot, sooty boiler so the ship will be ready to sail tomorrow. You can do it successfully only by example. . . .

During annual inspection my office—this lonely cabin of manuals, blueprints and files at sea—is as crowded as a rookery. Machinist and electrician snappers, General Electric and combustion-control specialists, a gang cleaning the fuel-oil heaters, another gang on overboards and sea suctions, welders, my own assistants, the Coast Guard inspectors, port engineers, people bringing stores—I can keep up only with the major doings. Grease marks and cigarette ashes pollute the joint, and it will be some days after the ship gets to sea before my office returns to shipshape orderliness.

Fresh water and fuel are responsibilities of the chief engineer, and the layman will be likely to say: "So what? You know how far you are going, so why not take plenty to get you there? Why don't you fill her up so you can't go wrong?"

The answer is that the people in the office ride herd on fuel and water and check you down close. The reason for this is simple: every ton of water or fuel a ship carries, that less ton of cargo can be carried. The operator makes his money out of hauling cargo, not water or bunkers. It is one of those things where you can't win. If you should run into bad weather and adverse currents, and run out of bunkers or fresh water, you would be held responsible by both the office and the Coast Guard. If, on the other hand, you have a fine run, favorable winds and currents, and economical consumption, and get in with a good fuel reserve, the office will beef because you originally took too much fuel.

So you maneuver to get a private reserve, or in seagoing parlance, you have fuel and water "up your sleeve." You scrounge and save until you get fuel and water ahead, then keep it ahead of your books. Sometimes an eager-beaver young port captain will cross-examine you on your reserve. Lie to him without fear—he won't get his hands dirty taking soundings.

A smart old boy will put it differently. "Chief," he will ask, "how are you on water or fuel?" He will have his note-pad and pencil poised, and he will say, "Officially?" with a smile. You tell him what you have officially and then he says: "And you got up your sleeve—" If he has the right kind of twinkle to his eyes, you tell him. He wants the ship's draft to jibe with the theoretical draft with a given amount of cargo, fuel, water, stores. He will be able to account for inches, if only for his own satisfaction, which the eager-beaver can only fret about.

There are all kinds of angles to the engineering end of running a ship, and only the basic ones are found in the engineering books. For example, there is the problem of getting along with the "deck apes," as we refer to the noisy heathens topside. Engineers are quiet, probing, thoughtful; deck officers run to extroversion and loudness. An engineer with a jug invites his friends into his cabin, and they polish it off with the utmost quietness; an obstreperous mate with a jug has to mount the deck, wave his arms, throw the logbook at the old man, berate some unfortunate sailor, and generally perform.

The engineering officer, knowing the caliber of deck officers, knows there is nothing overawing about navigation, that much of navigation is "by guess and by God," that at times the Old Man himself doesn't any more know where he is than the fireman taking a sight through the smoke-indicator. The engine-room has had its bells on an overcast night when an island came up sixty miles from where the ship was supposed to be. "Dead reckoning" means the bridge is doing the best it can at guessing.

I used to be critical of the bridge, but I've grown tolerant and compassionate. With machinery you deal in thousandths of an inch; in navigation they toss miles around like confetti—they have a whole ocean to make clearance. The Old Man likes to

make a good show on navigation by covering the distance between ports in the same number of miles shown by the tables; there is no problem for him to do this, for all he has to do is to cut his miles per day accordingly, no matter how much wind or currents have set him off the track. I like to make a showing on fuel; my figures cover fuel per observed mile. Naturally, I don't like running around the ocean, then figuring point to point.

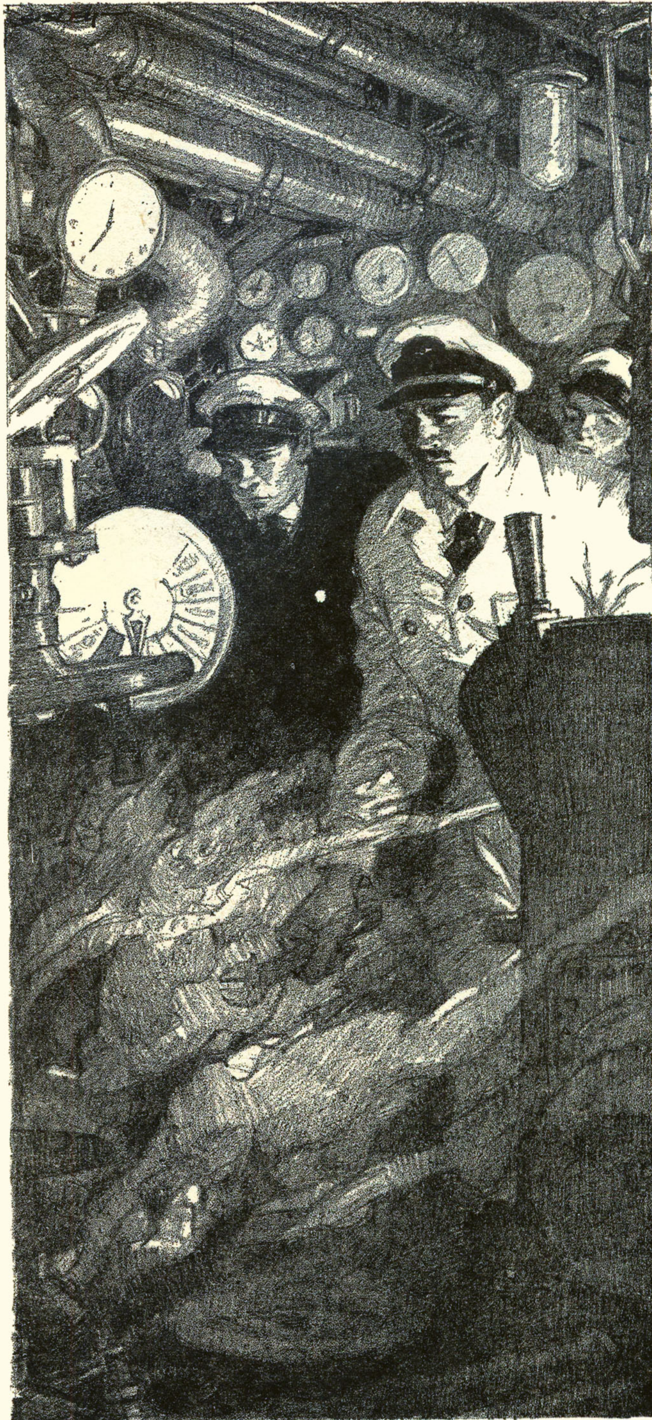
There is a little thing in our figures which tends to keep the bridge on the ball. It is "percentage of slip." I figure out the number of feet traveled by the ship's propeller ahead (theoretically of course, because the propeller can't go ahead of the ship) and reduce the bridge's observed miles to feet; the percentage of loss between engine feet and observed feet is called "percentage of slip." Adverse weather, adverse currents, a dirty bottom or poor trim to a ship can send this figure skyrocketing. And so can poor navigation.

This type of slip—where the propeller makes more miles or feet than the ship—is called "positive slip." When the ship gets ahead of the engine, as a ship sometimes does with fair weather and fair current, the slip is called "negative."

Usually, the master of a ship is a pretty alert customer. He has an eye open for favorable currents, the trim of the ship, and other conditions that will favor getting on with ship and cargo. If he finds his navigating officer is not doing too well, the Old Man himself will take over. Like you and me and other mortals, the Old Man makes mistakes and gets fouled up; but you can depend on it that he will be on the prowl if things are not going just right.

The same guy who got tangled up with the island not supposed to be there once took the ship through a shrouding sandstorm to the strange harbor of Karachi—so close in that when the weather cleared and the pilot got aboard, the pilot refused to take her farther. That's what, as a Chief, I expect of skippers—mistakes and miracles.

ONE of the slants you get in doing ship's business in various world ports is that American business practices don't even touch on sharpness compared with the general world outlook. What is inflicted on American ships in many foreign ports is not business but highway robbery. Ship repairs and stores are not a business, but a racket. In America, you can expect attention to workmanship, to doing a decent job. In too many foreign ports their only interest is how much they can bleed your operator for. In Colombo, it is not unusual for them



You answer: "Okay, Skipper. She's taking it all right."

to try to charge you for more water than the tanks of your ship will hold; in Singapore, I have stood behind my own bunker soundings and made the man knock thirty-five tons off the fuel bill. I have seen a skipper toss out a whole pile of phony launch-service bills in Bombay.

With all of the mechanical part of the small, compact, complex floating city coming under his domain, a Chief has a job to keep from becoming cranky. He passes a washroom, and finds a fresh-water shower turned on full blast while the naked showeree is blithely sitting on the head with a five-month-old magazine spread before him. The Chief who hears an ordinary seaman bragging about taking five showers a day has a difficult time to count to ten. It takes a lot of self-control to keep from busting out in wild fury when you see some character tossing matchsticks into a toilet bowl—particularly some deck ape who has been going to sea for twenty years.

CHIEF engineers have a bunch of traditions to live up to. If a steam line lets go, it is the Chief's duty to take the lead in getting things under control. If there's a breakdown at sea, he is expected to stay with the job until the ship is back under way. He is supposed to be in the engine-room during maneuvering or when the speed of the ship is changed at sea.

All ship's officers are supposed to be temperate; but as every seafaring man knows, that is merely a supposition. If a Chief does hit the bottle—and enough of them do—it is a good policy for him to steer clear of the jug around sailing time. That's when things happen in an engine-room, during the stresses and strains, and changes of pressures and temperatures when maneuvering. Once in a while, you have to take the throttle from an assistant who has been trying to emulate the feats of *Mr. Colin Glencannon,* the doughty chief of the *Inchcliffe Castle.* A good many engineers have the idea they can dispose of a jug like the old master, but it's a piece of impertinence when mere assistants try it.

(Incidentally, old *Glencannon* is a kind of patron saint of the profession. Sometimes when there is a serious breakdown, an engineer will crack dryly, "Well! I wonder what *Glencannon* would do about this?")

Of course, ships are filled with characters, and the black gang has its share. There are romanticists who love the sea, men who can't get along with their wives, bitter men, cynical men, indifferent men; men who want no more responsibility than that of fireman, men who are so handicapped by lack of education that they are destined to be tied to the fireroom for the rest of their lives; men who delight in putting over something on their superiors or equals; men who are intensely loyal to the ship, and men who hate the ship; men who don't come for days from the booze, and men who don't take a drink; men who want naught but solitude and peace; men who aren't happy unless they have a great ruckus rolling.

My door is always open to any guy who has a grievance or who thinks he has. About nine-tenths of the time all a guy wants to do is get himself recognized. Right now, I have a first assistant who recognizes this facet of labor relations; a beef hasn't reached my office in months. Likewise, if the gang is getting off the ball anywhere, the black gang delegate is called in by the first assistant and told the gang had better straighten out and fly right. This is not done with brutal authority and threats, but with a tone and logic that gives and expects respect and cooperation.

Actually, there is a bond between the Chief and the guys below. The very base of power of a steamship rests with the fireroom. The man at the throttle isn't worth a nickel unless the fireman has the steam; nor is the engineer going anywhere without water in the boilers. A good fireman-watertender is an important man.

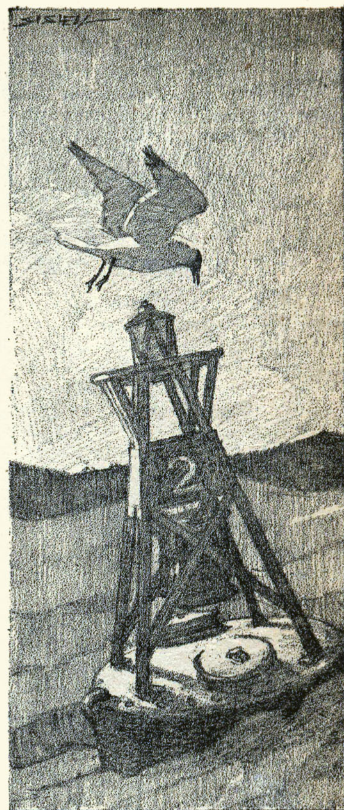
Now the questions: Why ride a tanker instead of a dry-cargo ship. Isn't a tanker more dangerous than a freighter or a passenger ship? You don't get much time in port on a tanker, do you? What is the disease called *"tankeritis?"*

No doubt, a tanker is more dangerous than a freighter. Every day I eat at the table with a man who reminds me of this danger; his face is permanently marked by the explosion and fire from one of these ships. My feeling is, like all who ride cars or duck traffic: "It won't happen to me."

True, tankers are not in port long. Herein arises the disease of *tankeritis,* the crankiness of men who are cooped up too much, the battiness of men who work too much and play too little. I am capable of taking the strain of this life, and I like the very part of it some men can't take.

I AM at sea for only one reason: to make money. The pay on tankers is higher than that of freighters, and usually there is not much time to spend it. Happily married, with a four-year-old daughter, I'm not interested in romance in foreign ports or domestic ones either, except New York, where my two womenfolk are. The idea of a tanker is to pick up four or five thousand dollars and get back home without any foolishness.

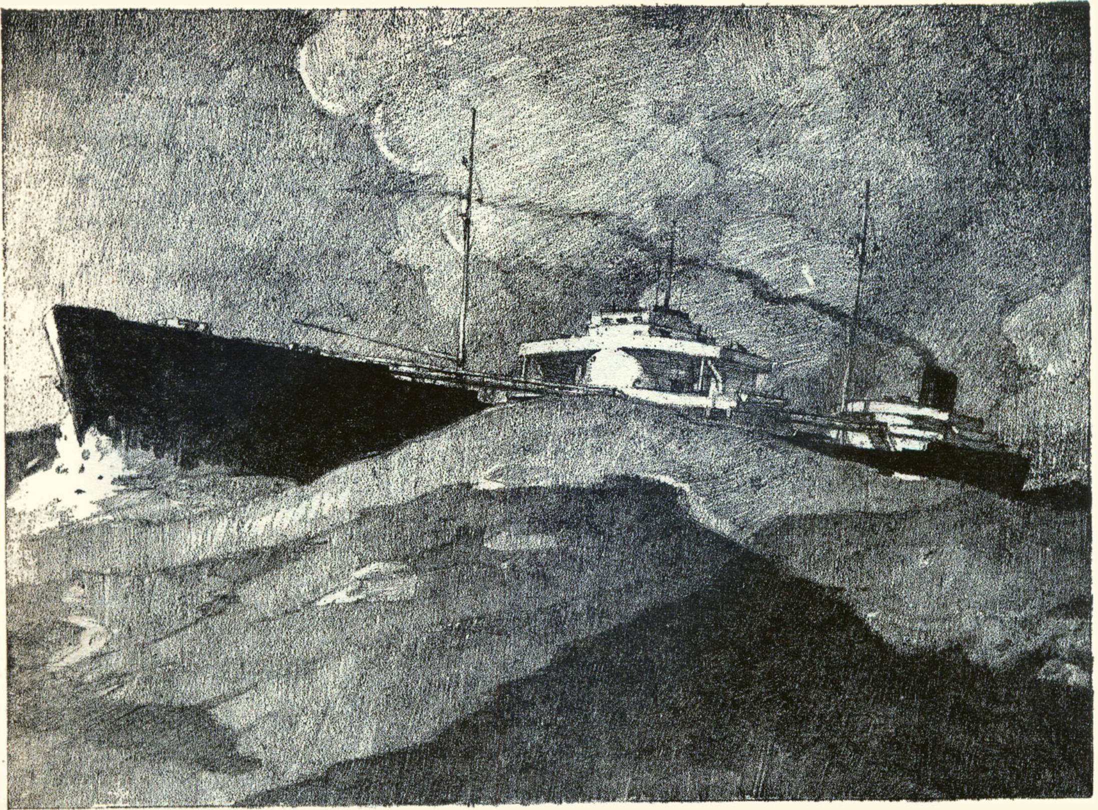
A passenger ship would not suit my temperament at all. I like the freedom of work clothes, and to get a good chew of tobacco and paint things brown. I would be impatient of standing in line waiting for a Chief's job on a passenger ship.



Tying up the loose ends of this article: Those rusty pipes I'm dragging across the China Sea for the Coast Guard inspectors when the ship gets home. They come from the steam smothering lines; and these lines—part of the ship's fire-fighting equipment—are not to be tampered with unless necessary. Chances are, when I report the renewal of this piping, there will be few questions asked. But I have the remains, in case.

The ship aboard which this is being written is a Maritime Commission tanker. When we left Galveston five months ago, the port engineer told me we would be gone for one month only, a trip to Europe. Positively no longer than a month, positively no farther than Germany or England. We are now bound for Japan, after trips in the Mediterranean and to Aruba. We will end up by going around the world completely.

This is to be expected of Maritime Commission tankers. Orders originate, change, veer and reverse themselves mysteriously, presumably in Washington; we take off as lightly and with as little fuss for the Persian



Gulf and Japan as a citizen crossing the street for a newspaper. There is a feeling of bigness and far-flung operation, a feeling that you are working for a Big-Time Operator.

Likewise, there are less petty economies practiced on these Government-owned ships—such things as doling out wiping rags and beefing over an extra pint of lubricating oil used by a watch. You are not held so close on fuel and fresh water, and generally the atmosphere is not full of characters who go around replacing sixty-watt bulbs with forty-watters. The toughest private operator when handling his own ships softens up a bit when operating for the Government.

There are moments of splendor connected with the same, times of riding the horses of the sun. When your ship's got a sleek clean bottom; when she's trimmed right; when her boilers are clean; when combustion is on the ball; then when you rev her up and watch her go, riding hard the theoretical figures of performance, riding past records in the file of abstracts—then you're on the horsepower beam! Or when it's hellishly rough, the gale's whining, and she's plunging into it, and you're making extra rounds, to see how she's standing up under the storm—you hear the anxious voice of the Old Man on the phone: "How are things with you, Chief? How's she holding up below?"

And you answer with the deliberation of a doctor: "Okay, Skipper. She's taking it all right."

And of course there are dark times: When the ship's bottom has grown long whiskers and the barnacles of the tropic seas have put the slowdown on the vessel; when her boilers have picked up the sooty accumulations of long use; when no matter how much tube-blowing you do, or how much oxygen-releasing compound you inject, you just aren't going to get any performance but that of a tired ship with foul bottom and boilers.

A dark time, too—a very dark time—is when the hum of the turbine has abruptly ceased; when the ship is coasting to a stop and the waves are already asserting themselves, lifting and tossing the great hull at their own will—without any opposing force from the steam horses!

"Bridge?" you call from the soundproof in the engine-room. Engineers, firemen, oilers, pumpmen, electrician—the whole black gang is down to give a hand. They scamper for tools and rigging. "Mate? Mate, this is the Chief. Get hold of the Old Man and tell him that the main thrust bearing has let go, that I can't give him a definite report until we get it opened up. It will take about three hours for that, to rig chain tackle and lift and cover—there are gratings and a ladder to take down."

The mate says: "You will be able to fix it, Chief, huh, all right?"

"Yes. We have spare shoes. It will take approximately ten hours, altogether, I estimate," you answer. But you don't like the tone of the mate's voice. It is tense with alarm.

You turn to the first engineer. "First, I figure ten hours on it: lift the cover, fit new shoes, box her up, and get under way. "What do you say?"

The First thinks it over. Ten hours is on the long side; it allows for petty difficulties, gives a little leeway for unforeseen obstacles. "Yes," says the First. "We ought to be able to make it in ten hours, all right."

"All right. I'll tell the Old Man ten hours. I'd better get up and see him. I don't want him to be getting wacky ideas."

The First looks at you and grins knowingly. He understands that you want to assure the Old Man that the ship will be under power again, that you will get her in—and do it before he starts getting panicky on the radio.

No Bands Playing

Professional football doesn't go in so much for glory; and it has some very special angles—as witness this story,

by
WILLIAM COX

TONY HALE said to the girl: "Sure, we've got a band. And a little guy dressed in a whale costume, prancing and dancing behind the end zone—very amusing indeed. But the tune is different."

"You'll get used to it," said Milly Tracey. "It's not college football. It's better!"

"I'm just a defensive back. I'm greener than the grass on the field. But the trouble is, it doesn't seem like football."

She was a tall girl, slim and lovely; and that she should know enough about the game to be an observer on the rim for the professional athletes known as the Whales was unlikely but true. She crinkled her short nose at him and said: "You do what Beansy says, and you'll be all right. And if you get in the game, watch Devlin. He's a rookie too, but he's terrific."

"I know Devlin," he said. "I'm getting to know Max Moroni, too. What's with you and Maxie, or can you tell me?"

She did not evade him. She said directly: "Max had the inside track with me until you joined the Whales."

"But it's over now?" he persisted.

"I don't know. I'm trying to find out. I've spent a lot of time with you, haven't I?"

He said: "You're the nicest girl in the world, Milly. They don't pay defensive backs enough for me to—"

She said: "And there is your mother and young Al. . . . I know, Tony. You're a proud young guy, and you've got to give it the old college try."

Max Moroni came out of the clubhouse and scowled upon them. Tony Hale glared right back. Milly smiled sweetly, waved her hand and went off toward the ramp leading up into the grandstand of the ball park.

Moroni said: "You are a joe I would never like, anyway. And if you keep going the way you are now, you will be a joe without a future in this business."

Tony Hale said: "You'll see to that, I suppose?"

"That's the first sign of intelligence I have seen in you," nodded Moroni. He was a large man with a slightly bashed nose, a dark man from the mining country, a star pro quarterback in his fifth season. He was the spark-plug of the Whales offense and a potent factor on the club, everyone said. Moroni knew the owners, they said: Moroni was smart.

Tony Hale said: "You know what, Max? I have a slight suspicion that I'll be around this club when you're gone. It is just a hunch, you understand. But I'm playing it that way."

Moroni said: "You may not stay healthy, busher."

They surveyed one another with hearty mutual detestation. Tony Hale was fair and somewhat leaner than Moroni, but they were equal in height and sturdiness of limb. It was obvious that neither would back down an inch.

Tony Hale said: "This job happens to mean something to me. I have always been healthy. I mean to remain so. You can take it from there."

Moroni may have tried, at that, he thought, had Beansy Cain not strolled from the clubhouse. Beansy had been a great pro tackle in a day not so distant. He was Milly Tracey's uncle, and he was coach of the Whales. Moroni growled beneath his breath and strode away toward the playing-field. The rest of the Whales came out behind Beansy and followed, trailing along, sauntering, talking among themselves. They were very unlike a college squad.

Beansy took Tony's arm. He said gently: "I want ya to sit on the bench with me, see? This bunch—well, the boys ain't young. They've been great, but—well, Moroni and Grogan are about what's left that's real good. Next year I'll have a club. This year—well, we'll be lucky to stay in the league."

They were walking toward the Whale bench. The Unicorns across the way were preparing to do battle. The Unicorns were younger, and perhaps a bit larger than the Whales, and they had Devlin, the All-America rookie, the "born pro." Beansy sat comfortably on the bench and said: "Now you watch close, Hale, because I got to use you on defense. Watch that Devlin. What'll happen now, they'll kick off, but not to Ky. We'll start on the twenty, and maybe Max can break Ky loose—I dunno. We'll be all right, anyhow, until they get their reserves going. Then they'll beat our cans."

Tom nodded, not understanding. In college you might believe you are overmatched, but you never conceded defeat, not in football. In college you figure the game begins with th score nothing to nothing, and that anything might happen, and that you are going to reach heights never reached before, and that you can, and most likely will, win the game.

Furthermore, at the college which Tony attended, the coach—although utilizing specialists when essential and fully employing the unlimited substitution system—had not been a believer in the two-platoon idea *in toto*. Tony had learned to defend perhaps a lot better than most—but Tony had been allowed to run, pass and kick occasionally, also.

HOWEVER, that had been a small college; and Devlin of the Unicorns was out of vast Midwest U., where he had been the leading Conference quarterback on offense. Moroni was of similar caliber, and Beansy had decided that Tony Hale was a defensive man, a line backer-up. The pros were not a bit like college players, and Tony was glum, thinking of the mortgage on his mother's house, his brother's impending matriculation at the old alma mater, and the fact that he was falling in love with Milly.

He watched the play on the field. The Unicorns kicked over the goal line. Kv Kaye couldn't get to the ball. Moroni started driving the Whales from the twenty. Behind Moroni's skillful blocking Kaye got away. He ran fifty yards. Moroni threw him a pass, and Kaye scored.

"The Unicorns have several other gents out there. You stop them? Not you, Moroni, you rat!"

Tony Hale was up, yelling. Beansy sat placidly and said: "All right, Hale, Now you go in there and watch Devlin close. He's new, and we ain't got him scouted, but he is very good. They'll throw the book at you, and—"

Tony did not wait for any further dire—and too accurate—predictions. He was shaking like a leaf, going out there. Moroni curled a lip at him as they passed. Moroni knew how he felt, going in for the first time.

The big quarterback said: "Okay, Hale. Bobble a couple, and see what happens."

Tony did not trust himself to reply. He went down and took his place in the line-up with the other defensive men of the Whales. There were a few other rookies with him—Beansy was determined to build for next year. Tony wondered if they all felt as loose and fluttery inside as he did. His hands were clammy and clumsy as he awaited the kick-off.

Grogan, the center, the one Whale who got little relief in a tight game, was a round-faced, cheerful giant. He eyed Tony and said: "It's just a ball game, kid. Let's get down and stop this bunch. And watch that Devlin!"

Kline kicked off just then. Tony started running. He was in the second wave of defense; and he saw Carewe and Grogan nail Devlin on the twenty. He was still jittery as the Unicorns jumped to position. Freygang, the Unicorn fullback, lunged promptly at tackle, and Tony went in, down and forward in a submarine.

His face hit dirt. He got hold of Freygang's legs and jerked. The pile-up was plenty tough, but not dirty. He shrugged himself out of the heap—and the hippodrome was over.

He did not hear the hired jazz band again that day. He began to sweat nice and free, and the game was football, and he was in it. Devlin was again sending the fullback at the tackle, and this time Tony took off, going into the hole like a cannonball.

A fleet end stepped nimbly into the spot Tony had vacated. Devlin magicked a slight pass over the heads of struggling men. The end nabbed the ball and began running.

By the time Tony was disentangled, the Unicorn end was racing across the goal-line. Moroni was leading his pack back afield; and Devlin, a handsome, cocksure youth, was smilingly accepting the congratulations of his more experienced teammates.

Tony's heart sank down through his cleats, into the sward, out of the world. Moroni had a word for him. "The Unicorns get Devlin. . . . We get Hale! That's life!"

Tony dragged himself to the bench, all his newfound elation evaporated. He tried to avoid Beansy's eye and could not, and when the coach beckoned, he went over and sat, hang-dog, on the bench, and steeled himself to accept the verbal lashing he knew he deserved.

Beansy said mildly: "We haven't got Devlin scouted. He pulled a real fast one. You got to watch out for those from all the pros. We got most of 'em scouted, and Milly will have Devlin today."

Tony could not believe his ears. Beansy was practically apologizing!

Tony said flatly: "I bobbled it. I should have checked."

"Yeah. You should've," nodded Beansy without heat.

In a little while he put Tony back in on defense. The Unicorns, playing with exciting and powerful *éclat,* scored three touchdowns, each engineered by Devlin. The Whales scored only two. All goals were converted, as in the pro game. . . .

Beansy seemed to think a defeat by the Unicorns by a mere seven points was a moral victory for his Whales, and that philosophy Tony could remember from college; but it was not that which he cared to treasure among his school memories. Max Moroni, fierce, angry, said in the dressing-room: "I'm not satisfied. This team can do better than that. This team is a good team!"

Tony kept silent, listening, watching, trying to learn. Moroni, whom he detested, seemed to be on the right track. Beansy, a very likable gent and Milly's uncle to boot, shrugged and left the dressing-room.

Moroni said balefully: "If Beansy wouldn't play rookies in key spots! . . . We could 'a' beat them, if that first pass hadn't gone home!"

Big Grogan said: "If the dog hadn't stopped to nap, he would 'a' caught the rabbit. Nuts!"

But the oldsters, many of whom would not be back next year, nor ever thereafter, were listening to the fiery Moroni. They could be good for one more season and collect the big money from the pay-off game—a return bout with the Unicorns for sure, they agreed. Moroni could lead them, and that extra dough would buy a piece of a business or a farm or something. It was easy to know their urgent desire for that extra chunk of money as they came down to the end of the football trail.

Tony reluctantly admitted that Max Moroni was a leader, that he seemed able to make the big men think—and follow. He hastily dressed and left Max talking it up almost like a college coach—not quite, but almost—and went outside and found Milly.

He said: "I was bad, huh? I couldn't figure Devlin."

"I've got news for you," she said. "You'll never figure him."

"You couldn't catch his fakes?"

"I caught a dozen. He varies them like a magician. Only by instinct will Devlin be halted."

"Or by a broken limb?" suggested Tony.

The girl shook her head. "Not in this league. That boy will be top box-office. No smart pro will seriously hamper his chances to draw at the gate!"

"Yeah," said Tony slowly. "I never thought of that." But nobody would hesitate to slug a mere defensive back, his aching ribs reminded him. Tony Hale was no attraction at the ticket office.

THERE was no doubt, late in November, early in December, that Beansy had missed the boat. The job Moroni did was superb, lashing his ancient linesmen to action, utilizing the skill of Ky Kaye with cunning, smashing to victory again and again—by narrow margins, but ever to victory.

Beansy, predicting disaster from week to week, honestly building for coming seasons, had placed himself far out on a creaking limb. Everyone knew it. Tony Hale, playing defensive halfback, making his share of errors and more than his share of stunning tackles, collecting bruises and a small pay-check and no praise for his pains, never did get to feel like a member of the Whales football team. He was a club employee, all right, but there was no dash and glory to playing behind a weary but determined line of oldsters and rookies, and taking abuse from Moroni when the opposition scored. He said as much to Milly when they had finally won through, and were to play the Unicorns again for the championship of the league—and the earned increment of exhibitions about the land, which would fatten the coffers of retiring big professionals.

They were eating a chop in a modest bistro on Main Avenue when he sighed and confided in her that he was about to give up. "When this season is over, I will get a job. Maybe I will make thirty dollars every week. I can live home. Mother is a fine cook."

Milly said evenly: "Maybe you're right, Tony. Maybe you're not a real pro."

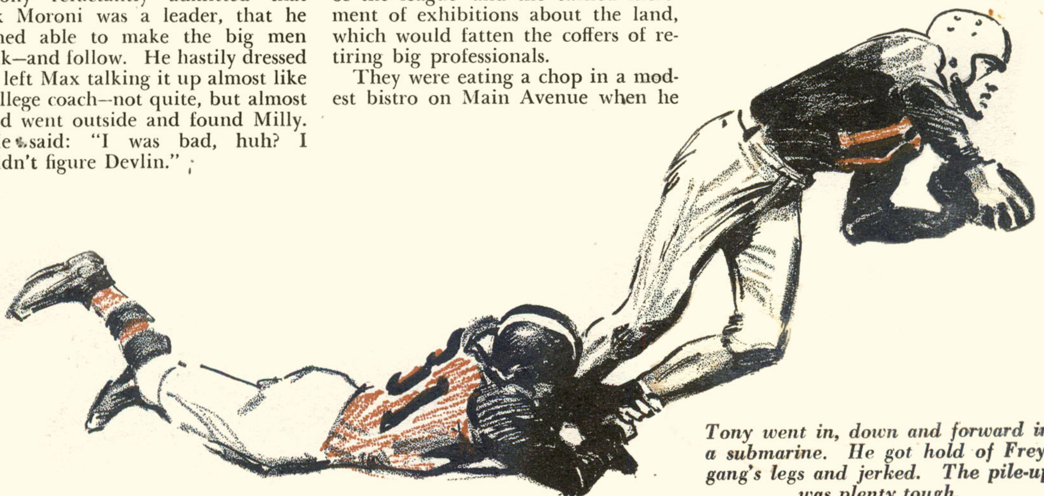
He said: "Beansy—"

"I know," she interrupted. She sat and looked at him, and he forgot his own troubles, noting the thinness of her face. Her voice came fast and angry: "But what you don't know is that Max Moroni went to the owners. He blew his top about Beansy wanting to play you and other rookies for experience; he said Beansy wanted to buy a team, and coach from a rocking-chair. He said that if he, Max, had not driven them, the Whales would have lost half their games and the owners would have been forced to spend thousands to rebuild for next year." She paused, breathless, staring at him.

Tony said: "Max shouldn't have done that."

"He's half right," Milly said. "He did spark the team. Beansy did want to groom you fellows for next year. Beansy missed the boat. He didn't think the veterans had it for another season. So Max is moving in on Beansy's job."

"ON account of you and me." Tony's jaw began to harden in a way he recognized and deplored. In his extreme youth he had been afflicted with a deep and burning temper which had led him to disaster on many key occasions. The death of his father and resultant struggles had leavened him, given him control. He felt now the sickening foretaste of one of his old-time attacks. His voice lowered almost to a whisper. "He



Tony went in, down and forward in a submarine. He got hold of Freygang's legs and jerked. The pile-up was plenty tough.

shouldn't have gone behind Beansy's back—to the owners."

"Max is a pro," said Milly. "He looks ahead. He'd rather coach than take the beating on the field. Who wouldn't?"

"Well—I wouldn't," Tony rejoined. "I'm not the leader type. But that part's all right. It's the treachery I don't like. Beansy is—Beansy is a nice guy."

"Beansy is a good coach," retorted Milly. "The old-timers played over their heads, but do you think they can do it another year?"

Tony said: "Beansy was trying to build with me and the others. Now it can cost him his job. If we win, he's wrong. If we lose, he won't be right! That's not fair."

"You'll have a job back in Ohio," she reminded him.

Tony said: "I paid off the mortgage on the house. Al got a scholarship for football. Things could be worse."

She pushed back her coffee cup. She said: "Oh, you—you. . . . Why can't you fight? Max is dirty, but at least he fights. All you can do is back up a line!"

Tony felt the anger growing. This was not the time, but he could feel it. He said: "That's my job with the Whales. Backing up the line."

"Not against Devlin," she said. Her eyes were hurt and a bit bewildered, and her own ire was apparent. "Nobody has done it right against Devlin. There's always someone better than you think."

He said with some difficulty: "I don't want to quarrel with you, Milly. I can't. . . . I was going to sort of surprise you. I got extravagant and sent for Ma and Al to come to the game. I got them the next box to the owners', on the field. I thought you might sit there—they won't need you on the rim this last game." His voice was shaking a little. He tried to control it. "I wanted to try and work something out. . . . Milly, let's not get upset with each other. I'm so crazy about you—"

"What good is it?" she asked dully. "Beansy'll be out of a job. You know him—hand in pocket all the time—he hasn't a dime. At thirty dollars a week what can you do for yourself? I think a lot of you, Tony, but I want a man who can take care of himself and me."

He said: "I wouldn't want you any other way. Will you sit in the box with Ma and Al tomorrow?"

"Next to the owners?" she asked. Her face lighted a little in a rueful smile. "I could at least tell them off, couldn't I? . . . Of course I'm dying to meet your mother, Tony. You know I wouldn't miss sitting there. It's just—well, Beansy and I have been Whales a long while." There was a tear on her cheek.

"Max went to the owners. He blew his top about Beansy. . . . Max is moving in on Beansy's job. Beansy'll be out."

He stared incredulously. She was weeping because a professional football club would probably fire her uncle from his coaching job. He held her hand across the table, soothing her. The anger was dormant in him, but it was there in a hard, nauseating small lump.

They made it up halfway, but the tension was there, even in the lingering last moments before they parted until after the morrow's climactic events.

This was in the Midwest, in the home stadium of the Unicorns. The day was cold and bitter, and Tony Hale made sure his mother had blankets against the December wind. Milly was quiet and taut and reserved.

The Unicorns had a very large band, and their comedian was costumed like a unicorn and pranced and danced along the end zone line, and the Unicorn band played "Jump Up Blues," slightly off key because of the cold; but when the Whales appeared, the band merely played discords with razzberries on the brass, or was contemptuously silent. In the dressing-room Beansy Cain was quietly admonishing those of the Whales who would still listen to him, mainly the rookies and Grogan, the great center.

The owners summoned Beansy, and Moroni took over. The fiery big quarterback gave them a spiel reminiscent of the old-time fire-and-brimstone coaches, with a single difference —Max's motif was the money they could make. To Tony Hale it sounded incongruous.

And then Moroni took a step toward Tony, as the rookies gathered defensively together around Grogan and yelled: "As for you characters, we can do without you. If I can keep you off the field, we'll show you how to beat Devlin!"

The lump inside Tony Hale became a small flame which curled at his soul. He stood up. He said: "The Unicorns have several other gents out there. You stop them? Not you, Moroni, you rat!"

The silence was terrible for a moment. Then Grogan laughed.

Tony said to the livid, speechless quarterback: "You do your job. Get some yardage. Then you might run to teacher and squeal on your betters and maybe suck into a job. But don't tell us what to do."

Moroni said: "I'll see you after the game. . . . After the game!"

"Sputter and choke!" said Tony's long-dormant temper. "Sound off. Empty barrels make the most noise!" This was irrelevant, his cold other self told him, watching, listening, trying to control the flame. This was schoolboy talk, fight talk. This had

no place in pro ball. "Try to scare people! Swagger and strut. To me, you'll always be the jerk who squawked. You're good, Moroni. You're a quarterback. But you're yellow somewhere inside you."

Even Grogan was looking askance at him. He got hold of himself and stopped talking, standing there, staring at Moroni. Those of the Whales who knew of Moroni's actions and those who did not were buzzing. The door opened, and Beansy returned.

"It's time," said Beansy in his even tones. "You know what to do. Max will handle the offensive strategy. Make it clean, guys, but rock 'em and sock 'em."

The tension lessened, and they straggled out onto the field. They had warmed up and all was ready. Grogan went out for the toss of the coin. He won, and that was all right. Tony sat on the bench and wriggled so that he could see Ma and his sturdy young brother and Milly in the field box next to the burly overcoated owners and their wives.

Carewe and Landy and Simms and Niles, those were the key rookies, all defense men, and they sat together, around Beansy and Tony. They were not talking at all, and knew nothing of events behind the scenes, but Tony could feel that they were with him and against Moroni, a thing of the spirit, of instinct. The game began.

Beansy said: "If Max can break Ky loose— There he goes!"

There was no indication of what the owners might have said to the stout coach. He kept his shrewd eyes on the play and talked in his customary monotone to the players about him, making observations on Unicorn play, on Moroni's excellent stratagems. He was a genial, smart, understanding man. Tony's anger fanned a little higher, thinking of treachery against this man.

Slight lugged for eight yards, and Moroni masked a hand-off to Ky Kaye, who bootlegged along the sidelines unobserved for ten yards, then ran like a mad gazelle for the goal-line. He scored. The jazz band did not perform when the Whales scored.

Beansy said: "All right, guys. Try and stop Devlin."

Moroni's head was high, going off to spattering handclaps among recalcitrant fans. His glare was poisonous, but Tony ignored the enemy. Grogan was waiting, wry-faced, nodding at the rookies, and smelling trouble ahead. Devlin turned loose his Unicorns.

They were big and swift, and they had his skill to direct them. They came, a juggernaut with twenty-two legs, and Tony went back, step by step. He fought them; Grogan fought them; the rookies and old men in the Whales line fought them; but Devlin drove his team ahead, a swaggering, handsome young man with sure genius on the football field.

Down they came, and Grogan called a time out. He said: "I'm gettin' awful tired awful early."

Carewe was bleeding; Simms was bruised; Landy was limping. None was unscathed; but they could grin, the younger ones. Tony panted: "If we could steal that ball—"

Grogan grinned. "I been tacklin' it every chance I get. They got handles on it today."

"It's the pay-off," nodded Tony. He could feel that. It was the big game—the championship game.

It was like in college, that traditional game. He shook his head—it couldn't be like that.

But it was. He saw it in Grogan, in the ancient huskies on the line, in the rookies like himself. It was pay-off day.

It was in Moroni, Ky Kaye, those others aching on the sideline, praying the Unicorns could be stopped. It had to be in Tony Hale, somewhere, underneath his disgust at Moroni's perfidy, the film of red temper burning.

Devlin had a new play. The Unicorns had come the hard way, on the ground. Now they faked one; then Devlin was backing up, and when Tony tried to retreat, big Freygang came through and staggered him, and the pass went to Regan, Unicorn end, who lateraled to a back, who ran over the goal-line unhindered. . . . Dyke converted.

Moroni was storming on, leading his ball-toters. Moroni said: "We win it—you lose it. Can't you hold 'em?"

Grogan said: " 'Tend to your knitting, Max."

Tony said nothing. On the bench he listened to Beansy. The coach said: "They had Freygang set you up on that one. But Devlin won't do that again."

"He's got to repeat himself just once," said Tony.

"Maybe. If he gets careless. He's very great," Beansy commented. "He shuffled his cleats. You got to watch awful close, because he shuffles, quick, like a fightin' rooster."

Tony nodded. He had noted the deceptive, queer way the swift quarterback used his feet. It was something new, and Devlin had it down pat. He concentrated on Devlin, remembering every play. Across the field, resting, he knew Devlin was cooking up more stunts. On the field Moroni was driving the Whales to another score. They were playing like pros today, all right. . . .

At the half it was, miraculously, twenty-one points for each team. But the Unicorns were fresher, had more reserve strength, Tony knew, going to rest and count his bruises.

He came out early, and they were waiting for him. Al was bigger and heavier than he remembered, and Ma was maybe a little older, but happy-faced, hugging him.

He said: "Where's Milly?"

"Talking to some men," said Ma. "My, she's a nice girl."

"She sure knows her football," said Al. "She even taught *me* a couple things already!"

"Not you!" Tony grinned for the first time that day. He said to his mother: "You like her, huh?"

"She's keen," Al said. "What a shape!"

"Al!" said Mrs. Hale. "Shame! She's a lovely girl, Tony."

"So long as you like her." He could meet his mother's gaze without flinching. "Things are tough right now, but she's for me, Ma. It may not work out—"

Al said: "They don't let you carry that mail, Tony? I wish I was in there awhile."

Tony said: "Moroni and Kaye do the carrying. This is pro ball, kid. Specialists, we are."

"Not so good," Al said wisely. "Not so hot against Devlin."

"Shame, Al," cried Mrs. Hale. "Your brother's doing all he can. He always does his best."

Tony patted her arm. "Al's right. Not good enough today. Tell Milly. . . . Tell her I'm watching Devlin."

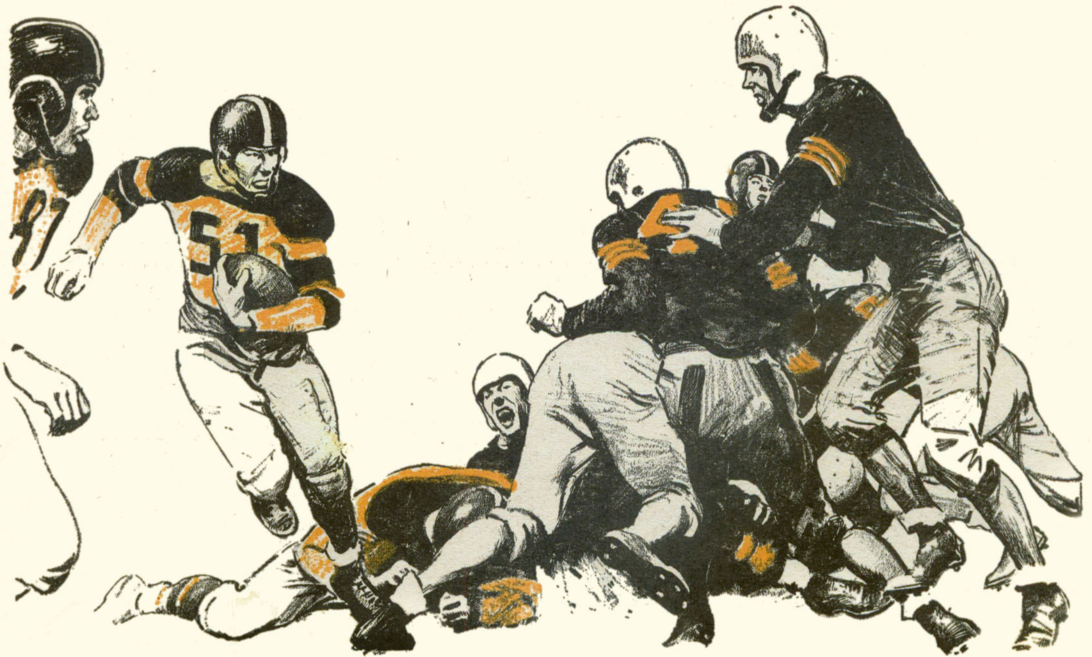
Al said: "You better! He's for me, that Devlin!"

Tony chuckled, going toward the bench. The anger was dying. Seeing Ma and Al was part of it, that had helped. Thinking about Devlin, about Milly, about Beansy, that had eased the strain, too. He had to remember, he told himself, that now he was a pro. There was a problem, namely Devlin.

Somehow they muddled through. The work was close and tough, and as the Unicorns failed to score, mainly through mishap, they lost patience and fists began to swing. Tony caught a couple and then gave a few, unnoted by officials and then he didn't catch so many any more. Time began to run out.

It was the Unicorns' ball on their thirty, and Devlin would not be brooked. He sent Freygang into quick openings; he ran it himself, twenty twisting yards. The Whales retreated, over the midfield stripe, down into their own backyard. The Unicorns sent in young, fresh, experienced men against the oldsters and rookies that Beansy could muster. On the sideline Moroni fumed and raved.

They were on the Whales' fifteen-yard line. Devlin had them in the T, and Freygang had been hotter than a two-dollar pistol, ripping the line.



The burly defense men dug in their cleats and Tony started handing-off to Ky, then cutting in and slamming the Unicorns.

Tony was standing up, watching Devlin.

The play broke fast in a pattern growing familiar. Devlin did his bantam rooster quick-step and Freygang came through.

Tony saw the motion. He saw Devlin's hand drop. Because he was watching so that his eyes ached, he saw the ball, behind Devlin's thigh. He evaded Freygang and spun, shouting, leaping.

The basketball pass was meant for Regan, the end. Tony hit it with his palm, juggled it. He held on. Grogan was there because Tony had yelled and Grogan took out Freygang.

Tony began to run. Niles was there. Carewe came. They rolled him past the twenty-yard line. He kept his feet, moving. They hit him on the Unicorn forty-yard line, Devlin and another.

He got up and started for the sideline, ablaze with the thrill of a turning tide. The clock showed little time left. He looked for Moroni.

Only Ky Kaye came loping. Grogan stood among the sweating Whales and stared. Ky said, "I'm fresh. Beansy says give it to me and slug it out."

There was only one second pause. Then the rookies and the burly defense men dug in their cleats and Tony started handing-off to Ky, then cutting in and slamming the big Unicorns.

It was a pleasure to see Ky go. He kept moving right, then left. Tony called for the in-and-outer from the single wing, an old college play he knew. The Whales had used it seldom, but it gave Ky a chance.

And then Tony was belting off attackers, and Grogan was mopping up, and Niles and Carewe and Simms with their youth and fight were forming a cortege and Ky was down to the ten with Tony on his heels. Two Unicorns came in and Ky gasped: "Yours, pal." He dived ahead, flipping the ball back to Tony Hale.

And that was how, quite by force of circumstance, Tony Hale, defensive halfback, offensive quarterback for two minutes, scored the winning touchdown on the Unicorns in the championship game.

Milly was saying, "I kept telling them, pointing out to them how good you were to hold the Unicorns to a tie. Then when Beansy fought back a little, leaving you in there on offense I told a big, fat lie, Tony. I told them Beansy had you under wraps all season."

Tony said adoringly: "You're a real pro, baby."

They were on the observation platform of the train going back. No sane person would be out there in December weather, but they were warm in each other's arms and not entirely sane just at present. Tony said, "What I can't get over is the trade!"

"Max would have been no good to us next year," she said. "Beansy got three good linesman and a back for him."

"But we'll need a quarterback next season!"

She said: "Beansy can pay more than thirty bucks per week, you know. Beansy says the way you analyzed Devlin's shuffle and came up with that interception proves to him you are a thinking man. The owners agreed."

Tony was very solemn. "I had to get mad, then cool off. I had to stop thinking about Moroni and me and you and think about the game. I had to learn a lesson before I got to be a pro."

"It's better than college ball," she said.

"It's different," he replied. He really did not want to talk. He kissed her again. He said: "You're better. You're better than anything or anybody."

"Your mother likes me," she said dreamily. "We can build near her, for off-season. The play-off money and the exhibitions—we'll have enough."

"A real pro," he repeated happily. "We're real pros. We don't need a band playing."

To Each Generation

An old sailor compares the hazards of the Cape Horn voyage with those of the Air Force.

A FEW days ago I was talking about fear with a young fellow who served in a carrier in the Pacific during the recent war.

"There is something which goes beyond fear, so that one is no longer afraid," said I. He agreed instantly. His carrier was bombed a number of times, and escaped destruction in a manner nothing short of miraculous.

"There comes, or so it used to be with me, a sort of great stone-coldness," I continued.

"You've hit it! That's it, exactly!" said my young friend.

In my youth the lad with a taste for adventure turned his steps toward the docks, where square-rigged ships lay moored. Of all lives, that of the sailor was by far the most perilous. There was no life like it, nor anything near like it. One was completely cut off from the world for long periods. Radio was undreamed-of. On one voyage I was out of sight of land for a hundred and sixty-six days; on several voyages for a hundred and fifty, and these were not particularly long voyages. I have seen a ship come to port after two hundred and ten days at sea, out of sight of any land.

If a sailing-ship was in trouble there was no possibility of calling for assistance. In any case, the average sailor had a great distaste for so doing, preferring to fight it out alone, though he might be a thousand miles or more from any land. If the battle were lost he usually went down with his ship. At times a crew was able to get away in the boats, but of those who did, the vast majority were never heard from.

Looking back to those days, I feel very humble. They seem to have been rather childish. Today youth has a new romance which, to me, seems filled with adventure infinitely greater. As I write, there comes to me the drone of a plane high in the sky. Yesterday one crashed a few miles away. There were no lifeboats to get away in; there was no time to take to a parachute. In a few moments the entire crew were dead.

The sailor's calling was a very simple one: There were many knots to know, many splices, and hundreds of ropes—each with its own name and special purpose. A sailor had to know how to send up masts and spars, with a high sea running and the ship rolling heavily. The smallest yard, the royal, a hundred and sixty feet above the deck, was fifty feet long, of Oregon or Norway pine, with a diameter of fourteen inches.

It often happened that a ship was dismasted and must be refitted at sea with spare spars kept on deck for the purpose. If a ship's bows were stove in by collision with ice or another vessel, a sail was hung over them to stave off some of the sea's pressure. If she was found to be afire all ventilators were tightly closed, all hatches firmly battened, and she was headed for the nearest land, which might be a thousand miles or more distant, with only the wind to take her there. And often the wind falls dead, for days together. If the wheel was smashed it was repaired with lifeboat oars or capstan bars secured by rope to what was left of it. A lost rudder could be replaced by a jury rudder, a cumbersome makeshift which eventually might bring her to port. Steer-

Its Adventure!

by BILL ADAMS

ing was very simple—a green lad of sixteen, of ordinary intelligence, could be left alone after a few minutes, unless the weather were heavy; then it took two powerful men to handle the ship. All they needed was watchfulness, and plenty of muscle.

When I consider the instruments a flyer has before him, I shudder. Sextant, compass and chronometer were all a sailing skipper needed. Compared to the flyer, we were mere cavemen in our crudeness. About all we needed was a fair degree of physical strength, a head always steady, and some courage. One might get along even lacking courage—an individual could, not an entire crew.

After my days under sail I was in steamers. We of the clipper ships did not consider those trained in steam to be sailors. Since they could not know a royal from a jib, why should we? They were not; seamen, perhaps, but not sailors. Ask the shade of Paul Jones, of Horatio Nelson, Lawrence, or Drake. A shrug would be your answer.

The third mate of the vessel on which I was first mate, had spent four years under sail ere going into steam, had rounded the Horn several times in midwinter, and had voyaged by way of Good Hope. Whenever we were in fog, heavy weather or thick traffic, he was terrified—therefore totally unfit to be in charge on the bridge. We carried three hundred passengers! That the skipper was apparently unaware of the situation placed me in a most awkward position. Should I inform him of the poor fellow's terror, or let things go and trust to luck? One does not like to let down a shipmate, one of the brotherhood. In sail he had been an apprentice only, never an officer. I used to wonder why he went to sea; he must have suffered horribly under sail. I suppose it was the strange inescapable thrall of the sea, its ineffable beauty, that kept him enslaved. Perhaps names had something to do with it: Chinde, for instance. Who, first hearing of that steamy port, would not know that the hippo, unicorn, lion, and naked savages roamed nearby? Or consider the Virgins: To any lad with an ear, the mention of them must bring a picture of snowflakes, ice and forbidding shores. . . .

Those with no romance in their souls would say it was stupidity which kept the frightened third mate at sea. No member of the brotherhood understands such people; their whole idea of life being the garnering of dollars.

When the third was in charge on the bridge in fog, heavy weather, or thick traffic, or even on very dark nights, I made a point of keeping my clothes on; of being "handy," when I might have been in my bunk, asleep in pajamas. At such times he was an object for pity, undoubtedly hoping that I was unaware of his fear. I never let him know that I knew of it. Had we been in a collision with him in charge of the ship, there would, of course, have been an inquiry—provided we did not go to the bottom—at which I should have had to testify. Having to admit that I knew him to be unfit for his berth, I would have been in serious trouble. Probably my license would have been revoked, which would have ended my career as an officer.

We made port safely. Shortly after the ship was moored, the skipper came to me. "The third's leaving her, Mister," said he. "A good thing he is; I couldn't have him back in her, or in any of the company's ships. He tells me he's going in sail again."

I had been quite unaware that the skipper knew of the situation. The third mate never knew that both the skipper and I had been watchful as weasels whenever he was undergoing his torture. Such a fellow as he never would have been able to undergo the training of a flyer.

Though a sailor could get along, after a fashion, without courage, for a flyer to do so would be, I think, impossible. Possibly I am wrong. Courage is a rather strange thing. The fact that a man could be so terrified and yet stay at sea would seem to indicate courage, and perhaps of a very high type. Was he possibly a hero? He to whom fear is unknown cannot be said to be courageous. There are such; I have known them intimately.

There was a pitch-black night, plutonic, barbarous, with a Cape Horn gale yelling, the seas rolling eighty feet high, six seas to the mile. The ship was on a lee shore, being driven inexorably, with no possibility of escape, onto the Hermite rocks a little west of the Horn. The able seamen, the apprentices, sailmaker, carpenter, cook and steward were on the poop, behind a line to which they could cling. In the chart-house an oil lamp burned, hanging in gimbals so that, no matter how wildly the ship rolled, the lamp remained erect.

The first mate and I stood side by side at the fore end of the poop. At ten o'clock, when four bells struck, the mate said to me in a voice utterly matter-of-fact, "She'll pile up at six bells." That would be eleven o'clock.

That, for the sake of the crew, an officer must show no fear is a great help. For so long as the ship still floats there is always hope. If for no other reason than to make things as easy as possible for them, the crew must be kept steady. Perhaps that was the reason why I was unafraid. A great stone-coldness, yes; but not fear.

A man wonders whether he will be able to swim a few strokes when the ship strikes; or will he go right down with her? Perhaps a falling mast will crush him, and end it instantly. How will the others take it? How long will it be til' all are voiceless, their cries extinguished in the screaming dark?

The mate had not an atom of fear in him; there could be no question about that. At a quarter to eleven—I could see the clock in the chartroom —he felt for and gripped my hand. "So long, shipmate!" said he. He scarce had spoken when I felt rain on my face. As often happens when rain starts during a gale, the wind lulled a little and shifted. We were able to alter her course, and for fifteen minutes to run her south. Then, with the wind back in all its fury, she was safe.

I wonder how that third mate would have fared that night? None of the crew were aware of our peril. They probably would have guessed, had it not been for the skipper seated at the chartroom table, beneath the lamp, apparently *reading a book.*

The only one who knew of our danger, save for the skipper, mate and myself, was the second mate. Because his nerve had broken during a crisis early in the voyage, the skipper had disrated and sent him to live with the foremast hands. As apprentice, making my fourth voyage, I was acting second in his place. To blame him for losing his nerve would be unjust. He had been wrecked on his previous voyage, and was one of his last ship's two survivors. They had been adrift in an open boat for a week in winter in the north Atlantic. Lest he spread terror to the crew, he had been sent to a storeroom under the break of the poop; by the skipper's order I had locked him in. When I hurried away he was sobbing like a frightened small boy.

Those were simple days—Neanderthal, primitive. When a few days ago I said to a young friend who flies that I never could have had the nerve to be a flyer, he laughed at me. "We have our parachutes," said he—as though that made everything plain and safe. I assured him that I never should have had courage enough to jump from a plane. "It's rather good fun," said he, and added, with a grin, as he drove his car through thick traffic on the highway, "Flying's just a racket."

"What did you say?" I exclaimed, not sure I had heard aright.

He repeated the words, and added: "We have radio; we can talk to the ground. If we don't show up, they come and look for us; we get headlines in the papers; perhaps Congress holds an inquiry. When you guys were knocking about in the ice south of the Horn, perhaps with your masts gone, or the ship on fire, who gave a cuss? Nobody knew. I guess nobody cared, unless you happened to have a girl ashore, or a mother. I'll take mine in a plane; you can have your square-rigged ships!"

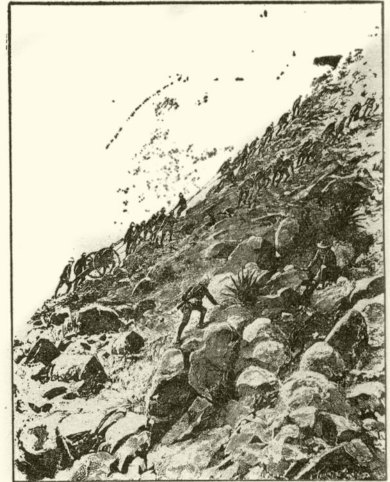
"You can have your plane; I want solid ground beneath my feet," said I.

"Nuts! Look at the traffic! You're a hundred times safer eight thousand feet up—or ten, or twenty," he replied, with that amused grin.

They make an old sailor ashamed for having imagined his life was one of adventure.

Ah, youth!

Fifty Years



British artillery hauled up the Coleskop near Ladysmith.

British artillery defending Ladysmith. Below: British armored train.

Ago in South Africa

The Dublin Fusiliers rushing the Boer Trenches at Spion Kop—only to find that they were commanded from other heights and could not be held.

The Battle of Magersfontain, where 600 of the Highland Brigade fell in three minutes under the storm of Boer fire.

Old prints from Three Lions, Schoenfeld Collection

Lord Kitchener, at first Chief of Staff and later British Commander-in-Chief in South Africa.

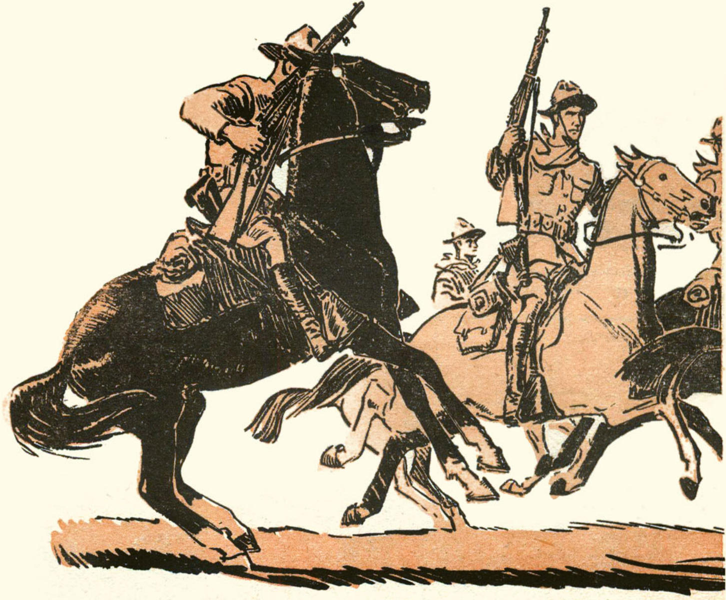
Advance of General French's cavalry division on Kimberley: Attack at Klip Drift. He reached the town on February 15, 1900 and raised the siege.

Below: Boers halted the British crossing of the Tugela River in their advance on Ladysmith.

Below: British batteries, under heavy fire from the Boers in the Battle of Colenso, December 15, 1899.

THEY NEVER

IT USED TO BE SAID IN THE ARMY THAT OLD PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS NEVER DIE—THEY JUST DRY UP AND BLOW AWAY. HERE IS THE STORY OF SUCH A MAN. COLONEL CLIFFORD OUGHT TO KNOW HIM WELL, FOR HE HIMSELF SERVED IN THE ARMY FROM THE PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION THROUGH WORLD WAR II.



It was something to hear when Mock gave you the horn with

"YOU say I'm going to die?"

"I didn't say that," the Doctor said sharply.

"It's the same thing," the General said. He was propped in a huge four-poster bed by the open window. The spring beauty of his lawn and gardens lay below him. "Look at all that. Spring! And you talk about death."

The Doctor looked at his watch. "It is beautiful," he said mildly.

"I'm not going to let a slug that couldn't stop me eight years ago take all that away from me now."

"It needn't—if you do your part."

"Lie here like a stone man! For what you call life? I'm going to get on my feet like a soldier. Take my chances! If *you* won't take yours."

"Excitement or exertion could drive that fragment into your heart like a knife. Complete rest can rebuild that tissue you tore loose."

"Let it rebuild when the damned thing is cut out."

"It would be like cutting your throat. If you'd lived here quietly since your retirement, you might not have had any trouble for years. But your housekeeper tells me you've been galloping horses, pulling tractors around. . . . And then this last business with the boat—"

Faint color came into the General's face. "Imagine! Me fainting. Why, that little rowboat I could have picked up on my back."

The Doctor had seen the boat. He wouldn't have tried to pick up one end of it. Now he was wishing he hadn't picked the telephone up when the housekeeper had made her first frantic call for aid.

"So you won't take a chance?" the General asked scornfully.

"No reputable surgeon would operate."

"No surgeon who wasn't a fighter, you mean. Once you'd have said the same thing about another 'impossible' operation. It wasn't a Jap mortar fragment like this. It was a big Mexican slug. But there was a fighting man at hand—Doc Red. He wasn't afraid to operate; and without the proper tools or any anesthetic. Later, the cautious doctors like you said it couldn't be done. But there it was."

The Doctor had heard his share of apocryphal tales of miracle operations. But he also could read an X-ray. He knew his business. And he had a very touchy pride in it. He shrugged; there was no use arguing.

"And there was another," the General went on stubbornly. "A fighting man too. But he could blow a trumpet like an angel. It was something to hear when Mock gave you the horn with a cavalry regiment going at full gallop."

"That's interesting," the Doctor said, looking at his watch again "You should have a nurse, at least. And—"

"I won't have a nurse. Mrs. Morris can do anything one of those starched robots can. And I won't go to any hospital."

The Doctor expected that, and he didn't press the point. He measured out some pills. "These will soothe you."

"Good beer would soothe me. I don't want any dope."

"No beer. You've got to quiet down. A few days, a little readjustment, and things will look brighter. Look ahead, not back. That's delusive. The old days weren't as good as you think. And those men you spoke of are old now." The Doctor smiled. He never found it easy to smile. "They may have crosses to bear too—heavier than yours."

"I'm going to dump mine." He was still talking when the Doctor left, and when Mrs. Morris came in, she was talking too. He liked to hear Mrs. Morris talk. That was really soothing.

"I know what you're going to ask, and the answer is still no," Mrs. Mor-

DIE

by CHARLES CLIFFORD

Illustrated by
FREDERICK CHAPMAN

the regiment at full gallop.

When he first knew Mock, he was the youngest private in the troop. He himself was a young second lieutenant. There was no vacancy for a trumpeter; but he understood Mock's plea, and got him permission to practice with the regimental buglers. In a few weeks he was like a lark among cackling geese. His trumpet notes rang clear and mellow above the discordant blasts of the others. The men of the troop would listen, say with pride: "That's Mock. Listen to that John put the honey to it!"

Mock knew all the calls: garrison, battle and field music, by the time the platoon was ordered on outpost duty to a little fort in southern Mindanao. Mock asked respectfully, but with a plea in his young eyes, and he said: "Yes, bring the trumpet, Mock. You can double in brass."

It was bad out there at Butuan. During the lonesome lost weeks the jungle seemed to bend ever nearer toward the stockade. The hot wind carried whispers of death. The stars in the sullen sky hung low, as though watching for the rush of the besieging Moros.

Mock proudly blew his calls. He seemed entirely unaffected by the depression growing daily in the other men. The call he loved best was Taps: the call for the living to sleep; for the dead to sleep eternally.

In the sixth month, when the platoon was long overdue for relief, Mock blew the long call only twice. The first time was over the grave of Private Feeny. He started to blow it once more, but he never finished that third call. In the bed, by the window, the General was seeing that startling scene, hearing again the first moving notes of that call that was throttled.

It was a night of pressing heat. The heavy clouds were so low, they seemed to hang like shrouds from the jungle trees. The little fort was quiet, with a quiet of suspended fear. The moon was blood-red. It was like a great bloat, an evil sore, on the sky. Three days before, the Moros had attacked viciously. Mock had blown his first battle calls: *Commence Firing* and *Cease Firing.*

When the last Moro attack had died before the stockade, and their gruesome dead were lined up before

ris said. "But I've got something here for you in line with what Doctor Barents said—soothing. Did I tell you when I first phoned him for you I just like picked his name out of a hat?"

"A silk hat, though. What's that stuff you've got?"

It was steaming in her hand in a flowered cup. "My mother came from a part of the old country few know. It's herb tea she sent me with a bit of magic in it. A pinch is all that's left over the years. And the old cup goes with it. You notice? Them's roses of an ancient kind. You note the little Puck? The wise face of him under the thorns? When your sister was lying in this very bed, God rest her, I brewed her some. Died, she did, with the most beautiful smile on her sweet face."

"But—died," the General said.

"Sweet memories it gave her. And she took them along with her as she passed. It brings dreams of the good life, drives off memories of the bad."

The General gazed at the steaming cup when Mrs. Morris had gone. The odor rose in the soft spring air, blending happily with the earthy smell of life in the gardens below. He stared at the big cup, with its ancient chips and cracks. He watched the little face of the Puck. It seemed alive, watching him with impish cunning, from under the lush roses. He drank some of the tea. The little face grew larger; the pipe seemed to waver. . . .

The General finished the tea. Over the slow, lazy hum of the bees, through the sleepy call of birds, a mellow sound seemed to rise. It grew robust, mightily quavering, from the pipe in the painted hands. The General closed his eyes. But the face from the cup glowed at him. It wasn't Mrs. Morris' Puck with his tiny instrument. It was Mock. It was Honey Mock, with a long, tasseled, cavalry trumpet in his hands. . . .

Mellany's fingers clawed at Mock's web belt. "Don't leave me," he cried.

the trench grave, Mock had asked: "You want I should blow Taps for them, sir?"

"They were brave men. They did their duty as soldiers," he told Mock, and the men of the platoon had nodded. Mock played it beautifully over the Moro dead. From the jungle edge, at the first long notes, Moro *tubos* showed. One young *dato* stood boldly forth. He lifted a red-tasseled war kris toward the sky, as a sacred bloody symbol to Allah. When the last echo of the call died into the distant hills, the platoon sergeant said: "You never played it sweeter. Mock, you ought to be in a band."

In the bed the General sighed. But he didn't open his eyes. He didn't want Mock, or the rest of what happened that night to escape him. The night Mock blew the last notes of Taps he was ever to blow at Butuan. . . .

From his hut below, against the red moon, he could see Mock on the firing platform. Mock was on sentry duty; but now he was laying aside his rifle, lifting the trumpet to blow that call he loved. He who was now a general had slipped up the stairs to the platform, stood in a shadowed corner. He loved to hear Mock blow it; and here, watching him, he seemed a part of it. It soothed and thrilled him; made the coming night a time of earlier and happier memories.

He watched Mock's tongue flick his lips, the lips curve as for a caress. The trumpet flare lay round, and gleaming, against the moon. The moon hung there, with the clouds drawn away from it, as from the blood of murder. Mock blew the first long notes. He stood sturdily, gracefully, as though blowing fragile bubbles from the horn. The horn looked golden in the heavy light. The General could feel that heavy light on his eyelids now, feel the quickening beat of that young lieutenant's heart. And he seemed to feel the sudden shaking of the stockade steps, see the blurred shadow plunge up those steps. And the white face as it passed him, the evil moonlight marking its agony, inflaming the despair in the gleaming eyes.

"No, Mock! No, for God's sake!" The words were a hoarse scream.

The man fell against Mock, dragging the trumpet from his hands.

"What is it, Mellany?" Mock said. "What is it? You full of *bino?*"

"I can't stand you to blow that call another time. It's driving me crazy."

"I got my duty, Mellany. Shut up or you'll have the Lieutenant up here."

Mock again raised the trumpet. In a frenzy, Mellany knocked it from his hand. "No, *no!* It makes me see them all over again—their bloody bolos, their black teeth. And that red betel nut like blood."

"We run them off," Mock said. "They come again, they get the same dose. We got the fightingest lieutenant and the best platoon in the army. We didn't lose a man."

"We lost Feeny. Just goes out a ways to catch a little monkey, and they cut him to pieces. I seen it from here. I was on guard. I shot and shot. But I was shaking and not holding good. And crying tears into my rear sight."

"I know. Come on—go down with the gang now, and forget it."

"You—you stood over Feeny's grave, doing your big stuff. Big-shot Honey Mock, gloating over that call."

"I just tried to play it good. I liked Feeny."

"You can play your trumpet here, but not back at the Post. So you want to stay here, in this living hell. You hope we're never relieved. And men get killed. And you can play that death-call you love."

"It's a sweet call. It don't have to be death."

"You ain't got no wife and baby girl, who don't know what's happened to you. Or where you are in these dirty Philippines. And no mail from them for weeks, because they got us cut off. And the regiment off chasing others."

Mellany fell on his knees and shook with his hoarse sobbing. Mock tried to comfort him, and at last he said; "I don't mean it that bad about you, Mock. You got that trumpet, and you don't feel like the rest of us. And me, I'm worse scared than any of them. That Taps makes it worse. It makes me remember every sad and happy thing that ever happened. We ain't going to get out of this fort alive. The regiment's in trouble and can't send help. The Moros know it, and they got us blocked."

AND that was true, the General remembered; that was what the lieutenant was thinking. But known only to him, he had thought at the time.

"If you blow that Taps again, I'll shoot myself, Mock. I can't stand it even one more time. It brings right up in front of me the face of my wife and my little girl. You can tell the men—the Lieutenant. You can shame me. I don't care. Because I can't take it any more."

Mock laid the trumpet down. He put a hand on Mellany's shoulders. "I won't never blow it again unless I get a direct order. Maybe nobody but you and me ever listened to it, any-

way. Get down and bunk in and forget it, Mellany."

The Lieutenant had slipped down the stairs after Mellany. Later, when he came back for the after-midnight check, Mock was walking his post alertly. The moon was gone now. The half-blacked street lamps that lighted the barbed wire sent a pale glow over the barren flat that surrounded the fort. Mock liked him, he knew. Mock was much like himself. The moods that stirred other men, men like Mellany, were unknown to him. He was a soldier, born. What a soldier had to do and think were what he did and thought.

When Mock had unburdened himself of his Special Orders, the Lieutenant said casually: "Better cut out night calls from now on, Mock. I'm having reveille an hour earlier, and the men will need their sleep."

He wondered if Mock would guess he had overheard Mellany. He often came up here when Mock blew Taps. Mock knew he loved to listen to it. But he knew, that if Mock did guess, he would never share that guess. As he watched him that night, he saw the guess grow into certainty in Mock's eyes. And he said, a little embarrassed himself: "How are you on the *Charge*, Mock? Think you can blow it on foot?"

"I can blow it standing on my head, sir," Mock said, and they both laughed.

THREE days later Mock blew the *Charge*. The attack had started the day before. From the jungle edge, the Moros came in wild, unending waves. The ground about the fort was covered with their dead. Many lay inside the wire, over which they had vaulted on their spears. There were no defending machine guns, no grenades. And for these cavalry troops, no bayonets. The rifle ammunition was almost gone. Blazing spears had at last fired the fort. The earth-floored mess hall had been turned into a cemetery. The wounded had been distributed among the stronger, unwounded. There was only one thing left to do—die, attacking.

The platoon was ready, their eyes watching their young leader. There had been a lull in the fighting. The Moros had drawn back to the jungle edge. The drawn-faced men, waiting at the gate, could hear their taunting calls, the beat of their drums, the wild tinkling of their battle gongs.

The big gate was loose and ready to be swung. The General could see himself as that young lieutenant, standing by that gate with two pistols in his hands. The faces about him were pale, but the sunken eyes looked toward him confidently, asking for the word. The platoon sergeant held a captured Moro kris. He was testing its edge. "I'm going to give them some of their own medicine. See how they like it," he said.

Mock was wetting his lips. The trumpet was steady in his hand. There was a cocked pistol in the other.

"Think you can remember the notes, Mock?" he asked.

"Right on the end of my tongue, sir."

Some of the men laughed. They were all going to die in a few minutes. They all knew it. But only Mellany acted as though he knew it. Since Feeny had died, Mellany had hung around Mock with pitiful doglike persistence. He was what that young lieutenant called a "leaner"—he had to have a bunkie, a man stronger than himself to throw his burden on. Mock, he knew, had never had a bunkie. Never needed one. Just the trumpet. At the gate that morning, as he lifted his hand with the cocked pistol in it, Mock was watching him. Mellany's face was gray-white; he was dead before he had died.

"Ready, Mock?"

Mock raised the trumpet: Mellany's fingers clawed at Mock's web belt. His shaking legs would never carry him to the first shock of battle. A wild Moro yell broke from the jungle edge. "We make it together, Mock, you and me! *Don't leave me, Mock!*" Mellany cried.

"Ready, Lieutenant," Mock said.

"Give them the horn," he said to Mock.

Mock blew as no other horn has been blown since Jericho.

THE General sighed deeply. The picture had faded. He didn't open his eyes. When you "took the tea," Mrs. Morris had warned, you broke the spell of dreams if you looked again at the present world. That doctor had warned against the very opposite. The old days were not as good as you think, he had said. Maybe his weren't. He spoke of certain death if he operated. That was certain death at Butuan,

One young dato *lifted a red-tasseled war kris toward the sky, as a sacred bloody symbol to Allah.*

He was storming still with strength enough to be heard: "Don't retreat! I'll shoot the first man who goes by me." Mock yelled back: "I'll never blow Retreat, *Captain. I'll never sound that call in battle."*

that sortie. Any expert would have said so. And the same about the other forlorn hope in Mexico. And about Doc Red's desperate operation in the Mexican dust. He'd sneered about that, this young busy civilian doctor. At the ragged scar, which he probably thought of as a botched job. But both jobs had paid off because of a willingness, a readiness, to fly into the very face of death.

THEY were deep in Mexico, chasing the bandit Villa, when the second defiance of death had occurred. He was a captain then, and Mock was still by his side. This was a real war only to such as he and Mock. Mexican bullets bit as Moro krises bit. Just as though war had been declared against the invaders of their land by Mexican and Moro. Though no war existed (this was just pacifying, or punitive, they were told), long, hungry marches existed. Horses dried to mummies for lack of food and water, fell—or died screaming, racing in mad circles, streaming with frothy sweat and blood. Men died—and cursed and questioned. What had the Mexicans done to us? As years before in the Philippines, they had questioned and cursed about the Moros.

The Mexicans did something to his scouting troop—craftily led it on, and then turned and pinned it down. Again Mock blew battle calls. On his tough little troop horse he rode close to his captain's big blaze-faced thoroughbred. Mock hated the call he finally had to blow: *Dismount to Fight on Foot!* The troop had no machine guns; the Mexicans had two, hard-firing Hotchkiss. There was no doctor with the troop, but there was a veterinarian. Doc Red, the men called him.

Doc Red was a jovial man, young, big and adventurous. He'd been a great football player somewhere. He could hold a kicking horse like a tantrumed baby, quiet it as a mother might a baby. He had asked to go on the reconnaissance. And, unofficially, he had been told to come along.

THE General, from his bed, watched the whole scene unroll. He could see Doc's grin as he told him. He could see himself, a tough and hard young captain with his bright hair long uncut. The men were already calling him "Custer" behind his back. To a fellow troop commander he had said of Doc: "I'd rather have Doc than any lieutenant of the line in the Regiment. And I mean for fighting."

Doc had wanted to "make the trip." That was the way he put it. And ten days later, when the Mexicans struck, it looked as though it were the last trip he'd ever make. The junior lieutenant had been killed at the first fire. In the roar of the rifles Doc said: "What do you want me to do, Captain?"

"Aid station," he said.

Back in the ravine where the led horses were under cover, Doc took care of the first wounded. Swiftly, efficiently, he worked with the corpsman, his pannier kits for the use of horses spread out for the use of men.

The battle had stirred Doc Red as football must once have stirred him. Soon he was back on the firing line. "Conolly's got things in hand back there. Hell, Captain, I want to fight."

"Take over the Second platoon, then."

Doc Red didn't know the formal orders. But he knew how to fight. When the men saw him behind the firing line, heard his cool voice, they quieted down. For Doc Red was a hunter. He knew that you had to aim, and aim carefully, to hit. You couldn't be breathing hard. He slowed their fire, kidded them as though they were on the target range. When a man was hit badly enough, he carried him back, worked with the corpsman. "It's easy," Doc told him. "A horse can't tell you where it hurts. A man's a cinch."

The first lieutenant was killed. Doc looked down at the streaked face, with the sun still burning it, the sweat still wet on it. "He was a good poker player," Doc said. "He had nerve. And it hit the nerve center here—see? Complete extinction. If we can all be as lucky!"

Some of this he heard from Doc in the firing lulls. They were getting more frequent. The belts were empty, the bandoliers slack cloth, blowing in the light wind. Early surprise fire had stampeded most of the ammuni-

tion pack-mules. Mock had brought the news of the shortage. Seeing him there, his eyes steady in the thump of rifles, the whine of ricochets, the dust, the looks of desperation in the troopers' eyes, brought back that hopeless day at Butuan. The same steady look had been in Mock's eyes as he waited for the word to blow that horn. He could see himself now, smiling at Mock, hear again the words that he said to Mock. "We've got to do it again, Mock. Like Butuan! Blow *To Horse* and then the *Charge.*"

As he watched Mock lift the trumpet, he felt the hammer blow of the bullet. Mock held him up, the blood from the wound running heavy over his hands. He was a big man, for little Mock to hold. But not as big as a horse. Doc Red came fast, picked him up like a doll.

"I'm going to get you out of here; and then these men out of here," Doc said.

In spite of his cursing protests, Doc carried him back to the ravine. And he shut Mock's trumpet up and shoved him back to the firing line. "You're a rifle now, not a trumpet or a compress," Doc told Mock.

He himself was storming at Doc, still with strength enough to be heard by them all. "Don't retreat! I'll shoot the first man who goes by me." Mock heard him and yelled back: "I'll never blow *Retreat*, Captain. I'll never sound that call in battle."

Blood blinded him. He had been hit twice; and the scalp wound covered his face with blood. A combat patrol trooper found Doc Red working on him. "There's a spick officer come out with a white flag," he reported. "Wants to talk with whoever's in command."

"I reckon I am now," Doc Red said, and started off with the trooper. He had cursed after Doc, threatening him with his pistol. But Doc only laughed. "Hell, Captain, you forget I'm from Texas. And that Alamo fight! I'm not setting any surrender precedent this late. —Mock," he yelled: "Blow *Suspend Firing.*"

Later, Doc never did go into details of his parley with the Mexicans. But Mock did. With his canny imagination and his soldierly genius for ferreting out officer secrets, he compiled a tale. Told how Doc Red had got the troop away, not only with the honors of war, but with the best wishes of their erstwhile enemies.

"I seen Doc through your glasses, Captain," Mock said. "Right after you passed out. He was sittin' between the lines like a carved Indian with the Mexican general. Takin' his time—rollin' cigarettes and blowin' smoke at the sun. Then he hands the General the flask the Troop give him. You know, Captain, the big silver one with: *'To Doc Red from the grateful members of Troop A for saving the life of their horse Dick'* when old Dick was going to be I.C'd for senility. Doc give him a shot, and he was like a colt again. So now he gives the spick general a shot of medicinal whisky outa that flask. Because the General just said, very excited: "Your soldiers violate our country! The order is they must not pass south of that line!"

"'What line'?" Doc says, blowing up smoke.

"The General tells him, naming a lot of towns we already went by."

"'We never seen that line,' Doc says. You know, Captain, he can talk spick like one of them. "The on'y line *I* see,' Doc says, 'is right out there midway between them two brave fighting lines of men. Yourn and ours.'

"The General takes another pull at Doc's flask. Doc takes a pull. The General says: 'Your captain is a very brave man. Through my glasses I see his hat shot off. And the blood on his face. And that gold hair in the sun. *Que hombre!*' That means '*What a man!*' Captain."

He had laughed then at Mock's serious face, at his glibness of guessing.

"'Yes,' Doc says," Mock went on, still serious. "'Some fighting *hombre*. But he's bad wounded. I think he will die. And the two *tenientes*, already they have died. But my *capitan* could die happier if he didn't have this here guilt of invasion on his soul. And no fear of shame for his soldierly name. He didn't know about no forbidden line. Just that one I point out between the troops.'"

"So that spick general, he's *que hombre*, too. He takes another pull, hands the flask back and bows low. I seen that with my own eyes, Captain. Then he says: 'I think I see your line down there, *Teniente*. But before you withdraw your men, and I withdraw mine, I have a excellent surgeon I will have attend your brave captain. And you have no ambulance; so I will send you my private spring wagon with my compliments.'

"That's the one you rid back in, Captain," Mock finished proudly. "But you was out and didn't know what it was all about."

He didn't know what it was all about even when Doc called a halt several days later in a narrow valley where they found water. Then he came to, in a little hut of shelter halves. "Mock," he heard Doc Red say, "you help with fire, water and a fly brush, not with advice." And the corpsman Conolly's voice broke in, horrified: "You ain't goin' ta operate, Doc? Not with them horse tools on the Captain!"

Doc Red said, cheerfully: "I never saw a man who was better than a good horse. Get going and open those panniers up."

He had closed his eyes then; and now, thirty-three years later, it seemed that he opened them again to see Mrs. Morris smiling down at him. "Write down what I tell you," he told her. "Then do it quickly." . . .

After a quiet and improving week the Doctor noticed a change in him. His pulse was faster. There was a feverish glitter in his eyes. He talked eagerly:

"If I've got to die, I want those around me I want to see me die—to die with. There's your immortality. Men like Doc Red, like Mock. I went through two forlorn hopes and made it. Once with Doc Red, both times with Mock. . . . Mock and his trumpet took us through a thousand bloody Moros. It scared them or mystified them—I don't know. Every man made it except one. And I think Mellany died of fright."

"That must have been interesting," the Doctor said, looking at his watch.

"It's still interesting. Both were certain death: Doc's operation and those Moros. Now I'm faced with a third forlorn hope."

"I wouldn't say that," the Doctor said nervously.

"I would. And I'm going to attack as I did then. I thought over those old times in spite of what you said. They were like living people before me. They were indispensable once: they pulled me through two lost causes. And once again they're going to have their chance."

The Doctor was watching him sharply now.

"What's that?"

"You say an operation will kill me?"

"I say it advisedly—and after consultation."

"Have you ever heard Taps played?"

"I went through the last war, you know."

"Then you heard it through rasping loud-speakers—from a tinny record, at some base hospital. Hell!"

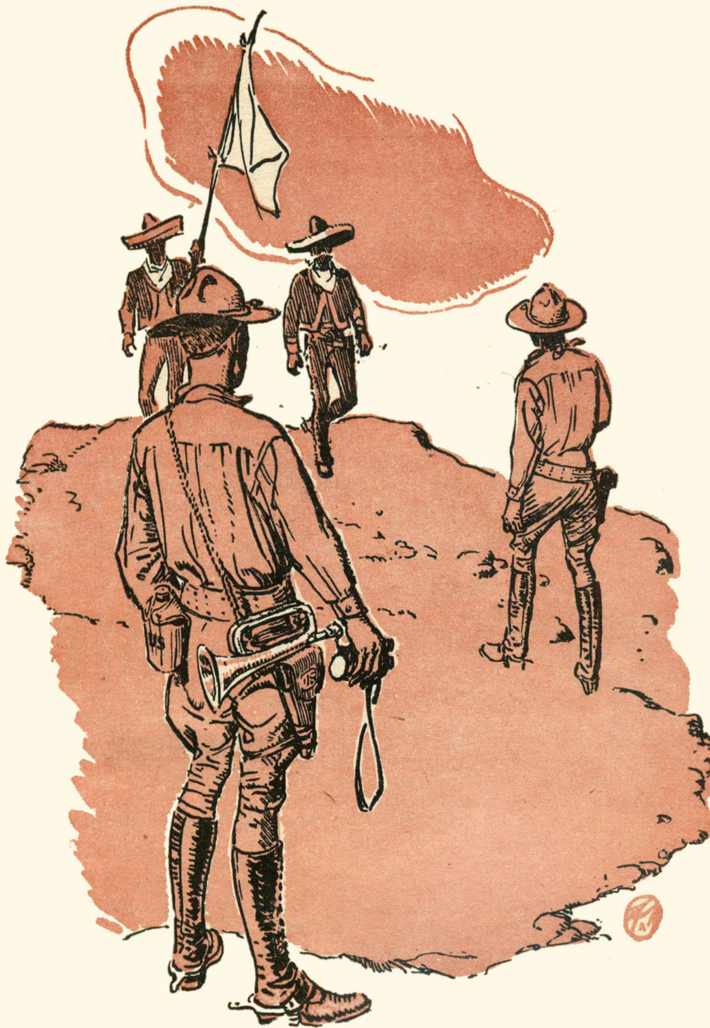
Too true. The Doctor was annoyed. "Yes. We had no Honey Mocks."

"If I die, come to the funeral. Listen to Taps through an old cavalry trumpet. That blows honey, not air. Listen to Honey Mock blow it. It will stay with you forever. Hang in the air over this old place for all time—over that river bank where I've picked my grave."

"What do you mean?" the Doctor asked quickly.

"Look. You can see the spot out there by the big oak. We called that the Indian Burial Oak when I was a kid."

In spite of himself the Doctor looked out. He could see the great oak, the smooth grass beneath it on the river bank. The General watched him, smiling. It was a crafty smile, but



Doc never did go into details of his parley. But Mock did.

without malice. "I finally located them. You know where they were?"

All the Doctor could do was shake his head. Maybe his mind was going, at that.

"Doc Red was in Tokyo—wasting his talents. And Mock — they couldn't down Mock. They took the horses away from us—put in the loud-speakers. But over the grave of the Unknown Soldier they blow a trumpet. And at Arlington, where they bury the old soldiers who never die but just dry up and blow away—they blow a trumpet. Mock blows it."

"Well, well!" the Doctor said uncomfortably. "But you're not going to die. You're going to—"

"I told you I located them. They went for a walk awhile back. They came in last night by air. Right now they'll be talking over old times. Maybe drinking beer at the crossroads bar. They look almost the same—to me. Not, of course, if you compared them with when I last saw them, but they're young, still full of fight. Doc because he's mad at his patients being taken away. Mock too, because he has to blow his calls on foot. Being mad keeps you young, alive. I'm mad at what's happened to me. I should have got in touch with them long ago. We did write once in a while. But it died out. You get an inferiority complex when you retire. You don't impose on men you knew who are still in the service. Only when you get in real trouble. They never let you down."

"These two men are staying here?" the Doctor asked in a thin voice.

"Arrived last night. We had a party. Like old times. Mock blew all the calls. First laugh I've had since this thing hit me. First bock beer. A wonder that sliver didn't go right into my heart. If it had, Mock would have been ready. He brought the old trumpet, as I asked. But as it is"—the General smiled happily—"Doc gets first chance."

The Doctor had been staring at him in amazement. "What do you mean?"

"He'll have better instruments than he had on that ragtime march. I radioed him to bring all he had. And Mock can help him. Poor Conolly's gone—killed in the Argonne with an ambulance unit."

"What are you talking about?" the Doctor said sharply.

"It's better than old shelter halves and an OD blanket here," the General said, gazing about the handsome room. "And Mrs. Morris can heat the water on a good range instead of over mesquite roots. Tight screens and no dust."

There was sweat on the Doctor's forehead. "You're talking childishly."

The General smiled straight into his eyes.

"This doctor? Is he an army man now?"

"Old army," the General said. "Real army."

"His name?"

"Doc Red we called him, even the men. Colonel Pollit, now, on the rolls."

"I don't believe I've heard of him. But they do have some good men at Walter Reed. And there's one—Colonel Yates, closer, in New York. I can—"

"They'd say the same as you. But it's settled. So why talk about it?"

"Settled!"

The General's black eyes half closed. They glittered with the old battle light. "It's Mock or Doc Red. Whichever wins, it's all right with me. The will of God. You can't understand that. They can."

"A doctor who would do that—with hospital facilities available— It's malpractice. He must be insane. Not even consulting me." The tones were almost wild, the lean face white.

The General wasn't looking at the Doctor. His eyes brightened. Forgetting, he tried to sit higher, lean toward the window. Through the open window the sound of whistling came to them. A big man, in a rough tweed suit, with wild hair that still flared red in the morning sun, a stocky

little fighting cock of a man in blue serge, a cheap brown felt hat with a red feather in it—on they came, side by side, through the gate, by the riotous dogwood trees. At their heels was a skinny brindle mongrel dog, his tongue hanging happily. The whistling rose louder as they passed the garage and made their way toward the kitchen door.

"Funny," the General said. "Mock never could whistle worth a damn!"

THERE was a long silence in the sunny living-room. Doc Red laid the X-ray plates on an old mahogany table. Dr. Barents had been watching him carefully. In the silence he could hear the uncapping of beer bottles in the kitchen, Mock talking gayly to the housekeeper, Mrs. Morris saying: "To please you, Sergeant. I don't usually care for the stuff."

"You see?" Dr. Barents said, shrugging at the plates.

Doc Red merely nodded.

"If he insists, I must withdraw, of course."

Doc Red said nothing. He lit a cigarette.

"We have an excellent local hospital. Arrangements can be made if you decide to go through with this, Doctor."

"Thanks," Doc Red said.

Dr. Barents looked at his watch. "You are on the active army list, Doctor?"

Doc Red nodded.

"Are you—er—calling in others?"

Doc Red tapped the ash from his cigarette.

"I'll have to," he said.

Dr. Barents didn't feel so unhappy. The crazy old fighter had to have an army doctor. A whim he was entitled to. This loutish-looking fellow was the sort you read about in fiction. Like those in the novels about Welsh coal miners, all personality and damned little technical skill. But shot with luck! Suppose this fellow did pull it off? In the stories, in spite of the most informed prognosis, they always confounded their betters. The very composure of the man, his few words, his long moments of thought, infected Dr. Barents—frightened him a little. Here was the very stuff those novelists used for their miracles. And miracles in surgery did happen. He thought of the General's cold and practical words: "I've got more money than I'll ever need. And no one to leave it to. I'll split it with the man that gets me out of this damned bed!"

Would he split it with this shaggy Doc Red? The chances were, whatever happened, he'd split it between him and the cocky little trumpeter now drinking beer with the housekeeper in the kitchen, who probably took it for granted Doc Red could pull another ex-cathedra job as once before he had in the Mexican dust.

Dr. Barents was making a formal statement of withdrawal. Doc Red seemed not to be listening. He said quietly: "I would like some new pictures. If you'd—" Still ethical and formal, Dr. Barents said he would arrange for it.

In the big bedroom that night there was more beer and music. Outside, on the sundeck, Mock raised his trumpet toward the spring stars. He played the field music like a troubadour. The General's face was flushed. He strained against the invisible hands holding him. Doc Red, with a cold mug in his hand, stood by the foot of the bed. He was smiling. But back of the smile were grave thoughts and images—images of that dark speck in the still hardly dry X-ray plate. Images of the same dark speck, dozens of angles of it, in the plates taken days before. He wondered. He thought of all the arguments about euthanasia, the taking of a life in mercy. Was a man's life his own? The law of man and of medicine said no. But what of the fighting man? Those who made the laws had profited by the life he offered in battle. This man on the bed, singing boisterously, sipping beer through a vari-colored straw, had discounted his innumerable times. Had he not earned the right to dispose of it? To delegate that disposal to a friend?

Some did it with a needle, though they never dared admit it. He had done it with dogs, with horses. There was no ethical law about them. A horse could live with a broken leg; but he wasn't a horse any more. So you drew the mental lines across his forehead, held the pistol close. It was the better mercy. And man? Was he better than a thoroughbred horse? More beautiful, courageous or true? Looking down at the General, Doc Red thought this man came close to it. He deserved the pity and the honor man so truly gave to the crippled horse. If he died now, waving that beer mug, shouting the soldier words to field music, he would die happy.

DOC RED thought of the horrified eyes of Dr. Barents if he could view this scene. The words that would fly at him. "You'll kill him! The excitement—the muscular movement! Less than that might drive that sliver into his heart!"

If Barents knew the whole truth, he'd scream malpractice. But he'd be wrong. Doc Red hadn't administered to the General, except a little massage. Chloroform liniment, because the odor was nostalgic. And a compress with white lotion over a bursal enlargement. It had made him happy. . . .

When the last long note of Taps died out on the sundeck, Doc Red turned out the light, stood over the General a moment.

"When are you going to do it, Doc?"

"In a few days. I want some more pictures."

"You're not afraid?"

"Hell, no!"

The big hand still had some of that old fierce strength. It closed over Doc Red's.

"We'll have fun first," Doc said. "But as soon as you begin to get bored—" Or, he thought to himself, that sliver moves the way it may and you die. Happy. Or, the other way. . . . It could. It had already, a little. "It may have to be in a hospital," Doc said. It frightened him, saying that. He feared battle. But the General's voice was mellow, drowsy, completely trustful: "Whatever you say, Doc."

A WEEK later Doc Red actually faced the horrified eyes of Dr. Barents, set in a furious face. "You say you're a *veterinarian—a horse doctor!*"

"Until the horses gave out. Lately I've been inspecting meats."

"You must be mad."

"I am a little. But in the colloquial sense."

"You must know the law. And the General certainly does. Even tampering with my patient would be malpractice."

"He *was* your patient," Doc Red said. He was very cheerful. He held up the latest X-ray to the light, cocked his head. The gray in the fiery hair gleamed like silver. They were in a staff room of the local hospital, and Dr. Barents was still in his gown. It was no whiter than his face.

"You *were* his doctor," Doc Red said cheerfully. "I'm hoping you will be again. The operating-room is arranged for. Three o'clock, I believe you said?"

Dr. Barents said nothing. He couldn't think, or even form a word. Doc Red tapped the moist X-ray plate. "It's moved a little." He smiled. "You know, a man isn't a hell of a lot different from a horse—especially when he's spent his life on them." He moved a finger gently over the murky plate. "Now, with a horse, this tissue would be tougher. There wouldn't be quite the danger of severing this cardial—" He laughed. "You'd have more room to move in there. Oh, I'm sorry! You haven't specked this last plate, Doctor."

Dr. Barents said grimly: "I consider this—using this hospital—"

"There's an exposure of tissue here that wasn't visible before. As though some violent contraction of the muscles. . . . Maybe in his sleep. Take a look."

Like the bird fascinated by the snake, in spite of himself, Dr. Barents stared at the outthrust plate. For a long time he stared without a word.

Then he grabbed up the old plates. Doc Red lit a cigarette. At last Dr. Barents laid the plates aside, sat heavily into his chair. He didn't look at Doc Red. His eyes were gazing far out beyond the lawn trees to the river.

"The technique is simple," Doc Red said, still cheerful. "Even I could do it. If I wasn't a horse doctor."

"I'm ashamed of having said that," Dr. Barents said quietly.

"No harm done. I only wish it were true. Now it's just the cats and dogs of dismounted soldiers."

"Please forgive me. It was insulting—and meant to be. I'm damned sorry."

Doc Red laughed. "The other way about, I might have been. Now, if he dies, he'll at least be happy beforehand. He'll have had his way."

Dr. Barents nodded. "It's amazing the change in him since you and that trumpeter arrived. Just that first day. It made him happy."

"And confident," Doc Red said. "That's important. Even horses and mules know. I've seen them struggle in stocks, get that anxious look on their faces, when a new vet stepped up to work on them. I've quieted them. Not bragging. But you can talk to them—make them happy too."

"It must be really interesting," Dr. Barents said. "I never thought of it before."

Doc Red got up. He laid a hand on the younger man's shoulder. "You've got to be that way with people too—some people. As though they couldn't talk. This is new to you. You're dealing with an anachronism, in the General. A *mule.*"

For the first time Dr. Barents laughed. He looked like a different man. The anxious look was gone from his face too.

"You'll do it, then?" Doc Red said, and Dr. Barents nodded. "I must get the pre-operation credit. But of course, if God wills it, you get the post-mortem credit. You can fix me up to look like an M.D., can't you?"

"You look like that already," Dr. Barents said. "Like that picture of the family doctor with the sick child. Remember? You used to see it in every general practitioner's office and most homes."

"That old and worried?" Doc Red laughed loudly. But he walked like a boy to the door.

When they wheeled the General into the operating-room, they left Mock outside. But Doc Red was there, the masked nurses watching him, wondering. Dr. Barents was waiting too. And farther back, his assistant and the anesthetist. The General slid his eyes toward Dr. Barents. "You came around, eh? Good!" He added tactlessly, "To see how a fighting doc does it."

One of the nurses giggled. She had always thought Barents a stuffed shirt. Dr. Barents smiled gravely. "I'm honored," he said. The assistant smiled with embarrassment. He thought Barents the greatest surgeon in the world.

"Too bad we can't have Mock blow *Draw Saber,*" the General said, eying the instrument tray. There was no fear in his voice. But it had the hurried heartiness the doctors knew and recognized.

Doc Red was smiling with that deep cheerfulness Dr. Barents had been studying in him. Too grave, didactic, some of his colleagues had said of Barents. He'd never be again. Here and now he swore he never would. . . .

"You get a break this time," Doc Red was saying to the General. "You won't have to listen to the coyotes yapping."

The General's eyes glittered with nervous eagerness. "They were awful, weren't they? Worse than that rusty razor you used."

The nurse giggled again. The anesthetist was ready. He took his eyes from his gauges, looked at Dr. Barents. He was ready.

"Here comes the Sandman," Doc Red said; and Dr. Barents, watching him curiously, saw the sudden brightness of what must be tears in those steady brown eyes.

Doc Red walked quietly by the kitchen. Dr. Barents had said: "I'll wait down by the river. If he should be entirely conscious—" He smiled. "He'd probably rather see your mug first."

Through the open window Doc heard the uncapping of beer bottles: Mock and Mrs. Morris arguing in hushed tones. Mock said stubbornly: "I only know what the General said, just before Doc Red cut him. 'Even if I'm alive or dead, you blow that call, Mock. Wherever I am, I'll hear it,' he says. Instead of waking him, like you say, it'll put him to sleep good and happy."

Doc Red went through the front doorway, walked lightly up the wide stairs. In the big bedroom the windows were open to let in the warm spring air. Doc Red moved to the big four-poster bed, stood at the foot, looking down. From the windowed door to the sundeck, light from a pale moon touched the bed, the quiet sleeping face of the General. There was a smile on that face. Almost the smile of youth. And youth, Doc Red knew, would be with him again when he awoke in the morning.

"*Que hombre!*" Doc Red said softly.

He stood a moment longer, then turned and tiptoed lightly out of the room.

A little later beside the burial oak, on the river bank, Doc Red and Dr. Barents stood side by side. The spring breeze seemed to pause, to halt over the river, while the mellowness of Mock's trumpet filled with exquisite tremors the void of the universe. The last note seemed never to have died. The whispering breath of it hung, as though it would always linger over those ancient trees, over the ageless river.

For a long time neither man spoke. Then Doc Red said: "You wouldn't think a mortal man could hold it that long."

"Mock wasn't mortal then," Dr. Barents said.

"No. Ugly as sin, bowlegged as a frog, but his face is like an angel when he blows that call."

"And the one he blew it for," Dr. Barents said softly. "What a man!"

"He can sleep deeply and long, now," Doc Red said. "Yes, *que hombre!*"

Dr. Barents was watching Doc Red. Not so curiously now, but with understanding. It was a perceptive study. Doc Red was not cheerful now. He seemed lost in some study of himself.

"What is it, Doc?" Dr. Barents asked.

"The deception," Doc Red said slowly. "I—there's always a day of reckoning. If you could only beat it for once."

"You can," Dr. Barents said. "It's a question of values here. He'll never know. Nobody will ever know—from me. He'll never see the others. Besides, I've had a talk with them."

"What do you mean?" Doc Red asked quickly.

"You know what I mean. And of all the men I've met, you can understand it best. Put yourself in my place, me in yours. You know what you'd have done. I've learned a lot from you. And—about you, from Mock. I'm eternally grateful. I've learned an inner cheerfulness. The value of sureness. Simplicity of action. And that you must account for yourself completely before God. Sounds stuffy, perhaps. I've been accused of that. Maybe brought on by that trumpet. But it's true to me at this moment. I hope to God it will last."

"There's your pride to consider, Medical pride. And your fee," Doc Red said.

Dr. Barents laughed softly. "I haven't any pride left. Not that kind. I'm humble for once. Fee?" He looked at Doc Red squarely, smiling. "I told you to put yourself in my place. Now, do it honestly. We've both had our fee."

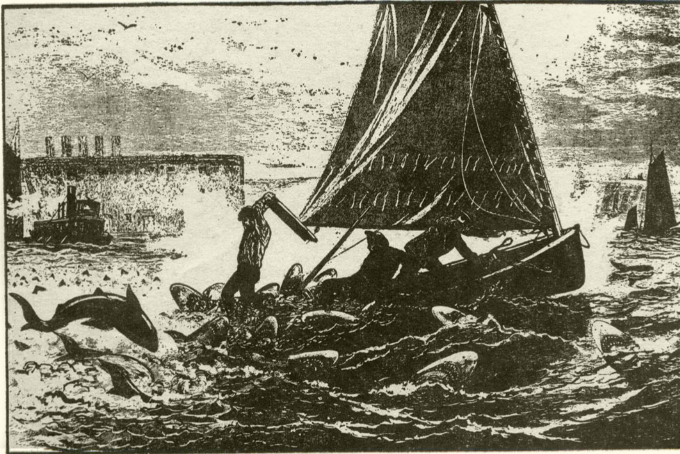
"All right," Doc Red said.

Dr. Barents laughed again. "If that beer of Mock's is half as mellow as his trumpet, I'll settle for a bottle of that."

"Come on," Doc Red said.

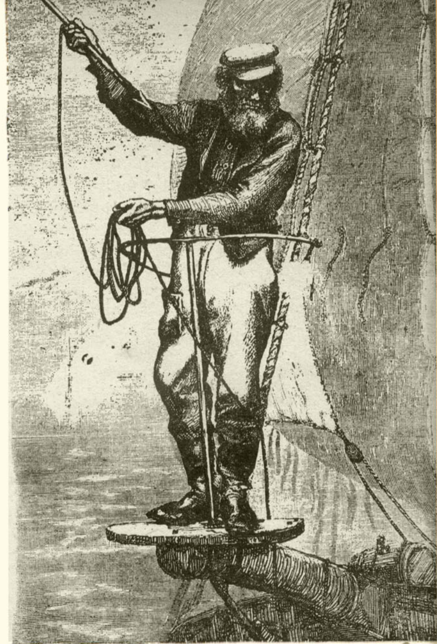
They turned and started for the house.

Hook, Line & Sinker

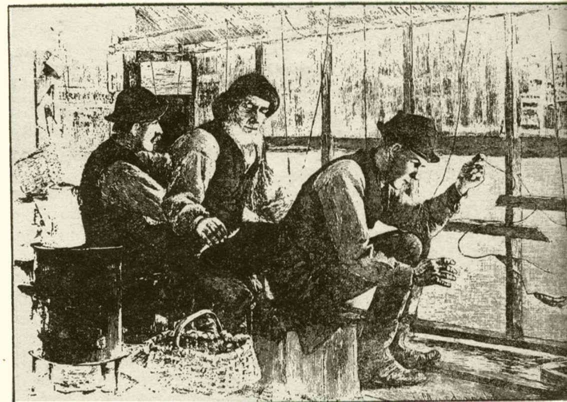


Remarkable school of sharks encountered in the Upper Bay, off Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, July, 1880. Sharks had been unusually plentiful off New York that summer. Once Capt. Alexander Robertson, while sailing about the Narrows, ran his skiff into a school of sharks that snapped angrily at the boat's sides, and lashed the water into a foam. One fish, larger and uglier than the rest, leaped toward the stern and crushed the back-strip and rudder between its jaws. It appeared fully ten feet in length. The water seemed alive with black fins, which darted in all directions. Robertson tore up one of the seats and used it effectively on the hard snouts of more than one of the sharks. The breeze filled the sails and carried the boat steadily through the danger; but not until Bay Cliff was reached did the boat get clear of its pursuers and rest safely on the beach.

Below: The favorite sport of princes and paupers and Presidents, winter and summer: President Chester Arthur in 1884 enjoys a leisurely vacation.

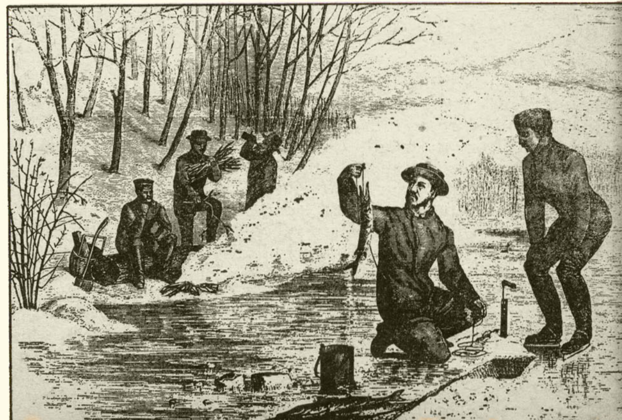


Swordfishing boats had a short bowsprit with a platform for the harpooner. A line from the harpoon to a buoy enabled the boat to leave a captured swordfish to be picked up later, and go on after others.



Fishing through the ice in the neighborhood of New York had become an industry in the 1880's.

Below: On Northern inland lakes also, fishing through the ice for pickerel and other fish was a favorite sport that still has some vogue.

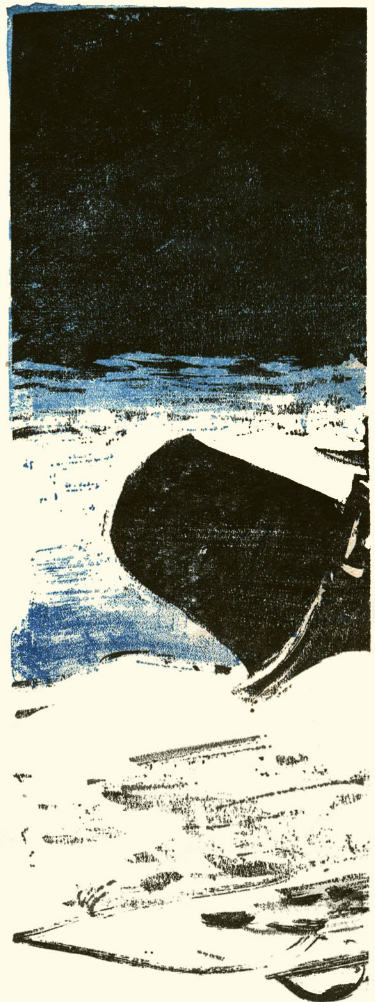


MEN OF AMERICA—I

Press of later events tends to make us forget men who played dramatic parts in our national history. This series will recall some of them.

Cushing *and the Albemarle*

by **MAJOR EDWIN SIMMONS, U.S.M.C.**



WHEN Lieutenant William B. Cushing started up the Roanoke on the night of October 27, 1864, he had with him in the launch fourteen other men. Seven of them had come down from New York with him. The rest were volunteers from the blockading squadron. There were three master's mates, Howorth, Gay, and Woodman; two engineer officers, Steever and Stotesbury; eight enlisted ratings, and Paymaster Swan. Paymaster Swan was eager to go along because he had never been in action before. He might have been less anxious if he had known how the night would end.

It was exactly 11:28 when Cushing left the *Shamrock.* He had in tow that ship's cutter, crewed with an additional two warrant officers and ten men. The night was dark and rainy; and that was good.

The Roanoke was a fairly wide stream, about two hundred yards, and quite deep except for the bar. Eight miles up the river was the town of Plymouth; and tied to Plymouth's customhouse wharf was the Rebel ram *Albemarle.*

Union intelligence was complete on the subject. Cushing knew exactly what he was facing. The Confederate ironclad was 158 feet long, 35 feet in beam, drew nine feet of water, had twin screws, and carried at each end a 6.4-inch Brooke rifle. Her armor was six inches thick in the front, four inches on the sides and stern, and had been forged from railroad rails confiscated from the countryside.

A masterpiece of improvisation, the *Albemarle* had been built the previous spring farther up the Roanoke in a cornfield near Edward's Ferry, N. C. Her designer, Gilbert Elliott, was twenty years old—a year younger than Cushing. She was captained by Commander J. W. Cooke, who had brought her down the river on April 19th, 1864. Lieutenant Commander Charles W. Flusser, defending the water approach to Plymouth, had tried to stop the ram with his fragile double-ender *Miami* and the armed sidewheel ferry *Southfield.* The *Southfield* had been sunk, and Flusser was killed by one of his own shot rebounding from the *Albemarle's* angled sides. Flusser had been Cushing's best friend.

Without control of the river, the Federal brigade in Plymouth had not been able to hold the town. It fell to the Confederates the next day.

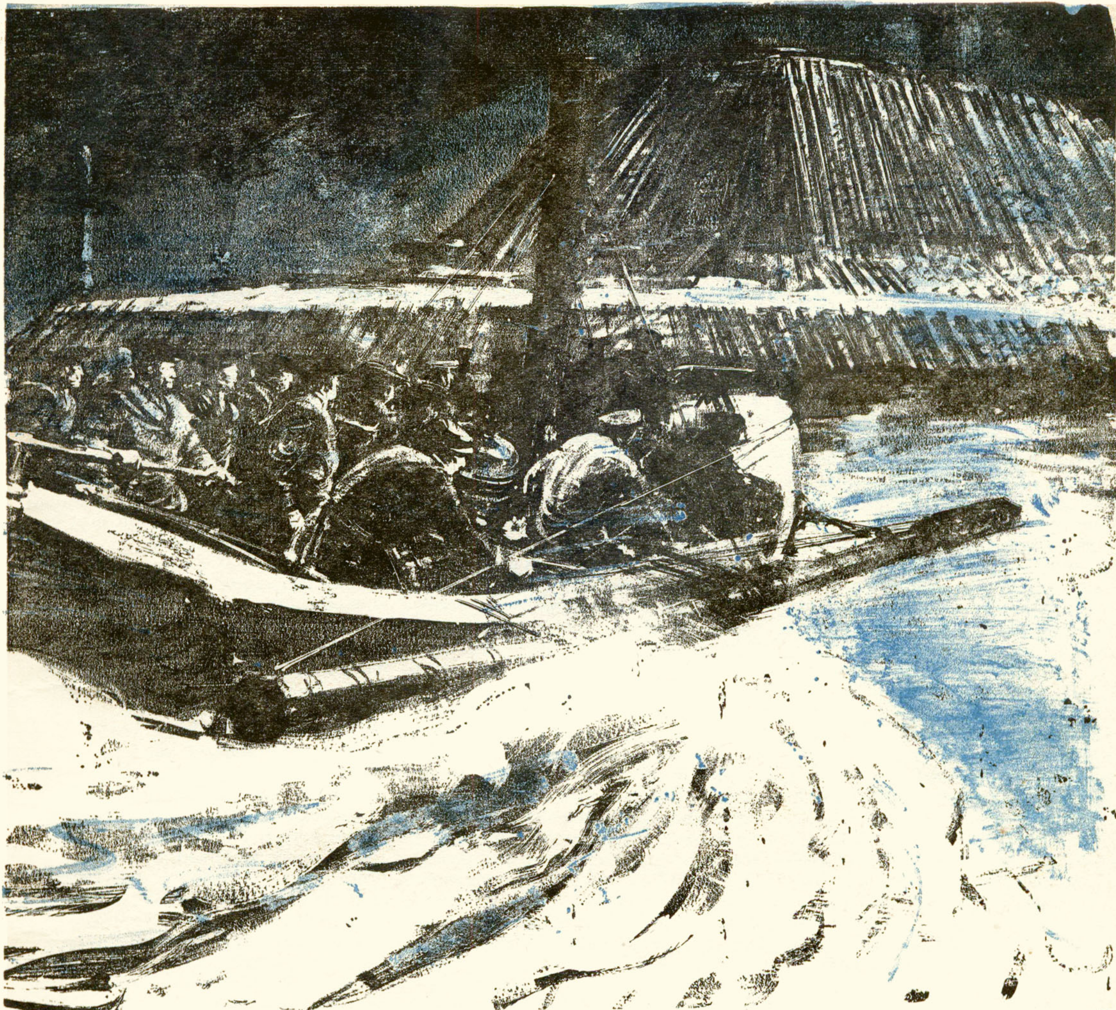
The Union had hastily assembled a flotilla in Albemarle Sound. Under Captain Melancton Smith, it numbered four double-enders, an armed ferry-boat, and three gunboats. But eight wooden ships did very little better than Flusser's two. They met the *Albemarle* on the 5th of May, were badly battered and sent flying from the river. Cooke, after this victory, took his slightly damaged ram back to the customhouse wharf at Plymouth. There she remained throughout the summer, a constant threat to the Union blockade.

AND now Cushing chugged softly toward her in a thirty-foot steam launch armed with a twelve-pound boat howitzer, and a new kind of torpedo fastened to a spar rigged to the side. Cushing was going to attack one of the Confederacy's most powerful ships with an open boat and a bomb on the end of a stick.

Cushing was the *enfant terrible* of the North Atlantic blockading squadron. In 1861, in his last year at the Naval Academy, he had been bilged out for misconduct. A few pulled strings (his cousin was a commodore, and he knew a general who was a friend of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy) got him into the Volunteer Navy, with the warrant rank of acting master's mate. Later he had jumped his billet on Admiral Goldsborough's staff to go junketing with McClellan's army, posing as a member of Lincoln's official family. There was also the matter of his arrest for a brawl in Philadelphia.

On the other hand, he had done well enough to be reinstated as a midshipman and then promoted three ranks to lieutenant. Aboard the *Cambridge,* he had been wounded slightly in the *Monitor-Merrimac* fight. Later he had fought off an infantry charge with a field howitzer from the deck of a grounded gunboat, and he had developed a taste for small, sharp raids, sometimes ordered but more often his own idea, against the Virginia and Carolina coasts. Sometimes there were added impudences such as calling-cards left for absent Rebel generals.

The son of a widowed mother who had raised four boys (two in the Army, two in the Navy) and a daugh-



ter, Cushing had the looks to set young feminine hearts fluttering. He was a slender six feet tall and had gray-blue eyes, long blond hair that reached the collar of his coat, and almost delicate features. He was also not at all modest about his own talents. He was quite certain he could sink the *Albemarle;* and there was good reason for it to be sunk.

By 1864 all but one of the great ports of the Confederacy had fallen. The one door remaining ajar was Wilmington, N. C. Peculiarly protected by two entrances widely separated by Cape Fear and Frying Pan Shoals, and by the guns of formidable Fort Fisher, Wilmington harbored a busy fleet of low, fast (fourteen knots) blockade-runners. As long as this slender supply line fed Lee's army, the South would fight on, and the war would not end.

General Grant and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles were agreed that the reduction of Fort Fisher was almost as important to the prosecution of the war as the capture of Richmond.

But to take the fort would require a tremendous concentration of wooden shipping, both to transport the assault troops and to provide the necessary naval gunfire support. The Union hesitated to risk such a fleet, with the *Albemarle* lying in wait just a few miles north.

So the *Albemarle* had to be destroyed. But how?

Her predecessor *Merrimac* had posed a similar threat above Norfolk in 1862, and had been checked by the *Monitor*. There were other monitors now, and they could perhaps settle the *Albemarle* affair; but they were deep-draft, and a sandbar across the mouth of the Roanoke held them out of the river. And with their low freeboard they were not seaworthy enough to remain on station in Albemarle Sound.

Cushing thought he had the answer. In fact, he had two plans for destroying the *Albemarle.* The first called for an approach march through the swamp bordering the river, and then a boarding party of 100 men to attack from rubber boats. The second plan, which he favored, was to move up the Roanoke with two steam launches, each armed with a howitzer and torpedo.

However, at the moment, Cushing was in official hot water. He had been a little overenergetic in his blockading and had handled the British brig *Hound* rather roughly, something Her Majesty's Government was not apt to overlook.

He was lucky in that the Navy Department rather admired rashness in its young officers. Rear Admiral S. P. Lee, in command of the North Atlantic blockading squadron, approved his second plan, and sent him to Washington to lay it before the Secretary of the Navy. Meanwhile, the

Hound affair was dismissed with a written slap on the wrist. Gideon Welles had his own doubts about Cushing's chances of success, but sent him on to New York with orders to Rear Admiral Gregory to provide him with two suitable launches.

"Finding some boats building for picket duty," wrote Cushing, "I selected two and proceeded to fit them out. They were open launches about thirty feet in length, with small engines and propelled by a screw. A twelve-pounder howitzer was fitted to the bows of each, and a boom rigged out, some fourteen feet in length, swinging by a goose-neck hinge to the bluff of the bow. A topping lift to a stanchion inboard raised or lowered it, and the torpedo was fitted into an iron slide at the end. This was intended to be detached from the boom by means of a heel jigger leading inboard, and exploded by another line connecting with a pin which held a grapeshot over nipple and cap."

In other words, Cushing proposed to ride up to the *Albemarle* in his launch, poke the torpedo under her armor belt, yank one line to free the torpedo, and then yank another line to explode it, the *Albemarle,* and presumably the launch. The second launch was to stand off and cover the try with its twelve-pounder howitzer—a weapon as effective against the ironclad as birdshot against a walrus.

His boats completed, Cushing started down the chain of canals which then existed. They reached the Chesapeake and were headed for Norfolk when somewhere along the line he lost boat Number Two.

MEANWHILE, at Hampton Roads, Admiral David D. Porter had replaced Admiral Lee. Cushing reported to him and was ordered back up the bay to find the missing boat. After three days' searching, Cushing, worn down by exposure and exhaustion, again reported to Porter. All that he had learned was that the boat, along with its volunteer ensign and crew had been captured by the Rebels.

The Admiral, an old gunboater newly arrived from the Mississippi, was pessimistic about the expedition. But he promised Cushing a promotion if he were successful, and sent him south with the following orders to Commander W. H. Macomb, senior officer present in Albemarle Sound:

> *I have directed Lieutenant Cushing to go down in a steam launch and if possible destroy this ram with torpedoes. I have no great confidence in his success, but you will afford him all the assistance in your power, and keep boats ready to pick him up in case of failure.*

The "going down" was not so easy. Not only did the Chesapeake and Albemarle Canal pass through enemy country, but it was half filled with silt. To get the launch through, Cushing had to take out his gun and coal and load them on a flatboat. It took two days; then he reached the Sound and ran with a gale to Roanoke Island. Fifty miles farther up the Sound, he rendezvoused with the squadron, which was nervously waiting for the *Albemarle.*

The cutter borrowed from the *Shamrock* would have to do the job of the missing torpedo launch. About one mile south of Plymouth the hulk of the sunken *Southfield* was now a sort of non-floating battery. The Confederates had manned it with a picket guard. If Cushing wasn't able to slip past it in the darkness, it would be up to the cutter's crew to silence the guard before they could fire their signal rockets.

But it wasn't necessary.

Almost silently, blessed by the dark night, they steamed by the *Southfield,* her sides not twenty yards away, without rousing a man.

They were now almost to the customhouse wharf. Not a sound nor a light came from it. Were the Confederates all asleep? Or was it a trap? Cushing wasn't certain, but things were quiet enough to tempt him into a change of plan. He decided to take the ram alive.

He had two boats and nearly thirty men well-armed with revolvers, cutlasses and hand grenades. He knew there were two hundred Johnnies on the ram, but with surprise on his side, he figured he could cut her lines, overpower her sleeping crew, and let her drift to the center of the stream, where her iron sides would protect him.

He decided to land on the lower wharf, close quietly, and then rush the ram from the bank. But just as he sheered toward the wharf, a sharp, quick hail came from the ironclad. Once, and then a second time. He was discovered!

He ordered the cutter to cast off, go back, and capture the *Southfield.* Freed of the cutter and with full throttle, the steam launch jumped toward the dark mass of the *Albemarle.* The shore was alerted now. A heavy rain of rifle bullets came from the banks, the wharf and the ram. A fire blazed up on the river's edge, and by its light Cushing could see a circle of logs boomed well out around the hull of *Albemarle* as protection against torpedo attack. *Perhaps his secret had not been so well kept!*

Cushing ran his launch through the galling fire until amidships of the ram, sheered off a hundred yards, and then began a full-speed run toward his target. As he turned, a shot carried away the back of his coat, and a second tore off the sole of his shoe.

From the *Albemarle* came another hail, presumably from the captain, demanding that he surrender. Cushing's crew hooted back through the night and sent twelve pounds of canister rattling against the iron ribs of the ram.

"Leave the ram," shouted Cushing optimistically. "We're going to blow you up."

The launch hit the boom of logs, bounced over it, and slid almost under the quarter port of the ram. The muzzle of the 6.4-inch rifle faced them ten feet away. Four more bullets tugged at Cushing's clothing.

He ordered the torpedo spar lowered. The dying forward motion of the launch carried the torpedo under the ram's overhang—she was not armored underneath. Cushing yanked the line in his right hand. The torpedo slid free of its sleeve and he could hear it bump against the hull. He pulled the exploding line just as a bullet cut his left hand.

THE torpedo exploded, and at the same instant the crashing weight of one hundred pounds of grapeshot tore through the launch. Cushing felt himself lifted on a vast column of water, and then his launch was sinking out from under his feet.

"Men," yelled Cushing, "save yourselves!" He got rid of his sword, pistol, shoes and coat. From the *Albemarle,* they were calling on him to surrender. He cleared the wreck of the launch and began swimming.

The water was cold from the autumn frosts and plowed with enemy grapeshot and Minié balls. Cushing struck out for the opposite bank. The Rebels had boats in the river now and were picking up the survivors. A man near Cushing went down with a gurgling scream. A boat was attracted by the sound, and Cushing heard the Rebels calling him by name. He swam downstream until he thought he was far enough to attempt landing. The cold water was sucking his strength. He heard a groan, and in the darkness found Acting Master's Mate Woodman ready to go down.

Cushing did his best. He kept him afloat as best he could. For how long? Ten minutes perhaps. And then Woodman gave a yell, and slipping free of Cushing's grasp, sank like a stone.

Again alone, Cushing now swam toward the town side of the river. His wet clothes were an anchor, and angry little chop waves filled his mouth each time he gasped for air. He could hardly move his arms. He lost all sense of time; he was no longer conscious of swimming when he felt soft mud underneath him—wonderful soft mud. He staggered the last few feet ashore and fell, half in the water, half out.

He lay there the night through. His next conscious recollection was the warmth of the morning sun beating down on his back. Experimentally, he moved his arms and legs slightly. His strength seemed to have come back.

Cautiously he raised his head. Thirty or forty feet of open space separated him from a point of swamp that touched the outskirts of Plymouth. Forty yards in the other direction was one of the town's batteries. On its parapet a sentry walked his post.

Beyond the fort Cushing could see into the town, bustling this morning with soldiers and sailors, and he could hear the baying of dogs. But he could not see the customhouse wharf and he could not tell what damage had been done the *Albemarle.*

With the brightening morning light the sentry was bound to discover him. He waited for the Rebel soldier to face about, and then lunged for the fringe of dry rushes that marked the line of the swamp. Halfway across the open space the sentry completed his turn and Cushing flattened himself, bracing for the musket ball he thought was coming. The sentry did not fire. Perhaps it was the camouflage of river mud that saved him.

HE now lay between two paths. From the right approached four soldiers, two of them officers. Cushing could hear them talking. They mentioned him by name. Cushing was sure that they could not fail to see him. But they passed harmlessly by, so close that one almost stepped on Cushing's arm.

The swamp now seemed more of a haven than ever. Cushing began inching toward it, using his heels and elbows. He reached it, and then began floundering forward. For five hours he moved through the swamp. The cypress roots and the briers and thorns tore at his bare feet and hands. His shirt and trousers were in ribbons. Sometimes the mire was so soft that he had to thrash through it full-length, half swimming, half crawling. But at last he reached solid ground.

He rested for a while, then started moving again, and almost stumbled onto a clearing where a working party of Confederate soldiers was busy sinking three schooners to block the river's channel. He skirted the clearing carefully.

Blocking the river's channel? But would they do that unless the *Albemarle* was badly damaged? It didn't seem likely. Cushing passed through a cornfield, protected by the long brown stalks, and then into a woods.

Here he found an old Negro. Cushing used the double persuasion of some verses of Scripture and a twenty-dollar greenback, and sent the darky into Plymouth to find out what had happened to the *Albemarle.* The Negro returned with positive information that the ram had been sunk.

This made Cushing feel considerably better, but it in no way solved the present problem of his escape. He plunged once more into the swamp, which at this point was so thick that he could not see ten feet in front of him, and could keep his direction only by constant reference to the sun.

About two in the afternoon he came out on a narrow, deep stream that apparently emptied into the Roanoke. In front of him was a square-ended skiff. If he had emerged from the swamp thirty yards above or below where he did, he would not have seen it. A picket of seven Rebels had tied the boat to the twisted root of a cypress, climbed the bank, and were now settled down under the big tree eating their ration.

Cushing slipped into the water, swam the narrow stream, keeping the giant tree between himself and the picket. He quietly untied the skiff, let it float free of the bank, and then drifted with it downstream. Thirty yards, and they were around a bend and he felt safe in climbing in and paddling.

The hours passed, and still he paddled. The afternoon changed into twilight and the twilight thickened into night. The darkness of the swamp was broken by only a few faint stars. The little stream emptied into the Roanoke, and then the Roanoke emptied into the Sound. Cushing was no longer conscious of paddling; his arms and back moved mechanically. If the weather had been rough, his skiff would not have lived a minute in the open water, but luckily there was only a slight swell. He set a course by a star and paddled for where he thought the fleet must be. A long time passed, two hours perhaps, before he found a vessel and was within hailing distance.

His "Ship ahoy!" took his last fraction of strength. He let himself slide down into the water that sloshed about in the bottom of his skiff. He could only wait now. He had paddled continuously for eight hours.

The picket vessel *Valley City* was very suspicious about the hail coming out of the night. They put a boat over the side, but they also took precautions against torpedoes. The *Shamrock's* cutter had come back that morning with four prisoners from the guard aboard the *Southfield.* They had been quite certain that Cushing and his men were dead. The *Valley City* had a notion that this voice out of the darkness might be the Southerners repaying Cushing's compliment in kind.

But they found Cushing, floating in his little skiff, took him aboard and poured enough brandy and water into him to bring him around. Then he was taken to Commander Macomb's flagship.

When it was learned that the *Albemarle* was down, rockets were sent up, all hands were called to cheer ship, and Macomb assembled his captains to prepare an attack against Plymouth in the morning.

Afterward Cushing was sent in the *Valley City* to report to Admiral Porter—who, as promised, had Cushing made a lieutenant commander. Without the protection of the *Albemarle,* Plymouth and all the surrounding area fell to the Federals. Cushing received the congratulations of the Navy Department, the thanks of Congress, a silver medal, and a raft of testimonials from Chambers of Commerce, Union Leagues, and cities. Only one other man besides Cushing, William Hoftman, a seaman from the *Chicopee,* escaped that night. Woodman and Fireman Higgins died in the river. The rest of the launch's crew, all battered or wounded to some degree, were picked up by the *Albemarle's* boats and later confined in Salisbury or Richmond's Libby Prison.

The war was not over for Cushing. He was given command of the *Malvern,* Porter's flagship. In the first attack against Fort Fisher he went in in a gig to put down buoys to guide the fleet. In the second attack he was one of the leaders of the assault troops ashore. With the spring of 1865 bringing the crumbling of the Confederacy, there were more captures of towns, ships and forts. His last adventure of the war was to add a canvas turret to a flatboat, and with this false *Monitor* to take Fort Anderson without a shot being fired.

AFTER the war Cushing married and served variously, ashore and afloat, becoming a full commander before his untimely death at thirty-two in 1874.

He died probably without realizing that he had pioneered a new form of naval warfare. There had been torpedo attacks before, but none so successful, and none captured the world's attention as did Cushing's against the *Albemarle.* The naval minds went to work; and after him came the Whitehead automotive torpedo, the torpedo boats, the torpedo-boat destroyers, and then—in World War II—the PT boats and torpedo planes. They all go back to a slender twenty-one-year-old standing in the bow of a steam launch headed for the armored sides of the *Albemarle.*

The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official attitude of the Navy Department.

Edwin Simmons

Bungstarter's Daughter

Riverboat life in California has its exciting episodes.

by KENNETH PERKINS

IT was about seventy miles to San Francisco, not as the crow flies but as a river boat chugs and paddles. On the way Lank Thompson had to stop at several ranches to pick up produce in trade for his kerosene and hardware, dry goods and seeds. At one of the delta islands he picked up a heifer, at another a crate of chickens, at a third a pretty girl.

This last must be explained. The side-wheeler was no longer a passenger boat as it had been when his father owned and piloted her. In those days before so much water was diverted for the ranch lands, the boat could go up to Sycamore Point, a four-hundred-mile trip into the heart of California. Lank was a small boy then, but he remembered the pop of corks and clink of chips, the calliope and the dancing, the women in fine feathers and the fighting over them. He remembered his father racing with other river boats, the Kanaka engineer pouring fast-burning cottonwood into the furnace to get more steam, and even holding the safety valve down with an oar!

It was the same Kanaka, now grown old, the same boat in need of paint, her paddle-boxes patched without benefit of jigsaw, the hogging frame barely able to keep her from sagging at both ends. Her passenger list consisted of livestock on the way to San Francisco's butcher town. But there was a compensation. Hogs and heifers never brought suit for damages against the skipper. That last race when the Kanaka held down the valve cost twenty thousand dollars in damages to scalded passengers. Since then the boat raced no more. The calliope was sold; so were all but one of the marble-topped tables in the texas. She became a humdrum old creek boat without music or wine or women or lawsuits.

There was the exception I mentioned: Lank saw her, a slim dejected figure in the tule fog, like a lost spirit on the shores of the Styx waiting for Charon's ferry to Hades. She was standing in the mass of brush and apricot prunings that was the boat-landing for Wild Irishman's ranch. Her father, the Wild Irishman, had been bartender on one of the larger river boats before taking up ranching, and he still kept the bungstarter which he had used on the heads of troublesome passengers. He still used it, Lank Thompson knew, on Kathleen's unwelcome suitors.

Lank rang off the engine and drifted up to the landing. Hastily he brushed his red hair, adjusted his peaked hat, and clapped on a bow necktie with a rubber band. He wanted to look his best, because the daughter of Bungstarter Jones was the prettiest girl he had ever seen on the San Joaquin—or on the Sacramento, for that matter.

While the Kanaka, with a touch astern, another touch forward, kept the boat nosed up against the brush, Lank called from the pilothouse: "You folks need anything today?" Seeing the basket on Kathleen's arm, he judged she had something for trade, but then he noticed the flower-trimmed hat and print dress. She wasn't trading. She was partying.

"Yes, I want something—a ride," she called. "I'm going to the firemen's picnic on Simm's Island!"

The engineer having closed the throttle, had to lift the safety valve, which gave the effect of an astonished snort.

LANK knew about this picnic. Everyone would be there, for all the eligible bachelors of the river towns belonged to one fire company or another. But he wondered why a girl like Kathleen had to go alone. She explained this in the next breath, and very logically: "Tim Sanford was afraid to take me after his fight with Dad. So Jack McCoy said he'd call for me, but he must have heard Dad didn't like him. Bob Humphreys said he'd meet me at the picnic if I could find some way of getting there without Dad's knowing."

"But if I take you in this boat, your dad wouldn't like it," Lank said.

"He won't blame you. He says you always help anyone who's in trouble."

Of course everyone said that about Lank Thompson. It was the main reason he never had money enough to paint the old side-wheeler. He would go ten miles up a creek because some rancher's baby needed a teething ring; and here a girl wanted him to take her twenty miles out of his way to a picnic! "The slough to Simm's Island is too tricky in this fog. I'd be hung up on a sycamore and— All right, get aboard."

WHEN she came up to the main cabin, it was as if someone had lit the big brass bulkhead lantern. The illusion was caused perhaps by the tule fog seeping in through the ports, obscuring the background of groceries and hardware. In Lank's imagination the background changed to suit those black ringlets and dancing blue eyes. Vividly he remembered the "texas," as they called this cabin in the old days, with its red-plush upholstery, ogee molding, white enamel and ports outlined in blue and red glass.

Giving the Kanaka a bell and a jingle, he steered for deep water. He kept his hands on the wheel, but his eyes on the girl. Since the pilothouse was on the same deck as the texas instead of on top as in the larger river boats, he could steer the boat and enjoy Kathleen at the same time.

"Put your basket on the table and have a drink," he said. "Case of ginger beer under that shelf."

"And a gramophone!" she cried delightedly. "I'll put on a record."

"It's for a Jap onion farm. They ordered it, but— Okay, go ahead and play it."

When the gramophone started its squawking, the Kanaka called up from the open boiler deck, "Hi, Lank! We got a party?"

That was a good word for it, Lank thought, as he saw her coming toward the pilothouse with a bottle and two cups. The mist was like the cigar-smoke of the gamblers long ago. And the girl was like—well, not exactly like the fancy ladies of those days, for the red of her lips and flush of her checks were real, and she was much younger. "Let's see, she was born during the San Francisco earthquake. That makes her about eighteen—old enough to take care of herself. But while she's on this boat, I'm responsible."

Navigating in that fog by the sense of hearing alone, he was bothered by the gramophone. It drowned the sound of his whistle thrown back

"If she'll float, I'll take you in tow," Lank called to them.

from an echo board or ranch-house or river oak. He got a few points off the course and found himself up the wrong slough. Giving the engine-room gong full astern, he backed into a mass of tules, and this was the moment Kathleen chose to come into the pilothouse. The pilothouse was the size of a circular ticket booth, with barely room enough for a high stool and the wheel, but she squeezed in and stood at his elbow while he steered with one hand and held the cup with the other. When he took a sip, he realized it was not ginger beer, which is a soft drink. She had gotten into the wrong case somehow, and opened a bottle of Napa wine.

The gramophone, to his relief, had reached the end of the record, but from below there came the strumming of a ukulele in time to the soft cadence of the paddle wheels. Evidently the Kanaka, affected by the change that had come over the old trading boat, intended having a good time himself.

"We're leaving your poor old engineer out of the party," Kathleen said. "I'll take him some chicken and cookies."

Lank was glad to have elbow-room for a few minutes. He only hoped she was not going to serve the Kanaka wine with his lunch. He might lose interest in his poppet valves and let the engine get stuck on dead center. In that case, Lank would have difficulty keeping out of the cottonwoods.

Kathleen came back, wound the gramophone, then flitted, half dancing, to the pilothouse. Every movement she made was in time with the usually monotonous sounds—the rise and fall of the wipers in the engine-room, the chunk of paddles, the rhythmic stroke of the piston. Even the engineer throwing more river oak and bull pine into the furnace seemed to have caught the cadence in the air. And he had caught the reckless spirit of the old days, for he was getting up more steam to race a tug that loomed ahead of them in the fog!

They passed the tug, which, drawing more water than the side-wheeler, had to feel her way slowly through the fog. They passed another, for the simple reason that she had a barge of sacked grain in tow. The side-wheel-

er, rejuvenated like her engineer and pilot, rattled and puffed and wheezed, the buckets beating their soft barcarolle. It was high water and a high time!

The ukulele thrummed, and the Kanaka sang. Kathleen began to sing too, and so did the pilot. The slough narrowed, and as they turned into a cut-off for Simm's Island, a sycamore branch brushed the fan slatting of a paddle box. Lank gave full steam astern, but there was an ominous silence, the paddle buckets hanging motionless and dripping.

"Hi, Lank! She stick on dead center!" the Kanaka called as the boat plunged into a grove of cottonwoods.

In the crash of branches against the jackstaff, Lank did not identify that voice down by the boiler-deck rail yelling for help. His first thought was that the engineer was roaring drunk, but then he saw a man floundering below the rail like Caliban wiggling out of his swamp. By the time Lank and the girl ran down the after ladder, the engineer had reached over the side with a boathook and hauled the man up to the open boiler deck.

He lay sopping and weed-slimed, his rough young face blood raw from temple to chin. "Busted an oar on my head. Pretty near killed me!"

"Hot water and raw bacon," Kathleen ordered, kneeling down by him.

"Need a drink," the man groaned.

"My father says never give liquor when a man's hit on the head," said Kathleen. "Might be a concussion."

"I'll boil coffee." Lank hurried to the galley.

When the Kanaka came back with the hot water and bacon, Kathleen washed the wound and tied the bacon

Bungstarter

slice over his cheek with a handkerchief. Obviously she was expert at doctoring broken heads, especially if they had been whacked by some blunt wooden instrument like an oar—or a bungstarter.

The man looked up at her, his narrow beady eyes coming to a slow focus. "Ran right into us. Cracked the oar in half and— Say! Who are you?"

"She's just a passenger," Lank said, coming from the galley with the coffee. "Don't worry about your oar. I've got an extra one, and dry clothes. Plenty in stock." He ran up to the texas deck, got a pair of jeans, a denim shirt, long-handled underwear. When he came back, Kathleen had finished doctoring the man's head, and the fellow was sitting up, his dazed eyes fixed on her. "Guess I got no kick coming," he said as Lank handed him the clothes. "But where's Uncle Max? And where's Slob Murphy?"

"You mean we hit three men instead of just you?" Kathleen gasped.

LANK and the engineer ran to the port rail. Because of the fog and the thick cottonwoods, it was the first they had seen of the two men bailing out their skiff. The older one, pinch-shouldered and long-faced, was doubtless the uncle. And the younger, shaped like a tub with a pumpkin head, would be Slob Murphy. They must have seen their companion hauled aboard, for they were less concerned with what had happened to him than to their skiff.

"If she'll float, I'll take you in tow," Lank called down to them. "And I'll pay for any repairs."

"I know you will!" Uncle Max began; but as Kathleen appeared on deck, he changed his tone: "Just how did it happen anyway, Captain?"

Slob Murphy answered the question. "Slammed right into us! I got a good mind to—" He checked himself, and gaped at the flash of color which was Kathleen's sleeveless dress.

"If you're taking us in tow," said Uncle Max, studying the girl sidewise, "what's the sense our staying in the skiff? Shipped a lot of water when you bumped us."

"You can come aboard till you get dry," Lank said uneasily.

With the skiff tallied on at the stern, they climbed on deck. Then, as their companion came out of the engine-room, buttoning up a new denim shirt, Uncle Max said: "What's the bacon for, Billy?"

"The lady fixed me up." Billy seemed quite proud of his disfigurement. "Got no kick at all."

All three watched Kathleen's round tanned arms and sparkling fingers as she poured the coffee. Lank came from his cabin with a box of cigars.

"Where you fellows want me to take you?" he asked. Since they had been rowing, he judged hopefully that their destination was not too far.

The men looked at each other, then at the girl as she passed the cups around. "It depends," Uncle Max said, lighting a cigar. "We're hunting work. We're fruit-pickers. Where was this boat heading when you bumped into us?"

"Firemen's picnic," Kathleen said readily.

The men looked at each other again. Slob Murphy put two cigars in his pocket. "Well, now, isn't that a coincidence," he chuckled. "We were heading that way when you rammed us!"

Lank swore under his breath and turned to the Kanaka. "Let's get those engines started."

"Nice party!" the Kanaka grunted as he went into the engine-room. "Pretty girl, three fruit tramps. That means *pilikia*—lots of trouble."

Slob Murphy asked, as Kathleen handed him a cup: "Got any doughnuts to go with the coffee?"

"We haven't had a bite to eat for three days," Uncle Max added.

"Three days!" Kathleen exclaimed. "I'll fix you some lunch." She ran up to the texas deck, which was a temporary relief. It gave Lank a chance to climb into the port paddle box with a long bar, and pry the wheel over until the crank crossed center.

Billy was watching the ladder where the girl had disappeared. "Listen, Captain," he said when Lank climbed out of the paddle box, "you serving lunch up in the texas?"

Lank wiped his forehead. "If you'll sit down here, I'll bring you something to eat."

"Sit down where? On these crates?" Uncle Max asked.

"Wants us to sit down with the livestock!" Slob Murphy gave a neigh of laughter as if he had told a joke.

"He'll be putting us in the China hold next," Billy said. "But not me. I'm going up to the texas."

THEY all started for the after ladder, but Lank stood in front of them. He felt cornered, like his own boat snagged in the cottonwoods. If he could only get out of shoal water, he would have some power of command. Nevertheless he was about to order them away from the ladder when Kathleen came halfway down and called: "Lunch is ready! Everybody come up to the texas!"

She had the gramophone playing when the three men climbed to the main cabin and sat down at the table. Lank had seen that same picture many times in his boyhood—men filling the texas with their cigar smoke, boots tapping to the ragtime

of a calliope, narrow-lidded eyes following a pretty woman. It was the old, old story, except for the common climax—the fist-fight.

While they gorged themselves, Lank had all he could do to keep off the mud lumps and sandbars. The jackstaff was so badly tilted he could no longer line it up with the landmarks ahead. He had to rely on echoes, and he had to keep an eye on his ragamuffin guests, who were opening one bottle after another of the ginger beer.

Having wolfed the last scrap of food Kathleen had prepared for her picnic, they started on a crate of apricots. They munched, threw the stones on deck, filled their pockets, reached for more. Let them eat themselves sick, for all Lank cared. At least it kept them busy. But when he heard the pop of a cork, he turned and called out: "Leave those bottles alone!"

"What bottles?" Uncle Max asked innocently.

"Look, Captain—seems like you don't know the trouble you're in."

Slob Murphy reached to the crate. "No objection to eating apricots?"

Without answering, Lank nodded to the girl to come into the pilothouse. "You stay in here," he said, "with me."

"I'm not afraid of them," she laughed. "I've seen a lot of fruit tramps on our ranch."

Billy had followed her after putting on a new record. "How about a little dance?"

"She's not dancing," Lank said.

"I didn't ask you, Captain. I asked her, and you say no. You her husband, or what?"

"You own this boat, Captain?" It was Uncle Max who asked this apparently irrelevant question. But in the light of what happened next, he had a reason for asking it. With the engine rung off, Lank had drifted easily up to the shore.

"What we stopping for?" Slob Murphy called.

"It's where you three get off," Lank said, stepping out of the pilothouse door.

The men stared at him aghast.

"Get *off!*" Slob Murphy repeated, then gave a whoop of laughter. "You mean you're putting us off in the middle of a swamp!"

"Why, we don't even know where we are!" Uncle Max said. "We're lost. We'd die of thirst."

"Might as well murder us!" Billy added.

"Look, Captain," Uncle Max' voice turned oily and sweet. "Seems like you don't know the trouble you're in. You give us a new oar, and you give Billy a pair of jeans and a shirt, and you think that lets you off. Ten thousand dollars is what you're going to pay."

"Ten thousand!" Lank gulped. "I haven't got it!"

"If you own this boat, you've got it. And we've got a good case. Look at our skiff—ribs cracked. Look at Billy here—head cracked. Look at your jackstaff and the fresh splintering and dents in your cutwater. That's proof enough how hard you hit us. Why, we don't even need a lawyer, but we're getting one."

"All right, let's get off, since he's dumping us," Slob Murphy put in. "The lawyer we're getting will laugh himself sick if he has *that* to tell a jury."

"We aren't getting off," Billy said, his narrow eyes shifting from Lank to the girl. "There'll be witnesses at the firemen's picnic, including a lot of deputy sheriffs. We're staying right on this boat."

Lank turned back to his pilothouse to get his shotgun. He kept one for ducks as well as for arguments with Italian fishermen when he broke through their nets. But Kathleen was in the pilothouse, staring white-faced. With her enormous eyes on him, he felt suddenly clumsy, slow-witted, helpless. What if one of these rats had a gun? What if his cartridges, their primers ruined by many tule fogs, failed to fire? He gripped the wheel to keep the shake out of his hands. Kathleen was shoulder to shoulder with him, her arm hooked in his and pressing hard. He could not start a fight with her on board. They were in a maze of mud lumps and tules, hidden by a dense fog, where no one could see or hear what happened to them. He rang to the Kanaka and headed on toward Simm's Island.

"They're making that all up about the ten thousand dollars," she said.

He nodded vaguely. Let her think they were making it up. But he had not forgotten how damage suits had ruined his father. In most cases it was a matter of persecution. The Sacramento and S.P. fleets, who wanted to run the independents out of business, would bring suit for a broken slat in a paddle box. And they always won.

Uncle Max came swaggering to the pilothouse door. He seemed to know that the threatened lawsuit gave him the upper hand, for he announced blandly: "You fixed up Billy with new clothes, didn't you, Captain? Well, what about me? Got a chill. Need some dry shoes and socks."

In answer Lank gave his whistle a toot, estimating the direction of the echo and the distance to Simm's Island. Far ahead there was a pulsation in the fog which only his practiced ear could detect—it was caused by a band pounding and braying at the firemen's picnic. Let these tramps call their witnesses. At least Kathleen would be out of danger!

Uncle Max had stepped to the row of napa boots that hung on the bulkhead and was picking out a pair. Slob Murphy wiggled his fat shoulders into a denim shirt. Billy followed them, but he did not stop at the dry-goods shelf. He was obsessed with something more than petty thievery. Stopping a little distance from the pilothouse door, he said: "How about that dance?" When Kathleen turned to him, he went on cockily: "Course you don't feel like it after what Uncle Max said about a lawsuit. But they can't bring suit without me, can they? I'm the one that was hurt."

Lank glanced back, surprised. The slab of bacon had made the man's cheekbone and forehead shiny, the welt showing purple and yellow. One eye was puffed, tight-lidded but glittering bright. "The Captain did everything he could for us, and Uncle Max wants ten thousand dollars! Not me. Me, I want to be friends."

Lank saw the girl nod. Perhaps she smiled, for Billy was trying a side-of-the-mouth smile himself. "We go to the picnic together. I'm your partner, see? You're my girl." The smile must have left her face, for he added: "Of course with this crack on my head, I could make it out pretty bad. I could go limp like this—" He acted it out, his disfigured head lolling like an idiot's. He slumped back against the bulkhead, his eyes closed. "I'm in a coma. Brain concussion."

Lank stared, fascinated. In the background Slob Murphy stopped in the act of clipping on a bow tie. Uncle Max looked up from lacing his new boots. The pantomime impressed Kathleen most of all. "It's exactly the way they act when they're knocked out!" she exclaimed. "But you aren't going to play such a trick on Lank Thompson!"

"Not if you—"

"All right, I'll go to the picnic with you."

Lank gave a gasp. "Not on this boat!" he cried voicelessly. "I don't care if it costs me ten thousand dollars. I'm taking you home!" He spun the wheel, intending to turn around, but the slough was so narrow he had to ease up to a bank, put the rudder hard over and come ahead on the engines. It was the usual procedure in making a sharp bend in the river, but it took too long.

Kathleen went on, disregarding the interruption: "It's a bargain. We'll dance every dance at the picnic. Want to start now?" She went to the gramophone.

Lank went for Billy. He wanted to hit him, but instead he took him by the collar and dragged him to the after ladder, on the way bumping into Slob Murphy, who stepped back and gave Lank a sneak punch on the back of his neck.

Uncle Max jumped up. "You asked for it. We didn't want to get tough, but when you ask for it, you get it."

Kathleen leaped for his arm as he raised a bottle, and this gave Lank a chance to floor Slob with a haymaker. Then Billy stepped in. As Lank staggered slightly from a smash on his ear, Uncle Max kicked the wind out of him.

"I said you'd get it, a whole lot!"

Kathleen jumped in front of the men, her scream echoed by the toot of a horn and the chug of a motorboat somewhere in the fog. Lank was on his knees retching for breath when he felt the girl helping him, dragging him to the pilothouse. He was astonished at her wiry strength as she lifted him to the stool. What astonished him still more was the change in her voice as she turned to face his three persecutors.

"Now let's all be friends." She had said that many times no doubt, when men fought over her. "Here, I'll help you up." She must be talking to Slob Murphy. "Take this drink. What? You were knocked out; that's what happened to you. Now let's have some music. I'll get a record."

It was incredible! Lank had been knocked down; she had screamed; a motorboat had tooted—then she wanted music! Perhaps she was killing time until that boat came close enough to hear a call for help. Perhaps she even recognized the horn. Whatever her game, she said: "Come on, Billy, this is your dance!"

Slowly, stupidly, Lank realized he was piloting the old creek boat, but his hands were not on the wheel. He remembered he had been on the point of turning when he started that scrap, and now the horn hooting madly at him meant that he was blocking the channel.

When his fingers closed on the spokes, he felt better. The wheel was a refuge and strength. He had no intention of calling for help from that motorboat. He could handle his own fights, he hoped! He gave the Kanaka the gong, but a boat with a man's head and shoulders showing above the duck cabin hove out of the fog and gave the side-wheeler a bump just aft of the prow. It was a moderate bump, but the jackstaff, already snagged by an overhanging sycamore, toppled backward against the pilothouse.

Above the cackle of chickens and the bawling of the heifer, a voice sang out: "Now you'll not be starting those engines, Kanaka! I'm coming aboard!"

From Lank's point of view the man who vaulted to the main deck was foreshortened, all shoulders and derby and handlebar mustache. Actually, Bungstarter Jones was quite slim and stringy-muscled, about the size of San Francisco's Spider Kelly. As he looked up at Lank with his popping Irish blue eyes, the latter said automatically: "Need anything today, Mr. Jones?"

"My daughter. That's what I'm needin'—and then you!"

As Bungstarter disappeared below deck on his way to the after ladder, Lank changed his mind about calling for help. In shameless panic he yanked his whistle, giving out a succession of long blasts as if his boat were on fire. His ear caught the promise of rescue when the band on Simm's Island broke off on an unfinished beat.

With one hand still on the whistle cord, the other on the wheel, he turned his head like an owl to see what was happening behind him.

Bungstarter Jones stood framed by the after door of the texas. Uncle Max was right in front of him, not troubling to move. Nor did Billy trouble to take his arm from the girl's waist, even though she started tussling with him. Slob Murphy, slap-happy and glassy-eyed, took a bite from an apricot and rolled it in his swollen cheek like a cud. All three were blissfully innocent of wrong, and blissfully ignorant.

Bungstarter looked at his daughter, then at the man holding her waist. He could see only the good side of Billy's face. Otherwise, being something of a sportsman, he might not have done what he was about to do. "And who would this young gentleman be?" he asked politely.

"His name's Billy," Kathleen said with remarkable composure. "He asked me to the picnic."

Bungstarter nodded, smiling at Billy, then at everyone else. But when his eye caught Lank standing in the door of the pilothouse, the smile tightened grimly. "So Lank Thompson figured he'd be taking you to the picnic on this tub?"

"No, that wasn't it at all!" Kathleen said. "Billy was taking me in his skiff. Those two men"—pointing to Uncle Max, who had circled behind the table, and to Slob, sidling dizzily to the after door—"they were in the skiff too. They all wanted to take me to the picnic, and they got fresh, and I called to Lank for help. He was just passing by."

Bungstarter tipped his derby back and spat on his hands. "Then I'll be 'tending to this matter very simply."

Billy ran to the door but found it blocked by both Uncle Max and Slob Murphy, who were trying to get out at the same time. Bungstarter grabbed Billy with one hand, Uncle Max with the other, and knocked their heads together. Slob squeezed through the door, but he was in just the right position to get the same blow he had given Lank, a dull smash in the fat behind his pumpkin head.

It was glorious! The rejuvenation of the old side-wheeler needed only this final touch—a real barkeep from one of the palatial Sacramento boats cleaning up on bindle stiffs who hadn't paid for their drinks!

A tug whistled, plowing through the fog, her decks crowded with firemen. As she came alongside, there was a crash, but this came from back aft, where Slob Murphy, fleeing the Wild Irishman, jumped overboard.

He jumped for the skiff, landed feet first on a thwart, which cracked under his enormous weight, the skiff sinking in two feet of water.

The crowd of firemen swarmed aboard, a deputy sheriff and fire chief running up the ladder to the texas. "River pirates—or what?"

"It's only Bungstarter Jones," the deputy said, looking down with complete understanding at the two men lying on the deck.

"And it is a family matter," Bungstarter said. "But since you are the authorities, I'll say for your own edification that my daughter comes to your picnic against my wishes. And it serves her right that these fruit tramps scared the devil out of her. But they won't do it again, I'm thinking."

The deputy knelt down and examined Billy's wound. Billy was lying slumped against the bulkhead, his eyes closed, his head lolling like an idiot's. "You'll be killing somebody with that bungstarter of yours, Mr. Jones. Look at this kid's head!"

"I hit him with this other fellow's head, not with a bungstarter."

The fire chief examined Uncle Max. "You knocked this one silly, Mr. Jones. He thinks it was this boat that hit him. He wants ten thousand damages."

"Ten thousand he wants for getting fresh with my daughter? Ten thousand smacks on the button is what he'll be getting!"

Uncle Max struggled up with the help of the chief, and sat stony-eyed and mumbling: "We got proof he bumped us! Look at his jackstaff!"

"Sure I saw his jackstaff topple when I cracked into the prow with my boat!" Bungstarter snorted. "I'll buy Lank Thompson a new jackstaff, and some paint besides."

"Our skiff—it's all the proof we need! The skiff will show where he cracked the planking—"

"Cracked what planking?" Bungstarter hooted. "A three-hundred-pound walrus jumps into your skiff and goes through the bottom."

The chief laughed. "You aren't asking Bungstarter Jones to pay ten thousand for your skiff, I hope?"

The Wild Irishman took his daughter's arm. "We'll be going home now. Maybe you'll contemplate all this trouble you caused." But as he led her to the after ladder, she held back and Lank could see her pleading. Her father turned. "Come here, you!"

Lank came, the muscles in one of his legs jerking.

"My daughter says I forgot to thank you for helping her in her tribulation. It is not the first time that you've helped someone to the detriment of your business. But this case has a different aspect." His eyes were a glacial blue, chilling Lank to the bone.

"Yes sir."

"Yes sir, what? You thought maybe you'd have a chance to court my daughter?"

Lank put a finger inside the band of his necktie to relieve the choking. He saw Bungstarter's clotted knuckles as he held up his hand, and this was a reminder that the Wild Irishman was not beyond giving him a licking in front of a score of firemen and deputies. Lank's heart thumped against his ribs, but it was a courageous thumping. He made the bravest confession of his life: "That was in the back of my mind, sir."

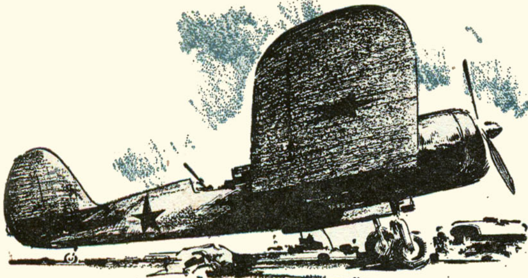
Glacial blue eyes sparkled. The bruised fist was opened, not doubled. "Were you going upriver or down with this old tub when you picked up Kathleen?"

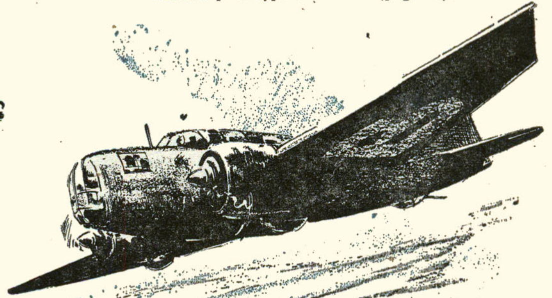
"Down to San Francisco."

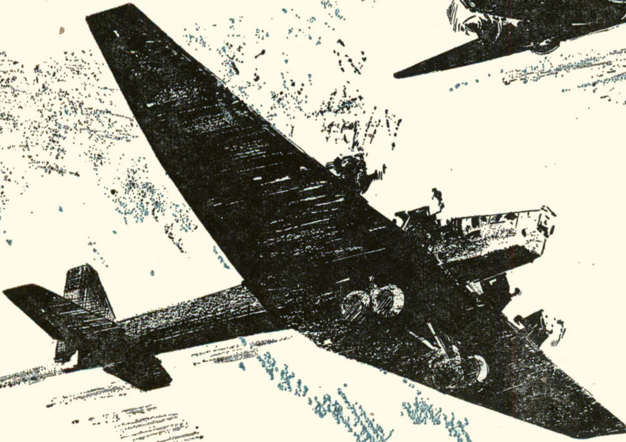
"Then stop by the ranch for a bite of supper, and we'll be having a little smile or two besides."

It was glorious; a real barkeep cleaning up on bindle stiffs.

At left, the SB-2. This veteran of Spain, powered by twin 830-horse radials—speed of 230, was typical of early Soviet three-seater bombers. From this prototype developed SB-3 (two 950-horse liquid-cooled engines and top speed of 280) shown on page 49. Below is the DB-3, an early DB medium type. DB-3 had two 1100-horse radials and could reach 260. Bombardier lay flat in the nose. Dorsal and ventral turrets added some rear protection. It became prototype of DB-3F (page 49).

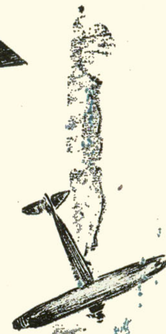


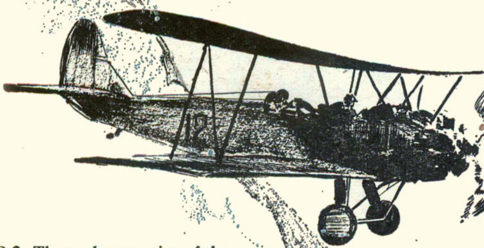




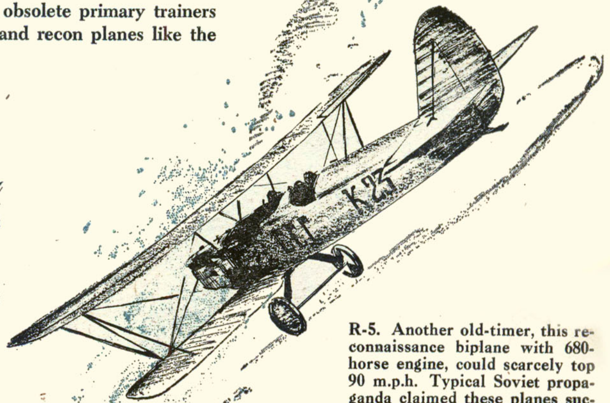
TB-3. This Tupolev-designed heavy bomber had four 830-horse liquid-cooled engines, only cruised at 95 with a top speed of 125. Note fixed tandem landing gear. Completely knocked out of combat by the Germans. It was, however, retained for cargo and troop transport throughout the war.

Shown above are the principal bomber prototypes (SB and DB) which were in use by the Red Air Force up to 1941. The SB types were twin-engined three-place fighter bombers, first developed and put into service during the war in Spain; the DB series produced the medium DB-3 and the heavy long-range TB-3. During the early days of World War II, these ships were hopelessly outclassed by the Luftwaffe, and the Russian bombing arm was decimated, some regiments losing their entire complement of planes in a few days' time. In order to furnish ground support to their hard-pressed troops, the Russians were forced to use everything they had, even to pressing into service obsolete primary trainers and observation planes (the PO types) and recon planes like the R5 (below).





P-2. Three-place version of the Soviet's antiquated primary trainer, designed first and built about 1925. Was still available principally as an ambulance craft until necessity forced its use as a low-level bomber. Several suicide missions, described by author, were in planes of this general class.



R-5. Another old-timer, this reconnaissance biplane with 680-horse engine, could scarcely top 90 m.p.h. Typical Soviet propaganda claimed these planes successful in combat because their slow speed made them "hard to hit." Nevertheless, author reveals that one mission cost Russians 24 out of 27 planes of this type.

The Soviet Air Force

One of the two Russian Air Force men who fled to this country last year gives us his experiences in and opinions of the planes and personnel of the USSR Air Force during the war and up to the time of his flight. Doubtless there have been improvements since that time.

by PETER PIROGOV

Illustrated and annotated by
HAMILTON GREENE

IT would be futile to attempt an evaluation of the individual Allied contributions to their common victory over Germany during the last war.

These contributions were in proportion, of course, to the technical developments and manpower reserves of each country. In measuring the achievements of the Soviet Air Force during World War II it must be said, in all fairness, that it had achieved better results than its resources would suggest.

These good results must be attributed exclusively to the heroism and self-denial of the Soviet Air Force personnel.

The U.S.S.R. entered the war against Germany equipped with an air force which was qualitatively far inferior to that of the enemy. The claim of the Soviet propaganda that the Soviet Air Force was invincible and unparalleled in history proved to be nothing more than a dishonest advertising campaign. In the first weeks of the war, air supremacy passed to the Germans. Soviet planes were inferior in every respect: in speed, in range, in altitude ceiling; in loading capacity and even in numbers. The personnel were not as well trained as the members of the Luftwaffe and could not stand up to the German pilots, who had by this time acquired valuable experience in combat.

The Soviet Union entered the war with two types of bombers: the SB—a fighter bomber with a speed of 125 to 155 miles per hour; and the DB—a long-range bomber with a speed of approximately 185 m.p.h.

The large majority of these planes were soon out of combat and had to be replaced by completely outdated models, previously taken out of commission. These were craft of the types R-5, RZ, ZS with speeds ranging up to one hundred m.p.h. as well as PO-2 capable of doing only seventy m.p.h. These planes were thrown into action as reconnaissance craft, dive-bombers and bombers. Needless to say, their return to service was a senseless waste of fuel, and more important, of trained crews, since their value in combat was nil. Their participation served only to boost the figures in German reports of victories in the air, and offered a splendid opportunity to decorate German flyers with Iron Crosses.

Here are some examples of this criminal waste:

General Kutzevalov, commander of the Soviet Air Force in the Northern Sector of the front, dispatched eighteen planes of the type PO to drop bombs on enemy positions. These bombs weighed about three pounds.

Over their target the eighteen planes flew at an altitude of two thousand feet, since they were incapable of reaching higher altitudes. After some three minutes seventeen of the planes were lost—went up in flames hit by German machine-gun bullets. Only one of the eighteen crews returned to safety and reported the outcome of the mission. In a rage, General Kutzevalov ordered nine more aircraft of the same type remaining under his command to attempt the same task, led by the crew of the plane which had managed to return.

THE navigator of that plane had the audacity to contradict the commander. He said: "General, I suggest that you order the bombs to be packed in a sack, which I shall carry on foot and drop at the station we are ordered to attack. This will be a surer and much safer way to carry out this mission." This advice provoked a new outburst of anger from the general, but he finally revoked the order.

In the opening phase of the war, eighteen planes of the R-5 type and nine planes of the RZ type were dispatched from Melitopol to Ochakov, which had just been occupied by the Germans. The planes were ordered to dive-bomb the enemy positions. Only three planes returned. That same year the 48th Air Force Regiment, operating from bases in the Moscow region, lost on one day all its planes of the DB type. All planes were lost on reconnaissance missions. The regiment was withdrawn from its forward bases to regroup.

These pitiless "meat-grinder" operations were accompanied by shameless propaganda statements claiming that Soviet airplane production was paramount, and that Soviet aircraft were in no way inferior to the German models.

BY the same token the Soviet Ground Forces were taught in 1941 and 1942 that a gasoline-filled bottle ("the Molotov cocktail") was the best anti-tank weapon in existence. In reality the Soviet Army simply lacked anti-tank grenades.

This was the general situation until Britain and the United States stepped in with their lend-lease aid. Among the first lend-lease shipments to arrive in the Soviet Union were a number of Boeing-Boston, Aircobra, Kitty-Hawk and Spitfire planes. The deliveries of the fighter planes were particularly welcome.

From the time of the first lend-lease deliveries, the air superiority began to change in our favor. It is interesting to note the Soviet flyers' reaction to the first American planes they tested. "The Americans," they used to remark jokingly, "build the cockpit first and the plane itself around it. We build planes and then start looking for some hole for the pilot."

The Soviet planes were indeed remarkably lacking in all comfort. Unprotected pipes and wires protruded everywhere, catching the sleeves and hands of the pilots, and lacerating the arms, elbows and faces of the crew during fast manipulation of the controls.

A popular story of this time told about an American pilot who had tested a Soviet plane. According to this story the American pilot had said: "The plane is O.K. I would be willing to fly it, though, only if they paid me a cash premium for each flight and gave me a medal for each landing."

Simultaneously with the first lend-lease shipments from the Allies, the Soviet Government began to re-equip its Air Force with the latest plane models produced in the U.S.S.R.

We were all taken aback by the leisurely speed with which this re-equipment was proceeding. The rate of plane deliveries was no higher than in peacetime.

Before the war it took two to three years to equip the Air Force with new models. When the SB and DB bombers and I-16 and I-153 were introduced as basic-type planes, the change from the old models to the new ones took from 1937 through 1939. During the war it took over two years, from 1941 to 1943, to equip the Army with the new types of planes, which remained in service to the end of the war and even now still form the core of the Soviet Air Force equipment.

The new types of planes introduced from 1941 to 1943 were the PE-2 (Petliakov) and TU (Tupolev) twin-engine short-range bombers with a bomb loading capacity of 3200 to 4000 pounds. They had a speed of 250 to 345 m.p.h. and an altitude ceiling of a little over 2100 feet.

The other new types were the Yakoviev and Lavochkin fighter planes and the Ilyushin dive-bombers, with speeds up to 312 m.p.h. and an effective flying range of 940 miles.

Usually deliveries to the Air Force pools were behind schedule and production was lagging.

For example, in 1943 when eight new Air Force regiments were being formed in Kazan, the crews were forced to remain inactive because of delays in scheduled plane deliveries. There were cases when impatient flyers stole the first planes they could lay their hands on and flew them to the front.

On the other hand, in a "smart" move on the part of the authorities, many of the idle Air Force crews were transferred to other branches of service, and numerous valuable trained flyers were lost while fighting with the Ground Forces. At present the Soviet Air Forces are going through another period of reëquipment. There is reason enough to believe that this new reorganization, like the previous ones, will require from two to three years.

So far, only one new plane* has been added to the current types described above. It is the TU-4—a long-range bomber. The TU-4 is an almost exact copy of the American B-29. This plane has an effective range of 1875 miles. To my knowledge, not more than fifty planes of this type were in commission up to the time of my departure from the Soviet Union in October, 1948.

The Soviet press often mentions one other category of planes, the jet-propelled bombers and fighter planes. The work on jet-propelled aircraft is being vigorously pushed both in the experimental and in the production stages.

Altogether there are about ten different models of jet-propelled planes, none of which has been put into mass production. These models have numerous shortcomings, such as insufficient fuel reserves (only for about fifty minutes of flying-time), quick wearing out of motors, and so forth.

On Aviation Day in 1948, at the parade in Tushino, several types of jet-propelled planes took their first bow. They were models designed by Yakovlev, Lavochkin, Nikulin and others. Apparently the construction of jet-propelled bombers poses even greater problems than the construction of jet-propelled fighter planes. The assumption, however, that the development of jet-propelled planes is being given high priority is substantiated by reports of numerous citations of test pilots aiding research in this field. The accident rate during the flying tests is very high. The test pilots themselves joke about their work. I have heard one say that the tests last four hours, the flight itself lasts fifteen minutes and the funeral with full military honors three hours and forty-five minutes.

Even if the test should be completed and mass production of the jet-propelled planes put into effect in 1949, the reëquipment of Soviet Air Forces will not be completed before 1951. Nevertheless, retraining schools for flying crews are in operation at present in Voronezh, Kalinin and elsewhere.

The retraining courses for pilots concentrate mainly on the handling of the transport plane TL-12. Special attention is given to night flying as a preparation to flying of TU-4 bombers and the jet-propelled planes.

Since 1947 particular emphasis is also given to high-altitude flying. These flights are accompanied by bombing and target practice at 15,000 to 24,000 feet. During the war the military authorities recognized the inaccuracy of the Soviet-manufactured bombsights. To improve this defect, the bombsight OPB-ID was modified through the addition of a mechanical detail from an American bombsight. The new combined mechanism is known under the nomenclature OPB-IR.

The compromise in outfitting the old bombsight with a part from an American bombsight instead of simply copying the American design was made in order to forestall the accusation that Soviet production simply follows a foreign pattern. As a result of this approach, the accuracy of bombing with the aid of OPB-IR is unsatisfactory. The dispersion of bombs dropped from the altitude of 3,300 feet is 88-132 yards; from 9,300 feet 275-440 yards and from 16,500 feet 1650-2750 yards.

All statements about the accuracy of Allied bombings are being rigidly suppressed. Many members of the Soviet Air Force have been in Frankfurt on the Oder, Vienna, Katowice and other cities of Eastern Europe and have convinced themselves of the precision with which the targets were hit by American and British bombs. However, no remarks to that effect are tolerated by superior officers.

In maneuvers only high-ranking officers from a flight commander up participate in target practice. The other flyers simply follow them and drop their bombs after their leaders. Mostly the bombs used are of the fougasse type, and weigh from 250 to 625 pounds. Ninety per cent of the flying is done by compass and ground orientors, with occasional use of the "radio half compass RPK-10" for approaching the home base.

Since 1948, the modernized TU-2 bombers, renamed "TU-6," have been equipped with the "Bendix" radio compass, which is the latest achievement in this line. The entire Air Force personnel follows the latest achievements of the American and British aviation and the latest types of their planes with great interest. The instructors, however, are constantly trying to teach their students a skeptical approach toward everything that comes from the West.

For instance, Soviet flyers are told that the Constellation and the B-36 are no more than projects of planes existing only on blueprints.

When the first reports of these planes' performances appeared in the Soviet press, it was stated that they were used only in parades.

To all skeptical remarks about the lack of new and original designs of Soviet aircraft, the official answer is: "Wait, and don't worry. Once the need for new planes arises, we shall have them."

In spite of these reassurances, everybody in the Soviet Union knows that Russia has been long outclassed in the air by the former Allies, who possess such planes as the B-36, the B-50 and the Constellation. Everybody also remembers that the Russian counterpart of the B-29 was constructed by 1943, but that this plane was put into mass production only in 1947.

On that basis it may be assumed that not sooner than in 1951-1952 will

(Text continues on page 52)

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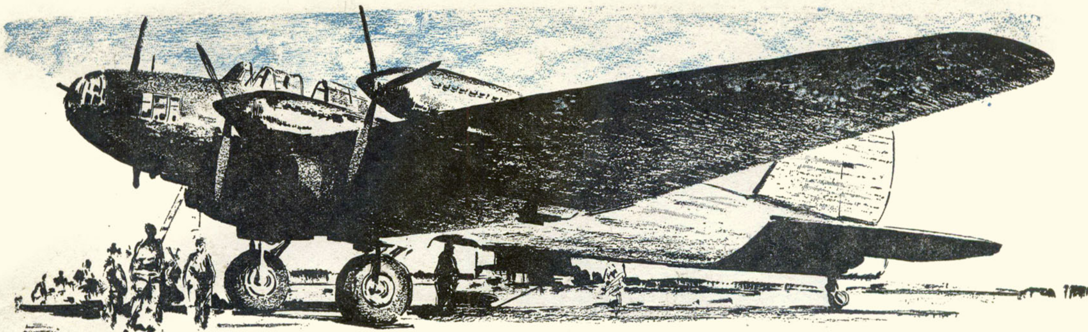
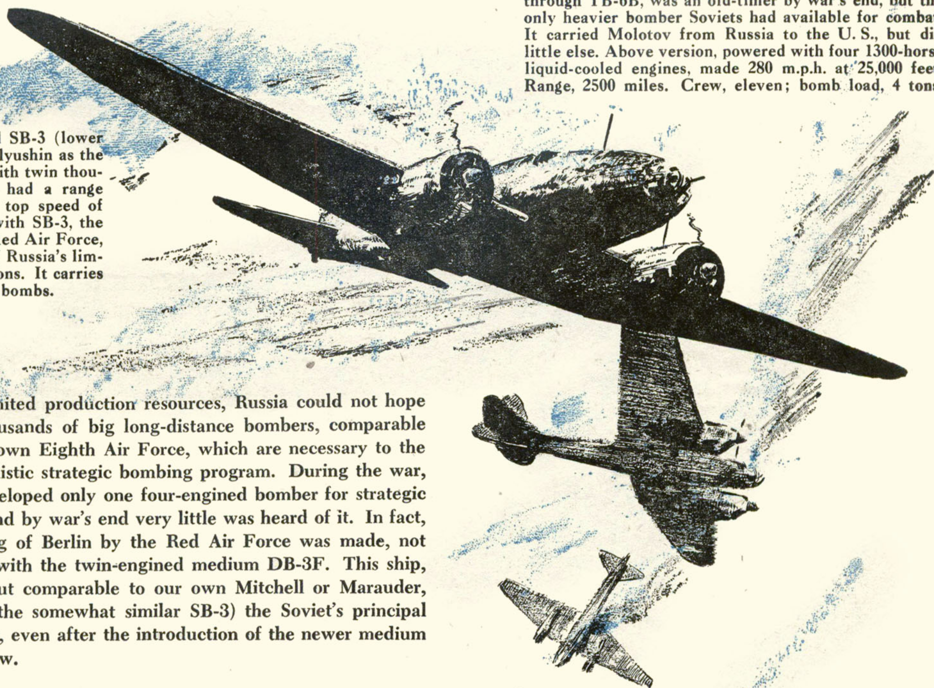
* Since the above was written, newspaper reports have described a parade of fast jet planes in an exhibition flight over Moscow.

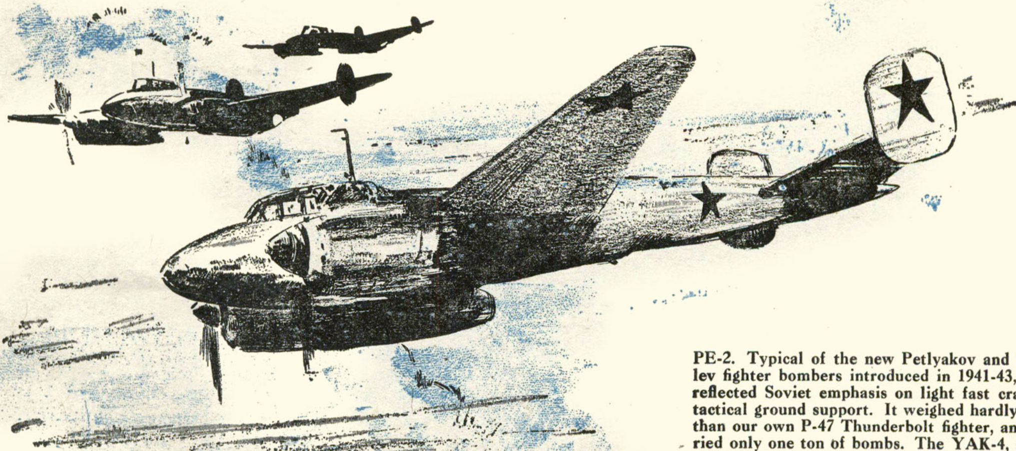


TB-7. This long-range bomber, developed from TB-3 through TB-6B, was an old-timer by war's end, but the only heavier bomber Soviets had available for combat. It carried Molotov from Russia to the U. S., but did little else. Above version, powered with four 1300-horse liquid-cooled engines, made 280 m.p.h. at 25,000 feet. Range, 2500 miles. Crew, eleven; bomb load, 4 tons.

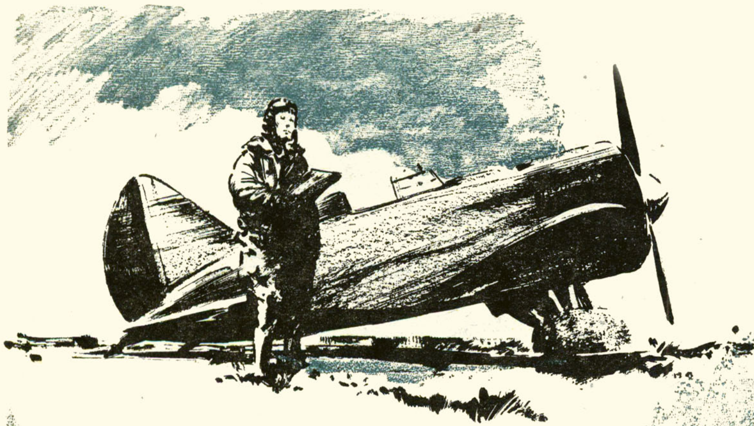


DB-3F (right) and SB-3 (lower right). Made by Illyushin as the IL-4, the DB-3F with twin thousand-horse radials had a range of 2500 miles and top speed of 265. It remained, with SB-3, the workhorse of the Red Air Force, performing most of Russia's limited strategic missions. It carries two tons of bombs.

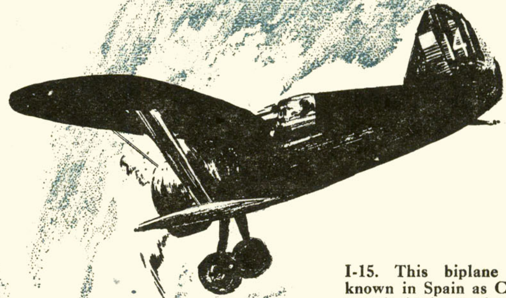
Because of limited production resources, Russia could not hope to build the thousands of big long-distance bombers, comparable in scope to our own Eighth Air Force, which are necessary to the support of a realistic strategic bombing program. During the war, the U.S.S.R. developed only one four-engined bomber for strategic use, the TB-7, and by war's end very little was heard of it. In fact, the first bombing of Berlin by the Red Air Force was made, not with TB-7s but with the twin-engined medium DB-3F. This ship, slightly larger but comparable to our own Mitchell or Marauder, remained (with the somewhat similar SB-3) the Soviet's principal strategic bomber, even after the introduction of the newer medium types shown below.



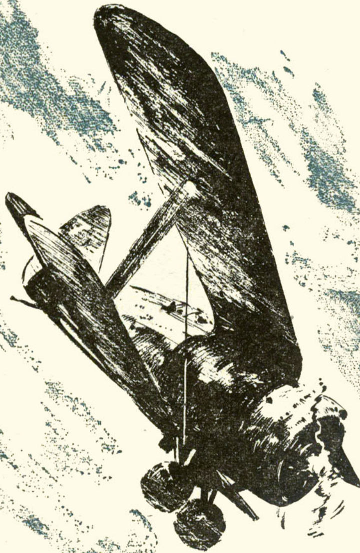
PE-2. Typical of the new Petlyakov and Tupolev fighter bombers introduced in 1941-43, PE-2 reflected Soviet emphasis on light fast craft for tactical ground support. It weighed hardly more than our own P-47 Thunderbolt fighter, and carried only one ton of bombs. The YAK-4, shown above at left, was another widely used type, similar to PE-2, but even smaller.



I-16. This basic fighter type. developed from our old Boeing P-26, saw extensive service in Spain as RATA. Kept in operation during war with Germany, it was eventually powered with a 1100-horse radial engine, and could reach a top speed of 300



I-15. This biplane fighter, known in Spain as CHATO, was the basic type from which the I-153 was developed. Chato was powered by a 750-horse radial and had a top speed of 230.



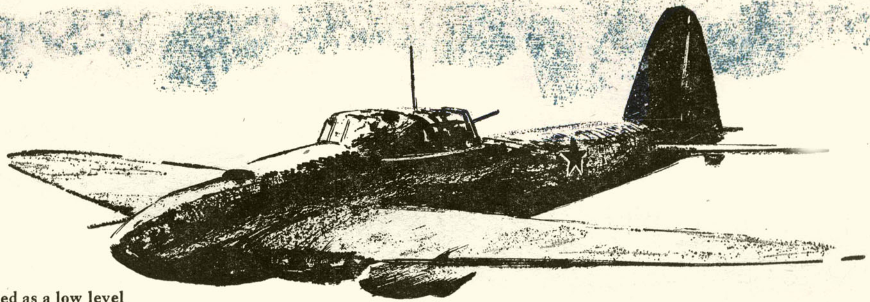
I-153. This was the veteran biplane fighter bomber which was first used in Spain as CHICKA, and saw considerable service as a dive bomber in World War II. A 1,000-horse radial gave it a speed of 242.

Russia Wanted Fighter Bombers

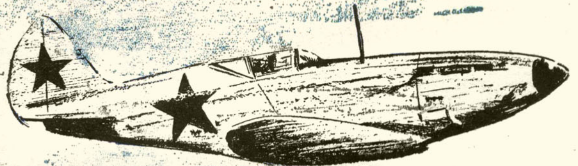
ABOVE are the fighter planes which the Soviet Union standardized as basic pursuit types between 1937 and 1939. They were proved and used extensively by the Nationalist forces during the Spanish Civil War. But by the time war with Germany began, they had become obsolete as pursuit ships. In line, however, with Russia's tendency to consider ground objectives as of primary importance, I-153 continued in use as a work-horse dive bomber.

This emphasis on low-level attack bombing and strafing led the Soviets to make extensive lend-lease use of the cannon-firing Bell Aircobra and King Cobra, planes which our own Air Force found too slow and inefficient for high-altitude pursuit. When the Soviets introduced their own new types in 1941-43, shown on opposite page, their armament usually included one or two cannon as well as machine guns and rocket rails, revealing their continued preoccupation with tactical support. Most of these new types weighed from 6,000 to 7,000 lbs. empty and could carry about 1,000 lbs. of loading, either conventional or rocket-propelled bombs. They were usually of mixed wood and metal design, quite often framed in wood with plastic-bonded plywood or metal skins.

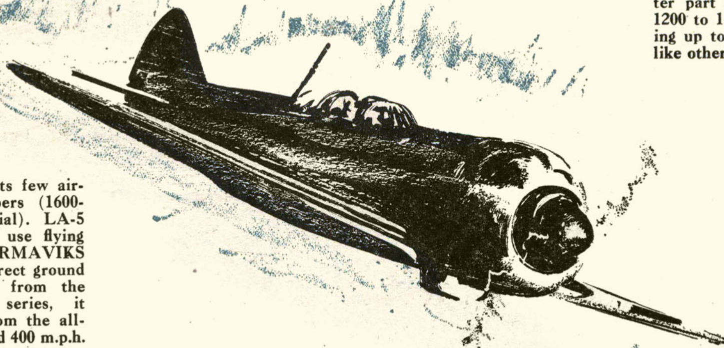
It took, however, more than two years to get these badly-needed types into operation, and as the author points out, right up to war's end they were never plentiful. They are now thoroughly obsolete by modern air force standards, yet Russia is said to retain these same planes as the core of her present-day Air Force. The Soviets have, however, developed and displayed jet planes—and as we go to press, President Truman announces that they have produced an atomic explosion.



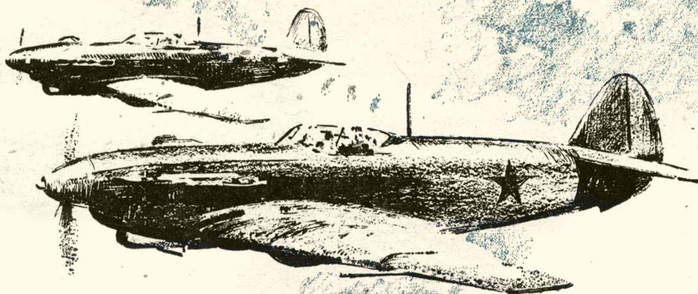
IL-2. Most widely used as a low level attack bomber, IL-2 was popularly called STORMAVIK, which means "stormer" and designates a functional type rather than a specific model. Shown above is the 1300 h.p. two-place version. Top speed of 280 was too slow for safe operation without fighter cover.



MIG-3. This was a highly maneuverable single seat fighter bomber, but not mentioned much during latter part of war. Series ran from 1200 to 1600 h.p. with speeds ranging up to 380 m.p.h. or more. Unlike others on this page, MIG-3 was all metal.



LA-5. One of Soviets few air-cooled fighter bombers (1600-horse twin-row radial). LA-5 was given extensive use flying fighter cover for STORMAVIKS and taking turn at direct ground support. Developed from the Lavochkin fighter series, it stemmed directly from the all-wood LAGG-3. Speed 400 m.p.h.



YAK-9. This was final wartime development of the YAKOVLEV designed fighter series, which ranged in power from 1100- to 1800-horse with progressively improving speeds of 345 to 390 m.p.h.

(*Continued from page 48*)
the Soviet Air Force have at its disposal a substantial number of planes of the type that has long been in use in the United States. No one would be so naïve as to believe that airplane technical progress in the United States has been halted. Therefore no one in the Soviet Union believes that the day may come when the Air Forces of the U.S.S.R. will equal those of the United States.

If, as the Soviet propaganda insists, an armed conflict between the two nations is inevitable, then, at the start of hostilities, the Soviet Air Force will find itself in the same position as in 1941-'42, during the war with Germany.

Before World War II the Soviet Air Force drew its manpower reserves almost exclusively from the ranks of young men who received their flight training in OSOAVIAKHIM clubs, and who were anxious to join military aviation schools.

In the Air Force the physical requirements were very high, and candidates had to pass rigorous medical tests. The educational requirements were on an equally high level. Army aviation school candidates were given a test in general knowledge. Future pilots had to have at least seven years of school education, navigators ten years. The pilots' training consisted of a three-year course, after which they graduated as 2nd lieutenants. The training course for navigators was somewhat longer, between three and four years, and the graduates became 1st lieutenants.

In 1940, Marshal Timoshenko, then Peoples' Commissar of Defence, ordered that both pilots and navigators were to graduate as sergeants, with the understanding that their officers' commissions were delayed until they had proven themselves in combat. The judgment of their officers' qualifications was left to the field command. This order, evidently ensuing from the failures and shortcomings of the Finnish campaign, applied only to the Air Forces. Needless to say, it caused great dissatisfaction among aviation-school graduates, and did not serve to raise Timoshenko's popularity in the Air Force. Three years later Stalin relieved Timoshenko of his post, for ineffectiveness.

During the war, voluntary enlistments in the Air Forces proved insufficient, and additional manpower reserves were drawn through inductions, and also through transfer of officers and sergeants from other branches of service.

After the war the Soviet Air Forces returned to the old system of voluntary enlistments. The OSOAVIAKHIM, however, changed its name, dropping the last four letters, and became exclusively an association dedicated to the aid to aviation. This organization also became a retraining institution for the Air Force Officers' Reserve Corps.

At present some eighty per cent of the Air Force personnel consists of flyers who graduated from military aviation schools during or shortly before the war. However, most of these have either no combat experience, or at best entered combat late in the war.

The best flyers cannot bear the oppressing environment in the Soviet Air Force since the end of the war, and give up military service. During the war they grew accustomed to a certain degree of independence and personal initiative. Now they are being subjected to a strict pseudo-discipline and to unnecessary fuss. The military authorities endeavor to keep the flyers busy with absolutely useless tasks. One of the rules introduced after the war says that if a flight is scheduled for the next day, one must know today what to do in the air tomorrow.

This rule translated into practice means that each member of the airplane crew has to pass an oral examination prior to the take-off. The tests consist of numerous confusing and often plainly stupid questions. If the test period lasts long enough, many flyers get confused and are unable to answer questions correctly. In this case they are grounded. The obvious purpose of this procedure is to transform the flyer into an obedient instrument, devoid of any free initiative.

In the summer, life in the Air Corps becomes unbearable. There is no time for sleep. If a single flight is scheduled, the whole regiment has to get up at four o'clock in the morning and to line up on the airfield. Each flyer must follow detailed work and flight schedules worked out far in advance. All this preparatory work, however, is wasted due to constant interference from division, corps and Army group authorities.

The May Day parade in Moscow is a good example of this waste of energy. The preparations for the parade begin six weeks in advance, including four weeks of training in Moscow itself. The product of all this labor is one minute of flying over the Red Square.

In Germany I had an opportunity to observe the life and the work of American flyers. I talked to them at length, and was surprised at the freedom of initiative they enjoy in solving all the problems concerning their work.

Every one of them knows his duties and is able to use his brains in fulfilling the task assigned to him. There are no daily instruction periods to take up his spare time. Only then did I understand how the Berlin Airlift could work with its clockwork precision and with a minimum loss of men and matériel.

Under the conditions in the Soviet Air Force, I was unable to understand how the entire operation of supplying Berlin by air could have been made possible. No matter how tiresome the flying routine used to get in the Soviet Air Force, it was a relaxation compared to the days of "theoretical instruction and political studies for officers." These studies consisted of endless repetitions of the same things we had to learn by heart in school. No new material was ever added. The training schedule calls for two days of political studies a week. These periods consist of reading the History of the Communist Party and a "Short Biography of Stalin"—three hundred pages long. The instructor reads from the books, and during the next period the students must recite the passage from memory. Once a year a test is given in "Political Preparedness." After that the whole cycle repeats itself.

During the war our regiment commander used to say that good politicians never made good flyers. Since the war the whole structure of the Soviet Air Force has changed. The politicians are at the top, and can make fools of the good flyers.

In 1946 during a party meeting in the regiment, one of the "politicians," who had not earned a single combat credit, furiously denounced a distinguished flyer with 240 combat flights for having fallen behind with his membership dues for two months. This scoundrel quoted from Yaroslavsky, saying that "the absolute minimum a party member or a candidate can do to remind the party of his existence is to pay his dues regularly." Unable to stand this scene, I interfered by saying that the accused should be able to remind the party of his existence by his heroic deeds during the war. On the other hand, I said, the accuser had no other means of reminding the party of his existence except "the miserable coins with which he paid his dues." That was what made him so furious, I added.

My statement provoked a heated argument. The political commissar ordered me to leave the meeting, but the rank and file insisted that I should stay. As a result of this incident I had many unpleasant conversations with the political commissar.

As I stated before, the best elements in the Air Force quit the service after the war. Soon, however, after a taste of civilian life, they began to return into the service in a humble mood. Taking advantage of the situation, the Army began to get rid of former war heroes, who objected to the new spirit and the senseless pedantry in the Air Force.

The case of Kuvaldine, a distinguished flyer of the 63rd regiment is a typical example. Kuvaldine, who had several minor clashes with his political commissar, was discharged from the Army and given such a bad character that he was unable to find any employment in civilian life, and committed suicide by jumping under a train. . . .

Coming in contact with civilian life had a demoralizing effect on former combatants. They saw life in the Soviet Union from a new angle, and were appalled by the disorders, the privations and the injustice. The Army authorities had wisely concealed all these shortcomings from the service men by denying them passes and leaves. Flyers were entitled to two months of leave a year. However, officers could consider themselves lucky if they got one month leave. Enlisted men were given no furloughs at all.

In 1947 a sergeant of the 244th regiment shot himself while on guard in front of the office of the division commander, Fedorov, after his request for a furlough to visit his sick mother had been turned down. The "considerate" Army authorities notified the sergeant's relatives that he had died in a crash during a test flight. But they were too late. The next day a telegram arrived that the sergeant's mother had died.

The number of suicides in the Soviet Army is increasing at an alarming rate. The reason for all these suicides is the nervous tension to which the Air Force personnel is subjected. There is a feeling of hopelessness to find a way out of the existing situation.

As a result many servicemen take to drinking. There are many cases of disorderly conduct under the influence of alcohol. Often members of the Air Force clash with NKVD agents, who are the object of a fierce hatred. These clashes usually have grave consequences for those involved.

A corps commander once reprimanded two former combat flyers in front of the whole regiment, saying: "You are traitors. While the enemy is preparing a war against your country, you go on drinking and behaving in a disorderly manner."

To what enemy was the commander referring?

The war which is being fostered by actions of the Soviet Government will be fought primarily in the air. It is therefore, self-evident that the air superiority will be the decisive factor. It is the chief task of the Air Force to insure this supremacy.

This problem with all its implications undoubtedly is the same in the United States as in Russia. In the Soviet Union we, the members of the Soviet Air Force, have often studied this problem. I have already given an analysis of these studies and the inevitable conclusion to which they lead. They were not favorable for Russia in regard to technical development or to trained manpower resources.

The key to a solution lies in the answer to one question only, a question which every citizen of my country must ask himself whenever there is a discussion about the future war: Who is the enemy?

THE LONG NIGHT

"The 89th round had been reached. Bowen was said to have a broken wrist, and some of the spectators bethought themselves of breakfast."

No, there isn't a typographical error anywhere in this paragraph, nor is it part of a fantasy.

It's a portion of the write-up the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* gave of the Jack Burke-Andy Bowen fight of April 6, 1896, a contest that always will make present-day pugilistic encounters seem rather on the anemic and milksoppish side, at least as far as endurance goes.

The Burke-Bowen scrap, which took place in New Orleans for the lightweight championship of the South, went 110 rounds and lasted seven hours and nineteen minutes.

At least, it's 110 rounds in the record-book. Actually, it lasted for so long that apparently the timekeepers began to nod, and there is some doubt about the exact number of rounds. The New Orleans *Times-Democrat* insisted that it went only 100 rounds and stanchly declared it would maintain this to be the fact, as long as its presses had the power to operate.

However, from the *Times-Democrat's* own representative at the fight it may be inferred that he might have dozed through a few rounds. "Many spectators, and even reporters, fell asleep," he wrote.

"Officers of the law," he continued, "forgetting dignity and discipline, were stretched out half-asleep on the sawdust. Bookmakers were stretch-

ing arms and legs and rubbing eyes sleepily, as if listening to a long Sunday service."

By all accounts, it was a lively fight for the first thirty rounds and then began to taper off sharply, principally because Bowen ceased to throw any punches.

At the fiftieth round Burke called out to Bowen to mix it up with him and Bowen replied, with what must certainly be regarded as amazing a bit of candor as has ever emanated from the prize-ring, that he was just tired and for Burke to go ahead and finish him up if he could.

Burke, himself huffing and puffing, kept pushing his fists out at his opponent, who retaliated by covering up or backing away.

The fight lasted past four o'clock in the morning; by the previous midnight the fans were already manifesting signs of boredom by breaking into a rendition of "Home, Sweet Home."

Every now and then the referee, a Professor Duffey, felt called upon to announce to the fans from the ring that he felt certain the fight would sooner or later come to some kind of finish.

One of those who began to despair of a termination of the contest was the *Times-Picayune* reporter, who concluded his account that night around the 80th round with: "Owing to the length of the contest and lateness of the hour, it is not advisable to describe the fight fuller, or to wait the result."

Somewhere along the way, around the ninetieth round or so, occurred one of the most impudent gestures ever reported in the annals of sports.

One of the seconds of Bowen, who by then hadn't tried to land a blow in something like forty rounds, allegedly went to Burke's corner and said that for one thousand dollars Bowen would agree to take a dive.

PROBABLY by then the fans would have been grateful for it. They were beginning to drop off to sleep one by one, and even the contestants were commencing to yawn.

In the last round a mild rally occurred. The fighters shoved their gloves in each other's direction and, as a result, both toppled over and went down.

For their rôles in this long-drawn-out saga of the ring the winner-take-all purse of $2500 was divided equally between the two men.

But perhaps the oddest thing about the whole fight was that the referee didn't call it a draw but used the term "no contest"—something that must have caused the eyebrows of these two tired and worn pugilists to raise a bit. That is, if they had had the strength.

—by Harold Helfer

Mr. Ostrich Is

A drama of the African veldt

AFTER the long rains, Buni began to think about mating. He was a fine specimen of a cock ostrich, and his black livery, decorated with white plumes on wings and rump, was glossy with health. He was confident of his charms, and his ability to defeat a rival.

For months he had lived in company with a herd of gazelles, eschewing his own species entirely. Sometimes he had seen hen ostriches in the distance, but had felt no inclination to make their closer acquaintance. This aloofness was now changed; the breeding-time approached, and he was conscious of unrest.

He greeted the dawn with a booming cry, a blend between the cough of a distant lion and the bellow of an ox. His long neck was an excellent trumpet, and the call carried far. As Buni went about his grazing, he was not surprised to see three gray hens approaching over that level plain of sand and grass which was his habitat.

His old-time indifference gone, he hurried to meet them. They all stopped in a line to watch him striding up; they had a calculating look in their bulbous eyes, and did not seem much impressed by this tall, handsome male. But Buni was not abashed; he knew what was due to ladies on an occasion like this, and was prepared to put his proposal in correct form.

A few yards from the hens he stopped on a firm strip of sand. Bowing gravely to right and left, he began slowly to dance. Up and down the strip he strutted, with drooping wings and bent legs, his head bobbing to the rhythm, his big toes spread wide, treading a stately measure. Like

a Family Man

by C. T. STONEHAM

Illustrated by
CARL
BURGER

Buni kicked him in the head with both splay feet.

wooden effigies the hens regarded him, silent and absorbed in this display of choreography.

Buni warmed to his work. He bent his long legs still more, extended his wings, and began to pirouette. He had something the appearance of a prancing savage—a medicine-man invoking a powerful spell. And the effect had similarity, for his audience was obviously spellbound. His silent gyrations, his expressionless eyes, like glass marbles, enhanced the solemnity of the performance; it had the significance of a religious rite. There was no hysteria, no waxing enthusiasm even; the dancer strutted deliberately, never hastening his steps, never forgetting decorum.

In a few minutes he had done enough. The conventions had been complied with, the onlookers charmed. Full of dignity, he went to the middle hen and pecked her lightly on the back. She seemed pleased with the attention. Buni stretched his neck, as if about to choke, and uttered his booming call. He then swallowed a fair-sized flint, whose glitter in the early sunbeams had caught his eye, and led the way toward a shallow pan of salt-impregnated water. The hens followed obediently; Buni had acquired a harem.

There ensued days of happy contentment. The little flock wandered over the vast plain between ranges of rain-washed hills. It was warm and dry; the herbage of the recent rains was plentiful and sweet; there were lizards, locusts, and tiny frogs to supplement the vegetarian diet. Buni was pleased with his wives, and they with him.

Zebras and antelope were numerous, so that lions had no cause to hunt the swift and wily birds. One incident, only, disturbed the soothing routine; a young unattached cock ostrich tried to entice one of Buni's following. Buni gave battle immediately.

The giant birds circled round each other, pecking and feinting. Each threatened to jump, but was afraid to take the risk of being upset. Then Buni perceived an opening; he leaped high over his opponent and struck downward with his powerful feet, a blow which could break an antelope's back. Alighting springily, he wheeled for renewal of the offensive.

The challenger was obviously staggered, swaying slightly on his stilt-like legs. Buni leaped again, and the other also rose in an effort to parry the attack. But the older bird was first off the ground and attained the superior height; again his feet thudded on back and ribs. His rival fell sidewise, fluttering helplessly. He was not badly hurt, but had no wish for further combat. Before Buni could press his advantage, the foe was in flight, and he proved a better runner than fighter.

Buni did not chase him far; he returned, well satisfied, to his admiring harem, and resumed the leisurely business of acquiring nourishment. The defeated cock traveled straight away across the veldt, and was no more seen in that district.

One morning a hen indicated that laying-time had arrived. The whole flock set about the selection of a nest-ing-site, and there was a good deal of discussion over it. But eventually Buni had his way; he it was who must hatch the eggs, and he intended to find a spot to his liking. In a warm nook, almost surrounded by rocks, he scratched a shallow depression and proclaimed it the nursery. Obedient-

When two lions left cover and came galloping noiselessly forward, the ostriches were not taken by

ly the hen settled down in the sand to lay, while the others wandered off about their feeding.

When the absentee rejoined the flock, Buni went to view her accomplishment. A big greenish-yellow egg was half covered with sand. The cock, being inclined to fussiness, arranged it more to his pleasure, and scratched up sand to hide it completely. Then he went back to his feeding with an easy mind.

The flock did not go far from that spot, though never lingering in close proximity, for fear of betraying the cache to inquisitive marauders. In succeeding days the hens visited the nest in turn to deposit their eggs; by the end of a week a dozen eggs filled the depression in the sand.

Buni left his wives and retired to his duty of incubation. He sat quietly in the nest with his long neck sticking straight up. In this position he was strangely inconspicuous. His black-and-white plumage blended with rocks and sand, though not precisely of their color; his erect neck might be mistaken for a diminutive thorn bush. It would be found that from whichever direction one looked at the sitting bird, he had a background of gray and brown and black—gray of the grass, brown of the sand, black of the thorn-bark and the shadows under the rocks. It was very difficult to distinguish him.

When evening came and the shadows fell patchily beside each object, he became one of them. It was the time when hunting beasts prowl, and nature had fitted the cock ostrich to elude them.

Day after day Buni sat there patiently in the full glare of the sun. He could just see above the rocks to the wide, breezy plain, and his remarkable vision missed nothing that moved there, although his protuberant eyes did not turn. From time to time a hen came to sit beside him and lay another egg. But finally only one visited the nest, or grazed within view of it. The others had wandered off; Buni never saw them again.

Dege, the faithful wife, would brood the eggs while Buni took his recreation, to stretch his legs and satisfy his hunger with a light meal of grass, insects and pebbles. He was never long off duty, apparently distrusting the efficiency of his substitute.

TIME passed; the moon grew, and the nights became more dangerous for creatures depending upon concealment. On the night of the full moon Buni and Dege sat side by side listening to the roaring of lions, steadily approaching. They did not move a muscle, but their minds were filled with fears and conjectures. It was to

surprise. They rose as one.

be hoped the assassins would pass unenlightened, but the wind blew toward them, and it seemed they could hardly miss the ostriches.

The roaring stopped; there was no sound save the distant barking of zebra, who had heard the lions and were uneasy. The ostriches were uneasy also. It might be that the killers had departed; it might be they had located a quarry.

Buni listened and watched with the utmost concentration. He heard the slight rustle of sand under a paw, just beyond the rocks. His head turned sharply; he stared with that peculiar expression of disinterested superiority, which is so noticeable in these gigantic birds.

When the two lions left cover and came galloping noiselessly forward, the ostriches were not taken by surprise. They rose as one, and sped away into the night. Their heads and bodies remained still, only their great legs moved like powerful pistons, carrying them in huge strides over the rough ground. They were the world's fastest runners; nothing could overtake them, once they were free and afoot.

The lions' case was hopeless. They had tried to spring on the birds before they got under way; now, despite their best efforts, they were being left behind with ridiculous ease. They bounded past the nest, one on either side of it, all their attention fixed on the disappearing birds.

Pursued and pursuers leaped the rocks at the farther side of the clearing; and there the lions came to a stand, acknowledging the uselessness of further effort. It was at that moment that Buni appeared to suffer a mishap. He fell sidewise, supporting himself on one extended wing. When he rose again, it was to continue his flight in a limping, uncertain manner at half his former speed.

The lions took heart at this good fortune; they rushed forward again, rapidly closing the gap. But though huge their bounds, and awkward the ostrich's crippled action, they could not quite overtake him. Going very lame on one stiltlike leg, he yet contrived to escape capture.

After a few minutes of this tantalizing chase the lions gave up again and stood roaring ferocious threats after the fugitives. Buni was satisfied; he ran on with no trace of a limp now, and soon caught up with his mate. His subterfuge had drawn the lions three hundred yards beyond the nest; there was small chance of their discovering it.

The ostriches described a wide circle, returning to the nest an hour later. It was untouched; no prowling jackal or genet had chanced upon it.

A FEW days later the ostrich chicks hatched out—fluffy creatures of yellow and brown, bigger, even at hatching, than full-grown domestic fowls. All that day and night Buni sat quiet on the brood. But the next morning he strode out on the plain, followed by the crowd of piping chicks. Dege at once took charge of them, pecking and scratching in the sand for their profit and diversion. An ants' nest was unearthed, and there was much noisy glee. The cock regarded this scene with apparent contentment. His work was done; hence he would relinquish the post of nurse and assume that of protector. . . .

Within an hour or two his services were called upon. The brood was traversing a narrow clearing between a line of rocks and dense thickets of brambles. There they met a young bull rhinoceros, making his way to water. The big, obtuse beast was interested in the piping family; he advanced straight toward them, but assuredly with no evil intent.

Buni would have none of this interference. As a recent father, he was one of the fiercest creatures in the wilderness, unafraid of the largest beast. It was probable that nothing less active than lion or leopard could successfully contend with him; he had amazing speed and agility, and considerable strength. The rhino was hopelessly outclassed.

Dege departed at a slow run, with the chicks streaming after her. They looked as if towed on wheels, for their heads and bodies remained motionless while their agitated legs were hidden by the grass.

BUNI put out his wings, performed a few prancing steps by way of preparation and warning, and raced to meet the rhinoceros with the speed of an express train. He held his head proudly erect; his glass-marble eyes surveyed the foe as they surveyed everything else, without a trace of expression; his legs worked like machinery, propelling him twelve feet at a step. Thus, tall as a hop pole and proud as Lucifer, the cock ostrich went into battle.

The young rhino stared, amazed. He did not see very well, but he could be in no doubt of the intentions of this gigantic bird advancing upon him with its wings outspread in an unmistakable fighting attitude. He snorted angry warning.

A moment later the whirlwind struck him. Buni took off four yards away, sailed effortlessly over the rhino's back, and kicked him in the head with both splay feet. If the rhino had possessed a proper neck, it would have been broken. He squealed with rage and surprise, pivoting hurriedly to confront this outrageous assailant.

Buni was wheeling with the stately grace of a ship in sail. He came round to face the rhino, accelerated to sixty miles an hour, and bore down on him again.

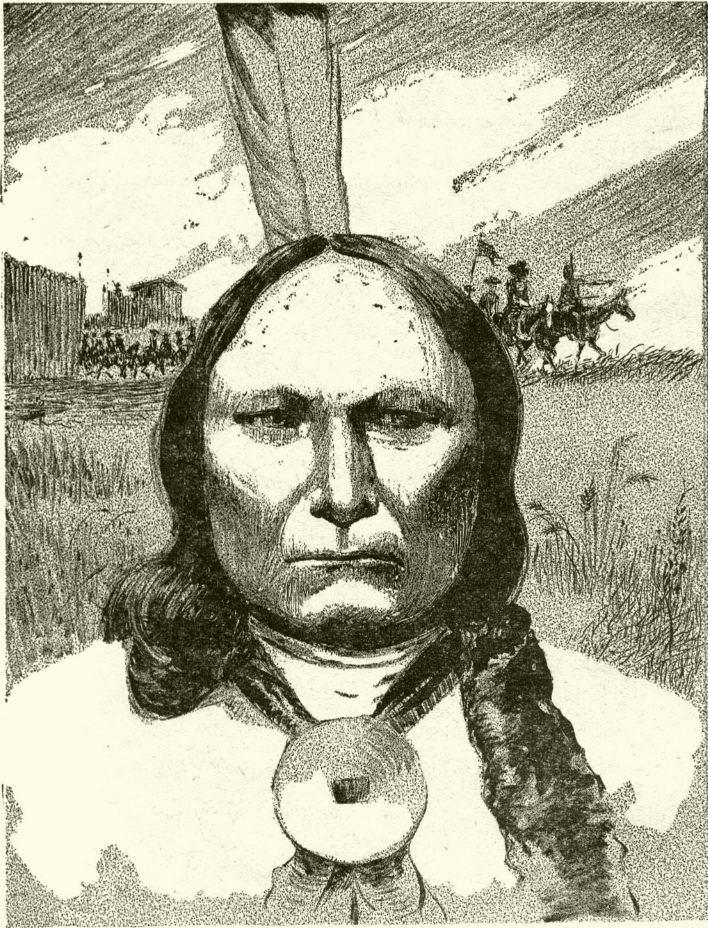
The furious animal charged to meet the bird. It made no difference: at the correct moment Buni jumped, and again kicked his enemy on head and shoulders.

The unfortunate beast, hurt and baffled, continued his headlong rush over the veldt, forgetful of all but desirability of escaping from this terrible, elusive demon.

Buni was content; the enemy had been repelled. He walked with leisurely dignity after his mate. His expression was still inscrutable, but one supposed that, were his thoughts translatable into human speech, he might have been reflecting, in the words of O. Henry's victorious pugilist:

"I know what I done to dat stiff!"

There Were *Two*



Sitting Bull the Oglala Sioux who came to be known as Sitting Bull the Good.

For over three generations almost everyone has known the name of Sitting Bull, first as a leader of the warlike Sioux and then as the principal Indian attraction with Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West show—picturesque in his feather head-dress, selling his photograph to small boys, and sometimes making for them the painful scrawl that was his name in the white man's language.

Yet in the summer of 1876 an Army officer seriously asked: "Is Sitting Bull a West Point graduate?"

It was after the stunning news of General Custer's annihilation by a lot of what were commonly assumed to be naked, whooping red savages. A little later a newspaper correspondent cooked up an interview with the Hunkpapa medicine man in Canada, having Sitting Bull claim he was an alumnus of St. John's College. Others produced other schools, but a certain R. D. Clarke really came up with the *coup*. In a pamphlet called, "The Works of Sitting Bull," he presented the old buffalo hunter as a writer of Sapphic verse in Latin. Several other accounts listed him as a linguist; that he had read French history carefully, was particularly enamored of Napoleon, and followed the patterns of Napoleonic campaigns.

Then there were the charges that, during the years he cost the nation millions of dollars and hundreds of lives, Sitting Bull was on the rolls of an Indian agency, regularly drawing annuities, rations and, worse, ammunition. As final evidence of his treachery and treasonable conduct, it was proved that Sitting Bull had gone to Washington as a friend of the whites and received a gold-mounted repeating rifle from the President of the United States.

The story of the presentation was given wide circulation in such reliable and unsensational newspapers as the New York *Tribune,* in June, 1875. Yet one year later Custer and his men lay dead on the ridge overlooking the timber-lined Little Big Horn, with Sitting Bull undeniably there. Within six months more, the rifle was back in white-man hands, picked up outside of General Miles' cantonment on the Yellowstone, the brass mounting still bright as gold to the Indians, on it the inscription:

Sitting Bull, from the President,
for Bravery and Friendship

There is no denying the rifle. It exists; millions have seen it. Perhaps some of the other charges are not without foundation, either. Many people, including Army officers, had reported that they saw Sitting Bull study the campaigns of Napoleon, and knew he read the newspapers even while out fighting the whites. Further, it is easy to prove that his name was on the rolls of an Indian agency from 1868 until long after the Custer battle—almost to the end of the Sioux wars.

Only—it wasn't Sitting Bull the Hunkpapa medicine man, but an Oglala Sioux from below the forks of the Platte; and he was called not only Sitting Bull, but Sitting Bull the Good.

The two men were born about ten years apart, the Hunkpapa in 1831, the Oglala around 1841, when the traders' whisky was whipping the villages into violence, until young Sitting Bull's own grandfather, the head chief of the Cut-Offs, was shot down in a drunken brawl by the man later made Government chief of all the Oglalas.

But long before this chief-making, young Sitting Bull had found the white man curious and interesting in other ways. When the telegraph line went through on the Overland Trail

Sitting Bulls

by MARI SANDOZ

Illustrated by

BRUMETT ECHOHAWK*

in 1861, Oscar Collister became operator at Deer Creek station above Fort Laramie. With the Indian agent located there, and the traders, it was a center of Indian traffic and the place of much pleasant loafing in those peaceful times. The Oglala Sioux became very fond of the little white man, who often let them try his talking wires. One of the most eager was Sitting Bull. In his letters, Collister wrote of teaching him to use the tap-tap machine, and to speak and read English. Travelers and Army men, including Lt. Caspar Collins, mentioned him too, amused by the broad, bland baby-face of this son of the fighting Sioux bent over a book. Usually it was "Napoleon's Campaigns," borrowed from the post library at Fort Laramie.

When Sitting Bull was away with the village, he sent in by Bissonnette, the Oglala trader, for the newspapers, writing his order with a lead bullet on a strip torn from a margin: *"Want the black and white papers,"* and signed with the outlines of a man's head, a buffalo on his haunches floating above it—the Indian way of writing Sitting Bull. In an interview published in "The Annals of Wyoming" almost seventy years later, Collister still recalled this; only now, in his old age, he, or perhaps his interviewer, mixed up the two Sitting Bulls.

Back in the early sixties, however, Collister's letters show he knew the man squatting at his fire in the telegraph station the winter of 1862, with braids falling over the "Campaigns," was the head soldier of Little Wound's Cut-offs. This band of Oglalas was a serious, individualistic lot, who used to hold the southeast fringe of the Sioux country, raiding the Pawnees, matching their own few guns and stone-age weapons against the best mounts and arms the white man could furnish those earlier trade Indians. Besides, history shows that Sitting Bull, the Hunkpapa medicine man, was pretty busy in his own country that winter. Little Crow, fleeing west from Minnesota before the military, found him near the Missouri, at least three hundred fifty travois miles from Deer Creek station.

According to the Indian accounts, the friendship of the Oglala Sitting Bull for the whites lasted to the troubles of 1864, climaxed by the massacre of the Cheyennes at Sand Creek in Colorado. That settled him. He was visiting in the north, and

Sitting Bull, the Hunkpapa who took part in the Battle of the Little Big Horn

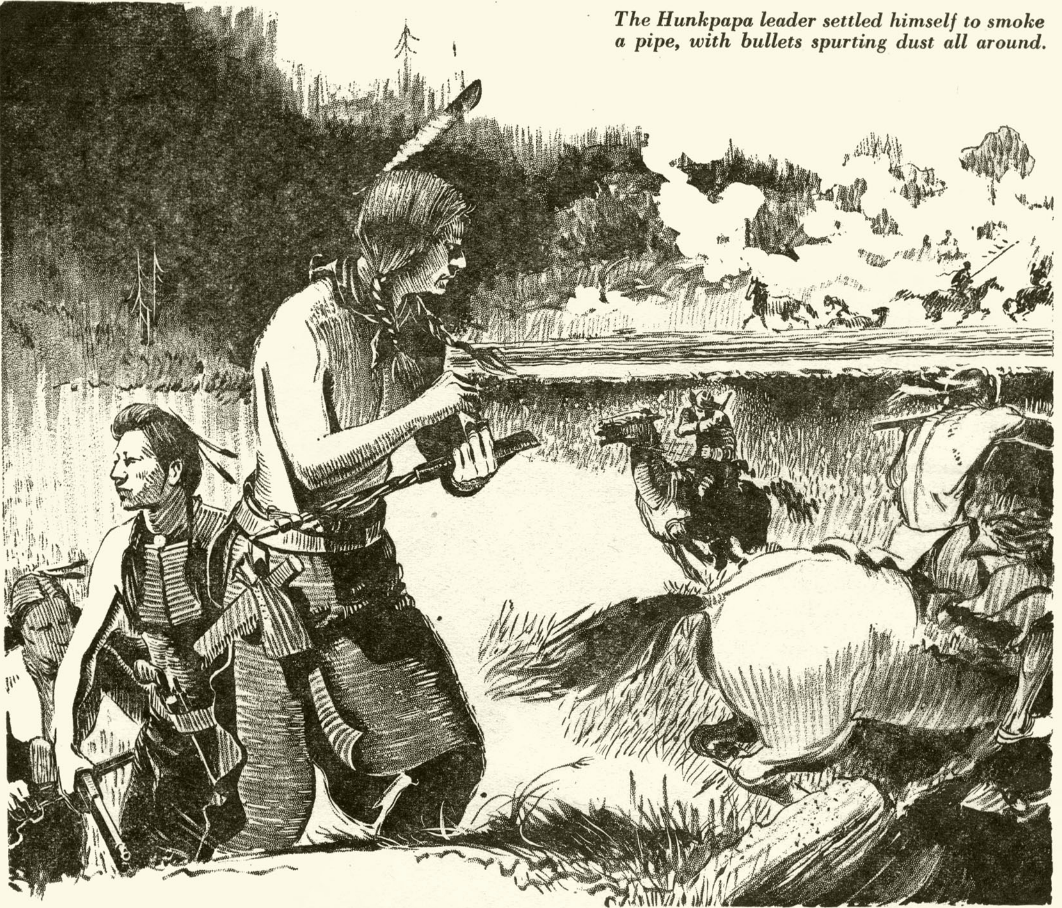
packing his war-bag, he rode down with the warriors under Crazy Horse in answer to the Cheyenne call for help.

For the next four years, until his uncle, Little Wound, signed the treaty of 1868 that was to withdraw all the whites and their forts from the Indian country so long as grass should grow and water flow, only Indian accounts can tell of Sitting Bull the Oglala.

The joint camp of Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapahoes moved north toward the Powder River, destroying ranches and overland stations, burning a strip a hundred miles wide. With the women and children, the pony herds and all the goods of the southern Indians, almost a thousand lodges, they marched north through deepest winter, spreading death and fire and alarm all the way.

The next summer the Oglala Sitting Bull was with the three thousand warriors who attacked the Platte Bridge near the present Caspar, named for Lt. Caspar Collins, who had written so enthusiastically about his visits to the camps of the Oglalas,

*A Pawnee Indian artist who still carries shell splinters acquired when he took the warpath for Uncle Sam against the Germans in Italy.



The Hunkpapa leader settled himself to smoke a pipe, with bullets spurting dust all around.

and of his friend Sitting Bull, who liked to study the maps of Napoleon. Chance put the young officer at the Bridge station that one day. The attacking Oglalas recognized him in the fight and cried, "Go back, friend! Go back!" parting to let him through. But he had a wild horse that bolted on into the Cheyenne warriors over the hill, and they knew only that he was one of the hated soldiers.

When Sitting Bull and the others found out about this, their hearts were so bad over their friend that they had to kill ten more whites.

The rest of the summer the Oglalas and their allies harried the Overland Trail from eastern Nebraska to South Pass. Only large troop-escorted trains willing to fight their way through were allowed to go. Up in Hunkpapa country there was action too. Sitting Bull synchronized his attack on Fort Rice with the Platte Bridge fight, and then chased the soldiers marching around above the Black Hills, and the miners set for Idaho. The Oglalas found miners too, and then the Powder River Expedition—four thousand soldiers in three sections spread over the buffalo ranges, fighting off warriors they had come to attack, until they had to head for the Platte, for food eating their starving horses.

The next year brought new forts like Buford on the Missouri, against which Sitting Bull the medicine man kept up a casual sort of siege. The string of new forts through the Powder River country started the Bozeman Trail war, and young Sitting Bull found himself following the man who had killed his grandfather. That had been in the bad, drunken times; and now Red Cloud was the one to make a strong fight against the soldiers. They raided the trail and concentrated on Fort Phil Kearny until they wiped out Fetterman and all his men.

By 1868 the fight was won, the Bozeman forts were dismantled, and the treaty signed. But by then Little Wound's Cut-offs, back south of the Platte, had been struck by the soldiers, the people getting away, but the lodges, goods and winter robes all lost. So, with the soldiers everywhere and the buffalo vanishing, it seemed advisable to forget his pride, as he had done before, and make the best bargain he could with the whites—even move into an agency under Red Cloud. But some of the good fighting men must come along to watch, to protect the women and children. This Sitting Bull, the Oglala, agreed to do; and by 1870, although only twenty-nine years old, he had become so influential with the white man and the Indians that he was selected as one of the twenty men to go from the Oglalas to Washington. His dignity and his face, really broad and bland as a baby's, surprised them there, particularly the newspaper men, when they heard his name. But the Government was not confused. The Hunkpapa Sitting Bull had turned down the tobacco brought by the messengers sent to get him to Washington to talk about settling on an agency.

By 1872 troops were escorting the Northern Pacific railroad survey up the Yellowstone, right through the

Indian country. Sitting Bull, the Hunkpapa, sent for help; and Crazy Horse took his Oglalas up, joining in the attack on Colonel Baker near the mouth of Arrow Creek on August 14. The soldiers got a good look at the Hunkpapa leader, recognizing his limp as he walked out between the battle lines and settled himself with a few of the more courageous followers to smoke a pipe, with bullets spurting dust all around.

In the meantime the other Sitting Bull was on the roster at the new Red Cloud agency below Fort Laramie on the Platte River. In April, the Oglala agent, Daniels, had reported that during the difficulties over the proposed move of the agency up to White River, Sitting Bull arose, pointed out that they had already agreed to do that, and now they wanted the guns and ammunition they had been promised—which they got. On October 25 Daniels made another report on his Sitting Bull: A couple of Indians had been found dead along the Platte, perhaps killed by whites or 'breeds. Immediately warriors came streaming in upon the agency, armed, painted, whooping, singing war-songs.

"Our hearts are bad!" they cried. "It will take white blood to make them good!"

The white men barricaded themselves inside the stockade, thirty men against five hundred mounted warriors, while in the camps the lodges were falling, the women and children hurrying into the sandhills out of harm's way. Now the warriors circled the stockade, firing into the air, lifting arrows to fall inside. Haranguers on the roofs of the buildings roared for burning and slaughter.

But fifteen young friendlies, guns pointed outward, planted themselves at the stockade gates. Among them was young Sitting Bull, high up now in the Head Band society, the warrior descendants of Oglala chiefs. Through the calm and influence of these men the attack was held off until General Smith's troops arrived from Laramie the next morning. Then the agent made a cracker-and-molasses feast.

Things were no better a year later, with the agency moved to the White River, far from an Army post, up under the breaks of Pine Ridge that covered approach from the northwest. The new agent, Saville, complained to Washington that the hostiles were slipping in, although getting them to surrender was part of his job. Arrogantly they pushed forward for annuities, and to trade for powder and guns, intimidating the agency whites and Indians. Many of the young men had been in the attack on Custer, August 1873, on the Yellowstone with Crazy Horse and the other Sitting Bull. They talked big, particularly some Cheyennes who had lost their families to Long Hair down on the Washita.

"This time, if the cannon had not come hurrying up, he would have been wiped out!"

So they bragged, and raced their good horses taken from the whites. The new stockade had no gates, and before going out on raids along the Platte, they rode around the inside, four abreast, painted, singing war songs, shooting into the windows while the whites lay on the floor inside. Saville finally got carpenters to finish the stockade gates, but a Minneconjou, a northern Indian whose brother had been killed, came in with his heart bad. At night he dragged loose lumber up to the wall, climbed over and shot Frank Appleton, the acting agent.

He got away, and by morning thousands of warriors rode whooping around the stockade. The chiefs came in, admitting they could do nothing with their young men. So the half-dozen whites, even those intermarried with the Indians, hid in the cupola at one corner of the stockade, built to survey the White River plain from Crow Butte to the bluffs along the north. They had one gun, the Winchester the butcher used to kill beef for the old and helpless at issue time. With a keg of water, and sacks of flour for barricading, they stayed up there four days, the Indians milling around below like a herd of long-horns smelling blood. While the chiefs were in council and the agent was held as hostage, the whites thought about the bull-train that was overdue with surely the usual kegs of whisky hidden under the goods. If the warriors got to that, it would be a massacre.

But outside, Sitting Bull was urging peace upon the young men. If they burned the agency, soldiers would certainly come to shoot the women and children. Even those who got away would have no lodges or robes or meat, and winter was upon them. He kept talking, hour after hour; and as the Indians cooled, he planted his followers around the agency supplies and the cupola, while a squaw-man living out from the agency whipped his pony for Fort Laramie and the military, with no assurance that he would get through.

But finally there were mirror signals and new excitement among the warriors. Bull-train or soldiers?

It was the military—horse and walking soldiers, and a train of supplies dark on the Laramie trail. Immediately the Indians broke into factions, some wanting to burn the agency and go north, others hurrying the women and children into the breaks before the soldiers arrived, while the rest charged the friendlies who had held them off until it was too late. But the friendlies stood fast, and General Smith was not anxious for bloodshed. Once more presents were made, and a feast, with some of the loudest of the hostiles slipping into the lines in the dusk. Not Sitting Bull—he went to sleep and was nicknamed Long Sleeper because he did not waken for so many days.

When he awoke, he found that the soldiers had started a post there called Camp Robinson, and they never went away again.

The next summer brought more provocation for trouble. Custer had marched into the Black Hills, where, by the treaty of 1868, no white man was ever to go. But the Northern Pacific railroad was in financial difficulties, and locating the gold known to be there would promote investment. Custer reported gold at the grass-roots, and made a starvation march back to the Missouri through country burned black by Sitting Bull's Hunkpapas and their allies.

The newspapers carried the stories, and nobody bothered to point out that while the Hunkpapa was burning the prairie before Custer, the Oglala was saving the Red Cloud beef herd from the wild Indians so there could be meat for the hungry.

Understandably, the agent's life wasn't too peaceful, and along in October he announced that the chiefs, and the agency employees, should have a rest on Sundays. To let the Indians know which was the day, he would raise a pole and run up a flag. So the little agent, innocent of any understanding of his Indians, brought on an incident that is still disputed among the Sioux. The one point of agreement is the expressed gratitude of both the military and the Indian bureau to young Sitting Bull, now called the Good, for his help. The various accounts of eyewitnesses add up to something like the following:

The first objection to the flagpole came from the band of old Conquering Bear, who had been set up as chief over all the Sioux by the Government and then killed in the Grattan fight in 1854 over a Mormon cow. With their war clubs they chopped the pole to pieces.

"We will not have a flag on our agency! A flag means war!"

The little agent had the stockade gates slammed, and sent a runner to Camp Robinson. Now Indians, both friendly and hostile, came streaming in from all directions, kicking up dust, roaring that soldiers were coming to their agency. Just then a pitiful little handful of troopers appeared, with angry, painted warriors racing along both sides, waving war clubs, shooting into the air, while be-

tween them and the soldiers rode Sitting Bull and Young Man Afraid of his Horse and their friendlies, charging their horses against the wild Indians, pushing them back, Sitting Bull swinging his three-bladed knife, long as a scythe, against them as the advance of the soldiers became a flight for the stockade. The gates banged behind them, but Lieutenant Crawford ordered them opened. Dismounting his troops, he faced the howling warriors. It was a brave thing, and stopped the Indians a moment. But the soldiers were mostly green Eastern recruits, so excited that Crawford had to strike them with the flat of his sword to whip them into something like a line. The warriors crowded harder, but let themselves be driven back by Sitting Bull and Young Man Afraid, and another brave man called Three Bears—three against almost a thousand now. Others came to help, but were howled down.

"Burn! Burn the whites out, and the white man's Indians!"

In the fighting young Conquering Bear, son of the old chief, was clubbed from his horse. Instantly two Red Cloud followers were off, and, laying a bow across his throat, stood on the two ends.

"You are all troublemakers! If your father had given up the Indian who killed the Mormon cow long ago, there would have been no fighting with the whites. No soldiers among us at all!"

THEN Sitting Bull came pushing through. He knocked the men choking Conquering Bear aside, and turning his horse upon the Indians, swung his great three-bladed war club and commanded them to scatter.

"You would shed your brothers' blood today, you small-brave ones! Fighting each other in your own village, on your own agency!" he roared.

"Hah! Hear the small-brave himself!" a Red Cloud man replied. "He's the one who was too weak to wash out the blood of his grandfather. Wasn't he left on the ground by our man in there smoking?"

"Hoka hey!" The warriors charged toward Sitting Bull from all sides, firing, striking at him with their clubs. A pistol bullet went past his braid, but before the man could reload, Sitting Bull had knocked him from his horse into the dust.

The Indians wavered. But one warrior rode his horse straight up to Sitting Bull. "You are flesh like the rest, and bullets will go through you too!" he shouted as he drew his rifle down upon the scarred, dust-caked breast.

Sitting Bull sat motionless, his big club still raised. "Yes, I am flesh," he said, "and bullets have gone through me—Pawnee bullets and Crow, and from the whites up around the Piney Fort; but you are not the man to put one there." And as the Indian hesitated, one of the Head Bands grabbed him from behind and jerked him from the horse, the rifle booming into the sky.

Without glancing down upon the man, Sitting Bull pushed his horse out of the dust to a little rise. Many, even some of the wild ones, followed, for it seemed even a good friend of the whites could still be a brave man.

Slowly the alignments of agency bands broke, began to move around, mixing in with the hostiles who were drifting away, the soldiers almost forgotten in what had so nearly happened.

With signs to his followers and those inside the stockade, Sitting Bull got the soldiers to come marching out between two silent walls of Indians, their guns across their horses. Then they wiped the paint from their faces and hurried into line for the feast. Later forty fine blankets were distributed to the chiefs.

Ten days later it was admitted that there were three thousand wild Indians camped out on White River when Professor Marsh of Yale came for guides and protection for his scientific expedition into the Badlands. The wild Indians called him a gold thief, but the Professor was good at listening to Red Cloud's complaints against his agent and so he got permission to go in if Sitting Bull and his Indians went along. But the expedition arrived with a company of infantry to protect the wagons and a thousand angry warriors streamed in from the hills. With breechloaders and Colt revolvers at cock they surrounded the party. Once more women and children ran, lodges fell, and the agent ordered Marsh to get his infantry up to the fort before he provoked a massacre. The little column went, followed by whooping Indians firing into the sky; but Marsh made the usual feast and got compliments and appreciative pats on satisfied stomachs, and demands when he was starting back. So he made a night march, and with the Sioux aversion to night fighting, they let him go.

Once more the newspapers played up the story, denouncing Sitting Bull and his Indians who made trouble from the Platte to the upper Missouri, and blamed the Government for arming and feeding him at taxpayers' expense. Both the military and Saville protested to Washington. The agent's letter of November 13, 1874, seems emphatic enough:

Regarding quelling of disturbance at the agency—Sitting Bull is not the Uncpapa but an Oglala, the nephew of Little Wound, chief of the Kiosces, noted among the Indians for his courage and daring. During the late war he was a bitter enemy of the whites. Since the treaty he has been friendly and a warm friend since I have been on the agency. He is head soldier of the Head Bands, of which Young Man Afraid of His Horse is chief. I have made him leader of the soldiers whom I have armed with permission of the Department. . . .

ONCE more, January 11, 1875, Saville wrote about rewarding those who helped in the flagpole incident. It would stop the notion that only the bad the Indians do is told, never the good, and that only the troublemakers get rewarded, adding:

A present in the name of the President would give satisfaction and prestige. The favorite present is a nice gun.

The winter was a hard one for a friend of the white man. The starving Indians moved in close to the agency to call attention to their misery and then up to the post, leaving the stripped bones of their butchered ponies under the eyes of the commander. Sitting Bull and his police tried to get the rations somehow, but none came. . . . With spring the rush to the Black Hills was like snowwater roaring in the gullies, and there was news in the papers that the Great Father wanted the chiefs to come to Washington to sell the Hills.

"One does not sell the earth upon which the people walk," Crazy Horse told the messengers; and Sitting Bull the Hunkpapa refused too.

But the Oglala went to Washington as second man to Red Cloud, who said he was only going to tell the Great Father about the thieving whites starving his people. At Omaha they stopped and were feasted and given fine clothes and had their pictures taken. In Washington they found their agent still being investigated through the intercession of Professor Marsh. Nothing came of that.

Nothing came of the Black Hills sale either; after futile weeks the Commissioner of Indian Affairs got the whole unhappy delegation together and, according to the New York *Tribune,* June 7, 1875, said he was sorry nothing had been done. He scolded the older men for it, and then turned to the younger:

Now, I want to say a word to Sitting Bull. I have heard from your agent and from the military officers at the agency of the great service you have rendered the Government. You have proved yourself to be a very brave man—a friend of your own people and to the whites. Your good conduct has been reported to the President, and I am instructed to give you a token of his regard.

Sitting Bull sat motionless. "Yes, I am flesh," he said, "and bullets have gone through me—"

This turned out to be a fine rifle, the *Tribune* says, nicely mounted and in a leather case. On the mounting surrounding the lock—made of brass but gleaming so the Indians called it gold—was engraved:

Sitting Bull, from the President, for Bravery and Friendship

It was a busy spring and summer for the other Sitting Bull too. Enough miners were getting killed so there was a great roaring for military protection instead of expulsion. A big commission was sent out to Red Cloud to buy the Black Hills, even for seven million dollars, if necessary. Such figures brought a swarm of hungry contractors like a plague of Mormon crickets moving up the trail to Red Cloud. The hostile Sitting Bull refused to come to the conference; but a lot of Crazy Horse followers went down to watch Red Cloud and Spotted Tail and their jealousies. There was enough galloping, whooping, rifle-fire and prairie-burning in the night to send the white women who came to be amused hurrying back to the railroad. At the conference-ground it was the same. While the circle of chiefs held council under the lone cottonwood, and delayed and delayed, the little group of commissioners—Senators, generals, a missionary and such—waited under the canvas flies with a handful of soldiers around behind them for protection. Gradually they realized the soldiers were walled in by Indians eight or ten deep—arms at cock, while haranguers rode up and down, shouting, singing: "It is a good day to die!"

If one wild shot hit—

"*Wholesale Massacre of Commission Barely Averted!*" the reports said, and told of the white men paling when they saw the Indian guns lifted against the soldiers. But Sitting Bull was ready, his hand on the bright lock of his gift rifle, his face still bland and emotionless. At the signal from Young Man Afraid in the circle of chiefs, he ordered his Indian soldiers to clear the grounds. The whites held their breath; and evidently many Indians did too, as the hostiles swaggered and threatened. But they fell back, and the commission was rushed into the ambulances and hurried off to the agency stockade, the knolls and hillsides dark with watching Indians. Once more the Black Hills had been saved.

The year 1876 was the high point in the career of the Hunkpapa Sitting Bull, but it was the tragic year for Sitting Bull the Good. While his Oglala relatives with Crazy Horse helped whip Crook on the Rosebud and then, a week later, wiped out Custer, there was a commensurate tightening at the agency. The usual hunt for buffalo was canceled; and when the Cheyennes went anyway, they were driven back to the starvation of the agency.

By September another commission came to buy the Black Hills. This time the conference was held in the agency stockade, to shut out the wild Indians while the treaty, already written, was read to the chiefs: Give up all their country and move to little fenced-in places among the whites on the Missouri or go south to Indian Territory. They protested, and were told there would be no rations for the women and children until the pen was touched.

Stunned, the chiefs sat silent in their blankets, Red Cloud surely recalling that only eight years before, the Government had backed down, dismantled a whole string of forts at his command.

But one man was not silent. That was Sitting Bull the Good. With the butt of a revolver sticking from his belt, his gift rifle in one hand, and his great war club in the other, he harangued the commission and the chiefs. This was trickery—the chiefs locked up, the women helpless! It was foolish to talk of selling the Hills with so few here, the people all away. When Red Cloud taunted him with his friendship for the whites, Sitting Bull ordered the gates thrown open, and driving the chiefs out, roared: "Get out! Go north! Maybe there a man can still be honorable!"

With his war-bag packed, he started openly away, and no soldier came to stop him. Safe from disturbance, the conference reconvened for the signing. But up north Sitting Bull's heart sank at the poorness of the children in the hostile camps, the scarcity of winter meat and lodges and robes.

Hopelessly Sitting Bull the Good rode the winter trail back to Red Cloud to talk to the headmen. It seemed everything was over.

The military asked him to go right back with a message to Crazy Horse. He went. It was not that he believed the whites now, for while he was north, Red Cloud and Red Leaf, the long-time agency chiefs, had been surrounded in the night, right on their agency, their guns and ponies taken so even the winter wood had to be carried in by the women.

He went north carrying the word of General Crook: Come to Red Cloud, get food and blankets and peace. But that was two hundred miles over wintry Wyoming, and to the place of lying, as he had to admit now too. General Miles, in his new cantonment on the Yellowstone, at the mouth of the Tongue River, offered them the same, right here in their own country. The Missouri Indians who had gone in there in the fall were being well fed and warm.

So the headmen decided to go talk to him. Sitting Bull the Good, the friend of the whites, went ahead, carrying a lance with the white flag the General had sent for their coming. Beside him rode three others, all unarmed, and behind them four more, driving some American horses stolen from the post herds by the wild young men. A distance back several older men sat smoking, one holding the gift rifle of Sitting Bull until his return, while on a little knoll the twenty-five headmen of the Minneconjous and Oglalas, including Crazy Horse, waited to see how they would be received; and far back, in their camp, the women waited too, and hoped.

The story of that day is told in the AGO Records, (Military Division of the Missouri, Sioux War, 1877) National Archives, of which the following are briefed excerpts:

December 17, 1876
Cantonment, Tongue River, Mt.
To Acting Adjutant General,
Department of Dakota:
Unfortunate affair at this place yesterday. Five Minneconjou chiefs came in bearing two white flags, followed by 20 or 30 other Indians and were passing by the Crow camp, the five in advance were surrounded by Crows, 12, and instantly killed. The act was an unprovoked cowardly murder. The Crows approached them in friendly manner, said "How!" shook hands with them and when they were within their power and partly behind a large woodpile, killed them in most brutal manner. At the first shot the officers and men rushed out and tried to save the Minneconjous but could not reach them in time.

The Crows were aware of the enormity of the crime as they saw the Minneconjous had a flag of truce and they were told to come back. Warned the day before against committing any act of violence against messengers or other parties coming in for friendly purposes. They tried to hide the flag and taking advantage of the momentary excitement, while efforts were being made to open communication and bring back others who had fled to bluffs, the guilty Crows jumped their ponies and fled to their agency in Montana . . . these five chiefs and the followers were within a few hundred yards of the parade ground, where they were deliberately placing themselves into hands of the Government and within the camp of 400 Government troops. These, with heads of others, would have given us leaders of the Minneconjous, Sans Arcs, and possibly the Oglala tribes, representing fully 600 lodges and at least 1000 fighting men of the hostiles and completed and secured beyond doubt the fruits of our efforts. . . .

The Crows were immediately disarmed, 12 of their horses taken from them and with other considerations, together with letters explaining the whole affair, sent to the people and friends of those killed, as an assurance that no white man had any part in the affair and had no heart for such brutal and cowardly acts.

Nelson A. Miles, Col. 5th Inf,
Commanding.

A note attached to General Crook's report to General Sheridan, February 1, 1877, gives a report two Indian messengers brought to Cheyenne Agency:

Sitting Bull the Good, from Red Cloud, was among those killed by the Crows in the attack on the flag of truce. Four fell where the Crows jumped them and the rest ran back, the Crows following and killing one about two miles from the post.

Lieutenant Day, commanding Fort Peck, had something to add, February 5, 1877:

Five or six Sioux killed by Crow scouts on Tongue River were sent from hostile camp with overtures of peace to commanding officer there.

This was verified by Colonel Wood, commanding officer, Cheyenne Agency, in his report February 21, 1877:

Chiefs killed by Crows went in to turn in horses, but chief purpose was to make peace.

General Miles was right. He would have had the heads of all the hostile camps except those very close to Sitting Bull the Hunkpapa, who fled to Canada. It would have ended the winter campaign which lasted six months more—until Crazy Horse surrendered at Red Cloud in May, the same day that Lame Deer's Minneconjou camp was destroyed. Both of these men were at the Tongue that day. Perhaps with good word from Crazy Horse, even the Hunkpapa Sitting Bull might have come in.

The newspapers gave the little fight on the Tongue almost no space. Sitting Bull had been reported killed in the Custer battle and then turned up fighting strong as ever. So Sitting Bull the Good disappeared. But not his achievement, his name on the agency rolls, his trips to Washington and his gift from the President. They became incompatible elements in the story of the Hunkpapa. Curiously, he too died from a white man's gun in the hands of an Indian. He was shot down by the Indian police of his agency, in the gray of morning, naked from the sleeping-robes, on December the fifteenth—instead of the sixteenth—in 1890, fourteen years later.

All those years in Canada and as a show Indian, Sitting Bull's reputation had grown, his prowess increased, and his apparent treachery and treason too. Here was a man who had professed wholehearted friendship to the whites, to the Great Father himself, accepted the rewards, and then repeatedly returned to the warpath. For those who knew nothing of the Oglala, there was verification enough, even without the tangible evidence of the "gold"-mounted rifle.

According to the Indians watching that day on the Tongue, the old man who cared for the gun had to flee before the attacking Crows, and in the fighting the unloaded weapon slipped from his hands. It was picked up and turned over to General Miles; and the rifle was included in the Miles Collection that went to the Museum of the American Indian, New York City, the gun showing almost no wear, the inscription in the brass still sharp and clear:

Sitting Bull, from the President—

Police Business

"Running this case down" decided Officer Murphy when the shooting was solved, "let me know again the Neighborhood is tough—but decent. A man stays his life in a place—he likes to believe in it."

by JOEL REEVE

Murphy heard the shots. He was running before the echoes died away.

THE sun was bright and the streets were narrow but clean in the Old Neighborhood. Kids played ball, roller-skated, biked around corners, endangering lives. Mr. Hogue waved from the open door of his radio shop. Humperknickel's Delicatessen was doing a rushing tea-with-lemon and cherry-cheesecake business. Murphy could see Gretchen waiting on tables. Little Gooney was helping. Old Man Humperknickel was slicing bologna, shifting his considerable bulk as his arthritis plagued him. . . .

Jingle, who was not of the Neighborhood, pointed out to Murphy, as they moved slowly along in the prowl car: "This Jack McBride, this Texan guy, he is hanging around Gretchen alla time. How do you know she wants to marry Gooney?"

Being of the Old Neighborhood, Officer Murphy was not given to sentimentalism. He was, in fact, a stern realist who knew only too well that life is not always the pretty thing we would like to make it. However, it was his firm opinion that Gretchen Humperknickel should marry Arthur Traudt. It was Herman Humperknickel's arthritis that had prevented the wedding. Gretchen was firm in her conviction that the old man would die if she left him to run the delicatessen and restaurant by himself. The round-eyed, fair-haired small girl loved Little Gooney very much, as everyone knew, but her devotion to duty was strong.

Murphy said to Jingle: "They been engaged for years. They've bought a house on Taylor Street. Arthur has money for the furniture. They belong together. They are nice little people. Arthur has a good job with the Daily *Clarion*. . . . Agh, you wouldn't understand."

Jingle said: "I understand it comes up springtime, you're talkin' like a lovelorn colyum."

"Shaddup," said Murphy.

Jack McBride came rolling around the corner of Kay Street. He was working for Raskob, the contractor, and right now he should be seeing about some trucks down at the new road job. He was six feet tall and wide-shouldered, a tanned, hard-eyed big young ex-Marine sergeant, a bully boy come lately to the Neighborhood from the wild and woolly West.

Jingle chuckled maliciously: "McBride beat up Chiz Hill, Rackety Morgan and Buster Hallahan the other night. The three of 'em, he took. Patsy Geoghan started for him with a bungstarter, and McBride dared him, and Patsy put it away."

Murphy said: "I was off, or somebody would have wound up in the pokey."

"They started it," said Jingle. "I investigated."

Murphy said: "If it had been a Neighborhood boy, you would have run him in. Some day, Jingle, I am going to unload on you."

"And get me transferred outa this crummy neighborhood?" asked Jingle hopefully.

"Shaddup!" The prowl car turned the corner slowly, coasting. Chiz Hill, Rackety Morgan and Buster Hallahan were going into Patsy Geoghan's gin mill. They looked a bit battered. They were runty graduates of the Reform School who were always together. None was over twenty-three, Murphy knew. They were the pitiful ones, the kind that never amounted to anything. Little Gooney, who had less than these to start life, and who was undersized and biscuit-panned, was worth a thousand of them.

Well, that was the Neighborhood. All kinds, it held. Murphy neither praised nor condemned. His job was to keep order and to help his own

The big man snarled something. Little Gooney stopped dead and made answer.

people as much as he could, and still remain a cop.

Jingle had four hours off, and left him to take the bus to his own part of the city. Murphy drove the prowl car back, parked and strolled over to Humperknickel's. It was six o'clock, and he was hungry.

He paused, watching Herman's thick red hands on the slicing machine. He said, "Why don't you quit, Herman? You've got enough money, and your feet are killin' you."

Humperknickel stroked a walrus mustache with one finger. He said: "Can't mind your own pusiness, eh, Murphy? Always tellin' people. Quit, shmit. I *like* the delicatessen pusiness!"

Murphy said: "In your hat!" He sat at a table along the tiled wall. It was an immaculate, gleaming, long narrow room which Herman had built over the years. The diners chatted back and forth; everyone knew each other. Murphy nodded to a dozen friends. At the next table to his, McBride said, "Howdy, Sheriff."

"Come all the way from Texas," Murphy suggested. "I'm just a cop."

"City cop," nodded McBride. His eyes were bold and mocking. "Sure wouldn't do back in Texas."

"Sure wouldn't be caught daid there," drawled Murphy.

McBride laughed without rancor. Murphy ordered knackwurst and sauerkraut. Little Gooney took his order. There were circles under the reporter's eyes.

Murphy said: "When's the wedding, kid?"

Arthur Traudt's glance flickered once toward the big man at the adjacent table. Then he said: "Maybe never, Murphy. I'll talk to you later." He went to bring the food. As he passed Herman, the big man snarled something about hurrying. Little Gooney stopped dead and made answer.

Murphy almost got up from his chair to interfere. Herman's irascibility had increased with the years and his pains, but it was not smart of Gooney to talk back, not now. Gooney went on. The walrus mustache lifted in a sneer.

Gretchen was bringing apple pie with cheese to McBride. The Texan said: "Darlin', you are as cute as a li'l' speckled hen back home on the ranch."

"You shush," she said pertly. She was a shapely small girl with eyes like the blue sky. She dimpled at McBride and bustled away. She had, womanlike, been pleased by the compliment, Murphy knew. She had been engaged to Arthur Traudt a long while, and his hours on the paper and hers in the delicatessen kept them apart a great deal.

Murphy ate and got out, disgruntled. He could go off now, as Jingle would be coming back with their relief. But Murphy, like Little Gooney, had no hours. The Neighborhood cop and the Neighborhood reporter were on full-time schedule.

At midnight Murphy was coming from the Bijou Theater, where he had disgustedly sat through a Western all about Texas, a never-never land invented by Hollywood and Jack McBride. He heard the shots. He was running, hauling out his own service gun before the echoes died away, but he had to make a turn on Main Avenue and go a full block and then a half, past Hogue's Radio Store.

The front door to Humperknickel's Delicatessen was locked. It took

Murphy another few moments to crash it. Then he had to skid the length of the tiled floor to find the big man.

Gretchen was kneeling, weeping, trying to hold up her father's head, which lolled horribly on his thick neck. The stubborn iron was gone from that neck now. There were three holes in Herman Humperknickel's chest, and his heart was nurturing a small piece of lead which had forever allayed his pains.

Murphy gently removed the girl. The body must not be moved; he had to call Homicide. The prowl car's siren sounded, and he heard Jingle's sour voice. He roared instructions, holding Gretchen in his arms. She had fainted. She was very light in his arms--even Little Gooney could have carried her upstairs, he realized.

When he came down, leaving her with Mrs. Hogue, who had appeared on the instant, all motherly concern and horror at the crime, Arthur Traudt was inside the delicatessen, staring down at the body of his girl's father.

Gooney said in a flat, weary voice: "I had an argument with him about an hour ago. Right here, in the store. Gretchen heard me. Jack McBride came by and heard part of it. Then Gretchen took him away, and I didn't see her again. I walked around, alone. I was over on Kay when I heard the shots."

Murphy said: "No alibi, huh, Gooney?"

"None. You want to take me uptown?"

Murphy said: "You think I'm nuts? You keep your mouth shut. You reported to me; that's good enough for now."

"McBride will talk."

"McBride always talks," said Murphy grimly.

"I've got a gun, you know—a .38; and this looks like a .38 job," said Gooney monotonously.

"You go home and look for it," said Murphy. Inside him an uneasy feeling grew. Traudt was so thoroughly beaten, so listless and unlike himself, that it communicated itself to the cop. "You cover the story, then check on that gun. And keep your mouth shut."

"All right. Anything you say. . . . I was looking for you, to talk."

"You should have found me," said Murphy. "The movie smelled." . . .

Homicide sent down a crew and they went through the regular routine. The Medical Examiner man came and said he thought it was a .38 that had done the job, all right, and it would be a hell of a job, performing an autopsy on such a big fat guy. Murphy stayed in the background, and the Inspector shook his head, and then Murphy gave his report, and the Inspector said that it was Murphy's job, but that Homicide would have a man on it. And they better look around for the gun. Usually these hold-up men threw away the weapon.

Murphy said: "The till is empty, all right. But I'd like to get Herman's safe open. I happen to know he always stuck the receipts in that little iron safe under the counter. It's bolted to the concrete floor."

Inspector Smalley said: "You mean you've got an idea?"

"No. I just happen to know the Neighborhood," said Murphy. The quarrel between Little Gooney and Herman would be aired; there was no use holding back. "If a hold-up man did this job, he was not from the Neighborhood, because everyone here knew Herman was stubborn and would fight, and that he sunk his money in that tough little safe."

Smalley said: "Okay, Murphy. I'll leave it with you. I will, of course, expect results." He gave Murphy a hard look.

"Yes sir," said Murphy. He made himself scarce, but he lingered, a lean man, slightly gray, watching the Homicide experts, soaking up every detail of their findings.

The safe was opened. The day's receipts were in it. Smalley himself went up to question the weeping Gretchen. Murphy tagged along in the background. This, he knew, was going to be tough.

The telephone rang, and he managed to take the call. He heard Arthur Traudt's despairing voice: "I'd better come down. The gun is missing."

"Just take it easy," said Murphy casually. "Nothing can be done now." He hung up, and at that moment Jingle's voice rose triumphantly below stairs.

"I got it," said Jingle. "I found it. In a garbage can, right in the alley! What a dumb stunt!"

The Homicide man replied sharply: "Don't touch it! How dumb can you get, you clunk? Don't mess it!"

Smalley looked over and Murphy nodded. "Jingle found the gun."

Smalley said gently to Gretchen: "Can you tell us anything that might help, my dear?"

The tear-filled blue eyes went to Murphy, clung to his gaze. She drooped against Mrs. Hogue. She said faintly: "I—I can't think. I was up here—getting ready for bed. . . . The shots sounded, and I was shocked, I guess. . . . When I got down, there was no one but—but Papa—"

"He had enemies, perhaps?"

"None," she sobbed. "Who would want to shoot Papa?"

"He had no quarrels with anyone?" persisted Smalley.

The girl sobbed all the louder. One blue eye peeked at Murphy, and he thought it was tearless. He shook his head ever so slightly. If Gretchen did not mention that Little Gooney had bandied words with Herman that night, more time could be gained. Murphy did not want the reporter arrested. He knew the spirit of Arthur Traudt, his sensitivity; he did not want it damaged.

Smalley shrugged and turned to Murphy. "You take it. I've got three big things popping uptown. Homicide'll clear out, and things'll quiet down. We'll identify the gun and take off prints and check with you. Ask us for anything you want. Probably turn out to be a routine open-and-shut hoodlum case. We'll throw out the dragnet, of course."

Smalley, the Homicide men and the morgue wagon left in successive flurries of sirens and flashing red lights. Murphy stood alone in the delicatessen. It seemed very empty and forlorn. All the cheeses and cold meats and salads and tinned goods seemed deserted and stale and unwanted now. A Neighborhood personage had passed when the leaden pellet found Herman Humperknickel's heart.

Murphy switched off the lights. He went out through the back door, because that was the way the killer had gone. It had to be that way, he decided. The front door had a fancy lock, but Herman had never got around to replacing the old wooden rear exit which led to an alley full of garbage cans, with two fences, one on either side. Hogue's place was to the south. To the north was a three-story brick house with a paved backyard.

It was a high fence, all the way around. Murphy eyed it. He rubbed his long chin and walked out past the garbage cans to Main Avenue. He made a routine stop at Geoghan's Saloon.

Chiz Hill, Rackety Morgan and Buster Hallahan were playing knock rummy at a table in the rear. Murphy paused and looked down at them. He said, "I suppose you been in here all night? I suppose the three of you never lost sight of each other since suppertime?"

Chiz Hill looked like a small parrot with a red beak. He said: "That's right, Murphy. Why?"

"You didn't hear the sirens? The pretty whistles? You didn't hear any shots a little earlier? You didn't know a man was shot?"

"Who?" asked Hill, making his beady eyes round and innocent. "Shot? Someone got shot?"

Rackety Morgan and Buster Hallahan wore no expressions whatsoever. Nor had they anything to say. Behind the bar, tough Patsy Geoghan

polished glasses and whistled under his breath. Patsy's was the hangout for the tough boys—Patsy was their sole protector.

Murphy said: "Okay, boys. Don't overdo it. We found the gun. When the gun is found, it becomes fairly simple. I just wanted to make sure you had your alibis straight. Wear them like haloes, kids."

Geoghan said: "Leave 'em alone, Murph. They ain't done nothin'. You should better watch that damn' Texan. He comes in here again, pulls somethin', I'm lettin' him have it."

Murphy said: "You saw McBride tonight?"

"Naw," said Geoghan. "I never wanna see him."

"Okay," said Murphy. "I'll tell him."

Chiz Hill said: "I seen him. I seen him with Gretchen Humperknickel maybe an hour, two hours ago."

"Then you weren't playing knock rummy all evening?"

"Who said so?" Hill's jaw set in a hard line. "We was walkin' around. McBride was with Gretchen."

Murphy said: "What of it?"

Hill said: "Nothin'. On'y she's Little Gooney's girl, ain't she? What's that cowboy so-and-so doin' here?"

Murphy said: "He must have beat hell out of you. I never knew you to sing on anybody before."

"Who's singin'?" Hill was indignant. "I just said—I just said I seen him with her. You ast if—"

Murphy said: "Okay. . . . Okay. Just keep your stories straight. Because I might be asking some more questions later."

Hill started to speak, clammed up. The other two did not look up from their cards. Hill's thin face twisted, and he slumped down in his chair. A lesser policeman would have leaped upon them verbally in an attempt to make them talk. But Murphy knew the breed. He had nothing for them but pity—and some contempt; and he knew how to handle them.

It was noon the following day and Murphy went uptown because they had called him. The premonition of evil was thick in his Celtic soul when he entered Inspector Smalley's office.

Arthur Traudt was there. He was sitting on a straight chair. His round face showed lines Murphy had never seen before, all tilted downward. . . . He was so small his feet barely reached the floor, and Murphy gritted his teeth at sight of his dolor.

Gretchen was across the room. Jack McBride sat near her.

Smalley said: "We checked the gun. It is registered in the name of Arthur Traudt. These people came forward. Murphy, is it true you heard an argument between Traudt and Mr. Humperknickel at suppertime yesterday?"

"No," said Murphy.

McBride said in his insolent drawl: "I was farther away than Murphy, and I heard it."

"There was no argument," said Murphy stonily. "Herman asked Gooney—Arthur—to hurry. Arthur responded. Herman was that kind of man, always hustling and making everyone else hustle. It was daily byplay."

Smalley said: "Traudt admits he has no alibi for the time of the killing. He admits ownership of the gun. He denies having shot Mr. Humperknickel."

Murphy said: "I know Traudt. I don't believe he killed Herman."

"City cop," said McBride, some of the drawl gone, his voice sharpening. "Traudt wanted Gretchen's father out of the way so he could rush her into marryin' him. Shoot! In Texas he'd be strung up by a mob afore now."

Murphy said: "Inspector, I haven't any questions to ask any of these people." He threw a look at Gretchen. Her head was bowed so that he could not see her eyes. She had informed against Arthur—urged by McBride, of course. Possibly that could never be repaired, Murphy thought sadly, even if Arthur got free.

He said: "I'm investigating this case, Inspector. May I be excused?"

"We're holding Traudt, of course," said Smalley. But his gaze was urgent. Ace Fletcher, city editor of the *Clarion,* was a bad man to cross, and Arthur was Ace's boy. McBride was showing his hand plainly, and Smalley did not like it. Murphy nodded and laid a hand on Little Gooney's shoulder, then went out.

It would be leg work, he thought, driving back.

He went to Geoghan's and talked to Patsy. The tough barkeep, never on the side of the law, said: "Little Gooney, now. H'mm. I like the boy. He's square. He's no cop-lover."

Murphy said: "What about Chiz?"

"I ain't talkin', and you know it," said Geoghan.

"Well," said Murphy mildly, "I thought I'd ask."

"Nuts to you," cried Geoghan.

Murphy nodded and left the saloon. He went into Harry Hoople's Café, the Neighborhood bar, as respectable an institution as the church on the corner; and Harry was indignant and worried and frightened; and Duke Mosby, Harry's fighter, wanted to go down and get McBride and do a job on him. Murphy calmed them and talked quite awhile. Hoople knew much about the Neighborhood. It was always profitable to recapitulate events and chew over opinions of people with Harry.

At the place where Little Gooney boarded, the widowed Mrs. Brown was in tears. "The nicest little man in the world," she wept. "He had a temper, sure. And pride. And that Gretchen kept puttin' him off. But how could he shoot the old man?"

Murphy said: "Had anyone been up to see Arthur in the last few weeks—when Arthur wasn't home?"

She dried her eyes. She was sharp enough to get by without a husband and live rather well. She sat with her chin cuddled and debated. She said: "Now let me see. . . . There was Mr. Fletcher—that was a month gone by. . . . And Duke Mosby—that was two weeks ago."

"I know about Duke," said Murphy.

"Then the big fellow. But he just knocked on the door. He is a handsome boy, works for Raskob."

Murphy said: "Ahhhh!"

"He came in last week, asked for Arthur. He went upstairs, waited. Maybe five, ten minutes. He said he couldn't get in, and that Arthur was surely out."

"He said he couldn't get in!" Murphy's lips curled wolfishly. "He said!"

"You know, Arthur—never locked his door. . . . Just a trusting boy. . . . He was like a son to me. . . ."

"You can stop speaking in the past tense about him," snapped Murphy. "They haven't burned him yet. And they won't!"

He was out of there like a flash. Jack McBride, calling on Gooney when Gooney wasn't home. . . . Going out of his way to say he didn't enter Gooney's room. . . . It was beautiful.

He made the rounds. Then he went out to the job where McBride was working. Raskob himself was there, a kindly man, very rich, a Neighborhood boy himself long ago. Raskob sighed: "I'm sorry about Arthur. The best kid around in years."

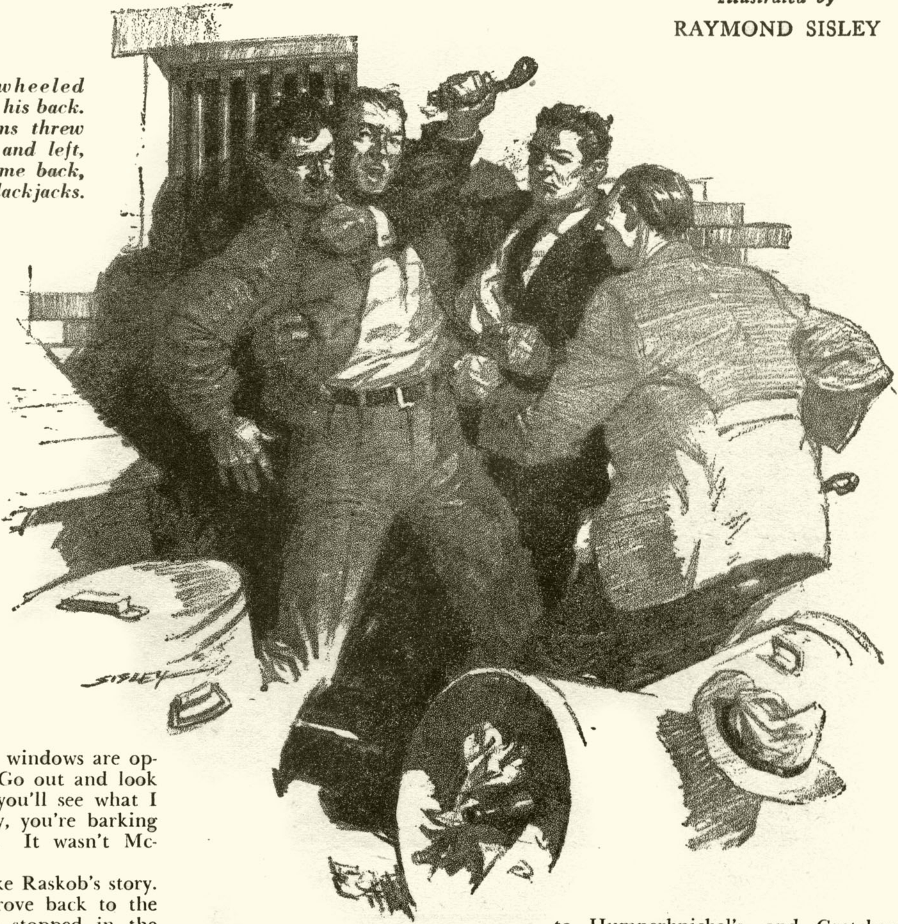
McBride was bossing a gang. He bullied them, but they worked. He had on dusty clothing and took a hand himself, unloading bags of concrete. He was strong as a bull, and they hopped to keep up with him.

Murphy said: "Raskob, I'm going to come clean with you. I need everything I can get on that fellow McBride." He told his story, biting off the words.

Raskob said: "Last night? Eleven? Murphy, for once you're wrong. McBride lives in the garage behind my house. He came in at ten-forty-five. I saw him through the window. He turned on his radio. He was listening to the news, same as me, until eleven-fifteen. Then he took a shower and went to bed. I never left my chair. I was smoking and thinking and I saw everything he did."

Murphy said: "He couldn't have slipped out, leaving his radio on? You're sure, Raskob?"

Illustrated by
RAYMOND SISLEY



McBride wheeled with one on his back. His big arms threw them right and left, but they came back, swinging blackjacks.

"I saw him. The windows are opposite each other. Go out and look from my den, and you'll see what I mean. No, Murphy, you're barking up the wrong tree. It wasn't McBride."

He could not shake Raskob's story. He gave up and drove back to the Neighborhood. He stopped in the newspaper office, and Ace Fletcher was hopping mad. The irascible editor said: "If there's a miscarriage of justice in this case, I'll fry your hide and have Smalley's badge. And by God, I'll lick both of you! That boy—that Gooney—" He choked.

Murphy said: "I know. . . . I know. . . . Take it easy, Ace. I'm doing what I can, and here's my pitch." He told Ace the whole truth.

Fletcher said: "Get that damned Texan in here. I'll make him talk. I'll tear out his—"

"Simmer down," said Murphy. "I ain't through. I'm just starting. You print it. That there is a chance Gooney's gun was stolen from him—by a person unknown."

"I wish I could name him! I'll have it on the streets in an hour, Murphy."

"Okay. I can wait," said Murphy. He went over to Hoople's and had a beer and talked to Mosby. Then he went over to Geoghan's, and the *Clarion* was out and Geoghan was reading it. Chiz Hill, Rackety Morgan and Buster Hallahan came in. Hill carried a paper. They saw Murphy and went out again without buying anything.

Murphy said: "Your boys look disturbed about something."

"They ain't my boys," said Geoghan.

"They weren't playing any rummy when old Humperknickel was shot," snapped Murphy. "Before and after. But not at that time."

Geoghan said: "I ain't talkin', Murphy, bad cess to you!"

Murphy nodded and left the saloon. Night came, and he was still going about, asking the people of the Neighborhood. It was strange; usually no one would talk. Even the good people kept their mouths tight closed in the Neighborhood. But now everyone answered questions with amazing willingness. And they all ended: "Not Little Gooney. He couldn't do it."

Jack McBride walked the streets, and people shunned him. He went to Humperknickel's, and Gretchen was with Mrs. Hogue, and he did not get to see her; and everyone knew it in ten minutes and snickers followed the big Texan wherever he went. In Hoople's they served him a beer, but no one answered his greetings. He was standing there, red-necked, when Murphy came in.

He said: "City cop!"

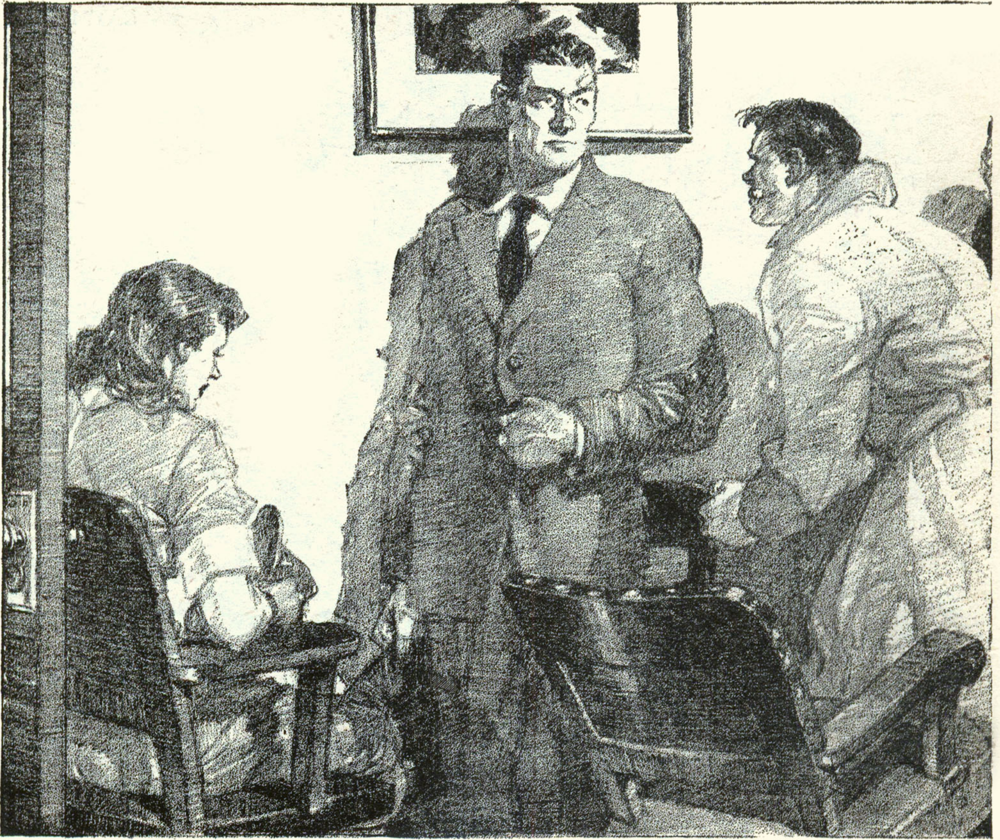
Murphy said: "Ah, the squealer. Don't start back for Texas—yet. I might want you."

McBride said: "You don't want me. You cain't hang your boy's kill on me."

"No," agreed Murphy. "But then there's other charges."

McBride swallowed his beer. He challenged: "I'll fight anybody in this Neighborhood says I'm guilty. I'll whup any son who dares—"

Murphy grabbed Duke Mosby. Duke was only a lightweight, and McBride was all of two hundred pounds of muscle, and this was a bar, not a ring. McBride left, and Duke spluttered: "You shoulda let me have him, Murphy. He was scared. I seen it in



Little Gooney whirled past Murphy. Smalley yelled: "Stop

his eye. Big talk, and yella underneath. I coulda had him, Murphy."

"He wasn't scared of you," said Murphy. He went out of Hoople's. He padded the streets. His feet were beginning to hurt. Sometimes in a sort of wonderment he realized he was no longer in his twenties. . . .

McBride was walking down Orchard Street, which is the street on which Geoghan's is located. He passed a dark alley. Figures suddenly swarmed. A blackjack swung. McBride wheeled with one on his back. His big arms threw them right and left, but they came back, all swinging blackjacks.

Murphy blew his whistle. Then he yelled: "Chiz Hill! Morgan! You, Buster! Stop, or I'll shoot hell outa you!" Then he ran forward.

"These are playground kids," said Murphy. "Raised in the cinders of the playground in the Neighborhood. It's important."

The Inspector was letting Murphy have his day, being relieved of pressure and feeling good, and Murphy was making the best of it. McBride bore a bruise over one eye. Little Gooney stood against the wall, his head lowered in a characteristic pose. Gretchen sat near the door, her blue eyes wide.

Hill, Morgan and Hallahan were lined up opposite Gooney. Their heads hung. They would not talk, but Murphy had the facts, he thought. He said: "McBride is under arrest for theft. He stole Arthur Traudt's gun."

Smalley said: "Can you prove it?"

Murphy said: "Ten people placed Hill and Morgan and Hallahan in the vicinity of Humperknickel's store the hour of the murder. Three known hoods can't move in the Neighborhood without being seen. People down there don't talk—unless it's for someone like Arthur Traudt. Then they go out of their way to remember. I gave them time—and put in the paper the facts. McBride was alibied, so he didn't do it. But a funny thing came up."

Smalley said: "I don't quite follow you, Murphy."

"Well, I put the three boys there. But I knew they wouldn't be dumb enough to stash that gun where it could be found. I traced the gun—right to McBride."

The tall Texan jerked out: "All right, I took the gun. It was stolen from me!"

"You see?" Murphy was triumphant. "McBride had beat up Hill and Morgan and Hallahan. They wanted revenge. They knew they couldn't get much cash out of Humperknickel's unless they got the safe. But they thought they could beat the safe, and maybe fire a couple shots, and leave McBride's gun and fasten a robbery on him. I found all the safecracking tools, latest style, in their rooms. Then Herman came on them

him!" Murphy pretended to trip, stumbled into the desk.

and fought, and Hill lost his head and shot Herman—"

"I didn't!" cried Hill, his rabbit chin quivering. "Buster—"

Murphy said quietly: "You see? They'll talk. . . . Well, they were playground kids. They shot Herman, went out the back door and did a pyramid over the wall. Buster is ground man, then Chiz, then Rackety goes over the top and hauls them up. A dozen people remember that act from when they were kids. So they go over the fence into a paved yard, leaving no tracks, and they're back in Geoghan's playing rummy. But Geoghan won't alibi them because of Arthur. Even Geoghan respects Arthur." He was directing a lot of this at Gretchen.

Buster Hallahan said wildly: "I didn't even have holt of the gat. Nobody wanted to shoot nobody."

A uniformed cop with a pad came in and sat quietly down, his pencil busy. Inspector Smalley said: "Er—about McBride. . . . I'll have to hold you, McBride. Your theft was a vicious thing. We can only imagine why you stole Traudt's gun."

"He was mad at me," said McBride. "I was scared he'd shoot me. I was purely beatin' his time."

"He thinks he's back in that moving-picture Texas!" sighed Murphy.

But Little Gooney had come away from the wall. He whirled past Murphy. Smalley yelled: "Stop him!"

Murphy pretended to trip, stumbled into the desk. Gooney flew into the air. His two stubby hands seized McBride's ears. His round bullet head smacked against McBride's chin.

The big man groaned once. Then he fell apart. Chiz Hill muttered: "I know I'm goin' to the chair, but that was almost worth it. The—"

Murphy said: "Better make your peace with God and cease the bad language, son."

He was following Gooney, then, and Gretchen. He kept close to them all the way down to the car. Then he drove them out to the Old Neighborhood, but instead of going to Gretchen's home, he wheeled up before the house on Taylor Street.

He sat there, silent, waiting.

Then Gretchen cried: "I'll marry him tomorrow. Honest, I will, Murphy. It was all a terrible mistake. I never really liked that McBride. I never really believed Arthur would hurt anyone."

MURPHY said: "Arthur?"

"It'll take a couple of days to get ready," said Little Gooney. "But Ace Fletcher'll let me off. Say next week. . . . Murphy, I can't thank you."

"Thank *you,*" said Murphy. "Running this case down let me know again the Neighborhood is tough—but decent. A man stays his life in a place—he likes to believe in it." He put them out of the car and went looking for Jingle. He had a word or two to say to *that* disbeliever.

The Dancing Flame

THE girl was whirling flame, a jointless visible wind that swept the tiny area allotted to her. She left her watchers panting for breath as if they too had shared the wild dance with her. Her breasts, high and pointed in the open bodice of her Minoan gown, were heaving. The long black hair flung out like a cape of glowing silk as she bowed; then, with a pirouette, she was gone.

"Heugh!" sighed Talthos explosively. "I have been told of great marvels in Knossos; this is a greater marvel than all! Might I catch such a Nereid as that in my net, and all fishing could go hang forever, for all o' me!"

"Hah!" snorted the black-browed innkeeper. "Old Nereus is more like to spear you with his trident, cover you with barnacles, and use you for a statue in his watery realm!"

"Taverner," said Talthos, "might a simple fisherman like myself seek the—acquaintance of the girl?"

"Of Euphloke?" The innkeeper's eyebrows were a startled bushy peak. "Aye—if you seek a knife in the heart with it. That girl, friend, is known wherever Minoans roam as the Dancing Flame. She's no man's doxy, and will yield her heart to no mortal. Some say she has been bewitched by the gods of field and forest; others, that she's a god's bride, or a goddess, spying on men for the great Moon-bull himself. I know not."

"A god's bride, *in a tavern?*" ejaculated the fisherman. His own black brows were a startled peak now, over eyes of so dark a blue that they appeared black at the first glance. The deeply tanned face was a mask of incredulity. "Such an one should be in the palace, dancing for Minos and his court!"

The taverner stared at Talthos for a moment, then wiped at the long table with the cloth in his hairy hand.

"She has danced for Minos, and aplenty. 'Tis said the monarch prizes her friendship more than half the kingdom. Yet when she takes the notion, Euphloke will take shipping for the remotest corner of the earth, or perchance, slip into such a tavern as this to dance for stinking fishermen."

The innkeeper goggled as brawny hands seized his wrists. The fisherman shoved him roughly against the wall. "You did not, I hope, have reference to present company?" blazed Talthos.

"N-n-nay," stammered the taverner, himself a stocky, well-muscled man, yet trembling before the fury of Talthos. "I—I but meant to convey that she dances where she will, for the sheer pleasure of it. Euphloke could have the greatest noble in the realm for a husband; yet even council members in the royal palace are less than stinking f— goatherds to the maid. Some say she's mad."

"Then will I be mad too. The notion possesses me to know this Euphloke better."

The innkeeper rubbed at bruised wrists as Talthos dropped them.

"You'd better be greater than you are," was all he said.

The fisherman's eyes were pensive for a long moment, black with their brooding. The darkly bronzed face was close to ferocious; and his craggy jaw jutted in determination.

"So you folk of Knossos look down on fishermen, eh? And think they cannot achieve greatness?"

"I've said no word of that sort," protested the innkeeper.

The powerfully framed fisherman seemed not to hear him, and went on with his musing: "A man must be great to so much as speak to the girl, eh? Well, a fisherman may achieve greatness! An archer-captain was Minos, of late."

"Aye, but he was grandson's grandson to the first Minos of all," cautioned the taverner. "It makes a difference if a man has greatness flowing in his veins."

"I'll not agree to that. If it flows in his heart, greatness will reach his veins soon enough. Girl or no girl, methinks I'll seek greatness for the achievement's sake!" countered the fisherman. "Hold—what trumpet is that? It's not a festival day, is it?"

The hoarse booming moan of a conch-horn filled the street like the bull-god's bellow. Both men stepped from the smoke-darkened great room of the inn to stare up the hillslope.

The trumpet bellowed again; and an approaching *kerux*, a herald of Minos, with purple imperial kilts flapping about his long shanks, cried out his message. The great voice echoed hollowly from the houses of brick and wood that clustered here more thickly than those of stone on the noble-occupied hill. The descending slope of the long avenue was unbelievably clean under the herald's feet.

FOR even in this era, more than nineteen hundred years before Christ, Knossos was world-famous for its unique system of sanitation. Cretans were proud, and rightly, of their concept of cleanliness, with their frequent private and public baths, their sewers to flush away corruption that lay in the streets of other ancient cities, and their fetish of health and of fitness of body. Thus the fisherman stared at a clean and shining city, even as he watched the approach of the *kerux* with his trumpeting sea-shell in his hand.

The hoarse note of the conch-horn vibrated in their very ears, now.

"Men bold of heart, attend!" cried the herald, his voice almost as clamorous as the horn. "Warriors, skilled masons, artisans in wood and metal, heed! It is decreed of Minos and his council that every effort shall be bent to the completion of Tiryns, City of Golden Splendor! Hear, heed, and join the ranks!"

"Tiryns?" asked the fisherman of the herald. "I never heard of the place, and I've fished the shores of Crete for fifteen years."

"Know you of it, taverner?" asked the herald in his turn. "I lack time to educate this dolt."

"Were you not kilted and on a mission, we'd see who's the dolt," seethed Talthos. "You, host—do you know what this message portends?"

The horn boomed out its summons again as the *kerux*, with a sniff, resumed his steady pacing down the

THE COLORFUL TALE OF A CRETAN FISHERMAN WHO TURNED SOLDIER AND FOUGHT WITH HIS TRIDENT TO SAVE A BELOVED DANCER.

by KENNETH CASSENS

"Heugh!" sighed Talthos explosively. "Might I catch such as that in my net, and all fishing could go hang!"

long descending slope of the stone-paved street. His voice grew hollow with distance, the words of the message clapping in twenty echoes from the buildings beyond.

"WHAT is this new city?" asked the curious fisherman.

"Tiryns? 'Tis a city in building on the peninsula of the Peloponnesus, land of the Argives, the Achæans, and the Danæans. Know you anything of them?"

"I'm a Pelasgian myself," admitted the fisherman. "I've met a few Danæan fishermen, and learned somewhat of their tongue, on occasions when I've been blown far from Crete. Wild fellows, those Danæans; a battle is their notion of a pleasant afternoon's amusement. We're building a city there, you say?"

"Aye. You mind how the long chain of mountains runs down just

inland from the eastern coast, with a great gulf running inland to marshy rivers? Argolis, the gulf is called."

"I know the gulf; and fifteen years ago, as a lad of ten, I saw it when my father's ship took shelter there from the wind Euroklydon. Notus, the south wind, blew us from Crete, and then the tempest wind took over. As I remember it, there's a great looming rock just inland from the sea, in the midst of the marshes."

"Aye, that's the spot, as travelers have described it to me. That rock, friend, is the city's base."

"I see," said Talthos. "Thanks, taverner. Methinks I'll pursue this herald, and join the ranks of colonizers. A man may rise far in a new city in a distant land!"

"And fall far, too," warned the other. . . .

But the fisherman was already pounding down the avenue, his colorful loincloth flapping, and his lungs filled for a shout after the disappearing imperial herald. His eyes filled with the promise of adventure, he'd almost forgotten the girl who had set off the chain of events, though the thought of her flickered briefly in his mind while he ran. Something about the wind in his face, the wild pace of his running, brought a momentary remembrance of the intoxicating wildness of her dancing. His jolting run ended as the *kerux* turned to see what the pursuit might be.

"You're no warrior?" quizzed the herald. "I doubt much if you'll be acceptable."

"I'm a man bold of heart," the panting Talthos protested.

"See Antenor the One-legged, then, at the palace," directed the herald. "He makes choice of men for the expedition. You'll find him in the archers' guardroom."

The trumpet resumed its hoarse bellow as the fisherman turned to make the long climb to the palace at the summit of the city's principal hill.

ANTENOR stumped about on his wooden leg, muttering crustily at the chafe of his stump. Even the overlay of ivory, carefully carved to shape, left him uncomfortable in the sticky heat.

The archer-captain rubbed a bowstring between his fingers, checking its condition; for weapons must be kept at their peak of efficiency in this hostile world. He cursed the Phœnician marksmen who had cost him his leg in Africa, sometime before, and fingered the hafts of the bronze swords and lances and axes in the rack. *Hei*, for the rush and clamor of battle again! But a man with only one leg of his own was scarce fit for hand-to-hand combat. He wondered what sort of levy would reply to the heralds this time, to go to the defense and upbuilding of Tiryns. From that central point they could hold the peninsula against the colonizing Phœnicians; and he took grim pleasure in the fact that Phœnician tribute, wrung from the Sidonians since a great Minoan sea victory, would supply richness of gold for ornamentation, copper and tin for weapons, and slaves for labor in the new city.

"Sir," said a hesitant voice. "I think you're the man I seek."

Antenor swung about, careful of his ivory-overlaid wooden leg. He scowled at the man before him, seeing a ruggedly built, brawny fellow, but a man lacking the appearance and snap of a warrior.

"If you seek Antenor, you've found him," he growled testily.

"I'm a fisherman of Erakleion, sir. My name's Talthos. I heard the herald's proclamation, and seek to go to Tiryns."

"A fisherman?" Antenor's voice was scornful. "We need no fishermen. We need artisans in brick or wood or stone, smiths to fashion metal, and warriors. Warriors most of all, now; the Danæans are harrying the city almost daily. If you have no skill but fishing, you won't do. Go back to your boat, your nets and tridents, and your fish- and octopus-catching."

"Wait!" cried Talthos. "Will you give me no opportunity at all?"

"Take this sword, then," directed Antenor, holding out a weapon of polished bronze that glinted in the light from the open doorway. "Show me how you'd fend off an enemy."

"Dead man need no fending off," said Talthos grimly. "I'd lunge at him and kill him."

"While he parried and ripped you open from neck to belly!" scoffed Antenor. "You handle that sword like a woman, dolt. War's a two-sided affair, and there's no place for amateurs."

"Aye, but—Captain," pleaded Talthos desperately, adventure more desirable in this slipping from his grasp, "I know not these short weapons, save the dagger I always carry. But I've wielded a trident often in my fishing, on fish too great for my nets. Let me but try that lance there on the arms rack! See if you can come at me, sir; I'll do you no harm!"

"*You*, harm *me?*" scoffed Antenor. "One-legged as I am, I can make you look like an old woman stirring her cooking-pot! Hah! Here's where we spoil a lance, then; but the head can be re-shafted. Guard yourself, dolt!"

Antenor seized a shield from the rack, and drew his bronze sword. He batted at the lance with the leather-covered wooden shield, and pivoted for a thrust which he meant to pull as it scratched the fisherman. But the lance was a live thing, flashing back from the shield, striking it aside and crashing against the sword blade to drive the weapon wide.

"Don't pull your thrusts!" panted the fisherman. "You'll never touch me, sir, with this excellent lance in my hands! It has the weight and balance I like!"

Antenor came in grimly, sweating now; but in a space of time scarce long enough to reckon, his offense had been turned, his defense beaten down; and the fisherman, swapping ends, had the butt end of his weapon digging into the archer-captain's ribs in spite of Antenor's doughtiest effort to come to grips with Talthos.

"You're in, fisherman," conceded Antenor. "I've faced your equal with a spear, when I had both my legs; but never your better. Learn swordsmanship to equal your skill with a lance, and we'll have few better warriors."

"I intend you shall have none better," replied Talthos.

"A bold man will rise far," promised the captain. "Take this token to the armorer, and have him issue you weapons and armor. Outside the door, to the right, the second door."

And he stared after his recruit.

"Heugh!" he gasped. "He'd have had me stuck like a wild boar on the best day I ever saw! I'll give my next fisherman a more courteous hearing!"

THE armorer was hard put to it to find a helmet for the fisherman.

"You're an odd-shaped fellow!" he commented. "Most heads are round; yours is long and narrow—you're no Cretan, are you?"

"I'm Pelasgian born," replied Talthos, "of the Hellenes, and pure-blooded, with no Cretan admixture."

"I see. Eh, well, the races have long been equal in Minoa, and largely intermingled. And your eyes are blue, as well—I thought them black, until I looked closely! Well, a little shaping here—so. A narrowing along the side—thus."

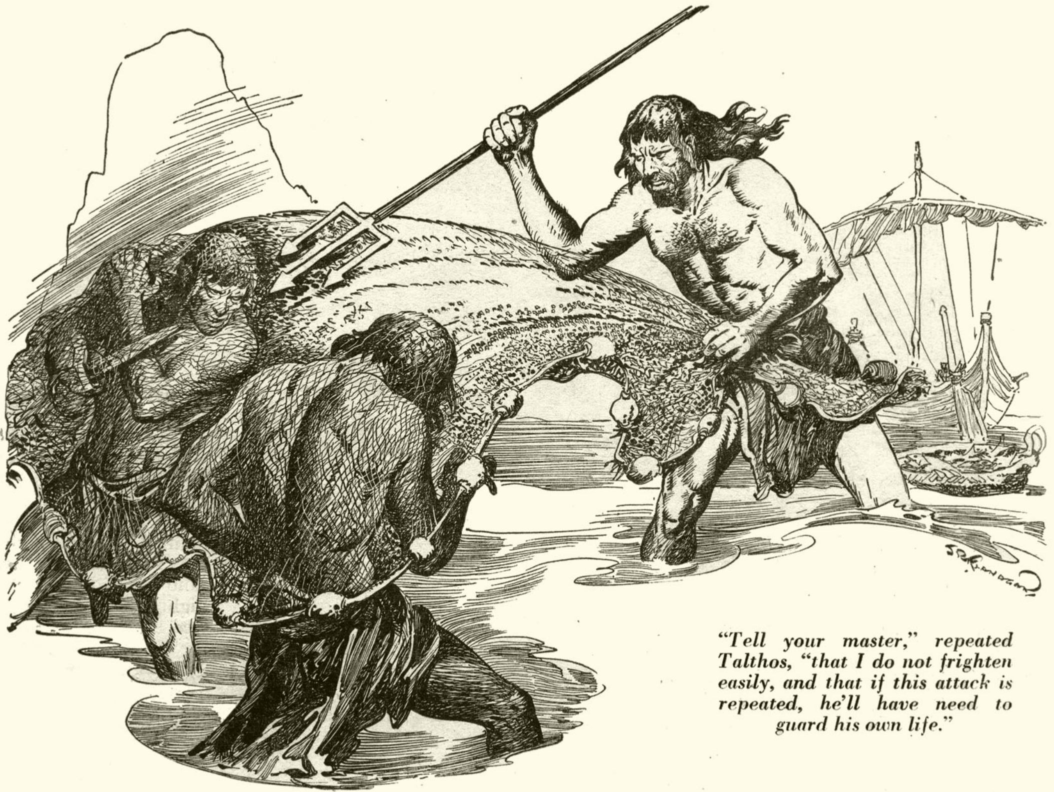
"I hate to put you to trouble, friend," apologized Talthos, interrupting the tapping of the bronze hammer against the helmet.

"Trouble? This is the work I love!" and the armorer resumed his tapping. "Here you are—return to Antenor; he'll tell you what shipping to take."

"Thank you, sir," said the fisherman. "This breastplate is a shade narrow; but I can make it do."

"Never make a thing do!" growled the armorer. "Have it perfect at the start, and it will serve you well. You can keep your mind on battle then, not on the fit of your armor."

It was the work of a few moments to have the tall fisherman fitted perfectly, and he stepped from the armorer's workshop feeling half a soldier, at the least.



"Tell your master," repeated Talthos, "that I do not frighten easily, and that if this attack is repeated, he'll have need to guard his own life."

In the end, Talthos sailed his own stanch fishing boat to the peninsula, with a dozen other bold spirits aboard, pursuing the same adventure with himself. It was good to feel the heave of his own deck beneath his bare feet; and he sniffed the salty air with pleasure, working the tiller with a practiced hand as the bow paid off the hill-crest he'd taken for his mark. His nets were still aboard, stowed in the forepeak now rather than on the deck, to keep them from underfoot. With them, his store of keen bronze tridents, true of shaft and balanced to his liking.

The gulf of Argolis was full of anchored craft at its head; beaked galleys of sixteen and of twenty oars; bluff-bowed merchantmen; a full hundred varied craft of many a rig and line. He dropped his ketch-sail himself, not trusting his amateur friends with the details of sailing, and luffed up to anchor close to the shore, as his shallow draft allowed him to do.

That there were fish in the bay was evident to his professional eye; and he promised himself a return to his trade for very sport's sake, when opportunity should rise. But for now, Tiryns with its conflict and rising splendor was his goal. . . .

His companions stared with him after their three-mile trudge along a marsh-bordered causeway to the looming rock on which the city stood. The massive upthrust of stone was close to a thousand feet in length, and a third as wide to an eye accustomed to gauging distances on land or sea. Minoan masons, the most skilled craftsmen in stone and brick of their time anywhere in the world, had begun a massive wall.

Bedded in clay against the outer edge of the great rock, hewn hammer-dressed blocks ten feet by three and a half by three and a quarter feet formed the lower courses of the outer wall. Wooden rollers, many of them smashed to useless splinters, lay about. A semicircular curved bastion faced toward the sea, and rock-hewn steps led up to a narrow postern gate not much wider than a man's shoulders.

The fisherman's eyes were wide, his mouth agape, as the adventurers filed in after answering the challenge of the guard. The wall was fully forty feet thick at this point, and where finished, rose to fifty feet above the marshy plain.

"Patroclos," cried Talthos to one of his new friends, "the army that takes this city, once completed, will need wings!"

"Were it an enemy city," laughed Patroclos, his voice hollow in the narrow rising passageway, "you and I would be the first to rush scaling ladders against these walls!"

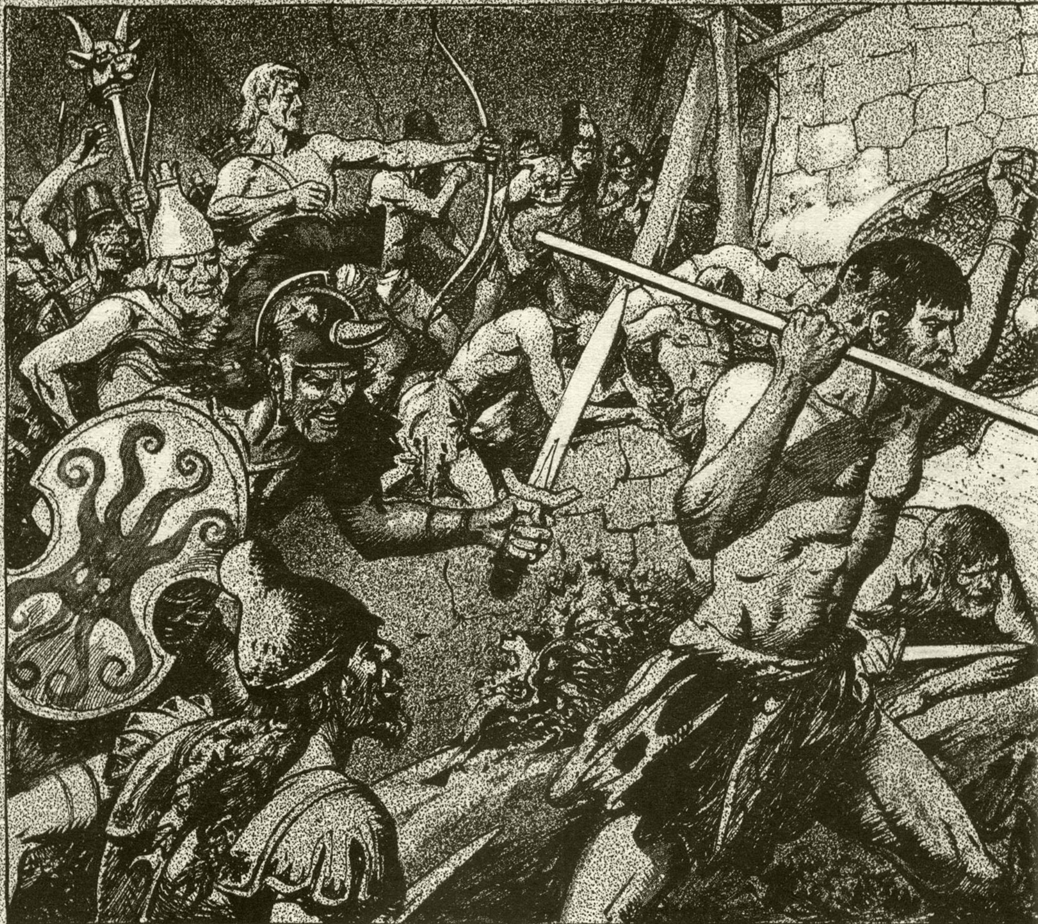
The whole interior city was a-bustle with hurrying men, rushing materials to needful points, laying up courses of stone or of sun-cured brick, apply ing stucco for an outer coat to the finished portions. Bronze hammers echoed as the wooden frames rose to hold the boarding of new dwellings, simple or palatial; and sawyers cursed their quickly dulled bronze implements, wishing aloud that Talus the Athenian had never invented the confounded things, and had left them to their hewing of boards with axe and wedge and adze.

Proetos was commander of the project, a hawk-faced man of middle size. He had a darting eye for detail, and was as quick of motion as a freshly caught eel.

"More warriors, eh?" he said at sight of the new levy. "We've need of artisans, too. Any special skills among you? You, there, the tall fellow with the long chin—are you anything besides a warrior?"

"I'm a fisherman," admitted Talthos. "I've my own boat moored down in the bay."

"A fisherman, eh? I'll remember you when we want sea-food; I could stand some myself! You, with the



"For serpent and bull! Cretans, ho!" cried Talthos, as he plunged for the

mashed nose: what's your skill? You've been a boxer, I'll wager."

The commander went from each man to the next like a darting swallow, while Talthos stared at the activity of the new city.

"You, fisherman—what of the gulf? Did you take any note, coming in?" asked Prœtos, suddenly before him again.

"The gulf is full of fish," replied Talthos. "I couldn't help but notice, though I came here as a warrior. I have my own boat, and my nets and tridents."

Instantly he was cursing himself for the admission. This was no path to greatness as a warrior, forcing himself in folly back to his old trade. But Prœtos, with a brief acknowledging smile, was already quizzing another man; then directing the levy to report to Skamandrios, captain of warriors. A carpenter left his work to direct them to the proper guardroom.

But they lacked time to reach it, for there was sudden shouting for warriors, and news of an attack. The carpenter led the new men to the main gate; and Talthos found himself part of a weaving line of sweating, struggling soldiers, stabbing or hewing at the fierce Danæans in hot and furious battle. The attackers were somewhat lighter of skin than the Cretans, and made up for their lack of armor by agility in their goatskin coverings. They were skipping fleas, clubbing and dodging in the same fluid motion; striking and vanishing before a man could swing an awkward sword. Talthos wished for a lance before the thing was done, with the Danæans at last retreating, unable to conquer men with heads and shoulders protected by bright bronze. Their slingers continued to hurl damaging stones even in retreat.

Too winded to pursue the fleeing Danæans, the Cretan warriors reëntered the massive portals of the still incomplete main gate. Talthos took note by the sun's position that this was the eastern side of the city, facing inland toward the low hills. Sculptors were back again at their work, chipping away stone and brick to bring the appearance of lions at either side of the gateway. Their scaffolds obscured the work, but glaring eyes and gaping fanged mouths were startlingly real on the unfinished portals.

foremost of the foe, his net spreading in the passageway like a live thing.

As the warriors threaded their way through the litter of the passageway, mounting to a higher level, Talthos stopped suddenly, staring. A girl was picking her way toward them from the inner wall, her face bright with interest.

"You—you're the dancer I saw in the tavern at Knossos!" cried the fisherman-warrior. "Your name is Euphloke!"

"You have the better of me," said the girl, her voice remote and cool. "But that you bear wounds for Minoa, I'd not let you address me at all. Please stand aside."

For the first time Talthos was conscious of a bleeding forearm, laid open by an unnoticed enemy dagger or javelin in the recent battle. He looked up at the girl, who was speaking crisply again.

"Stand aside, please. I've no interest in you simply because you know my name."

"You'll have an interest some day!" prophesied the still heavily breathing warrior. "For I propose to wed you!"

He stood in shocked amazement at his own words, spoken almost without volition. The girl stared at him for a moment, then burst into scornful laughter at his presumption. A robed noble who had been walking along behind the dancer came up to them, sneering as he looked down his overlong nose at the fisherman.

"Do you hear that, Ukalegon?" cried the girl. "Another! His second look, and he plans to wed me!" She turned to the now abashed Talthos, and her voice had a little less of an edge to it as she spoke. "Loss of blood makes you light-headed, friend. Euphloke weds no man."

"No man save myself," challenged Ukalegon with a bold glance at the girl.

"Count me your rival!" snarled Talthos, rousing from his trance, disliking the nobleman immediately.

"Do you know, you intrigue me!" said the girl. "I'll seek your quarters, soon, and dance for you and your fellows: a dance of war and battle's fury."

"Come away. You, soldier—take care. I know what to do with rivals," sneered the noble.

The girl went on toward the outer wall, and Ukalegon nearly trod on the fisherman-warrior's toes as he brushed past. Talthos stared after the pair before he turned to follow other city-

wise warriors through a narrow stone-roofed passage.

The passage led to a double porch, or *propylæum,* just inside the inner wall. The guard chamber was adjoining. Skamandrios greeted Talthos and his fellows, and called to a slave to bring warm water for their wounds. The wound dressed, the warrior captain granted permission to the men of the new levy to inspect the city and familiarize themselves with its courts and passageways.

"The Danæans aren't likely to attack again today," said the captain, a swarthy, burly man with a quick flashing smile that dwelt often on his lips, always around his crinkling-lidded brown eyes. "Look the city over; 'twill be of value to you later."

"Captain, sir," said Talthos, "I wonder—might I gain permission for a little fishing? I'm a fisherman, and have my own craft in the bay."

Skamandrios stared for a moment, and then the ready smile widened. "So that you forget not to return, friend, you're welcome to go. This isn't a scheme leading to a desertion, is it?"

"Desertion? Nay, I've reason to stay that would keep me here alone, save for one other," replied Talthos.

"A woman, I'll wager! To your fishing, friend—and bring me a part of your catch; I'm fair famished for something with fins instead of horns!"

Leaving his armor behind, Talthos belted on a light dagger over his loincloth. The dour guard at the postern gate let him pass without comment or suggestion.

He descended the stone steps to the level of the causeway, and set out across the marshes, blithe as any wheeling bird above his head. A company of archers approached him, coming from the sea to the westward. Their pleated warrior-kilts were gay with color; the painted wooden quivers and their stout bows glittered with inlaid traceries of ivory and silver and gold.

"We could have used archers a few moments ago!" said Talthos, grinning, and displaying his bandaged forearm. "Good fighting to you, friends."

The archers were haughty for the most part; but one of them condescended to greet the fisherman with a quick, "And good fortune to you, friend."

Although Talthos met an occasional party bound cityward, he trudged to the shore alone, finding no other headed for the sun-sparkling bay. His head lifted with pleasure at sight of the rippling water, golden with the declining sun. The mingled warmth and chill of the water was pleasant on his naked limbs as, leaving even his loincloth behind, he swam to the anchored fishing boat. He spread and checked his nets, then hung all but a casting net on the racks at the side of the deck. The chosen net was a circle almost eight feet in diameter, weighted around the circumference by small drilled stones. A light retrieving line was reeved around the edge to form a pouch when the flung net was drawn back by the fisherman who used it.

Talthos laid two keen tridents on the deck, three-pronged barbed spears intended for handling the larger of the creatures he might draw from the fecund sea. A school of small fish were leaping into the warm air even now. He buoyed his mooring rope and hoisted the small sail. They were Sardinian fish, by the look; small herringlike fish toothsome either when fresh-caught or smoked for preservation.

He was no time at all filling a large basket with the finny creatures, silvery under the slanting bright sun.

"Heugh!" he sighed, for very happiness. "I wonder if greatness is worth the leaving of all this?" But he steeled his heart against the nostalgic thought as he steered close to shore and set his basket on the marshy bank. He poled his craft off and picked up the mooring. He saw two men advancing down the causeway toward the beach as he made the ketch fast, but paid them little attention.

But as he dropped the bight of his rope, his eyes were attracted to a large shape, dim beneath the waters. The fish appeared four to five feet long, and might go to twenty-five minæ. Hah! Here was a captive worth the taking!

Talthos slipped overboard, naked, the throwing net and trident in his hands. He began to stalk the wandering big fish, wondering of what species it might be.

The men ashore had reached the bank, and as he swam slowly toward shore, they scowled blackly at him.

"You, fisherman!" called one of them, his voice as grating as one rock rubbed on another. "Are you the man who talked so brashly to the Lord Ukalegon and the maid Euphloke, of late?"

"That may be," replied Talthos. "Are you looking for fish for dinner, friend?" He flashed a smile at the scowling men.

"We look for you, fisherman," said the second of the pair, balancing unsteadily on a rock. "With a warning."

Talthos grew instantly sober. "A warning?" he asked.

"A warning to forget any acquaintance you may have with the dancer Euphloke. Ukalegon brooks no rivals."

The fisherman forgot his quarry, and waded toward the low bank of the marshy shore. He stood knee deep now, the throwing net in his right hand, the trident in his left, and the retrieving line looped about his left wrist.

"Tell your master Ukalegon, Cretans, that Talthos is neither fool nor coward, to be driven from his purpose."

"Then we have another message—this!"

They were leaping into the shallow water toward him now, naked daggers in their reaching hands.

The fisherman was quick of motion, but no quicker than he needed to be, to meet the unexpected onslaught. He dropped the trident in the shallow water and whirled the net to its full spread in one fluid motion. The flung net met the attackers in their surprised faces, and they lurched together as Talthos yanked in on the retrieving line to prison their shoulders in the flying strands.

Yanking the pair off balance, he stopped quickly for the dropped trident. The bronze points glittered thirstily at the throats of the would-be assassins, struggling to their feet awkwardly in the confines of the net.

"Tell your master," repeated Talthos, "that I do not frighten easily, and that if this attack is repeated, he'll have need to guard his own life. I'll help you to remember!"

His feet planted solidly, Talthos heaved on the line and dragged the thugs, completely off balance, into deeper water. He played them as he might have played a shark, bringing them to the surface, choking, then yanking them down into the darkening water. When he was sure that all fight was completely drowned out of the pair, Talthos drew them limply to shore and shook the net clear.

Leaving the half-drowned men to recover as best they might, and taking the net and trident with him in half fear of another attack, he shouldered his heavy basket of fish and trudged the causeway through the marshes to the rock of Tiryns.

He had stopped his panting, and his wrath had left him in part during the three-quarter-hour walk to the city. He greeted the porter at the postern gate with a fish for his supper, and stalked up the narrow passageway, barely clearing the turns with the heavy basket. *The gods smite them!* thought Talthos. *But for their interference, I'd have filled an oxwain with fish!*

He set the basket down in the warrior-quarters, and began doling out his catch, with caution to save some of the best for the commander's table. Darkness had claimed the city when he donned his warrior-kilt after hanging the net on the walls to dry, and standing the trident in a corner.

When he arrived at the princely quarters of Prœtos, after threading the torch-lit passageways, he found the nobleman Ukalegon closeted with the commander. Ukalegon stared at Talthos sourly, sniffing at the gift of fish he bore to the leader.

"This is the very fellow," grated Ukalegon. "I swear it."

Prœtos looked at the fisherman-warrior with interest. "Did you quarrel with the pair of this nobleman's henchmen an hour ago?" asked the commander.

"I quarreled with two men, or rather, they with me. Whose men they were or are, I know not nor care. The argument was of their choosing."

"You fought unfairly, with sorcery!" raged Ukalegon. "Prœtos, that man's a danger to us!"

"Sorcery? We could use some, to hold back these wild Danæans," commented Prœtos. *"Hei,* man, I recognize you now! You're the fisherman from one of the recent levies."

"Aye, with a gift of fish to you, commander. And my life, which the two fellows in question tried hard enough to take from me. I netted them instead of the great fish I was chasing," replied Talthos. The fisherman was uneasy under the questioning, and would have liked the feel of a weapon at his hip; but he bore none save the dagger that every man wore everywhere he went.

"Trapped them in a net, eh?" said Prœtos, rising to look at the fish, then returning to his seat. "I don't suppose you've the net nearby?"

"By chance, I have. I brought my net and trident with me to the city."

"Fetch them, then, fisherman—I'd like to see these odd weapons." Prœtos' hawk-face was full of interest.

"Nay, let him not go!" cried Ukalegon. "He'll but flee, with no justice wrought on him."

"Justice! It seems to me that justice has been done," said the commander, "with the rascals who attacked him half drowned. He could have cleared everything by slaying them, instead of immersing them and letting them go. Fetch your net, fellow—I'd like to see the weapons with which one man downed two."

"They're no weapons, lord. The net and trident are but the tools of my trade," said Talthos. "I'll fetch them, though, gladly."

But Prœtos was destined to see the fisherman's tools in action, not spread out before him for display. For as Talthos returned toward the commander's princely quarters, bearing his net and trident, the urgent summons of ram and conch horn trumpets rang out, terribly reinforced by the savage war cries of Danæans attacking under cover of darkness. Dismayed shouting filled the city, and the pound of running feet.

"They're inside the outer wall! Danæans in the walls!" was the shout.

Talthos ran with the rest toward the main gate and the scene of conflict. Archers were falling back grimly from post to post and pillar to pillar, taking toll wherever they could find cover to loose their arrows. But the wild horde of Danæans flowed over obstructions like a vengeful tide.

"For serpent and bull! Cretans, ho!" cried Talthos, in the rallying cry of Minoans.

The fisherman plunged for the foremost of the foe, his net spreading in the passageway like a live thing in his eager hands. Then he was flinging it at the pressing ranks of the enemy, its weights a flailing circle. Danæans plunged suddenly, tripped and tangled by the hampering net, hacking at the stout cords with weapons too quickly prisoned to accomplish their purpose. His trident flickering in his hand, Talthos was into them, backed by archers and light-armed warriors pouring from their quarters into the fray.

It took an hour of combat, but the tide once turned, the savage irruption of Danæans became a retreat, and finally a rout. Bodies remained behind, not all of them enemies, to stare unseeingly at the flame of the torches in their sconces along the partly finished walls. Some had their arms flung wide; others were grotesquely crumpled in the attitude of their death.

THE gate again secure and heavily guarded, the fisherman returned to look for his gashed and bloody net.

"Hah!" grunted Prœtos explosively, nursing a wrist broken by a flailing club in the battle. " 'Tis worth my pain to see you turn them, fisherman! And I'd face two men with swords any time before I'd willingly face your trident! Where did you learn battle with these odd weapons?"

"I've fished since I was five, and worked at it seriously since I was ten," replied Talthos, almost apologetic. "Any Cretan fisherman might have done the same."

"Not every fisherman would seek the opportunity," said the commander, his lips white with pain. He grunted and then cursed as an archer-captain set and splinted his wrist. "Seek me in the morning. You're not destined to be in the ranks for long, lad."

Talthos returned to his quarters, to find his use of the net and trident the talk of warriors and archers alike throughout the city. Men sought him out to pound him on the back, and if he grew a bit arrogant, he had good reason.

"Hei," he said to Skamandrios, his captain, at the last. "Would you say, sir, that I had somewhat to offer a girl? Something to make her think well of me?"

"Many a dark-eyed Cretan maid would welcome your least glance, after tonight's work," replied Skamandrios, grinning his amusement. "Were not members of the sex so few on this rock of Tiryns, you'd be wearing garlands already!"

"I'd like permission, with the morning, to seek out the damsel Euphloke, sometimes called the Dancing Flame," said Talthos.

The warrior captain whistled.

"Lad, you aim high!" he commented. "The dancer's a friend to Minos himself!"

"I've heard that. Surely, I'm not the Emperor's enemy, after today's fighting," said Talthos, with a touch of grimness.

"Look for disappointment, friend," warned the captain. "You're more than likely to find it. Euphloke is not easily won, and some of Minoa's princes have gone disconsolately away after seeking her. But of course you don't mean to marry the girl; you seek only speech with her."

"I mean to marry her."

"No wonder you fight so well, being a madman!"

"The crest of Ida is not gained without risk," quoted Talthos. "But who would choose the valley with the mountain to look to?"

"You have my permission to bespeak Euphloke. Don't let it sour you when she sends you away with her laughter searing your ears." Skamandrios turned away, and Talthos sought his pallet. . . .

With the morning, Talthos sought the great bathroom which was an integral part of the fortress. The room was ten feet by twelve, its floor consisting of a single slab, tilted for drainage. It was not yet ready for filling as a pool, but eager slaves were more than ready to supply the new hero with vases of hot and cold water, refusing his copper coins. The sloshed water ran off through the pipe that led to and through the outer wall, and before long Talthos felt himself clean enough to salute any girl in Minoa, from kitchen maid to queen.

The slaves had attended to his clothing, and it was as clean as careful washing and drying could make it. With his hair freshly oiled and hanging in looping ringlets to his brawny shoulders, and fragrant with such perfume as Tiryns could afford, he felt ready to seek out the dancer. He passed the quarters of Prœtos this time, seeking the entrance to the long and tortuous passageway that led past the quarters of married nobles to the women's part of the fortress city.

He was halted by an alert guard, who immediately recognized the fish-

"Euphloke!" moaned Talthos, recognizing the dancer. "Bull and serpent! Euphloke! No!"

erman-warrior, and insisted on chatting about the battle of the night before for an endless quarter of an hour.

"Euphloke?" he said at last. "I'll find out if she'll consent to see you. It might be that she will; Euphloke will refuse a prince's banquet to dance in a seaside hut, if she takes the notion. But she'd rather seek than be sought. Even Ukalegon has been rebuffed several times, and next to Prœtos, he's the greatest noble on the rock."

"Don't tell me Prœtos is courting the girl too!" ejaculated Talthos.

"Heh, no! The commander has been married these ten years!" The guard turned and shouted: "Andreia! Come here a moment. A message!"

The slave came quickly, then turned to go to the women's quarters. She was back after long minutes, her face showing dismay.

"The lady Euphloke is not in her quarters."

Nor was she to be found in the quarters of the married couples, or in the remainder of the city, though wor-

ried messengers were crisscrossing its streets and passageways in what grew to be a frantic search. Frantic, because the dancer was the friend of Minos, and because, in addition, every Minoan felt somehow responsible for the safety of the damsel who might seek him out at any moment, in any port or on any battlefield, to dance for hundreds of cheering comrades, or for him alone.

Talthos, still bewildered by the passages and bastions of the fortress city, was crossing the central great hall, with its circular hearthstone for fire against the winter's chill. He paused a moment, wondering which doorway to take, when an archer interrupted his course. The man was hurrying toward the quarters of Prœtos, a rough arrow in his hand, not of Minoan make.

Wrapped about the arrow was a strand of glossy black hair, held in place by a ring of twisted gold.

"What have you there?" asked Talthos sharply.

"An arrow, shot into the fort by a Danæan archer. He's shouting some unintelligible message," replied the archer. "Hinder me not. I seek Prœtos."

"Where's the enemy marksman?"

"Main gate, western side," replied the hurrying man, and he was gone.

Talthos hurried to the gate, to see a horde of Danæans just beyond bowshot. One of them was yelling defiance at the city gate and wall.

"Let me hail him," said Talthos, and stepped out beyond the guard and the hastily erected barricade at the gap in the massive outer wall. "You!" cried the fisherman. "You, Danæans! What do you want?"

"Parley!" came a high-pitched voice. "Parley with Minoans!"

Prœtos was panting as he darted to join the group by the barricaded gate. "You can speak to them, fisherman? Are you willing to take the risk of parley with them?"

"Aye." Weaponless, Talthos went out from the gateway, alone. A Danæan cast aside his own sword and javelin and advanced.

"We hold a Minoan princess," said the Danæan, "captured in the sortie of last night. A strand of her hair was shot in to your camp on an arrow."

"Aye, I saw it," admitted Talthos. "What do you want?" he continued in his ragged Danæan.

"All Minoans must leave the Rock at once. If not, we cut off her toes and fingers, one by one, to shoot into your camp. You Minoans are to leave and to return to your homeland." The Danæan's speech was slow, his words carefully chosen for simplicity, and spoken with firm emphasis.

"And if Minoans do not go?" asked Talthos.

"The girl will be burned, this day week, in sight of the Rock."

Talthos paled. The Minoan race, almost uniquely among its contemporaries, treated its women with all respect and consideration. They mingled freely with their men, and were held in honor far above the level of Asiatic or African civilized nations, and immeasurably above the standards of other, barbaric, European tribes. He had no idea who the princess might be; but at the very knowledge that a Cretan woman was thus held, Talthos felt mingled rage and fear.

"I consult—I ask chief," said Talthos lamely, realizing that he had begun to speak in Minoan, and changing quickly to his halting Danæan. "We reply this day, or one day yet to come." The phrase was awkward, but he could not call to mind the Danæan word for *"tomorrow."*

"Tomorrow," replied the Danæan, emphasizing the word deliberately to stress the Minoan's ignorance, "we shoot another strand of hair. Tomorrow's tomorrow, one finger. Seven tomorrows, and we burn the girl alive before your city if you are not gone."

"Make no surrender!" cried a woman's voice, in the Minoan tongue.

Startled, Talthos looked toward the higher ground where the Danæans stood, clustered around their prisoner.

"Tell them not to surrender!" the woman repeated. "I know their plans; but Minoa's life is far more important than mine! Hold the Rock of Tiryns, and take vengeance for me later on!"

"Euphloke!" moaned Talthos, recognizing the dancer. "Bull and serpent! Euphloke! No!"

"Take your message to your camp," said the Danæan sharply. He stepped back a pace before the sudden glare in the fisherman-warrior's eyes. "If I but wave my arm, my archers will pierce your heart!"

Talthos tensed, ready to spring on the Danæan; but he realized that a broken truce might instantly cost the life of the girl, as well as his own. Groaning, he turned away. He stumbled as he walked up the ramp toward the uncompleted gate.

"They have Euphloke," he explained heavily, and then set forth the terms of the savage Danæans.

There were blanched faces among the listening Minoans. Minos would not accept lightly the capture of Minoa's greatest entertainer and his friend. Yet the empire could not spare the new city nor give it up. For were the colonizing Phœnicians permitted to gain a foothold on the European mainland, Minoa's day was done, her star set forever.

"Attack them at once!" cried Skamandrios, caution forgotten and a snarl replacing his habitual smile. "Harry them, scourge them from their fastnesses!"

"They know these bogs and hillocks like the coneys of the marsh," objected Prœtos heavily. "Do you think there'd be a Danæan left by now if they harried so easily?"

With not a hint of disarray of hair or clothing, and no line of worry on his sneering face, the nobleman Ukalegon was now in the gateway.

"I'm but a man of peace, of trade of merchandise and management of my estates," said Ukalegon; "but from what I've heard, I'd say the girl had the right of it. I cautioned her myself about her habit of walking the space between the inner and the incomplete outer wall, for her endless talking with common soldiers. Now that she's captured, Euphloke knows the fault is hers. She has stated the right of it, and I agree: let her die. There are plenty of beautiful women left in Minoa, without risking our skins for this one."

Talthos was aghast at the sheer cruelty of the words. Then he leaped toward the nobleman, to be caught back by his own fellows.

"A madman still, are you?" cried Skamandrios. "This man's a noble of the realm, a member of the supreme council at Knossos, and would you attack him?"

"Noble and council member he may be," seethed the angry Talthos, "but no man! Were he worth the name, he would not speak as he has!"

There were glowering faces among both soldiers and archers; but there were sober faces too. Every man with experience in the campaign knew the problem of the wild men of the marshes and of the hills beyond.

"There must be men yet in Minoa!" cried Talthos. "Who will follow me to rescue the girl?"

Slowly, reluctantly, half a dozen men stepped forward. Most of them were men who had sailed with the fisherman on his little craft to the Gulf of Argolis.

"Small wonder the Danæans forced the walls, with boldness so lacking!" complained Talthos.

"Fisherman," said Skamandrios, no trace of a smile on his usually merry face, "I'd go with you myself if I thought hope existed. But these Danæans are no fox-whelps, to be driven off by fierce shouts and flung stones, or to dodge at shadows. They're fighting men, bold and arrogant, and have kept us on our mettle to hold the Rock of Tiryns. A thousand men could accomplish nothing in these marshes."

"We can surely accomplish nothing if we venture nothing," said Talthos,

his heart growing leaden. "Not by staying here."

"Nor there. They'd overwhelm you, overwhelm us all in a moment, could they draw us from the city. There's little doubt that that is their exact intent. I cannot grant permission for you to lead any number of men, six or six hundred, into the marshes." Skamandrios' face was bitter, but even Talthos had to grant the soundness of his premise.

"Then may I go alone?" he flared. "I speak their tongue a little, and understand it better than I speak it. One bold heart may accomplish alone what a hundred could not do in concert!"

"You may have my permission," said Skamandrios slowly. "Prœtos—"

"I agree," added the commander instantly. "Arm yourself well, fisherman. The gods grant you a speedy and easy death—no man can expect your return."

"My heart bids me go," said Talthos simply. "An the gods uphold me, I will return with the maid. If not, name a stone in the wall for me."

Talthos walked grimly to the quarters assigned to him and his fellows, and stood long before the rack of arms. In his heart, he knew well that the others had the right of it, that the foray he had in mind was foredoomed, hopeless. But it had come to this: despite the brevity of the glimpses he had had of Euphloke, death with her had greater attraction than life without her.

At the last, he turned from the array of weapons and picked up his net and trident. Calling to a slave, he quickly procured the gift of a black loincloth, and laid his warrior-kilt aside, together with every weapon but his dagger. He did not touch the helmet or shoulder guards; he would move under cover of darkness, lightly and fast; and armor would only encumber his steps. The day dragged slowly; and his friends, realizing now his grief, left him to stare at the mocking blue of the sky alone.

When dusk fell on the landscape, he made his way to one of the slits that served as postern gates. After a careful inspection of the shadowy terrain, beginning to be shrouded by a mist arising from the marsh, Talthos eased out into the dank darkness.

The dew-wet brush of the fen slapped at his naked legs, and the black loincloth grew moist from the air and the damp leaves. He was a skulking shadow now, seeking the gloom that might conceal him; avoiding shadows that might be similarly skulking enemies. A swirl of cooler air would show the stars for a moment; when he could see them, he checked his direction in the tortuous maze of intersecting paths.

He had little idea of where to seek the girl; but it seemed certain that the Danæans would be encamped on high ground in the vicinity of the marsh and of the Minoan-held Rock of Tiryns.

Then, while a wolf-howl echoed from a distant hill, he saw the momentary glint of fire reflected on a low-swirling cloud of the thickening mist. The chance glow was red for a brief instant on the surface of a lazily moving stream that wound sluggishly between muddy, brush-grown banks.

He slipped silently into the brackish water and swam to the far side. Slipping and sliding in the mucky path, avoiding noise as best he could, Talthos worked his way to a rocky defile and looked down on a strange wild scene.

Trees grew more thickly here, on the rising slope beyond the little eminence on which he found himself. And under their protection lay a village of goatskin tents and of wattle-and-daub huts of clay-chinked withes. Dogs and pigs and goats slept indiscriminately about the village, in and out of its maze of interlocking paths. Other more wakeful animals and humans prowled the fringe of darkness that pressed toward the central fire which illuminated the crude village.

Hah! thought Talthos. *Here is the opportunity for attack, if we Minoans are but bold to press it!* On the other hand, no striking force of any great size could creep through the foggiest darkness without creating an alarm and bringing swift death from the Danæans who knew the paths of the marsh as no Minoan ever would. He knew that the gods must have guided him in passing unseen Danæans during his own prowling approach to the village.

Gymnastic excellence was a fetish in Minoa; and so the fisherman found little difficulty in leaping to the shadowy branches of a great tree before him. A startled dog lifted his head to howl as a vagrant breeze carried his scent toward the village. The beast was joined in a moment by half the curs in the camp; and cursing Danæans wakened to peer into the darkness. Then, as no danger became apparent, the owners beat their dogs to silence, though a few searching men slipped off into the darkness with daggers, clubs or javelins in their hands.

Talthos waited until a party of searching scouts had passed the base of his concealing tree, then made his way carefully out along a branch heavy enough to hold him, that gave promise of reaching similar branches in nearby trees. He was glad he had avoided leaving a spoor when a sniffing dog picked up his incoming trail and began a mournful howling, backtracking him to the marsh.

By the time the animal had followed his trail back to the tree where he had quit the ground, Talthos was close to the center of the village, staring down at a well-guarded hut.

"See that the maid is not left unguarded, Xenon," grated a husky Danæan who sounded as if he must once have had an arrow in his larynx. "I'll see what that confounded dog is howling about. It may be a bear, or a wildcat, or it may be a human enemy."

"Mmmmmm," replied his companion, his monosyllable freighted with as much disgust as agreement. "That Brakhas!" he muttered as the other man vanished from the firelit shadows before the hut into the blacker darkness of the forest. "He thinks to have all the fun, while I have to stay posted here. As if a girl as well tied up as that one could escape! Anaxos—watch the maiden, will you? I hear another dog yonder."

Now Anaxos in turn was grumbling at the chore of guarding the hut. Talthos, satisfied that the maid the guards had referred to was Euphloke, waited while Anaxos settled himself beside a sleeping pig. The animal would be a hazard; to awaken it would be to start it shrilling an alarum of squeals that would set the camp by the ears. Shortly the head of Anaxos sank down onto the pig's back, their snores mingling.

Then, in a flaring, entangling circle, the casting net looped from the tree onto the unsuspecting guard's slumbering form. Before he could awaken or cry out, Talthos was on him, clubbing both man and animal with his bronze trident to still any possible outcry. He darted into the hut, praying to all the gods he knew that Euphloke might be alone.

"Who is it? What do you want?" she cried in the darkness.

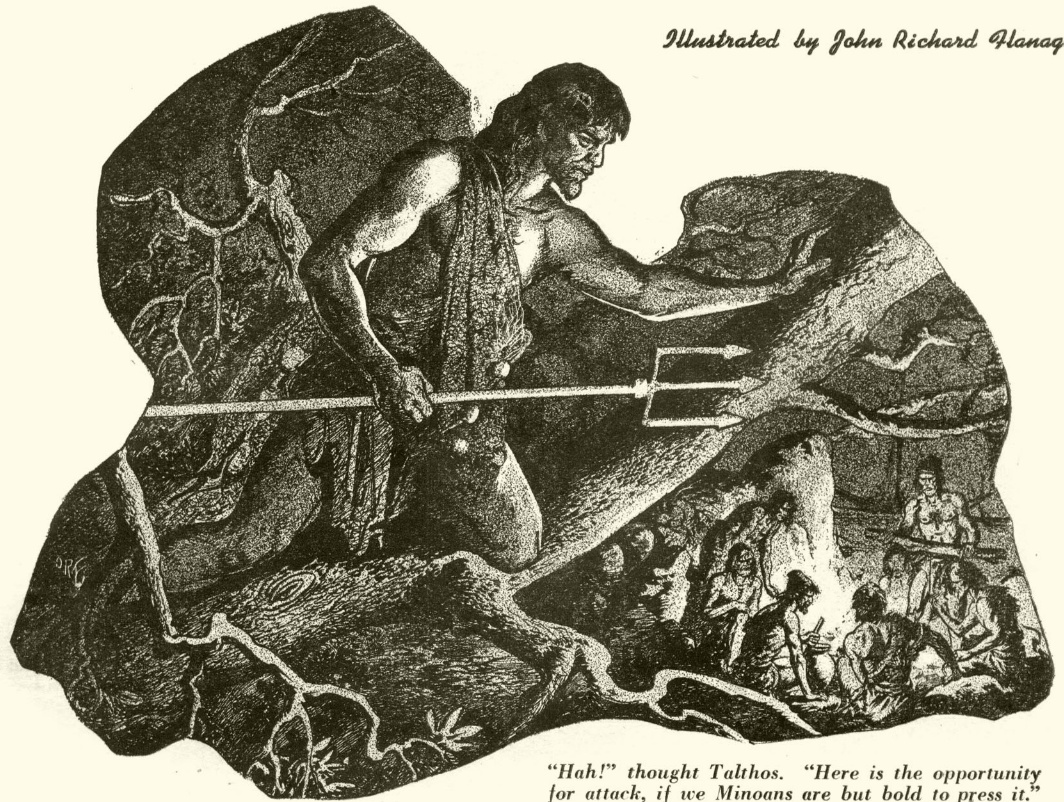
"Quiet!" Talthos hissed. "I am a Minoan."

She was bound to a post in a sitting position, and by a chance gleam of firelight through the withes of the hut, he saw the ropes and cut her free in a moment. In another instant he had the guard's dagger for the girl.

"Get into the tree!" he whispered. "You're gymnast enough, I'll wager. The city is in the direction of that low-hanging star, yonder above the mist."

Then, with grim humor, Talthos dragged first the pig and then the unconscious guard into the hut and roped them loosely to the post where the girl had been tied. The consternation thus produced would be worth more than the death of the man, he hoped. He darted to the tree and was scarcely in the branches before the pig recovered and began loudly squealing.

Illustrated by John Richard Flanagan



"Hah!" thought Talthos. "Here is the opportunity for attack, if we Minoans are but bold to press it."

Then he looked downward again and cursed. He had his trident gripped in his hand, but had forgotten the net. It was impossible to recover it now, so he swiftly swung to the next tree, and the next, where he found Euphloke crouched and waiting for him.

"Who are you?" she breathed uncertainly.

"Talthos—the fisherman, the fellow you're going to marry. Let's get on the way, quickly."

"Don't think this will win me!" she warned, and was off with a reckless skill that left Talthos, hampered by his trident, hard put to it to keep up with her.

Back by the prison-hut, men were running with torches to see what had happened. The first comers got their feet entangled in the forgotten net of Talthos, and pitched on their faces, the torches flying to gutter out or smolder in the dew-wet grass about the hut. Later comers, seeing the struggling mass, began to club at heads indiscriminately, thinking the hut under attack by Minoan rescuers. Soon there were bloody heads and faces among the Danæans.

The dazed guard had by now recovered, and stared at his supposed captive by the light of a flaring torch.

"Sorcery!" he cried. "The girl's a sorcerer! See—she has changed herself into a pig!"

"You're a fool, Anaxos!" jeered a cutting voice. "What became of the other guards?"

"She but waved her hand, and they vanished into the night at the same moment she became a pig!" cried Anaxos, eager to save his own skin by a tale of irresistible wonders. "I clung to the pole here, or I too would have been flung into the far reaches of the forest!"

"What were you doing in the hut?"

Talthos grinned in spite of their hazardous situation as the commotion about the hut faded on their ears. He and Euphloke crouched in the last big tree for a time, listening, before dropping to the ground.

Once on the mist-damp sod, they slipped like weaving shadows into a trail that led them—straight into the arms of a returning Danæan patrol. Hearing the faint sound of their coming, the Danæans had divided, to leap on the pair in the darkness.

"I thought that commotion in the camp meant something!" snarled a Danæan. "Drag them to the firelight; we'll see what we've caught."

Talthos swore in the Danæan tongue in an attempt to deceive their captors. But his command of the language was unconvincing. Trussing them like sacrificial swine, their captors dragged the pair back to the camp.

There were shouts of triumph when the Danæans in the rough village saw them. Dark glances of fear, as well; for many were convinced that the girl was a sorceress, with unknown power to do them harm.

No chances at all were taken with Talthos. They tied him so tightly that only his eyes and head could move, and thrust him into a wicker basket of the type used by barbarous European tribes to burn human or animal sacrifices alive. They flung the basket roughly against the wall of the prison-hut, in the glare of the flames. Fierce guards squatted about the hut, taunting their recaptured prisoner and their new captive, boasting of what they would do.

Through the interstices of his basket, Talthos could see a pigskin bottle, containing a sour wine by the smell, being passed from one guard to another while they filled his ears with dire threats of the agonizing death that was awaiting him and his fellow Minoans.

But the girl Euphloke had learned by her first experience; and when

they bound her roughly to the pole, she had tensed every strong muscle of her gymnast's body. Thus, when the last knot was tied, and the ropes and rawhide that bound her tested, she had a little slack—not much; but enough so that with agonizing slowness she worked one hand free. Quickly she released the other hand and went to work on her bonds.

She peered at the boasting guards outside, and located the basket in which Talthos was confined. She worked at the withes of the hut at the point where the basket lay. Then her fingers began pulling at the wicker of the basket, her nails chipping as she tore at the tough strands of willow.

"Minoan!" she whispered. "Can you cover the noise I am making?"

Talthos began to mutter, letting his voice grow louder as the sound of the breaking withes reached his ear.

"Hah!" jeered a guard. "He's praying to his gods, and tossing to and fro in the basket! Pray, Cretan—you'll bleat tomorrow, when we burn you before your city!"

The guard drank deeply of the wine in the emptying pigskin, and then crossed to sit on the basket itself. Talthos increased the tempo and the noise of his muttering as he saw the wicker bend down above him.

"Euphloke, that withe there; there's a stiffener inside. *Bull and Serpent, hear from your mountain.* . . . Loosen it a trifle more. Now the one to the left. *Gods of Ida, wing your messengers of mercy.* . . . Can you reach your hand through the hole yet? You might be able to release my bonds. *Father Nannar, wielder of power, smiter with thunderbolts ablaze with thy glory.* . . . Aye, there. There's a knot. Good; I can move my arms a little. *Father Nannar, great Anshar, attended by eagles.* . . . Now I can help; do you make a hole in the rear of the hut, away from the fire, while I enlarge this one in the basket. *Attend to my prayer.* . . ."

He let his droning voice taper to a whisper of sound, and knew as he lapsed to silence that the guard sitting above his shoulders was breathing with the deep and regular cadence of sleep. He peered through the wicker, seeing a guard across from him rouse for a moment, then lean against a tree again to drowse.

It was chancy work, worming out of the basket. He'd have liked to thrust a pig in to take his place out of sheer mockery, but dared not. Euphloke was ready at the back of the hut, the hole big enough to worm through.

They were silent as ghosts as they crept to the branches and made their way out over the sleeping camp. They had been careful the first time; they were seven times careful now. Dawn tinged the world's rim faintly as they reached the marsh.

PROETOS was pacing the floor when Talthos and the girl were brought in by cheering soldiers. His face lighted with a great gladness.

"Hei, give me the story!" he cried.

Talthos began to talk.

"What's this business of sorcery?" Prœtos asked, interrupting the tale. "Are you a sorcerer after all, fisherman?"

Skamandrios, summoned with the other chief captains, was convulsed with laughter at the thought of the look on Danæan faces when they looked for their captives in the morning. "How could he miss?" he chortled, "with Talthos a sorcerer and the girl a witch?"

Ukalegon alone was sullen, his face black as he listened to the account. It was blacker when Prœtos promised the fisherman-hero anything he wanted within the camp, including promotion on the spot to a captaincy.

"I—I can think of only one thing needed," said Talthos.

"Yes?"

"I dropped my best trident in the marsh, when the Danæans captured me. Could the smiths make me another?"

There was a roar of laughter.

"He should add one more request, Lord Prœtos," said Euphloke.

"Aye, Princess?"

The fisherman's eyes were wide at the title; he learned more concerning the dancer every day. His heart sank at the widening gulf between them.

"He should have bade you prepare for a wedding."

"Whose, Euphloke?"

"His and mine."

"But—Euphloke!" stammered Talthos. "I thought—you said even the rescue could give me no hope—"

"I decided it this way when I had to rescue you. You need somebody to take care of you and get you out of scrapes."

Talthos stared, slack-jawed. Then his arms were open, his heart ablaze with new and sudden gladness. Like a warming joy, the Dancing Flame was in his arms.

THE STEAM MACHINE DUEL

IN Jefferson County, Kansas, near the town of Tonganoxie, in 1896, there occurred what is still undoubtedly America's most fantastic duel.

The weapons the men used for their fight to the death were steam tractor engines, four-ton behemoths with little platforms behind the boiler and firebox from which the steering apparatus, throttle and reverse lever was controlled.

It all began when a farmer named Ehrhart decided he wanted to get his wheat crop threshed. In those days there were itinerant threshers who went around the countryside with their steam tractor machines and Ehrhart hired one of these, a man named Joe Peat, to do the job.

But something went wrong with Joe Peat's machine and he didn't show up on the day agreed upon.

Farmer Ehrhart, impatient, arranged for another thresher, John Stevens, to do the job. The next day John Stevens and his machine showed up—and so did Joe Peat and his machine, which had in the meantime been repaired.

As fate would have it, they arrived in front of Farmer Ehrhart's gate simultaneously, although from opposite directions.

The gate was only big enough to allow the passage of one of the machines. From their platform perches the two men glowered at one another. When one machine started up, so instantly did the other. Neither intended to yield.

Then, like a couple of armored, fire-smoking prehistoric beasts, the two machines went at each other.

The huge engines, their heads locked in combat, puffed and snorted, their great wheels tearing holes in the ground, like pawing bulls.

Neither machine was able to gain an advantage, and finally both backed away.

Then, after a moment of brooding silence, they again started up and again charged at each other. This time they came at one another from a greater distance and their throttles were wide open. But both men refused to jump to safety. Each, his jaw grimly set, stuck to his small platform.

The two engines collided with a mighty crash that could be heard for miles around. Both machines quivered like creatures in a death embrace.

Stevens was knocked off his platform and instantly killed; Peat was grievously burned and had to be carried away. Both of the huge steam machines were demolished and Farmer Ehrhart had to hire another man to do the threshing.

—*By* HAROLD HELFER

Finders, Keepers

Getting lost in the mountains can be fun if you're small boys with a dog, and an Uncle Everett whom you needn't take too seriously.

by OWEN CAMERON

UNCLE EVERETT sat down on this rock, and Rex sniffed at the hole under it. The tops of the mountains had snow on them, and there were trees all around for shade, but Uncle Everett was hot. He wiped his face and told us: "A true woodsman never gets lost, but if you ever should, remember to keep your head."

Mitch wiggled his, and said: "I guess it's on tight."

"I mean, don't get in a panic," Uncle Everett said. "Sit down, think calmly. Just pretending you were lost, Mitch, what would you do?"

"Go home," Mitch said.

Uncle Everett hollered: "No! That is, yes, if possible. But you don't know where we are, or which way the cabin is."

"We're right here, and the cabin is that way," Mitch pointed.

I thought it was too, but Uncle Everett said: "Nonsense. You'd end in Jewel Lake."

"Then I'd go swimming," Mitch said. Uncle Everett told him we'd been swimming, and Mitch said: "It's all worn off now. Anyhow, I want a drink, and I'm hungry. I want to go home."

So did I, but I guess Uncle Everett didn't. He kept coming back to this rock. He said: "Hungry? I have a bit of chocolate. Experienced woodsmen always carry something to sustain life, in case. . . . . Hmm—I must have eaten it, Never mind, we can live off the country if it comes to the worst. Edgar, what would you do if you were lost?"

I said: "Ask a policeman."

Uncle Everett kind of groaned. "No! The first thing to do is pick out a landmark, a big one, like a mountain or the sun."

Mitch asked, "Are you lost?"

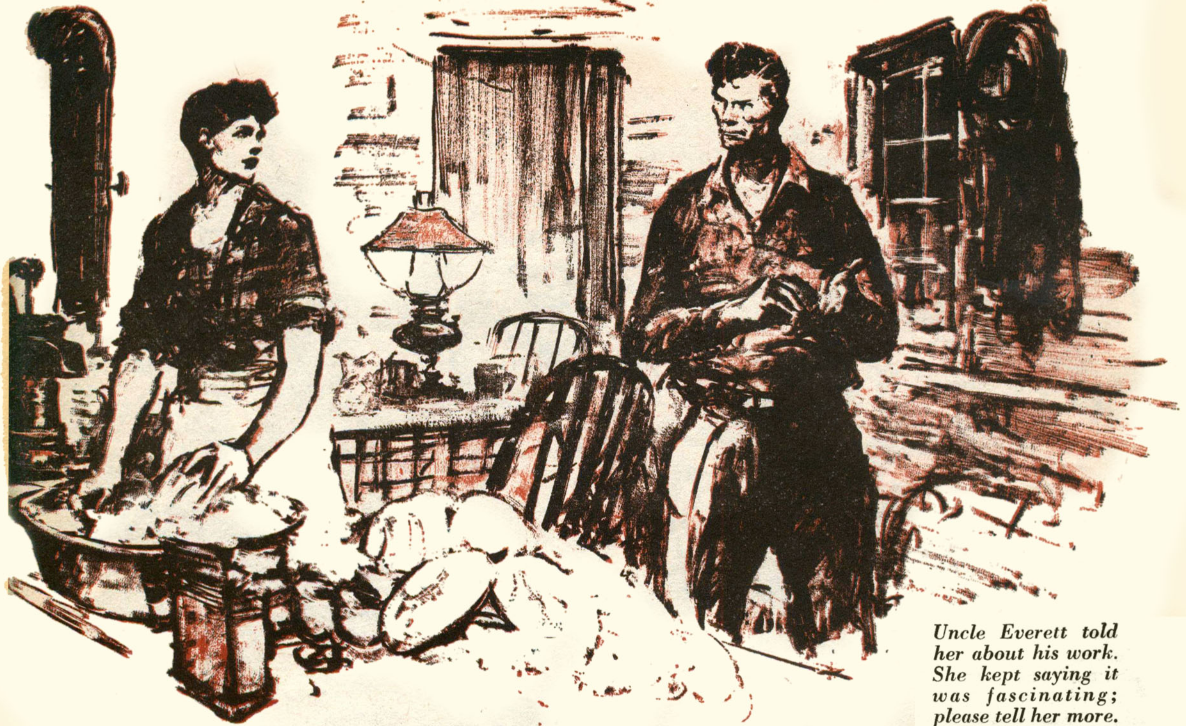
"Certainly not," Uncle Everett said. "When I was a boy, I knew every inch of this country. I'm merely trying to teach you woodcraft."

"I'd rather have a peanut-butter sandwich," Mitch said. "Why don't we stop pretending to be lost and go home?"

"After a while." Uncle Everett sounded cross. "I know it's difficult, but try to be silent a minute, while I think this out."

Uncle Everett had wanted a quiet place to work, and Father reminded him of this cabin, and said Uncle Everett could use it if he would take Mitch and me and Rex, because boys deserved a vacation in the country, and he needed one too. Mother said we wouldn't let him get anything done, but Uncle Everett said we would teach him to relax and keep his feet on the ground. Not only his feet, Father said.

The cabin was almost at the top of the world, with only some moun-



Uncle Everett told her about his work. She kept saying it was fascinating; please tell her more.

tains higher. It was so big and quiet that when Rex barked it kind of scared him, except one place where there was an echo. When he got lonely, he went to it and barked, for company. None of us had been there since I was born, because our grandfather had had a fight with Mr. Logan, who was a scoundrel.

Uncle Everett said Logan was probably dead by now, and anyhow he could ignore him. On the first day, instead of ignoring Mr. Logan, we hiked to where he lived, but he didn't. Nobody was there, so we had the whole of the mountains to ourselves.

This morning Uncle Everett gave up working early, after Rex tried to bury his briefcase and some of the papers got dirty. We went for a long hike to a creek, to go fishing, but the country had changed, and there was a lake instead. Uncle Everett said there were no fish except the two I caught, so we went in swimming. Then we started home by a shortcut, but it was a lot longer, because the country had changed.

Every time we came to this rock, Uncle Everett sat on it, and Rex worried about what was in the hole. Mitch poked a stick in, and hollered that something grabbed it, and wanted to go home right away.

"You have too much imagination," Uncle Everett said. "The sun's past noon, so over there must be west, but that still doesn't tell us which way the cabin is."

Mitch pointed, but before he could say anything, Uncle Everett hollered nonsense, and we started again. Rex didn't want to leave the hole, but after a while he ran after us and went ahead, and we walked and walked through the trees. We came to the rock again, and Uncle Everett sat down and patted Rex.

"Man's best friend," he said. "The old homing instinct."

Rex dug and snuffled under the rock and Mitch said he hoped nothing came out. The way it grabbed the stick, it must be pretty big.

"The country is beginning to look familiar again," Uncle Everett said. "When I was a kid up here, you couldn't lose me."

"You couldn't lose me," Mitch said.

"I know," Uncle Everett told him. "Though I've been tempted to try. Listen to me, so you'll know what to do when you're lost. For example, people often wander in a circle."

"When can we stop it and go home?" Mitch asked.

"Stop what?" Uncle Everett looked around.

"Rex always comes back to this rock," I said. "Is that hole too small for a bear?"

"No wonder the country was beginning to look familiar," Uncle Everett said. "Best friend, hah! But don't get excited, we aren't really lost. I'll just build a smoke-signal to—uh—to show you how it's done."

"I'm not lost," Mitch said. "I don't think Rex is, either. He just wants to get what's under there."

Uncle Everett gathered some sticks, but they wouldn't burn, and he said it was the wrong kind of wood, anyway, and went looking for another kind. I got some pine-needles, and we started the fire, and Uncle Everett came running and scolded us for playing with matches.

"Besides, it's not enough smoke," he said. "Nobody will see that."

"Except this lady," Mitch said.

She was coming out of the woods, with a fishing-rod and a basket. Rex barked at her, and then put his tail down and looked at the mountains.

The lady said, "Hi, people! Where did you get the tame lion?" She meant Rex. Mitch told her Rex was a police-dog, and she asked: "Why is he disguised? Are you tracking down criminals?"

Uncle Everett said hello, and Mitch asked if she was lost too, and Uncle Everett said: "Ha-ha! I was teaching the boy how not to get lost, and he's slightly confused."

"Are you camped near here?" asked the lady.

Uncle Everett told her: "We have a cabin over that way. Never mind, Mitch! —I'm Everett McReady, and these are my nephews, Edgar and Mitch Fearson. Mitch is the redhead."

Rex tried to put his feet on the lady's shoulders and kiss her, but she ducked, and smiled at Uncle Everett.

"McReady? The name sounds familiar."

"There's McReady Mountain, and a lake named for me," Uncle Everett told her. "The first settlers in here were my father and an old scoundrel

named— What did you say your name was?"

"Mary Smith," the lady told him.

Uncle Everett nodded. "We used to spend our summers up here, and I knew every rock."

"Rex knows this one," I said.

"Then my dad and old Logan quarreled, and this is the first time I've been back, since. The country has changed."

"It's Mother's cabin now," Mitch told the lady. "We don't use it because Mr. Logan is a scoundrel. Father says that's ancient history, and silly to begin with, but Mother says if he comes up here, he'll be alone, and he knows what his own cooking does to his stomach."

"Sounds like a feud," the lady said. "I'm a stranger here myself, but it's a beautiful country."

"Eddie Logan and his kid sister and I really explored it, in the old days," Uncle Everett told her. "The Logans brought up horses, and we'd swim in a new lake every day. Ride the horses right into the water."

"Horses can swim, like people?" Mitch asked.

Mary Smith said: "And now you are married and a professional ballplayer."

"Who, me?" asked Uncle Everett. "I haven't played since I was in high school, and I've never had time to get married, either."

"Uncle Everett is a professor, but not like Professor Hockmeyer," I told the lady. "He doesn't teach people how to play the piano."

"He's teaching us not to get lost," Mitch said. "But I'm hungry."

Mary Smith kept looking at Uncle Everett. "I could stand a little teaching myself. I think I'm lost—for the second time."

"You've come to the right man to help you," Uncle Everett told her.

"You were the only one I saw," the lady said. "But I'm glad I did."

"There aren't many people in the country," Uncle Everett said. "In fact, when I first saw you, I thought you might be someone else."

"I'm not that lost," Mary Smith told him. "I'm pretty sure camp is either that way or that way."

"North or south," Uncle Everett said. "That narrows it down, but perhaps we'd better make for our cabin, which is—uh—over there."

Mitch said it was the other way, and Uncle Everett told him: "Nonsense! Depend on the old woodsman's instinct. I've often wondered if I didn't have some Indian blood. Come along, Mitch."

But Mitch was stubborn. He said he wanted to go home, instead of wherever Uncle Everett was going, because he was tired of playing he was lost. Then Rex whoofed and backed out of the hole, and Mitch yelled: "Here it comes! I want to go home right now!"

Uncle Everett hollered after him, but Mary Smith said why not let Mitch prove himself wrong, and then he would listen to reason, so we followed Mitch.

Uncle Everett told Mary Smith that next time she was lost not to get excited, but look for moss and sit down and think about it. She said she would, and she might have stayed lost forever, until she starved to death, only for Uncle Everett; and he told her how a true woodsman could live for years on things he snared and raw plants, and how he knew every rock in the country, especially one.

Mary Smith said he had saved her life, and he said that was exaggerating a little, but he would be glad to, any time; and she made him promise to teach her how not to get lost. They walked slower and slower, so Mitch and me and Rex went on ahead.

At the cabin, we drank some water and ate a sandwich, and let Rex clean off the lid of the peanut-butter jar, and then went back and found them before Uncle Everett got back to the rock again. He was telling Mary Smith how he could go into the wilderness with nothing but a knife, and come out six months later wearing skins and in perfect condition, and she had never heard such amazing things before.

"It's time we were married," Sally said. "Will you fellows help me?"

Mr. Logan sighed. "No feud like an old feud. . . . And here you go and make it worse."

At the cabin, Mary Smith said if Uncle Everett would clean the trout she had caught, she would cook them. She was starved after wandering all day, and only for Uncle Everett would still be, and she practically owed him her life, let alone a few trout.

So while Uncle Everett talked, she cleaned the fish, and then cooked supper. Rex ate the fish-heads, and we ate trout and bacon and scrambled eggs and hot biscuits, and Uncle Everett said it was the best meal we'd had. The other times we'd had beans.

After supper Uncle Everett said it was getting late, and we had better take the car and hunt for Mary Smith's camp, but she told him it wasn't along the road, and she wouldn't go until she'd washed the dishes.

"We might have a hard time finding it after dark," Uncle Everett told her.

She smiled at him. "You're so right! We'll wait till morning, then. I can sleep in the front bedroom, if no one is using it. Mitch and Edgar can be chaperons, and Rex is a police-dog." Uncle Everett started to say something, and she asked: "Or is there a front bedroom? I guessed it, from the way the cabin is built."

"Oh," Uncle Everett said. "Well, won't your—uh—husband worry?"

"I'm not married," she told him. "Though I am engaged to a childhood sweetheart. I think I can manage him—I have so far, and besides, he's not at the camp. One of those things."

"Oh, one of those things," Uncle Everett said.

Mary Smith washed the dishes, and Uncle Everett held a towel and told her about his work. Father said it was so complicated even Uncle Everett didn't understand all of it, but she did. She kept saying it was fascinating, and please tell her more.

Mitch and me and Rex went down to the echo, and when Rex barked, we hollered, "Sic 'im, Rex!" and he thought the echo was another dog, but he couldn't find it. When he was too tired to bark any more, it was dark, and we went back to the cabin.

Mary Smith and Uncle Everett were sitting by the fire, and Uncle Everett told her: "I feel as though I'd known you all my life. What's this fellow like? You know who I mean."

"He's tall," she said. "Nice looking, in the same shaggy way Rex is, and *very* intelligent. I was in love with him for years, without realizing it."

"I suppose you know what you're doing," Uncle Everett said. "But you don't want to rush into marriage."

"I'm not," she told him. "Though a girl can't wait too long. Once I almost lost him."

Mitch asked if that was today, and Uncle Everett said go to bed, and then forgot about us again. He told Mary Smith that if she wanted to come outside, he'd show her the North Star.

"Nothing I'd like better," she said. "I learn slowly, but you'll be patient, won't you?"

Uncle Everett said he had all night, and told us we couldn't come. After they had gone outside, Mitch and I ate a sandwich, and Rex went to sleep under the table. He had worked pretty hard, trying to catch the echo.

All of a sudden Rex barked and jumped up, but he forgot he was under the table, and it fell over on him. Mitch thought it was a bear outside, or the thing in the hole that grabbed his stick; but then we heard a car, and when we opened the door, we could see the lights.

Uncle Everett and Mary Smith had seen it too, and she said: "Oh, dear, he's coming after me."

"I thought you said he wasn't at your camp?" Uncle Everett asked.

"Not *him*. Listen, can't we hide? I—I'll explain later. I'm a fugitive from—from a chain-gang. But I was innocent. I escaped and—and—"

"Went fishing? Come, come!" said Uncle Everett.

"I was a trustee, or something," she told him. "Let's hide until he goes."

"You stay here," Uncle Everett said. "I'll see who it is. Chain-gang, h'm?"

The car had stopped, but whoever it was did not get out, because Rex was there, and I guess they thought he would bite, but he hardly ever bites hard. We followed Uncle Everett to the car, and there was an old man in it, though it was too dark to see him good.

"Good evening," he said. "I didn't expect to find anyone here. My name is Logan, and my place is—"

"I'm Everett McReady, Mr. Logan."

The man leaned out of the car and then leaned back, but Rex almost got him. "Little Everett? That dirty-faced— Hmm, you've grown up."

"You sound astonished," Uncle Everett said, the way Mother does when she is mad and extra polite.

Rex tried to get in the car, but I pulled him away, and Mitch found the man's glasses, and after he put them on again, he said: "It's just that I never thought you'd make it, Everett. We came up last night, and this morning my daughter went fishing. You couldn't lose her, but accidents will happen, and when it got dark—"

Uncle Everett said in a funny voice: "Daughter?"

"I thought if she'd turned an ankle or something, this might be the nearest shelter. There hasn't been anyone here since— You haven't seen her?"

"I have," Uncle Everett said. *"Delilah!"*

"Sally," said Mr. Logan. "You've forgotten her name, after the way you two were always together?"

Mary Smith came out of the dark and said: "He'd even forgotten my face. I hate you, Pops."

"Lost," Uncle Everett said. "Leading me on to make a fool of myself! But you always were a liar."

Mary Smith told him: "And you'd forgotten that last summer, when the feud started and we were forbidden even to speak, and you swore to be faithful forever, or until you had made fifty dollars playing for the New York Giants and could afford to get married."

"Puppy love!" Uncle Everett said. Mitch pulled his sleeves and wanted to know what puppies, but Uncle Everett kind of shook him off and said: "Letting me show *you* the North Star."

MARY SMITH giggled. "You showed me Venus."

"Very amusing," Uncle Everett said. "All right, you've had your laugh."

"It wasn't a joke," she told him. "But the boys called Papa a scoundrel —quoting you, presumably. I didn't want to start feuding right away."

"Regret that," Mr. Logan put in. "First place, I did not cheat your father out of the mine. Second place, it was utterly worthless, and if he was alive in the first place, he could have it back."

"Deceit seems to be a family trait," said Uncle Everett. "Mary Smith!"

"You see, you *are* feuding," she told him. "And I'll bet you're engaged to someone else."

"I was a child," Uncle Everett said. "I was fifteen, and you took advantage of my innocence."

"I was twelve," she said.

"How old are the puppies?" Mitch asked.

Uncle Everett did not hear him. He said good night in a loud voice, and started to walk away. Mr. Logan asked the lady what was going on.

"Just stubborn," she said. "Why did you have to come here, Papa?"

"I'm sorry," Mr. Logan told her. "Even if I don't know why."

"Oh, he'd have to know eventually," she said. "And I'll manage. Isn't he the sweetest brute?"

Uncle Everett said:

"Edgar, you and Mitch come here! Of all the people in the world, do you have to associate with those two?"

Mr. Logan sighed. "No feud like an old feud. I'd like to get it off my conscience. Young people are supposed to patch those things up, and here you go and make it worse."

"A temporary setback," the lady said. "I think he's safe until morning, or I'd let the air out of his tires."

UNCLE EVERETT hollered: "Logan, you're on private property! Take that woman with you, too. Mitch, sic Rex on them."

"I can't do much while he's in this fighting mood," the lady said, and got into the car. She yelled: "See you in the morning, Ev."

The car drove away, and we went back to the cabin, and Mitch asked Uncle Everett about the puppies to love. First Uncle Everett wouldn't answer, and then he yelled at us to go to bed, so we did. There was nothing else to stay up for, anyway.

Next morning while we were eating beans and peanut-butter, we heard a car. Rex ran out to bark at it, but Uncle Everett hollered at us to sit down, and bolted the door.

The lady tried the door and then looked in the window. She said, "Hi, fellers!" and Rex put his feet on the sill and looked in too.

Mitch said: "Hi! What's your name this morning?"

"Shut up and eat your breakfast," Uncle Everett told him.

"Sally Logan," the lady said. "From Rex's greeting, I imagined all was forgiven. Come on out and play, Ev."

Uncle Everett did not hear her. He told me to close the window, and Sally Logan said: "I'll apologize, or sit up and beg, or anything. Don't you see how it happened? I thought if I told you who I was, you'd start feuding before I had a chance to work on—right away. So I said I was Mary Smith—and you start feuding!"

"An extremely amusing joke," Uncle Everett kind of muttered to himself. "Leading me on to brag about my infallible sense of direction, and rubbing two sticks together for a fire, and so on. Ha-ha! Will you shut that window, Edgar?"

I went to shut the window, and Sally Logan whispered she would give me a quarter if I walked down the road to the bridge after breakfast. Then she went back to the car and drove away.

Uncle Everett said: "I didn't think I'd get rid of her that easily. Well, easy come, easy go."

I DIDN'T say anything about the quarter, because he was mad at her and didn't want to talk about her. After breakfast Uncle Everett said he was going to get some work done if he had to bind and gag us, and I asked if we could go down to the bridge. Uncle Everett said it was a very good idea, and to stay there, and not trot back every five minutes to ask if it was noon yet.

Sally Logan was waiting at the bridge. She gave Mitch a quarter and me thirteen cents and said she would owe me the rest. She told us:

"I must have had second-sight as a kid. Who'd have imagined he would be like this? Is he engaged? What's the competition like? Brief me on his private life."

She wanted to know all about Uncle Everett, so we told her he was pretty old, and Mother said he would be thirty before he knew it, and should find some nice girl before his hair started going. But Father said Uncle Everett was no fool, and the woman who caught him would have to get up early.

"I'll stay up all night, if necessary," Sally Logan said. "Your mother and I agree. What about you two? Would you like an aunt?"

"We got some already," Mitch said.

She said oh, and to tell her more about Uncle Everett, and I told her he was a doctor and a bachelor and a professor, but he still went to school, and was smart by degrees. Mother said he could be a genius, only he was too modest, and Father said Uncle Everett was the only one on her side with a glimmer of sense.

"Father says Uncle Everett is a special case," I told her.

"That's so true," Sally Logan said. "I wonder if his suppressed desires brought him back here?"

"He's going to write a piece about atoms," Mitch said.

"Maybe he just thinks that," she said. "Defense mechanism in action.

He was telling me about his silly atoms last night. When we're married, I'll have to train him, conversationally."

"They don't have anything to do with the bomb," I told her. "He said he couldn't even make us a little one."

Mitch wanted to know how she could get married to Uncle Everett if he was mad at her, and she said: "We've been engaged twelve years, and it's time we were married. Will you fellows help me?"

Mitch said he would, and I guess Rex was willing, but she had only given me thirteen cents. So she promised to give me the rest tomorrow.

"I won't ask anything treasonable," she said. "Just spy on him, and tell me if he broods over my picture, and so on. I'll see that he gets one."

So we went back to spy on Uncle Everett. He was mad because it wasn't noon, on account of his system. If we left him alone until lunch, except in emergency, then he would take us swimming and fishing, and show us how to make tracks and which way was north, only he said that was hard to tell, because the whole country had changed. So we didn't bother him, except to ask what time it was, or if the snakes we had were poisonous, and if there was gold in rocks we found, and other emergency things.

This morning he said he couldn't get his mind on his work, anyhow, but he was mad about something else. We spied on him, and he kept asking why we were looking at him that way, but we didn't tell.

At supper time Sally Logan came again, but Uncle Everett locked all the doors and windows, and wouldn't let us answer when she knocked, but he couldn't stop Rex barking. No one ever could.

Sally Logan hollered that she knew he was in there, and he wasn't very polite, and then went away. Uncle Everett said he didn't know where people got the idea the country was quiet, and he might as well try to work in the subway during the rush hours.

Next morning we went down to the bridge and threw sticks into the creek for Rex until Sally Logan came. We told her everything Uncle Everett had done, and she gave me the money I had coming, and each of us another quarter, and a banana. She said next time she would bring one for Rex too, because she didn't think the skins were good for him.

"So he can't work?" she said. "That's a good sign, but not good enough. And I can't get anywhere while he locks himself in—personal contact is needed. He's too innocent to realize what's wrong, and stubborn enough to rush back to the city. I'd hate to have to wait another twelve years. Listen, would you like a horse to ride?"

Illustrated by
JOHN FULTON

"I'd rather have an elephant, like in the circus," Mitch said.

"The truck brought the horses this morning," she said. "You can each have one to ride."

Mitch thought she was fooling him. "Horses in a truck? Who drives it?"

"A man," she said. "The objective is to get him out of the house, and emotionally softened."

"What would they do if the man got sick?" Mitch asked.

"He never is. Or maybe one of the horses can drive. Yours is named Alice, and she's a sorrel, like you; and Edgar's is Babe, and they are sisters. Now, this is what you're to do—"

"Sisters?" Mitch interrupted. "Can horses be sisters?"

"These are," she told him. Mitch didn't know whether to believe her, and he thought about it all the while she told me what to do. She said if we brought Rex, please put a leash on him, because he was a major distraction, and she would have her hands full, she hoped.

When we got home, Uncle Everett said it wasn't noon, but he couldn't seem to work, and no wonder grandfather had never come back here, or let any of the family. Mitch asked if a horse could drive a truck, and Uncle Everett told him not to be silly—only people could drive.

"Well, can a horse be sisters?" Mitch wanted to know, and Uncle Everett said two horses could be, and Mitch said: "Then if they can be sisters like people and swim like people, why can't they drive a truck like people?"

Uncle Everett said not to talk nonsense. He was pretty cranky, the way Father gets sometimes.

When it was noon, Mitch and me and Rex went up on a little hill, like Sally Logan had told us to do, and came down and told Uncle Everett

When Uncle Everett saw her, he stopped. He said: "Hah! A trap!"

Uncle Everett asked if it hurt that much, but I remembered what we had promised to do. Rex and Mitch wanted to stay and watch, but I made them come with me to the big tree she had told us about, and there was a horse. It was a lot bigger than Rex, and I said hello Babe, and Mitch said hello Alice, but I guess it wasn't either of the sisters. I dared Mitch to get on, and he dared me, and so we both did. I guess it scared Rex to see us way up there, because he barked, and the horse kind of moved, so we got off before it could run away.

We untied the horse, and it followed us all right, the way she had said it would. Uncle Everett was kind of holding Sally Logan, so she wouldn't have to lean against the rock.

"Aren't you mad at her any more?" Mitch asked.

"Who, me?" Uncle Everett said. "Guess what? As soon as Sally can hobble around, she's going to keep you kids amused while I work, and after lunch we'll go riding and fishing, so that I can get familiar with the country again."

"Not only the country," Sally Logan said to us. "And I'll enjoy your company, mornings, and it will be experience for me. Maybe I'll work into something permanent in the line of looking after kids."

"We have to go back to town next month," I said.

"I know," she told me. "I had something else in mind."

Uncle Everett asked, "Where did you find the horse?"

"Over there," Mitch said.

"Over where? How would a horse just happen to be—"

someone was lost, the way we almost were, and had made a signal-smoke. Uncle Everett said it was probably some camper cooking lunch.

"It's way over near a mountain," Mitch said. "It looks like a lost fire."

Uncle Everett went with us to the little hill and looked at the smoke, and said probably we wouldn't give him any rest until we knew the cause, and he needed the exercise anyhow.

The smoke was over by the edge of a mountain, and when we got there we didn't see anybody at first, because she was sitting behind a rock.

When Uncle Everett saw her, he stopped, but she didn't see us, or even hear Rex bark. She had her shoe and stocking off and was rubbing her foot. Uncle Everett said: "Hah! A trap!"

When he took a step backward, Sally Logan looked around and said: "Thank goodness! I was afraid no one would ever come."

"Hah!" Uncle Everett said. "I suppose you're lost?"

"I hurt my ankle," she told him. "I can't walk."

"More deceit?" asked Uncle Everett.

Sally Logan said: "All right, go your way and leave me here. Maybe someone else will see the smoke—tomorrow or the next day."

She put her head down and began to cry. Uncle Everett said: "You could be telling the truth, though it's odd that—let me examine that ankle."

"Gladly," Sally Logan said.

So Uncle Everett looked at her ankle and said: "Hmmm!"

She asked him what was the matter.

"The ankle seems to be slightly inflamed," Uncle Everett said, "though not swollen out of—uh—proportion. I suppose we'll have to get you home."

"Perhaps some of you could go for help," Sally Logan said, and made a face at me.

But before he had finished, Sally Logan tried to stand up, and grabbed Uncle Everett so she wouldn't fall down, and he held her and said: "Take it easy—let me carry you."

So he put her on the horse and went back to throw dirt on the fire, and she leaned down and whispered to me: "I'm doing all right. If I could have arranged for a snowstorm and staked out a preacher instead of the horse, it would be all over now."

Uncle Everett came back, and she told us, out loud: "You kids might as well go on ahead. And if we're late, don't worry. We won't be lost."

"Not with my sense of direction," Uncle Everett said. "Everything's coming back to me."

"Everything," Sally Logan said. "See you later, boys."

It was almost dark before they reached the cabin, and the peanut-butter was all gone.

Tracking horsethieves to their hide-out is risky business for a seventeen-year-old poet. But sometimes fortune favors the foolhardy.

The Door in

DON FERNANDO pulled angrily at his long white mustaches, which resembled the horns of a wild steer. It was not improving the elderly *hacendado's* disposition to look out over his realm, the hills and valleys of his splendid ranch, or off toward the lilac mists where his rich new mine was; for directly in his line of vision was the corral from which, last night, four of his finest horses had been stolen by bold and discriminating horsethieves from Arizona.

The four were black Spanish Barbs, a stallion and three brood mares, one at the very point of foaling, which he had imported at enormous expense to improve his saddle stock and to perpetuate a famous bloodline.

He glared at the heavy Spanish serape which covered his knees. A broken hip is no small matter at any age. At the venerable age of Don Fernando Gaspar Cordova y Rincal de Torreon, it is hopeless. The doctors said he would never ride again, but must reconcile himself to a life of inertness, directing his enterprises but taking no active part. So there he sat, this fierce proud old man, propped up on pillows, a man of action who would never again mount one of his magnificent horses.

"If I were not as helpless as an old woman," he fumed, "I would go after those thieves myself." The statement was not open to doubt.

From where he sat on the wide windswept veranda outside his quarters, Don Fernando also commanded the road which wound over the hills toward Hermosillo, where his fearless son, his capable foreman Gonzales and his two stalwart, swaggering grandsons had ridden three days ago, leaving behind as his comfort and his staff his youngest grandson Miguel, who was a thin undersized boy of seventeen.

Miguel stood respectfully beside him, keenly aware of his inadequacy.

"Grandfather!" he said suddenly. "I have a plan!"

"And what, pray, may I ask," his grandfather inquired sourly, "is this magnificent plan?"

"I will follow them to where they live," said Miguel, his eyes aglow with his inspiration. "I will need but one man to assist me. Him I will station as a decoy on a nearby hilltop. At a signal from me, he will fire his revolver. When the thieves come running out in fear and bewilderment, I will go rushing in, fling open the corral gates and mount the stallion. Away we will go like the wind! I need no saddle, for I have ridden him bareback many times. And where he goes, the mares will follow!"

Don Fernando took a great breath; and his color which had been an arresting red, now turned to an improbable cerise.

"Ay! Ay! Ay! Ay! Ay!" the old man roared. "You and your imagination, which is a trait of lovesick women! When I need a man of deeds, what do I get? A silly poet! Out of my sight, you—you *señorito!*"

All of the color left Miguel's small, sensitive face, and his eyes blazed.

He stalked with dignity to his room, holding back tears of humiliation and rage. A sissy! He brooded for some time, then tried to lose himself in his poetry, but he needed someone's understanding, and it was quite natural for him to go to Trinidad Gonzales, the daughter of Gonzales the foreman, a slim, spirited girl of sixteen with whom he had grown up. He was painfully in love with Trinidad; and sometimes he believed she reciprocated it. He had written a new poem having to do with Trinidad's eyes and the stars in the purple sky of night; but she would not listen to it.

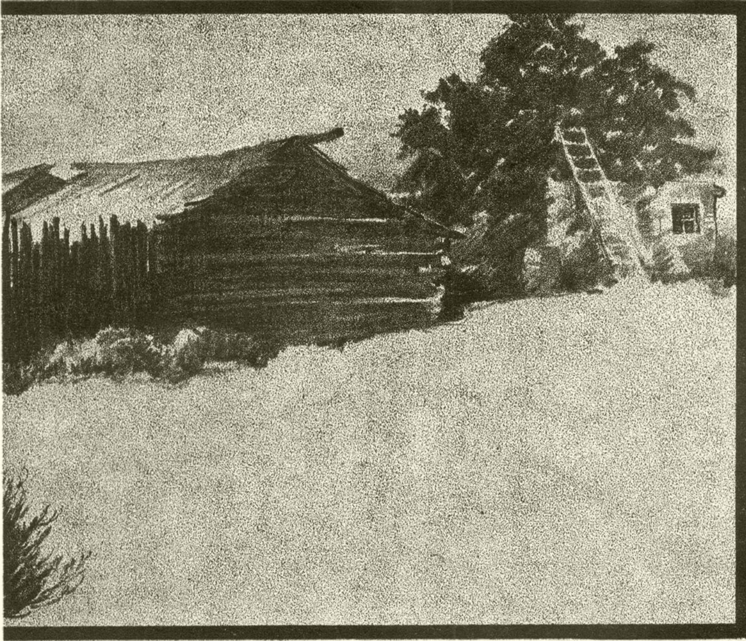
"I have no interest in poems today, Miguel," she said. "I have interest only in men brave enough to chase horsethieves."

"I am such a man," Miguel stated.

She looked at him as she had never looked at him before—at his soulful eyes, his sensitive mouth, his downy cheeks, his slight frame; then she laughed, and it was the most insulting laugh Miguel had ever heard.

BY nightfall the feeling in Miguel's heart had changed like a sword wound from a deep hurting to an angry festering; and pride struck so deep was recklessly demanding its right to strike back.

It was not only his grandfather and Trinidad Gonzales. It was his father, his swaggering brothers, the capable Gonzales and all those others who thought of him only as a delicate, poetic boy. He would demon-



by GEORGE WORTS

the Desert

strate to the world that in his poet's body there lived a man of deeds!

That night, as soon as the ranch was asleep, Miguel stealthily saddled his horse and set out. With no sleep, few pauses for rest, he rode through the night and all the next day under a sun that resembled a crucible of incandescent metal spilling out its wrath into that arid land. It must have been his angry heart that gave him such endurance.

He paused briefly for lunch with friends in Tubac, Arizona; he paused again in midafternoon at the Triple-Bar-R ranch, but only long enough to swap horses, because the horse he had borrowed in Tubac went lame. He rode most of that night. It was nearing dawn when he approached a turn in the cañon where he had been told the three outlaws he was looking for had their hide-away ranch.

He was so tired he could hardly sit his saddle. And the little Triple-Bar-R mare was in bad shape too—stumbling and groaning at every step.

Though dawn was only about an hour away, the cañon walls still gave back some of the warmth of yesterday's ferocious sun. The stars of Arizona flickered like the points of white-hot probes, lighting the cañon with a soft deceptive dusk. Now and then one of them would seem to sputter with blue-white fire; and when this happened, Miguel could almost hear the sizzling across millions of miles of space. In his exhausted state, everything was beginning to have a dreamlike quality.

The mare had halted again. After her last mournful groan, her breathing seemed to stop, and the silence in the cañon was now absolute. In such majestic silence, the poet reasoned, a man should be able to hear the very sound of his personality—whining apology, or bullying bluster, or beautiful harmony. Holding his breath to listen, Miguel began to hear a soft pulsing like the rise and fall of waves on a silver strand; and this, he imagined, was the poetic cadence of his being.

Then he heard the shiveringly soft, inquiring whinny of a horse; and he discovered before him like a lunar mirage a grassy shelf with vague shapes of corrals, and beyond them a cottonwood tree under which low, dark buildings huddled.

He had arrived! This was the place that had been described to him—the lair of the three notorious outlaws!

Miguel's breath was pinched to a shrill whisper in his throat, and an icy chill went over him; then these unpleasant symptoms passed, leaving only the fear that his capacity for this adventure had oozed out of him with the last of his endurance miles back. However, there was still a portion of his fierce determination to draw on, but he was now afraid that when he dismounted and started afoot toward the corrals, the trembling muscles in his legs would not hold him up.

Por Diós, what an opportunity this was to prove himself a man entitled to all men's respect and admiration! He had every advantage over his enemies—to begin with, that of surprise; for this was the hour before dawn, when men sleep most soddenly. He had only to steal into the smaller of the two corrals, to mount the stallion and ride away, and the three mares would follow like shadows. By the time that the three outlaws could gather themselves together, could saddle horses and start, he and the four Barbs would be so far away that pursuit would be ridiculous.

THE mare stood spraddle-legged, her sides suddenly heaving, her head drooping until her nose touched the sand in the dry cañon bed. She was an admirable animal, considering her breeding; but she had gone as far as her kind of horseflesh can go.

Miguel felt her legs giving like candles softened by heat. He slid to the ground as she collapsed. He loosened the cinch so that she might breathe more freely; then he straightened up and started purposefully toward the corrals, groaning silently with the ache in his loins.

His progress was as silent as that of a cloud shadow. Miles back, he had greased his boots with ham fat to silence their squeaking, and wrapped his spurs with strips torn from his shirttail to muffle their jingling.

As he approached the near corral, he comforted himself with the reflection that his particular star in the heavens was guiding him and that success was within his grasp. His breathing deepened. His muscles seemed to harden, and he felt the in-

toxication of challenge like strong wine.

With the stealth of a coyote, the lad glided past the large corral and toward the smaller one and the cluster of low buildings under the cottonwood tree.

A horse in the small corral whistled eerily.

Miguel stopped with a taste like corroded brass in his mouth. He watched the buildings, with a hand gripping the butt of the old-fashioned revolver in the holster at his side. He assured himself he was prepared, nay, eager to shoot it out with anyone foolish enough to attempt to interfere.

Nothing happened. No light appeared. Nothing moved. His heart calmed. He disengaged his teeth from his lower lip, and obeying the reflexes of relief, ran the rest of the way. He opened the corral gate, and leaving it open, went in.

There were only the four horses in this corral, the stallion and the three mares. In the starglow he could distinguish them against the pale cañon wall—those four black Spanish Barbs, those drinkers of the wind, with their small, dainty muzzles and flaring nostrils, their arched necks, their powerfully muscled quarters. Poems in horseflesh! For those few moments his admiration and delight made him forgetful of the caliber of the men from whom he was stealing the horses.

He recalled the newborn colt he had come upon lying dead and swollen in the desert under the pitiless sun, and his anger at that wanton waste of fine horseflesh returned. The mare that had foaled that colt had been given only time enough to drop it, and had then been ridden thirty miles. Never in all the world of horses had there been a bloodline to compare with the Spanish Barb for greatness of heart, for sailing stride, for thirstless endurance!

Immense purple-brown eyes glowed at him. He touched the cool, moist, velvety nose of the stallion. His hand ran along the thick black mane. Oh, stars of Barbary, make these jewels of horseflesh mine!

"Just put your hands up above your head," an amused voice said behind him. "And don't try for the gun."

THE poet's breath left him in a whispering sob. He started to reach for the revolver, but prudence changed the course of his hand, and he placed it with the other above his head.

"Señor, I comprehend. Do not shoot."

"Welcome to our humble hacienda!" said the narrow dark obstruction against the stars. "My house, anything in it that might gratify your slightest whim, is yours."

"I will follow them to where they live," said Miguel, eyes aglow.

"A thousand thanks, señor, a thousand thanks! May the saints guard and cherish you and your house!"

"Well, let's get along and have a look at you."

He took the boy's ancient firearm. He closed and fastened the gate and conducted Miguel into a room in which a light had just come on.

Two men were sitting up in bunks, pulling on their boots. One was a heavy-shouldered man with long yellow hair and a blotched red face. The other had curly black hair, white, even teeth and a vacuous grin, red-lipped and startling in a short curly beard.

Miguel recognized them from their descriptions. The blond one with the pale-blue pink-rimmed eyes was called Tex Jenkins, and the dark one with the imbecile grin was Smiley Lorrel. The third one, the one who had surprised him, was Red Mac Cumber, and he was said to be their leader and one of the fastest men on the draw in Arizona Territory.

This man had silky copper-colored hair and wore black: black hat, black shirt, black pants, black boots. He was tall and skinny, with narrow square shoulders. His face was thin and bony, and his small dark eyes, set far apart like a deer's, were steady and cold. He was said to have been a college professor who had had to leave the East because of a shooting caused by a woman.

"I found him in the corral," he said carelessly, "just getting ready to take his pick of the Barbs."

Tex Rankin came to his feet with a loose wet grin that displayed yellow, decayed teeth. He was fully six feet tall and powerfully built.

"Looks like they're growin' 'em purtier every year," he drawled.

The three men gazed speculatively at their horsethief, this olive-skinned poet of seventeen with his large brown eyes, his long thick upcurving lashes, his girlish beauty-mark, a mole low on the downy left cheek; and their young horsethief gazed back at them. Though his eyes had the satiny glaze of a cornered rat's, he was less frightened than fascinated. So these were the three famous outlaws of whom he had heard so much! His volatile imagination was already setting the stage for the scene in which he would tell his admiring grandfather and the adoring Trinidad of his fearlessness, his coolness in facing the three notorious bad men.

HE saw the expressions slowly change in their faces, the amusement, the speculation giving way to something else. Decision perhaps! The chilling realization came to him that there was only one decision they could make. But they would probably take their time about it, because they were amused by the incongruous combination of his daring and his youth. Perhaps they admired him for his audacity. Perhaps they would ask him to become one of them!

Tex Jenkins hitched up his pants and walked slowly toward Miguel. "Ain't you gonna speak up, bub?" he said. "Ain't you gonna tell us how you got lost from yore mamma and got into that corral by mistake?"

The boy stared up at him with a faint smile. He suspected that something unpleasant might happen, but he could not guess what it was. Let them see his fearlessness, and they would respect him! He was unprepared when Tex Jenkins slapped him across the mouth with the back of his big brown hand.

It was as shocking as the blow of a fist. It was the first time in Miguel's life that anything of the kind had happened to him.

Red Mac Cumber reached out leisurely and lifted the kerosene lamp from the table an instant before Miguel fell back against it, overturning it and falling to the hard-packed mud-and-oxblood floor.

The three outlaws gazed down at him expectantly, and he stared up at them with pained bewilderment and

reproach. The blond man had stopped smiling. Red Mac Cumber's mouth was a flat thin streak tucked in at the corners. Only Smiley Lorrel was smiling still, and his was the vacuous smile of a delighted idiot child.

Red Mac Cumber hooked his thumbs into his belt-loops.

"Got anything to say, son?"

The poet felt blood trickling down from his bruised mouth. The left side of his face was numb, but he felt the blood trickling.

"No, señor." There was no quaver in his voice. It wasn't strong, but it was controlled; it was a long way from quavering, just as he was a long way from breaking, and he hoped they realized it.

"Come here alone?"

"Yes, señor."

The tall thin man in black jerked his head toward the door. Smiley Lorrel nodded eagerly and slipped out.

"Where are you from?"

"Tubac, señor."

"Tubac. A long way."

"Yes, señor. A long way."

"Let's take the little rat out," said the blond man, "and git done with it."

The tall thin man glanced at him.

"There is something peculiar here," he said. "What's your name, son?"

"Pablo Gomez, señor." Before they hanged him, he would tell them his real name and ask them to get the news to his grandfather that he had died fearlessly. It was not, for those times, an unreasonable or an unusual request.

"Pablo, eh?"

"Yes, señor. Pablo Gomez."

"Of Tubac."

"Yes, señor. Of Tubac."

"You're saying you rode all this way from Tubac to steal one of our Barbs?"

Miguel met his eyes unflinchingly. "I do not deny it, señor."

"Who told you they were here?"

"A Papago."

"Where?"

"In Tubac, señor."

It was like a duel with rapiers in which the tall thin man was trying to get past his guard, and Miguel was trying to find an opening. Out of Mac Cumber's very suspiciousness, the poet was thinking, he might somehow manufacture an opportunity.

The man in black smiled thinly, and Miguel smiled too, but his mouth was still so numb from that knuckle slap that he could not tell what kind of smile it was. He wanted it to be a fearless, a defiant smile. He reasoned that the instant he betrayed cowardice, Red Mac Cumber would lose interest in him as a person, and would treat him as a horsethief.

"You are either a very brave lad, a liar, or a fool, Pablo. Which is it?"

"I am afraid I am a fool, señor."

The red-haired man smiled. "Pablo, I am afraid you are right. Get up. Tex, go through him."

Tex Jenkins searched his pockets. He found a length of cowhide thong, an old bone-handled knife, a small cube-shaped lump of glossy white rock and a scrap of paper. He glanced at the paper.

"Spanish," he said, and gave it to Red Mac Cumber.

The leader of the outlaws held the paper so that light from the lamp fell upon it. He smiled.

"Poetry," he said. "Love poetry. Listen! 'To Trinidad:

"'Thine eyes are dark pools of water
Holding the beauty of stars in a purple night sky.
Thy lips are the pepper in its bright ripeness,
Spicing my delight at thy being.'"

He glanced at the author of it.

"Who wrote this?"

"An old Spanish poet, señor. I copied it out of a book."

"So you're a poet lover—or just a lover?"

"Red," said the blond man, "look!"

The man in black frowned as if he were annoyed by the interruption.

Tex Jenkins had placed the length of thong and the knife on the table. He was holding the cube of white rock close to the lamp. He was revolving it slowly in his fingers, the smooth cleavage faces gleaming softly when they caught the light. Miguel remarked that his face had become a glowing scarlet.

Red Mac Cumber joined him. He took the little cube of rock and held it close to the light. Then the blond man snatched it from him, and Miguel saw the trembling of his hands as he held it close to the lamp chimney again.

The two men exchanged a long glance, then both turned and studied the poet.

"Where did you get this, Pablo?" Red Mac Cumber asked quietly.

Miguel stared. For a few instants he looked as if he were about to be sick. He was suddenly very pale. His eyes swam up into his head, and he swayed forward, away from the whitewashed wall. Then he got his teeth into his lower lip. His face began to shine with the abrupt appearance of sweat.

Tex Jenkins dropped the piece of white rock to the table. He walked slowly toward Miguel with his elbows up and his fists clenched. His pale blue eyes had a strained expression. His loose-lipped mouth was curved in a red arch.

Miguel realized that this time something extremely unpleasant was going to happen, and there was nothing he could say to prevent it.

The blond man hurled himself at him.

"You little bastid," he said shrilly, "where'd ya git this piece o' ore?"

Miguel stiffened himself and tightened his lips. Tex Jenkins drove his fist into his face. When the boy fell, he kicked him savagely in the ribs, and Miguel yelled once, then pressed his lips tight together.

The blond man stood over him, breathing hard, his fists still clenched, his pale eyes quivering, and one boot drawn back.

"Don't kill him," Red Mac Cumber said quietly.

Tex Jenkins sucked the saliva back from his lips and spat on the floor.

"Talk up—or do you want more?"

"Please, señor, no more," Miguel said hastily. He wiped his bleeding mouth with the back of his hand. "I found it in the sand dunes below Tubac—west of Tumacacori. East of Arivaca. . . . Beside an iron door."

He tasted blood. There were several loose teeth. But his fear of this man was gone again. He regretted his innocence. How poorly prepared he was to deal with these hard-fisted realists! Dramatically he saw himself as innocence incarnate, matching his stripling's courage against the brute might and cupidity of these three vicious men; and his poet's imagination transposed this into a greater symbol in which he, representing the hope of mankind, struggled against the evil forces which, encircling, threaten to destroy it.

The big loose mouth was dripping.

"Beside an iron door, eh?"

"Yes, señor. In the sand beside an iron door."

There was cunning now in those glittering, pale-blue eyes.

"What, pray, may I ask, is this magnificent plan?"

"A sheet-iron door jest a-layin' there?"

"No, señor. A door made of a thick iron slab set into brick and mortar."

"Flat with the desert?"

"It is a valley of sand dunes, señor. When I came upon it, yesterday, the door was just level with the sand."

The blond man's pale, brilliant, hysterical eyes seemed to come to dancing points.

"Jest where is it at?"

"I could take you to it, señor, but I could not direct you."

"Red, that stuff's blow sand," said Tex. "If this kid ain't lyin'—"

"Let's take our time," Red Mac Cumber said calmly.

Smiley Lorrel had returned. He stood in the doorway with his empty grin.

"Found his hoss, saddled an' bridled, down past the big corral," he said. "Foundered. Backtracked his tracks a ways down cañon. Scouted the ridge some, too. Ain't no one else."

"What brand?" said Red Mac Cumber.

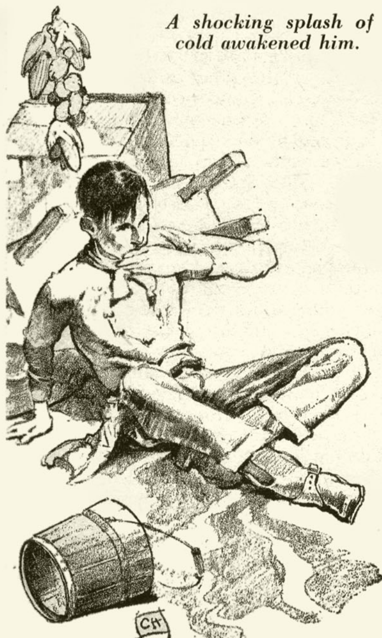
"Triple Bar R."

"Well. So you stole one of Jason Rideout's horses to ride here?"

"Yes sir," said Miguel without hesitation.

Tex joined Smiley in the doorway, and the two men talked in low voices. Then Smiley went to the table and picked up the little cube of ore. He held it close to the lamp. He grinned that idiot grin. He whistled softly on a low note.

"Purty nigh solid silver. Red," he said eagerly, "I can tell you some about that iron door."



A shocking splash of cold awakened him.

"So can I!" Tex broke in. "I been hearin' about thet iron door ever since I come into this hell-fired country. They's a million-dollar cache of high-grade ore all like this sample in the cellar under that door."

"Supposing we let Pablo do the talking," said Red Mac Cumber.

"But what's they to tell? It's fact. Everybody knows it's fact, Red. We're wastin' time."

Red Mac Cumber glanced at him; then his dark, cold eyes returned to Miguel. It was a glance of amused understanding, as if he and Miguel knew something that Tex Jenkins, Smiley Lorrel and their kind would never know.

"I want to hear the story in his own words."

But there was no silencing the two voracious men. Frequently interrupting each other, they told the red-haired man the story of the iron door. The cellar, they declared, had been there since shortly before the Civil War, when the Federal troops had been withdrawn from the territory. Before Cochise's Apaches could gather for an attack on the defenseless Tubac mine, the two mine-owners had had a hole dug far out in the desert. This hole had been floored, walled and roofed over with brickwork. A hatch about four feet square was left in the cellar roof, and this hatch was fitted with a thick iron plate with hinges on one side and two strong padlocks and hasps on the other. The two mine-owners had kept the keys.

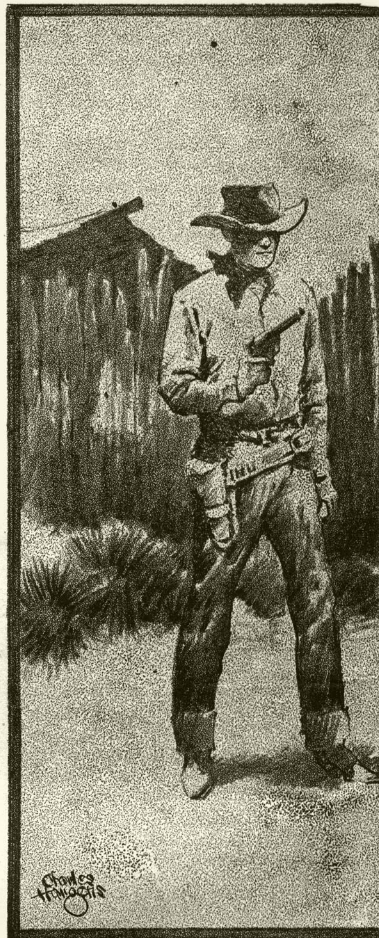
Before the Apaches could attack, the mine-owners had had several wagonloads of their choicest ore hauled to the cellar. When the cache was full, the iron door was closed and padlocked and covered with several feet of sand. Soon afterward the Indians attacked the mine. The two owners and everyone who had had anything to do with making the cellar or hauling the ore had been massacred. That was why no one had ever gone back for that million dollars' worth of choice ore. And no one alive knew its whereabouts.

"We know it now," Tex said. "So what we a-waitin' fer?"

"For Pablo to finish the story," said Red Mac Cumber calmly. "Go on, Pablo."

Miguel was now sitting on the floor cross-legged. His mouth was swollen, and it felt raw, but the bleeding had stopped.

"My people have looked for the iron door for many years," he said. "My grandfather knew one of the muleteers, but he could say only within a few kilometers where the door is. Since I was old enough to ride a horse, I have looked for it. The sand has drifted back and forth over it. But yesterday *el viento de la misericordia de Dios*—the wind of God's mercy—uncovered it for me to find."



"Just put your hands

The poet crossed himself.

" 'The wind of God's mercy,' " Red Mac Cumber said softly. "A beautiful way of expressing it. And did you find the two padlocks?"

"Yes sir; one at each corner."

"Then is it true that under the iron door is a cellar filled with high-grade silver ore?"

Miguel lifted his shoulders slightly. "I could not lift the lid to look. I had no tools, señor."

"But you naturally assume that the ore is there."

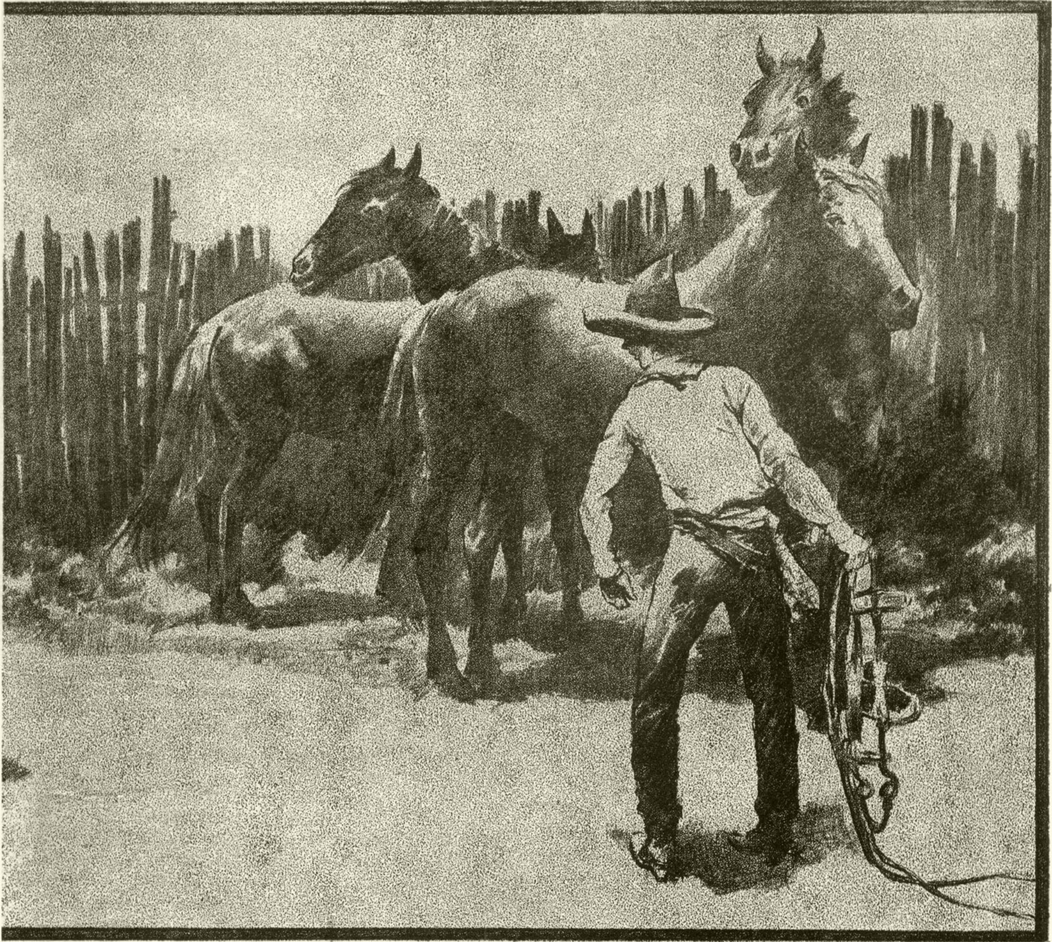
"I do, señor."

"Have you talked to anyone about this?"

"Only my grandfather, señor."

"Where is he?"

"In Tubac, señor. He is a harness-maker. He works for Señor Leon Gastoba."



up above your head," an amused voice said. "And don't try for the gun."

"And he told everybody in Tubac!" Tex burst out. "And they was there yestidy, totin' off that ore. And they'll be at it again today!"

"No, señor, no!" Miguel cried. "He would not, naturally!"

"But what's to stop anybody," the blond man asked, "from backtrackin' yore tracks?"

"I covered the door with a foot or more of sand, señor, naturally!"

"So ya covered it up! Then how in hell do ya expect to find it again?"

"I drove a stake into the sand, señor."

"Now, hold yore hosses a minute. Hold yore hosses jest a minute, Pablo. How far above the sand is the top o' thet stake?"

"About six inches, señor. It is easy to see if one is looking for it—meaningless, if one is not."

"Six inches!" Tex cried. "Comes up a sandstorm, and thet stake could be buried two foot deep in an hour! Red, fer God's sake, why are ya stallin'? Let's git started!"

"Pablo hasn't quite finished," said Red Mac Cumber.

"What's there to finish? If he's lyin', we'll quick enough find out. He don't dast to be lyin'!"

"Finish your story, Pablo."

"THE red roarin' hell with all this foofaraw!" Tex shouted. "I say, git there afore a sandstorm blows up and covers thet stake! The fastest hosses we got! Them Barbs! It's a sixty-, seventy-mile ride, and they're all we got thet'll do it in the heat."

"Who rides that mare?" Smiley Lorrel asked.

"Thet mare? Oh, the kid c'n ride the mare. She'll be strong enough fer him, but not so strong that we can't outride him if he tries any monkeyshines."

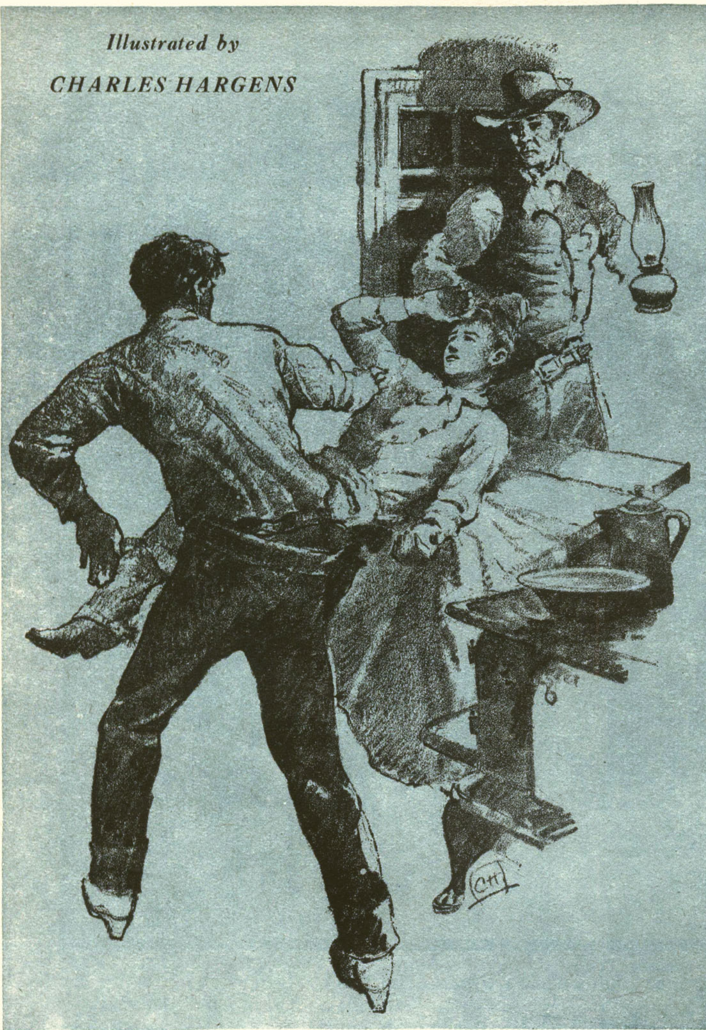
"Pablo," Red Mac Cumber said quietly; "the rest of it."

"Señor, my grandfather told me to take the news to my father, who is in Tucson. I borrowed one of Señor Gastoba's mules, but after a few miles she went lame. At Señor Rideout's ranch I borrowed the little mare. But Tucson is a long way, and I knew the mare would give out. My father is poor and does not own a horse. I wanted a fast horse for myself and one for my father. So I came here for the Barbs."

The only sound in the room was the labored breathing of Tex Jenkins.

"Fer God's sake, Red," he said, trying to control himself, "what more do we need to know? I know thet country. I know them dunes. I know how quick a sandstorm can blow up and shift thet blow sand. Bub, are ya dead sure ya can lead us to where ya drove thet stake?"

"Yes, señor. There is a landmark, an empty ranchhouse not far away at the head of the valley."



The slap was as shocking as the blow of a fist.

He glanced at Red Mac Cumber and found the red-haired man's wide-set eyes aglow with cynical amusement.

"Señor," he said boldly, "if I take you to the iron door, what do I get out of it?"

"Pablo," said the outlaw leader, "if you can lead us to an iron door with a million dollars' worth of silver ore beneath it, you can make your own terms."

"My life, señor, and one-fifth of the ore?"

Red Mac Cumber's eyes shimmered with laughter.

"The modesty of your terms, Pablo, is touching."

"Let's git saddled," Tex growled.

"Let me think a minute," said Red Mac Cumber. He walked out of the room.

Miguel saw the sand flicked up by the rowels of his spurs as he walked toward the small corral, then blended into the blackness beyond the shaft of lamplight. He saw the pink rime of dawn on the ridge across the cañon. He felt himself slipping into the clawing blackness of sleep, and tried to hold onto a vestige of consciousness, for he knew how witless he would be after a nap.

A shocking splash of cold awakened him. Smiley Lorrel was standing before him, spread-legged, a dripping wood bucket swinging from his hand, his lips forming a smile of delight.

"Git off that floor. Red's give in. We're saddlin' up."

Miguel blinked at him stupidly through a little cascade of water drops. He straightened out his legs. The sharp throbbing in his ribs where Tex had kicked him had subsided to a dull ache. Nausea fluttered through his stomach.

"Chuck yonder," Smiley announced. "Pitch in."

He stood back as Miguel painfully arose. There was no part of him that did not ache piteously. He staggered to the table and sat down on the edge of the bunk. There was a plate of beef and beans on the table, two blackened biscuits and a tin cup of steaming coffee.

Miguel ate the food, washing it down with the coffee. He had no appetite; he ate because he needed strength.

The kerosene lamp was cold. The sun, just up, was the pink-hot tip of a poker burning a jagged hole through the cool turquoise sky. Soon anything it touched would be scorching hot and the sky would turn to shimmering brass.

A great rebellion rose in Miguel's spirit. He suddenly saw his grandfather, Trinidad, his brothers and all the others with a peculiar clarity. Driven by the contempt of the man he venerated and the scorn of the girl he loved, he had ridden more than two hundred miles in less than two nights and a day with no rest, to prove that they had misjudged him. But they hadn't misjudged him. He was still a poet; he would never be a man of deeds; adolescent vanity and his romantic imagination had betrayed him and now even these wells were dry. He had no heart for another hard long ride through the midsummer heat. The mental strain since his capture, the physical suffering he had undergone at the hands of Tex Jenkins had sapped the last of his fragile vitality. His large, soft eyes filled with tears.

He wondered why he had mentioned the iron door. It had won him nothing but the privilege of riding until he fell out of the saddle—the reward of being shot or hanged tonight instead of this morning. Even if he could lead them to a cellar filled with gold nuggets, or precious stones, once his usefulness was over, they would certainly kill him.

Smiley Lorrel was grinning at him.

"Red says you got spunk. Show it, kid. Git saddled."

The others were in the corral, saddled, waiting. Miguel saddled the little Barb mare and they started out, Red Mac Cumber, quiet and thoughtful; Smiley Lorrel grinning idiotically, and Tex Jenkins hysterical and garrulous.

It may have been the food and the coffee. It may have been Red Mac

Cumber's thoughtfulness. And it may have been the indomitable spark that burns in every man of spirit. Whatever it was, the four horsemen had not ridden many miles when Miguel began to get his second wind. Recalling his grandfather's sarcasm and Trinidad's insulting laughter, the poet's heart filled with anger again.

They took a longer way than Miguel had taken in coming, for the outlaws had their own excellent reasons for avoiding settlements and ranches. They rode all day through a desert arid, quivering with furnacelike heat. When they stopped at springs and water-holes, the poet made himself useful in the most unostentatious ways. While the three men rested in what shade there might be and kept a watchful eye on him, he watered the horses and refilled the canteens. After the third or fourth stop, they began to take his usefulness for granted, but not for a moment did they relax their vigilance.

When night fell, they were still a long ride from the valley of the shifting sand dunes. The three men were tired and peevish. Occasionally they bickered over old disputes. Miguel, riding a little distance ahead, felt tired and peevish too; but from mysterious sources he continued to draw fresh supplies of vitality.

It was close to midnight when he found the abandoned ranchhouse. It was little more than an adobe ruins. The roof had caved in; but the adobe corral was in good condition, and the gate was still intact.

"How far," Tex Jenkins asked irritably, "do you figure that stake is from here?"

"Less than a mile, señor," Miguel replied. "I can find it easily in the morning. There was no wind today," he added softly, "and there is no sign of wind tonight."

"Might as well camp here," Tex said.

They waited for Red Mac Cumber to make the decision. He did not make it at once. Since nightfall, he had grown more and more silent and thoughtful.

"Yes," he said after many seconds had passed.

They dismounted. Miguel unsaddled the horses in the corral while the three men waited. He hung the four saddles on the gate to dry.

"There is a spring of cool, clear water in the hollow just beyond the mesquite," he told them.

For the past hour he had been wondering how best to phrase this suggestion, hesitating longest over "cool" and "clear" as being, perhaps, too obvious, yet deciding on them because men are led by words as pigs are led by rings in their noses, and *cool* and *clear* are lovely words.

The three hot, irritable men started toward a mesquite tree, the loom of which they could see in the starlight.

Red Mac Cumber stopped. "Pablo!"

"Yes, señor?"

"Show us where this spring is."

"Certainly, señor! I am just attending to the gate."

They heard him attending to the gate. Seconds later they heard the sudden small fury of many hoofbeats, and this small fury was swiftly diminished by distance to a rippling patter; and it is doubtful if any of those men as long as he lived ever heard the patter of distant hoofbeats without re-living a little of the shocking surprise of that moment.

The poet held the black stallion to a gallop for half a mile, then checked him to a canter, and looked anxiously behind him for the mares; and there were the reaching black shadows as he had known they would be.

His exhilaration at his escape was passing, and he was now sorting his adventure into its parts. So wholeheartedly had he thrown himself into the creation of his fantasy that he had at times believed in its reality. Perhaps there was an iron door in the desert somewhere, with a treasure beneath it; but he was skeptical. The fantasy, built on an old prospectors' legend and the sample of silver ore from a vein in his grandfather's new mine, had been swallowed whole by Tex Jenkins and Smiley Lorrel because they were stupid, gullible men. If there was a door in the desert, it was the one they had opened for his escape with their rapacious greed.

Yet Red Mac Cumber, with all his shrewdness, had accepted it too. Why? It was, Miguel believed, because of his youth. The outlaw leader had reasoned that only a man would have been capable of concocting such a thundering lie to outwit him. A boy—never.

Weighing it, Miguel believed he had proved that a man of imagination could hold his own with the most hard-fisted of realists. And he had proved that a poetic imagination, of which his venerated grandfather was so contemptuous, had its practical uses. He realized that when this story got into circulation—and he visualized it being handed along over campfires, by men meeting in remote mountain passes and at dusty crossroads, until it became a legend—it would drive those three notorious bad men out of the country if not out of business.

But there was something of greater importance to him than that, and that was the change he felt in himself. Something had happened to the very core of him, a toughening, perhaps a coarsening. It would be with something of a swagger, a swagger resembling his big brothers', that he would relate his adventure to his grandfather. He now pictured himself telling the story again, a little differently, to Trinidad. For when all is said and done, it is always a woman that a man of deeds desires most to delight.

The four black Barbs with their sailing stride were approaching a mountain pass that unfolded before them like an opening door.

Birds Are Like That

Crows can be taught to emulate some human sounds. The crow is the billy-goat of the avian world: he will eat anything that isn't nailed down, including the eggs of other birds. This bird flies a straighter course than any other and for considerable distances, giving validity to the expression, "as the crow flies." It has been reported that the crow sometimes courses as many as twenty miles to return to his roost at night, and often as much as ten miles.

* * *

Waxwings play handball with cherries, passing the fruit back and forth. As many as six have been observed playing the game in pass-the-bucket fashion. They line up on a branch abreast and pass the cherry from one to another until it reaches the end of the string and then it is started back to the other end. The waxwing male helps the female to hatch the eggs.

Robins and blackbirds are sometimes deceived by the weather and arrive before spring is really here, but never so the bluebird. Actually the bluebird is multicolored—red, white and blue. The male bird also helps to hatch the eggs.

* * *

The towhee is probably the only two-legged living thing that can kick with both feet at once and retain its balance. It kicks up leaves thus in search of insects to eat. Its song sounds distinctly like "Drink your tea, drink your tea." Its other sound is "chewing, chewing," which is the name by which many people know it. When the mother towhee thinks her nest is about to be discovered she will appear at the intruder's feet and, pretending a broken wing, take short flights until she has lured the stranger away from the nest. Her wing then makes a remarkable recovery and she soars off.

—*by* Simpson Ritter

The Mystery of

They called her the Crown Princess of Hollywood. And when she came to our old friend Jonathan, the professor of criminology, with a story that a ghost was trying to steal her jewels, he found he had to solve a mystery that was something really special.

Illustrated by JOHN McDERMOTT

"I would waken and see him there; then he would be

ANNABELLE came across the room with a brown-haired young woman who looked subtly familiar. Annabelle introduced her as Edith Adams, but the name meant nothing to Jonathan.

The brown-haired girl said: "I particularly wanted to meet you, Dr. Jaffrey. I have a problem." She was rather plain; but she smiled, a dancing smile, and its liveliness transformed her. Jonathan thought for an instant that she resembled some painting or other, and then he decided that was not it, either. She said: "If it is permitted to discuss problems at a party—"

"That's what parties are for," Jonathan said. He spun a little chair out from the wall and said: "Sit down."

People stood in groups in the rooms; and talk and cigarette smoke mingled in clouds above their heads. Someone was strumming a distant piano; and a woman, probably their hostess, who inevitably became *Carmen* after a couple of cocktails, was singing the "Habanera."

"It's a ghost story," the girl named Edith said. She let her reticule purse slide from her arm to the floor, and then seated herself in the little chair with an extraordinary grace; and it occurred to Jonathan that, of course, she was an actress. Only actors were taught to sit down in that way: to bend the knees and artfully sink. But he could not remember having seen her in any play. "You're going to think it's too silly. But it really is true."

Annabelle was watching him with a devilish discernment. She said wickedly: "Of course you know who Miss Adams is, darling."

"I'm sorry," Jonathan admitted. He explained to Edith Adams: "I never look at any other woman except my wife, so naturally I don't know any other women. Should I know you?"

"Ooh," Annabelle said, "listen to him lie his way out! The truth is that he never goes to movies, and that's why he's so backward."

"You're in pictures," Jonathan said. "I've seen your photograph in the papers."

"You're doing fine, dear," Annabelle said approvingly. "That's a little like asking if Roosevelt was in politics. Miss Adams is the one the critics call the Crown Princess of Hollywood."

It struck Jonathan that title was an unlikely one for this commonplace young woman. But he had no acquaintance among either movie stars

the Haunted Ring

gone. But he would make a gesture as if in warning."

by WILLIAM BRANDON

"I shall change my ways instantly," Jonathan said. "I give my oath." He drew Annabelle down to the arm of his chair. She looked especially beautiful, he thought, as she always did after some small success in exposing his ignorance. It was a pastime that never failed to give her delight. Jonathan had a private theory that that was because she had copper-colored hair and green eyes, and was probably a witch, but he couldn't object to that; he had always held that witches should make the best of wives. He said: "Can we both hear your ghost story, or shall I send her behind the purdah?"

"Oh, the more witnesses the merrier," Edith said. "By far the worst thing about this is that no one will believe it. The police seem to think it's a publicity stunt. I came to this party because I heard you were going to be here, and I wanted to ask for your help. Some friends caught your series of invitational lectures at UCLA last winter on the psychology of crime, and were talking about you, so I thought this might be right in line with your specialty, and you might be interested."

"What is the crime?"

"Well, breaking and entering, or attempted robbery, I suppose you would say. He seems to be trying to get at my jewels."

"Who does? You say the cops think it's a gag."

"The ghost. The ghost of David Innes."

The girl was entirely in earnest.

Jonathan said after a moment: "Well, you're being haunted by the best of talent, at any rate."

For twenty years David Innes had been generally acknowledged as the superb actor of his time. His *Lear,* in which he had made his greatest success only a few years before his death, was deemed unsurpassable. A man of genius, and of wayward, skyrocket temperament. His ghost, Jonathan thought, would indeed be one to reckon with.

or crown princesses, so his preconception could scarcely be of much account.

"The studio publicity people would hate you," Edith said pleasantly, "but I won't. After all, you're a professor, and that entitles you to at least one free foible, by tradition. Staying away from movies seems to be all too popular these days, anyway. That's one very good reason I'm here in New York to try a play."

"He died very recently, didn't he?" Annabelle asked. "Wasn't there something wrong about it?"

"He killed himself," Edith said quietly. "It was last spring, in April."

"Oh, I remember. He was supposed to be in love with the actress Annette Cory. She was killed in an airliner crash, and then he committed suicide."

"Yes," Edith said. "That was the way it was." A minor chord of compassion sounded through the words.

A group of people moved past them, trailing a bass voice solemnly explicating the Pisan Cantos. A maid in a lace cap wheeled up a cart, and offered them drinks and purple sandwiches the size of so many nickels. A young man who looked like a drowsy sheep wandered in from the starlit terrace and bent over the maid's cart as if idly to graze. He came on with a handful of canapés, which he dropped as he passed Edith Adams' chair. Blushing, he got down on his hands and knees and picked them up.

Edith went on: "I never knew him. He never worked in films. But Annette Cory was one of my closest friends. We were together in the same dramatic academy, years ago."

Annabelle lifted her hand in caution. The sheepish young man got up from the floor with his canapés, and dumped them in an urn beside the wall and went away.

"That's his son," Annabelle whispered, "John Innes. I remember someone pointing him out at that library benefit the other night."

JONATHAN nodded. The youth was no more than twenty. He bore very little resemblance to his brilliant father. The incisive Innes features had become in the son a high, bland forehead and a long nose and a small mouth, the face of a sheep under the shaggy Innes forelock—but an earnest young sheep, well-meaning and decorous. And those were epithets, Jonathan thought, that could never have been leveled at the fiery David Innes.

Edith Adams turned to look after him. "I didn't know he had a son. Do you suppose he heard what I was saying?"

"He seemed too embarrassed to hear anything," Annabelle said.

Jonathan said: "Why should the ghost of David Innes trouble you? Because you were a friend of the woman he loved?"

Edith hesitated. She said thoughtfully: "I've decided it must be because I have something of hers here with me. She left me quite a number of her things that I have now at home out on the Coast. But the only thing of hers I have with me here is a ring, and it happens to be a ring David Innes gave her just before she died. That could explain his interest in my jewels, because the ring is among them. They quarreled, you see, and decided they would not see each other again, and he gave her the ring then, when they parted, when she left New York to fly West—and that was the trip that ended with the accident, when she was killed."

"You brought the ring East with you? Why?"

"I didn't bring it with me. It was among some things she had left in her apartment here."

"She specifically bequeathed it to you?"

"Oh, no. It could scarcely have been mentioned in her will, because, as I say, David Innes gave it to her just before she left her apartment to catch the plane. I know, because her maid is working for me now, and she told me all about their last evening. They had a stormy scene, it seems, and David Innes played it to the hilt, practically chewing the scenery, I gather. At least, he stumbled over a coffee table and broke it, and smashed his watch, and broke a terra cotta piece Annette particularly loved, and so on; but then, he kept drinking quite a lot as the evening progressed. I imagine Annette was perfectly glad to be rid of him when he finally went. Anyway, Annette left all her jewelry to me, and this ring happened to be the only piece of jewelry among her possessions here in New York, so her attorneys delivered it to me when I arrived in New York last week."

"And then David Innes came."

"Yes. That was three days ago. It was Saturday night. The ring was given to me on Saturday. And he has come back each night since then."

Her fingers trembled a little, and she folded her hands in her lap. Jonathan began to feel that she was deeply frightened, beneath the poise that was the hallmark of her trade.

"Exactly what do you see?"

"I waken, and he's standing there. That's all, really."

"Standing where?"

"It won't mean anything for me simply to tell you. There's no reason on earth why you should believe me, any more than anyone else has. I thought, when I came to see you, I thought perhaps both of you could come tonight and watch. I mean, really watch. No one else has done that. The hotel did put a guard outside my door, but he only sleeps. Then if you also see David Innes, then at least—then at least you'll know, too." Her eyes searched Jonathan's face. She said: "Please don't just tell me to see a psychiatrist. That's what everyone else says, or at least implies."

Jonathan got out his pipe and filled it. He said: "You've thought about that possibility."

She said softly: "Yes, oh, yes."

"We'll be at your apartment by eleven tonight," Jonathan said.

"I think she vamped you," Annabelle said, after Edith Adams had gone. "Don't tell me you're really buying that spook story."

"It's got its angles," Jonathan said.

"You mean curves. But she isn't pretty, actually, did you think? But then, neither is the Mona Lisa. What angles?"

"John Innes went through her purse, when he was down on the floor by her chair playing marbles with his canapés."

ANNABELLE bit her lip and gazed at him with a droll affection. "You always come up with something like that, just when I'm deciding again that you're basically a dope. What was he after?"

"Her door-key, apparently; he took it with him." Jonathan stood up and said: "Let's go."

They did not see John Innes among the guests. They made their farewells to their hostess, who was dancing, with a rose between her teeth. Outside in the street, Jonathan flagged down a cab and gave the address of a midtown restaurant.

"But you simply let him do it," Annabelle said. "Steal her key, I mean."

"I want to know why he did it. I didn't think he'd tell me."

"You mean you've already got a guess cooking."

"Nope. Insufficient data."

"Pooh to your data! I've got one, and I'll bet it's more right than wrong. We know her story about a ghost must be made up. So that means she made it up to hide something else. And probably the something else has to do with jewels and Annette Cory's will. Maybe she stole all Annette Cory's jewels somehow, and John Innes knows it but can't prove it, so he wants to get in her hotel apartment to find evidence, or something like that. And you're typed for a patsy."

"Very logical," Jonathan said.

"A woman doesn't need data. She has intuition. But you said there were angles. What are some others?"

"I don't understand why Annette Cory left David Innes' ring in New York, for one thing. It was a token of a newly ended love affair. It should have meant something to her. He gave it to her just before she went away. She didn't leave any other jewels in her apartment here, but she left his ring. Why didn't she wear it?"

"Maybe it didn't fit," Annabelle said shrewdly.

"You know," Jonathan said, "this time you sound good."

"Thank you," Annabelle said, and patted his hand. "For my part, I'd like to know why David Innes gave her a ring at the close of their romance, rather than at the beginning. But from what I've heard of him, such a bizarre and sort of Byronic gesture

"Let's have it, Jake," said Harold. "What are you after? What did Edith Adams put you up to?"

sounds quite like him. The thing I'm most worried about is where we're all going to sleep in the lovely screen star's bedroom."

"Ha!" Jonathan said.

"Spoken like a husband," Annabelle murmured ruefully. She said after a moment: "Do you remember the first time you kissed me?"

Jonathan reflected. He prided himself on his knowledge of feminine psychology, a vast and dim-lit field, to be sure, but founded on one solid rock of pure truth: a woman is a creature of immediates. Consequently he made a covert inventory of current immediates—they had just left a cocktail party; it was a pleasant summer night; they were going to dinner in a restaurant that was more expensive than they could afford; they were caught in a flood tide of theater traffic, edging their way west along Fifty-third Street in a taxi—and came up with the answer in a matter of seconds: "Like this, in a taxi."

He kissed her.

'You darling," Annabelle said, "you did!"

"Sure I did," Jonathan said.

"I don't mean you did remember. I mean you did lie rather than admit you didn't remember. Why are men like that?"

Jonathan kissed her again, by way of evasion tactics.

"It was in the college library," Annabelle said, but she sounded appeased. "A book had just fallen on your head. And you're taking all my makeup!"

The cab stopped in front of the restaurant, and the driver turned around to give them a kindly leer. He said: "Here you are, kids."

Jonathan got out and paid for the ride. Annabelle held him by his lapel and wiped the lipstick off his face, and a doorman seven feet tall towered above them and said mellifluously: "Good evening. Your name, please?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Casanova," Annabelle said.

"Ah," the doorman said. "You have a table?"

Jonathan gave him a dollar.

"Ah," the doorman said dubiously. He ushered them across the sidewalk and opened a bronze gate. They entered a foyer where the doorman said to a fat man in a white jacket: "Mr. and Mrs. Casanova."

"*Good* evening," the fat man said, beaming. "We have your reservation?"

Jonathan gave him two dollars.

THE fat man closed his eyes and appeared to count, and then smiled precisely two dollars' worth, and led them to a silver-haired headwaiter standing at a high desk.

"Mr. and Mrs. Casanova," he said brusquely, and went away.

"Good evening," the headwaiter said, without looking up from his documents. "We have a table for you."

Jonathan gave him five dollars. A tall blonde girl who looked like a vision of paradise appeared beside Jonathan and took his hat. The headwaiter palmed the five dollars without seeming to know that he did so, and negligently summoned a waiter captain who looked like an Austrian archduke.

"Mr. and Mrs. Casanova," the headwaiter said. "Perhaps we can find something for them."

The captain admitted them to a long dining-room decorated with murals of faunesses playing pranks. The talk of people at the tables, an occasional shrill laugh, the scrape of a chair, the clatter of cutlery and china (a muted, well-bred clatter), sounded like an energetic and slightly intoxicated orchestra tuning up. The captain showed them to a corner table.

Jonathan said: "I'd like to see Harold Printemps, if he's here this evening."

"Very sorry, sir," the archduke said. "I don't believe he has come in."

Jonathan gave him ten dollars.

"Perhaps I have missed him," the captain said. He snapped his fingers,

and a brace of waiters sprang up as if by magic. The captain strolled away.

The Pied de Veau was a restaurant famous not only for excellent food but also as a gathering place for celebrities. Within recent years it had been necessary to create castes among the celebrities themselves, who nightly crowded the dining-room to toy with choice undercuts and look at each other; and a small separate dining-room had been created strictly for the use of tremendous celebrities only. This throne-room of the royalty of café society—it was called the Fromage Blanc Room—was the operating headquarters for Harold Printemps, the newspaper columnist, whose items of gossip about the intimate lives of actors, gangsters and other folk heroes were read daily by a public doubtless some millions greater than Plato had managed to achieve in two dozen centuries. Here, each night, Harold Printemps dined and chatted with friends while receiving a steady stream of reports, by telephone and in person, from the numerous informers who were his eyes and ears everywhere about the city.

By the time Jonathan and Annabelle were finishing their soup, Harold Printemps peered out of the door of the Fromage Blanc Room, the archduke waiter captain at his side. A moment later the columnist crossed the dining-room and joined them.

"Casanova!" Harold said. He was a little man with a broken nose, and a friendly grin. "Always the whimsy twins. What have you got for me?"

"Some questions," Jonathan said.

Harold said positively: "Somebody has knocked somebody off. All right, so ask. What are you after?"

"Was Annette Cory's plane departure delayed?"

Harold considered. "That was two months ago. Night of April twelfth. She left on a night flight. Plane crashed in Illinois." He bent his head and drummed upon his eyebrows with his fingertips. "Her flight was due out at nine. Bad weather, and the flight was canceled. But the cancelation was canceled, and it went on the board as delayed. She left her apartment for La Guardia Field at eleven o'clock, and the flight got away at midnight."

"He always gives me the shivers when he does that," Annabelle said. "He should be billed as the Mnemonic Marvel. Don't you ever forget anything?"

"Sure," Harold said. "I forget everything. The trick is to remember it again when I want it. The accident was at ten after five in the morning, give or take a couple minutes, our time. Ten after four their time, in Illinois where it happened. I got the bulletin at five-fifty, ten minutes before radio had it."

Annabelle said, "You learn things like that before they're even picked up and broadcast?"

"I beat everybody. How else do I stay in business?"

A waiter brought Harold a telephone. He spoke into it and then brought out a card and made cabalistic notes while he listened.

Annabelle said to Jonathan: "Why did you ask if her plane was delayed?"

"I'm still thinking about why she left her ring. If there was some confusion about her departure, that might account for it."

"Well, apparently there was, then. If the airline people first told her the flight was canceled, and then uncanceled, while she is waiting, all packed and ready, which is the worst nuisance anyway, I can easily picture her forgetting almost anything at the last minute, when she does finally rush away for the airport."

"It still doesn't account for her not having the ring on her finger when she left. She wouldn't have forgotten it in that case."

Harold put aside his telephone, and Jonathan said: "She had quarreled with David Innes and they had broken up. Did he throw her over?"

"You've got it backward. There wasn't anything between them. They quarreled because she wouldn't give him a tumble. He never got a chance to throw her over."

"What's the whole story on them?"

"That takes some telling. Your steak looks better than the one I got." Harold called a waiter and ordered a pear. "In the first place, Dave was fifty-two years old. You two are too young yet to know about life. It has a way of going along so fast you can't keep up with it. Everybody dies disappointed. . . . Look at me, I'm making maxims! . . . In the second place, Dave was a romanticist. Maybe he was the last great romanticist we'll ever see. He had all this life, this fever, this stuff that made him the finest actor in the world; but acting wasn't enough. What is acting? Reading lines, making faces, projecting a design somebody else has blueprinted for you. If you're an actor, you're no more, in a sense, than a motion-picture projector—only instead of using film, you run the play through a reel of emotion you keep hanging on a sprocket in your soul. You color and illuminate another man's creation; and even though that color and illumination may be the thing that captivates the will of the audience, it isn't enough—not to a Dave Innes. . . . Would El Greco have been content in a job of tinting photographs? . . . Dave smothered from that limitation all his life, because he had the power to want something, he didn't know what, something nameless, out of this world. Why is an artist an artist?"

Jonathan remarked: "The recent suggestion is that it might be a search for inner order."

"Maybe. Maybe that's a big thing. What do I know about it? Well, that kind of power, that kind of frustration, it can turn outward and make a man a saint, or it can turn inward and make him fundamentally bitter—which means he'll be so tragically concerned with himself that he'll behave to the world like a five-star heel. That was Dave, a heel in the grand manner, particularly where women were concerned. Somehow he had reached the unconscious conclusion that this nameless something he wanted was a woman, and he looked for her all his life. He was a spectacular guy with women, as everyone knows. He would bat an eye, and the dolls had vapors at his feet. So there they were, so he kicked them around."

"Why did the dolls have vapors?" Annabelle asked innocently.

"This power, this want, this desire. A doll thought it meant her. So did Dave, with each one, for a little while. But the girl herself meant strictly nothing to him. You've got to get it clear that with people as people, he was absolutely self-centered, absolutely no heart, and as vain as a mirror. By the age of fifty-two he had been in love a hundred times, but he didn't know what love meant.

"Now, I don't know if Annette Cory was different from any of the others, as far as the reality of his love for her was concerned, or not. But I know he thought she was. When he met her, he really thought that for the first time in his life he had found the one woman he had always been looking for. He really thought she would be his last conquest. Here was peace and fulfillment, transcendence, glory, and heaven on a cotton cloud. . . . There was just one little hitch. For the first time in his life, his conquest didn't work."

The telephone buzzed and Harold turned to it. He spoke in monosyllables, listened with his eyes closed, and recorded notes on a clean white card.

Annabelle whispered to Jonathan: "I guess I'd rather have you than a genius, after all."

Harold hung up and winked at her. He said: "Nobody gets a genius, honey—that's the gimmick. So, to continue: Annette Cory was a young actress, successful, serious about her work, sweetest kid in the world. Remember her in 'Jeanie?' To her, David Innes as an actor was an exalted and heroic figure; but as a lover, he was just another sharpshooter old enough to be her father. She told him as much in plain language right here in this dining-room, the night before she left for the Coast. Which was by all odds the most humiliating scene Dave Innes

ever played but he took it, which will give you an idea of how far gone he was about her. But naturally Dave couldn't believe she meant it when she kept turning him down. This was the woman he had waited a lifetime for, remember, or at least he thought she was, which is just as good. Always before he had been the heartbreaker. Now he was on the receiving end, but he couldn't let himself believe that, you understand, or everything he thought he was would have fallen apart. Keep in mind the fact that he was stuck together with his enormous vanity. So, while he still lived on his desperate hope of winning, came the accident, and that did it. Death was the one thing he had to admit he couldn't lick. So he did the Dutch. With a dagger, of course. The one he used in 'Macbeth'."

Harold stopped talking and bit into his pear.

"Why 'with a dagger, of course'?" Annabelle asked.

Harold raised his fist and brought it down upon his chest. "The gesture. It's got more dramatic value than pulling a trigger or turning on the gas."

"Well," Annabelle said, a little regretfully, "so it wasn't the ending of a love affair or even the beginning. It was just unrequitement."

Harold said to Jonathan, "Is it you teaches her those words?"

"He gave her a ring," Jonathan said.

"The night she left. The last time he saw her. A symbol, to seal his undying love. Another gesture." Harold shrugged. "Understand, all life was a gesture to him, but a gesture played to himself as audience. He wouldn't have killed himself over a woman, not that, he had had too many women. He wouldn't even kill himself over his injured vanity, not that alone, not unless killing himself was an ultimate gesture in a routine to heal his vanity, which it could hardly be."

"But he did kill himself over a woman," Jonathan said.

"I've made the point that he couldn't believe he wouldn't win her love eventually. The idea would be ridiculous, to anyone who knew him, that he would commit suicide merely because Annette Cory turned him down. Sure, that broke him up; but his single idea would be to make up for that defeat. He could hope to make up for it as long as he could hope Annette might finally change her mind and accept him; but this all-important hope had to give up when she was killed in the accident. Death stepped into the plot, the god from the machine, and there was only one course the libretto could take for Dave after that. He was in effect the victim of his own dramatic instinct."

"Sounds thin," Jonathan said.

"The worst thing about this is that no one will believe it. He seems to be trying to get at my jewels — the ghost does."

"That's because though you're an expert on the way people's minds work, you're forgetting that Dave wasn't people. He wasn't necessarily human. He was David Innes. The guy was outside your books. In any case, that's the way it was. He killed himself just after he heard the news of her death in the plane crash. There was a radio turned on in the room where they found him; and he died at six-thirty, only a few minutes after the first reports came over the air."

"Was he sitting up listening to the radio at six in the morning?"

"Why not? Maybe he couldn't sleep."

"How do you know he died at six-thirty?"

"The classic evidence. His watch was broken when he fell, and the hands read six-thirty."

Jonathan finished his coffee. He said: "Who found him?"

"His son. A boy named John—child of his third marriage. His only child, by the way."

"Did he leave a note?"

"No note."

"When did his son find him?"

"At noon. He came by Dave's place for lunch."

"Did the medical evidence show he had died at six-thirty?"

"What are you getting at?"

"Curious."

"I didn't hear any questions raised about it. You know as well as I do there's nothing in medical evidence to give a split-second time of death. The indications can vary too much from person to person, depending on too many factors of the individual physical condition. Why should he have died any earlier or any later? It wouldn't make sense. The whole thing was very clear. He was sitting there brooding and unhappy, probably drinking. He turned on the radio, and heard the news of the accident. So his last chance for her was lost. So he picked up that dagger, and—curtain!"

"The son and father were friendly?"

"Dave hadn't had much to do with him when he was little; but he had begun to take him under his wing the last few years. The lad's a music student some place, I think. Dull, not much of Dave in him. But he thought Dave was a little tin god."

"Well, thanks," Jonathan said. He called for the check. "We'll be going along."

"He says thanks," Harold said. "Let's have it, Jake. What are you after?"

"The truth is, I don't know," Jonathan said, smiling.

Harold grinned back at him. "You two were at a cocktail party this evening, where you talked for a half hour with Edith Adams. Edith Adams was a long-time friend of Annette Cory's. What did she put you up to?"

"Why would she put me up to anything?"

"Why? Because you're Professor Crime himself. You write books like 'Murder on Your Mind,' and you're an authority on why people do things like shooting holes in other people. You're Professor Jaffrey, Jordan University's gift to the science of criminology, which is the only reason Edith Adams would have for giving you so much as a good morning. So what's the pitch?"

"I've told you the truth, Harold. I don't know. I'll give you the only lead I've thought of: You might find out if John Innes has rented a room in Edith Adams' hotel—a room near her apartment, maybe next door, maybe just above or just below."

Harold's eyes began to shine. He got up and said: "That's fair enough. I'll see you later." He gave them a wave of his hand and returned to the Fromage Blanc Room, a waiter following him with his telephone. . . .

The archduke presented himself to inform Jonathan that there was no check for Mr. and Mrs. Casanova, as the management took pleasure in picking up tabs for Mr. Printemps' guests. Jonathan protested that they were not Mr. Printemps' guests, but the watchful management had irrevocably decreed otherwise. The management knew that a lusty share of its profits derived from Harold's friendly publicity for its bistro, and it was always happy to grant Harold any small favors in return. The headwaiter and the fat man in the white jacket, and the willowy blonde with Jonathan's hat, passed them tenderly along to the doorman, who had a taxi waiting.

EDITH ADAMS' hotel apartment overlooked the duck pond in the park. From a terrace outside her bedroom you could look down on the sparkling river of traffic that was Central Park South. There was a similar terrace, Jonathan noted, on the floor above. It would not be impossible for someone vigorous and athletic to make his way from one terrace to the other by a makeshift ladder.

A glass door opened on the bedroom. The dressing-table was just inside.

"He was standing here," Edith said, from beside the dressing-table. She was wearing a quilted peignoir, and her brown hair was piled and pinned on top of her head. She looked about seventeen, in spite of the fact that she wore no make-up, or perhaps because of it. She was very serious about the business of setting up the ghost's scene exactly as it had been. "Each time, he was simply standing here. I would waken and see him, for just an instant, and then he would be gone. But he would make a gesture."

She turned toward the bed and put up her hand, to illustrate. Through the cleverness of her art, the simple movement contrived to convey a suggestion of solemnity, mystery, and a nebulousness that evoked a fleeting image of the silent ghost.

"Gestures again," Annabelle said.

"As if in warning," Edith explained. Her brown eyes were remote with memory. "He is looking directly at me. His hand is above the jewel-box here, like this. But just for an instant, just as I waken."

Jonathan said: "Did you recognize him at once?"

"There was moonlight the first night. I was only half awake, and of course I was terribly frightened, and I didn't think anything. It was only later that I thought he looked like David Innes."

"You said you didn't know David Innes."

"But I've seen him on the stage a thousand times. The next two nights that little lamp was burning. I could see him just as—almost as clearly as I can see you now." Her voice trembled and fell to a whisper. "He looked almost as if he would speak."

"He disappeared," Jonathan said. He took up a place near the dressing-table. "Like this?" He stepped out past the open door to the terrace.

"But there was never anyone on the terrace when we looked. Where could he—where could anyone have gone from there?"

"How was he dressed?"

"I think—just dark clothes. I can't remember that."

"Chiaroscuro."

"Yes, just his face and his hand are all you really see, and the rest is only shadow, like a painting by Rembrandt. I don't mean the face and hand are disembodied. He's standing there; you're quite certain you see him; but you simply don't see how he's dressed. And it's only for an instant."

"Let's see the ring," Jonathan said.

She opened the jewel box and brought out a heavy silver ring, set with a carved red stone.

She said: "It's a hideous thing. See, the stone is carved to represent the head of a snake, or perhaps a turtle. It's supposed to be Florentine, and it's attributed to Cellini, which is probably ridiculous; but the day it was delivered to me—there was a little item in the paper about my getting it—a dealer telephoned and wanted to know if I would sell it, so it must have some real value. I don't want to sell it, because it's perfect to wear in the play I'm going to do. It's so huge it can be easily seen, and it's exactly the right accessory for the part."

"Will it fit?"

"Oh, but you see it's made like a hasp. The ring isn't joined on the inside, but the ends overlay, like leaves. You can press it together and make it any size you want."

Jonathan frowned and said: "Then why didn't Annette Cory wear it?"

Edith looked puzzled. "I imagine she just forgot it when she left. I know that I mislay things and forget them all the time, especially when I'm worried. Today Hannah, my maid, was out for the afternoon when I left the apartment, and so I meant to take my key; but I must have completely forgotten it or lost it, because now I can't find it any place. The hotel detective in the corridor had to let me in when I came home."

"Is your maid here now?"

"Yes, she's in her room."

"That hotel cop in the corridor—will he be there all night?"

"He has been on guard there the last two nights. But he only sleeps."

"If he sleeps, it's all right. Otherwise it might be better to send him away."

"Why in the world do you say that?"

"I wouldn't want him to scare away your ghost tonight. May I talk to your maid?"

Edith gazed at him in perplexity. She said at last, "Oh, yes, I'll call her," and left the room.

Jonathan started to slip the ring on his finger, and Annabelle cried out, "Oh!" and quickly put her hand over her mouth.

Jonathan spun around and looked behind him. He saw nothing. He stepped to the glass door and looked out. The terrace was empty. A bus roared lazily in the street. A tinkling brass chain swung to and fro beside the door.

Annabelle said: "I'm sorry." She looked ashamed. "I thought I saw someone, just—something like a shadow of someone." She moved her hands in a helpless attempt to illustrate what she meant. "Like a—just like a glimpse of someone standing behind you. It frightened me out of my wits."

Her face was white, and her lips were trembling. Jonathan went to her and kissed her on the forehead. He said severely: "That's to exorcise the devils."

"But I did see him!" Annabelle wailed softly. "I really thought I did!"

"You're too anxious," Jonathan said. "Wait awhile, and we'll all see him."

Edith returned, followed by a little colored woman in a white apron.

She said: "This is Hannah. —Dr. Jaffrey is investigating our ghost, Hannah."

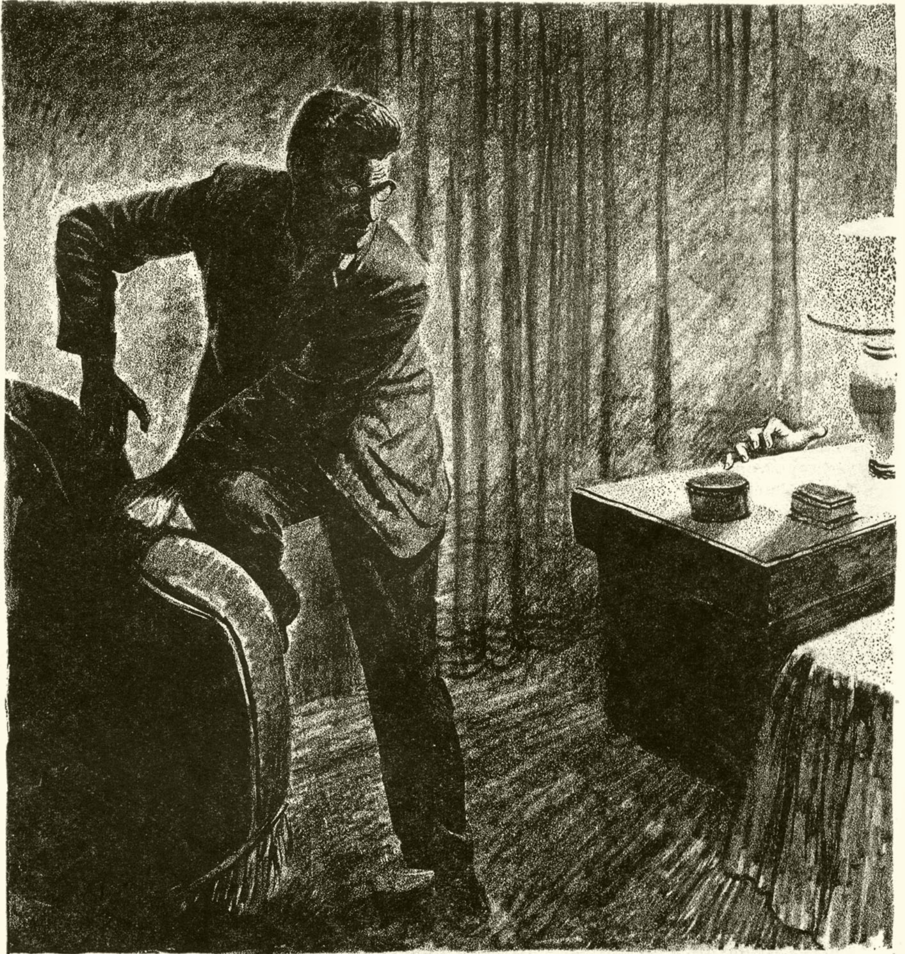
"Mr. Innes was nuisance enough when he was alive," Hannah said promptly. "I should think now he could leave folks alone."

JONATHAN, studying the ring, said: "I'm trying to find out why Miss Cory didn't wear this ring, Hannah. Do you remember?"

"Why, she did wear it. Mr. Innes put it on her finger himself. He made a speech, and a big piece of business of it."

"But she didn't take it with her when she left to catch the plane."

"Well, you see, she kept starting to go that night, and they kept putting off the flight, so when she did go, it was all in a rush." Hannah clasped her hands and closed her eyes and tried to remember. "I just can't recall now how she did come to leave it."



A questing hand — reaching up from the floor. . . . Jonathan reached for the light switch.

"Could she have scratched her finger?"

"Why, yes, that was it! Now how did you know that?" Hannah regarded him with admiration. "She scratched her finger a little bit somehow, and she went to wash her hands, and right then they called to say the airplane would go in an hour. And of course she had the ring off while she was washing her hands and putting iodine on her finger, so she just ran to get ready to go, and she forgot it. I remember later I found it right on the edge of the lavatory, and I took it and put it away."

Jonathan put the ring on the dressing-table beside the jewel-box and lit his pipe. He said: "Do you believe in ghosts, Hannah?"

Hannah said simply, "I believe in this one. Mr. Innes had powers."

"Powers?"

"I mean in his mind. Maybe a ghost is just part of a mind that doesn't die."

Edith shuddered and said: "Please, Hannah."

"There's no reason he'd want to hurt you," Hannah said reasonably. "Or me either, I should hope."

Jonathan said: "Do you remember when Mr. Innes broke the coffee table, Hannah?"

"The what, suh? Oh, yes, I know what you mean. That last night there with Miss Cory, when he was talking and gesticulating and most nearly drunk, and he stubbed his toe and fell right on the coffee table. Just broke it to smithereens. Why, that was late, just before he went. It must have been ten o'clock."

"Can you tell me exactly what happened here last night when the ghost came, as far as you know?"

"You mean what I saw? I didn't see a thing. I was sound asleep. I slept in here last night to keep Miss Adams company—I was right on that divan. But the first thing I knew, Miss Adams was waking me up, and the ghost had already been here. So we woke up the policeman outside the hall, and we looked out yonder on the terrace, and that was about all."

"Was anything said about putting this chain on the terrace door?"

"Why, yes, there was. The policeman and Miss Adams was talking about keeping the terrace door locked, but it makes it too hot in here for this time of year at night if you do, so the policeman said he'd have a chain put on it so you could open it a crack and leave it open, but nobody would be able to get in, and that might make her feel better; and they had a man come up right away in the middle of the night and put the chain on. Ain't that right, Miss Adams?"

"It's obvious that no chain or lock could help," Edith said; "but they insist that it's only my imagination."

"I don't insist it, ma'am," Hannah said. "Is that all, Doctor?"

"Yes, thanks," Jonathan said. Hannah turned to leave, and then stopped in her tracks, looking in a surprised way beyond Jonathan's shoulder.

She shook her head a little and said hastily: "I guess it's getting me too. I thought for a second I almost saw someone else standing right behind you." She laughed at herself cheerfully. "Good night. I'll be awake if you need me, Miss Adams."

She went out.

Jonathan turned around and looked behind him with studious care; he went out on the terrace again, inspected it and returned to the bedroom.

He said: "Ah, women!"

ANNABELLE said in a curious voice: "Darling, I thought I saw it again too, just when she did. I'm terribly sorry to have to say so if it disturbs you, but I honestly thought I did."

"Of course you did," Edith said. "It's getting late, and he's restless."

"Be at ease," Jonathan said irritably. "Self-hypnosis is a wonderful thing. You don't know yet, Miss Adams, that John Innes stole your door-key today when you were at that party. It's significant that he stole a key the day after a chain was attached to this terrace door, making it impossible to get in again from this direction. Does that sound like a ghost?"

"You mean David Innes' son? When he dropped those things by my chair today? But what reason would he have for wanting to get in here?"

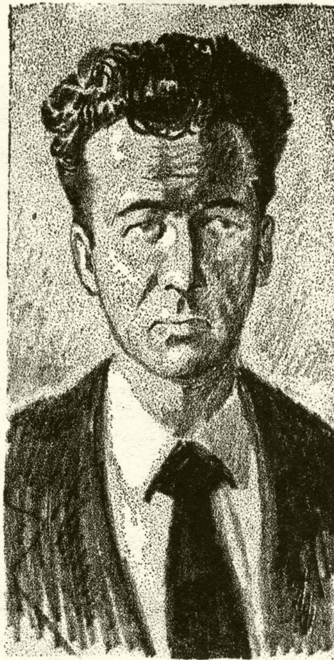
"The same reason David Innes' ghost might have, I think. To get that ring. However, it is a reason he can't easily disclose, so he has to take this means of trying to get it. It's possible that he was also the person who called you and represented himself as a dealer and tried to buy the ring, as soon as he saw in the paper that you had it. When you said it wasn't for sale, he had nothing left but to try stealing it."

Edith said: "But it was David Innes I saw, not that boy."

"He doesn't look much like his father; but put him in a half light, and see him only in a quick glimpse while you're half awake and terrified, and you might see enough subtle family resemblance to make you think of David Innes. What you really saw was someone at your jewels. Three times in a row you happened to waken and surprise him just as he was about to get his hands on the ring. You didn't know John Innes, but you had seen David Innes. Your imagination seized on what little resemblance there was."

"But what could his reason be for wanting the ring? It couldn't mean anything to him."

"I think it was because he idealized his father. He would want to pro-



"I've never been in here before."

tect his father's name. There was a further reason to add to his desperation. I'll get to that in a minute. I think John Innes arranged a false motive for his father's suicide; and I think he concealed the real motive, again through a desire to shield his father's name."

Edith said: "Shield it from what?"

"Murder. At least, attempted murder. I think he found that his father had killed himself before he could have heard the news of Annette Cory's death in the plane crash. Undoubtedly he also found a suicide note his father had left, which explained his father's real reason for killing himself. But to John that real reason was infamous. Worse than that, its revelation was now unnecessary, since fate had intervened, and Annette Cory had died in an accident. So John took it upon himself to hide that reason—conceal the suicide note, probably destroy it—and substitute another reason, sufficiently sound that David Innes' friends would not question it.

"His friends would have questioned it if it had been known that David Innes had killed himself before he could have known that Annette Cory was dead, without any other apparent reason than her rejection of him. But his friends would not question the suicide if John made it appear to have taken place after David Innes had learned of Annette Cory's tragic death. His friends would say, as Harold Printemps said, that his suicide, under those circumstances, was typical of the man, and they would have looked no further for a motive. So John turned on the radio and reset the hands of David Innes' broken watch to read six-thirty, which would indicate that he had killed himself just after hearing the news on the radio of Annette Cory's death. John Innes was not aware that the watch had been broken early in the evening, when David Innes stumbled over the coffee table in Annette Cory's apartment, some time before he killed himself."

"I don't see how you could have learned those things," Edith said. "How could you know John Innes had tampered with his father's watch?"

"If the hypothesis fits, you've got to assume the facts will wear it," Jonathan said. "I knew David Innes had smashed his watch at about ten in the evening, but when he was found dead the next day, the hands read six-thirty. I know John Innes wants something in your apartment, or he wouldn't have stolen your key. I learned Annette Cory had taken off the ring David Innes had just given her, because she had somehow scratched her finger. I know that to me the motive for David Innes' suicide sounded weak. I found the common denominator for all these facts in the ring itself."

Jonathan picked up the ring and held it under a lamp.

He said: "Watch the bottom of the setting. Now I squeeze the ring, and now I pull it open."

"The metal beneath the setting moves," Annabelle said.

"There's a point embedded there," Jonathan said. "When the hasps of the ring open, as they would if someone was wearing the ring and doubled his hand into a fist, for example, the point is thrust out. Can you see it?"

"That would be why Annette scratched her finger."

"That's right. Theoretically, the puncture would scarcely be felt. Also, the larger the hand, the more effectively the hidden needle would work. On a woman's finger it might slip and scratch, as it did with Annette."

EDITH said in a hushed voice: "You mean it's a poison ring."

Jonathan nodded. "The base of the setting slides open when the needle appears, as you can see. The setting is hollow, and the poison is contained there. It comes out with the needle, and enters the minute wound the needle makes for it. . . . I can't be sure without analysis what kind of stuff this is in here, but I'd guess it's a cyanid preparation; its odor is similar to that of a commercial rat poison that's very easy to secure, but deadly."

He pulled the ring wide open and held it upside down and shook it. Traces of gray powder fell from it to

the glass table-top. He bent close to the powder to study it—and a sudden gust of wind from the terrace blew it away, the glass door slammed open against the wall, and a lamp tottered on its base, throwing leaping shadows. Edith gave a little shriek.

JONATHAN went to the terrace door and closed it and locked it.

"I thought it looked like—it was like a shadow rushing out," Edith said contritely. "I am sorry. I know I'm just overwrought." She bravely returned her attention to the ring. "Would it really work?"

"I wouldn't want to try it out," Jonathan said. "It's a crude device, but it's the sort of thing that would have appealed to David Innes. As for whether it worked with Annette Cory or not, we can't be sure. If it was a typical cyanid its action would have been swift; but we don't know that it was, and there doesn't appear to be enough of the stuff left now to get an analysis, so we probably never will know.

"Possibly she received some of the poison when she scratched her finger, and possibly she would have died from it if she had not been killed in the accident. I'm inclined to think that she happened to press the ring open enough to get a scratch, but not enough to get a lethal dose of the poison. In any case, she was certainly within a thousandth of an inch of death. As far as David Innes was concerned, he evidently had faith in its ultimate success."

"She could have been dead from it when the plane crashed," Edith said.

"Conceivably."

"Then David Innes killed himself because he had murdered her, or thought he had murdered her."

"I think he probably said that in a suicide note, a note his son would have found. That he had arranged the death—symbolically, through his ring—of the woman who had rejected him and humiliated him, and had then taken his own life."

Edith said: "I was planning to wear it on the stage, that ring!" A shiver ran through her.

"That's why John Innes is desperate to get it," Jonathan said. "It's a murderous weapon, ready to kill anyone who might wear it. But his devotion to his father's name would not allow him to admit openly his reason for wanting the ring."

"I don't like to be stubborn," Annabelle said, "but wouldn't David Innes' ghost have the same reason for warning her about the ring?"

"We'll ask him when he comes in," Jonathan said. He switched out all the lights in the bedroom except a small lamp upon the dressing-table.

"I must admit I don't see any more shadows," Annabelle said.

Edith said almost gayly: "Maybe we won't, now that we know the truth."

Annabelle and Jonathan sat on a couch across the room from the dressing-table. Edith stretched out on the bed. . . . Time passed. Presently Jonathan slept. He woke suddenly and sat still in the shadow, listening. He was aware of Edith watching from the bed, but Annabelle had gone to sleep, her head on his shoulder.

He saw nothing until, at last, a movement attracted his vision, and a giant white spider ran along the edge of the dressing-table in the full light of the lamp. . . . It was a questing hand, reaching up from the floor.

Jonathan moved quietly from the couch and reached for the light switch. A figure rose up from the floor and charged past him, and he ran into the front room of the apartment in pursuit, and someone fell to the floor with a crash. He turned on the lights.

Harold Printemps sat on the floor on top of John Innes.

"He has a room on the next floor up," Harold explained, grinning. "I thought I would look into this deal myself, so I personally kept an eye on him tonight. He came down here and let himself in with a key, and crawled into the bedroom in there on his stomach. I was waiting here for him when he came back."

Jonathan went to the corridor door and opened it. The hotel guard was sound asleep in a leather chair outside the door. Jonathan closed the door. Edith and Annabelle hurried into the front room from the bedroom, and Hannah appeared, in a flannel wrapper, peering from the hall that led to her room. Harold climbed to his feet and let John Innes get up. The boy was shamefaced and sullen.

"So what, and why?" Harold said.

Edith said gravely: "Do you want this, John?" She handed him the ring.

He took it and closed his hand over it quickly and put it in his pocket. He looked up at her with curiosity and an unspoken question, a plea for her not to reveal the secret of the ring.

Edith said by way of reply: "No, there's no reason I should tell anything—even though you did almost frighten me to death."

John Innes gave her a deeply grateful look. He said: "I'm sorry. I didn't know anything else to do." His voice was startling—a deep, rolling voice, the voice of David Innes.

"There's one thing I'd like for you to tell me," Jonathan said. "How did you manage to get off the terrace so quickly the other times?"

"I went to a lot of trouble," John Innes said frankly. "I got that room under a different name, and then I followed her around all day trying to find some way to get her key, and then when I got it, I didn't know when I'd get to use it, with that hotel detective there outside her door. But I waited and he finally went to sleep."

"I mean the other times," Jonathan said. "When you came in by the terrace. How did you get away? It seems to me a ladder would have been too slow."

YOUNG INNES shook his head in bewilderment. He said: "Why, there weren't any other times. I just got the room rented today, after I had figured out what I would do. I haven't tried to get in here before."

A little chill ran persistently up and down Jonathan's spine and he didn't look at Edith or Annabelle.

Edith said in a small voice: "You must tell the truth."

"It *is* the truth. I swear it is. I've never been in here before. And how would I have got up to your terrace?"

Of course the boy was lying, Jonathan thought with a touch of anger. But he couldn't be sure.

"What is all this?" Harold demanded. "When do I get the background?"

"You wouldn't believe it," Jonathan said.

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McQuillan Beats

The Widow Crotty owned a junkyard in Canarsie, a fair share of beauty, and enough vanity to make her an easy mark for a sharper. Our intrepid hero McQuillan, however, moved cannily to save the situation.

by FRANK LEON SMITH

RAW was the day in Canarsie, and rain was falling hard. In their villa at the rear of the Crotty Junk Yard, big Rodney McQuillan and his small chum Disbro Whispell relaxed with their feet on chairs and cigars in their teeth, while a stove Rod had made from a fifty-gallon oil drum put out furnace heat. It was a lull before a storm in their lives, but they didn't know it; and overpowered by their luxury, Disbro inquired in his deep bass: "What's the difference between us and a coupla rich guys?"

"A good question," said Rod briskly. "We're rich ourselves, of course, for we're men of distinction in our trade; we're men of pride, taking no lip from friend or foe; we have fine jobs and a fabulous boss—"

"Yay!" cried Whispell, in salute to their employer.

"Yes," Rod resumed, "the Widow Crotty is one in a million. A few flaws in her judgment, but none in her soul. The joy of me life is correcting her mistakes; and presently I'll be out ahead, picking up after her before she gets there." Smiling through the cigar smoke, he studied his chum. "Disbro, me lad, you'll soon be taking over this neat little nest for your own. As for meself, I'll be moving into the front bungalow, with Belle Crotty as me bride."

Whispell stared in awe. "Does Mis' Crotty know about it?"

Rod waved a careless hand. "Over the years, I've found meself much too coy to play hopscotch in the mine-fields of matrimony. However, I now believe me proper place is in the front office and boudoir, where I can knock the phone from Belle's hand when she's about to plot herself into disaster. Yes, and under me new plan, visitors with evil schemes will be tossed into the street before they can open their traps."

"Yeah," said Disbro knowingly. "Mis' Crotty's an easy push for a bum deal. But look, Rod, if you're goin' to marry her, you orter tell her, right away."

A gust of wind tore a few extra tubs of water from a low cloud and flung them on the villa. Rod gazed at the streaming window. "Not quite the day for it. Why mar me chances by proposing in rubber boots, when I should be at me best, dressed to kill, with the sun in me face and a bouquet in me fist? Furthermore, Mr. Whispell, me sense of delicacy prevents me from approaching the widow at this time—when she's just had a bit of a legacy from her uncle, Barney O'Rell."

Disbro stared. "She has, eh?" A pattern of shrewdness showed on his seamy face. "Few minutes ago, when I come by the bungalow, Mis' Crotty was listenin' to that red-headed guy that sings them Irish love songs to her." As Rod gaped, he went on: "He's been here before. What's his name? Charlers?"

"Charless!" Rod's feet slammed the floor. In the Canarsie Who's Who of shady characters, there was one name that would always bring the vein of rage to the McQuillan forehead, and that name was Charles K. Kelty. This Kelty was a man of many schemes, and a talent for helping widows to conduct their enterprises for his gain and their loss. To Rod's knowledge, Kelty had swiped a contractor's elevator and scaffold business from one Theresa Shine; and now, no doubt, with his winning ways and tenor songs, he was at work on the credulous Mrs. Crotty.

"Not Charlers, but Charless! Charless K. Kelty! I should have wound his neck around me wrist long years ago!" Rod bounded up. "Disbro, me second best, or storm derby!"

Whispell handed him the hat. Rodney worked his arms into a long rubber raincoat. "Oh, the ghoul! Oh, the buzzard! So he heard about Barney's bequest and flew straight to Belle!" He glared at Whispell. "Why didn't you speak up at once?"

Kelty opened the door a crack. "I'll give you a ring, Belle. Don't forget the interview tomorrow."

"Gees, Rod, I didn't know till now that Mis' Crotty hit a jackpot, so I thought the guy was just a visitor, like."

Rod threw open the door, his cigar cocked at a ferocious slant. Three big raindrops put out its fire. He hurled it to the ground; and plunging through puddles, and steering around

a Thousand Drums

mounds of scrap iron, he made his way to the rear of the bungalow. Knocking with one hand, he tried the door with the other. It was unlocked. As he strode within, he heard a lyric tenor crooning, "My Wild Irish Rose." Then the song was snapped off.

"Who's that?" cried Belle, from her office. "Was that door unlocked?"

Rodney, a giant figure in his long coat and dripping derby, stalked into the office. Belle Crotty, a lovely buxom blonde, sat in the swivel chair at her desk. With feminine disregard for logic, she wore, on this raw day, a smart black party dress that displayed quite a bit of bosom. Sitting near her, on the office table, was a tall red-haired man in a white raincoat. As Rod entered, this fellow Kelty left the table, and in one move had his hat in his hand and himself at the street door.

"The back door was indeed unlocked," said Rod grimly. "And why not, since only your true friends have access to it." He waved scornfully in Kelty's direction. "If you'd keep your

Rod chuckled, and turned to Disbro. "So, he hung back, to spy on us, and he ran to the railroad to tell his tales."

front door locked, it would be less easy for swindlers to creep in."

"Hey!" said Kelty, in token protest.

"McQuillan!" said Belle sharply. "You forget yourself!"

"Not at all! I remember meself in every detail, including me horror of rogues with marcel in their hair and songs of deceit on their lips!"

"I don't like your insults," Kelty blustered.

"Then try these for style!" shouted Rod, showing his fists.

As Belle screamed, Kelty yanked open the door, stepped out in the rain, closed the door behind him. Rodney worked his derby off, shook the rain from it, smiled at Belle. Then Kelty opened the door a crack. "I'll give you a ring, Belle. Don't forget the interview, at noon tomorrow!" And slamming the bungalow door, he ran to his car.

Belle frowned at Rodney. "You're that mean, no one without a pitchfork is safe in your presence."

Rodney shucked his raincoat, sat on the table where Kelty had been, and regarded her with bold ardor. "But you need no pitchfork, me dear, for the little felly with the bow and arrow is on your side."

"Oh, shut up," said Belle, and swung around to her desk. Rod saw that she was uneasy, and he wondered if she was going to tell him why Kelty had called, or if he'd have to goad her into crying it out in anger. His right hand, on the table, had something sticking to it.

He looked down, peeled off a new business card, and his eyes bulged as he read it; *"Kelty & Crotty—Road Oil,"* with the address and phone number of the junk yard. He rubbed the print with his fingers. His eyes snapped sparks. " 'Kelty and Crotty—Road Oil?' " he said softly.

"Yes, and what's it to you?" demanded Belle.

"On the back page of this morning's paper, in the smallest kind of print, was a surrogate's notice that the late

Barney O'Rell had left a bequest to his niece, Isabel O'Rell Crotty—"

"That was no news to you."

"But it was to the world!" Rod shouted. "And on that short notice, this snide Kelty dreamed up a business for the twos of you, and had cards printed!" He thrust the card at her. "The ink is not yet dry! That's how fast the rascal works!"

Belle moved some things on her desk; moved them back. "This business of ours may be new to you, but it's been gone into carefully by Charless and meself."

Stunned, Rod slid from the table. "Had I but known, I might have saved you some part of your inheritance. By now, no doubt, Kelty has banked your booty."

"Booty? Uncle Barney left his cash to me sister Myrtle. He left his barrels to me, and we divide his acre between us."

In process of picking up his coat, Rod turned, stared. "Barrels! It comes to me now. Barney had a queer three-cornered acre, between two railroad embankments, in Long Island City. Well I remember Barney, and his one-horse cart, and his itch for barrels. No doubt the acre is now a bog of rusted hoops and rotted staves, for Barney wouldn't part with a single bung, or the hole to fit it."

Belle got up, stretched, took a few proud steps about the office. "Uncle Barney gave up the wooden jobs years ago, and he left me his whole stock of fine steel drums."

Rod's eyes glistened. "By garry, this'll run into rich tonnage, for even bent barrels crush up to fine steel scrap—"

Belle gave a cry. "I want them as barrels, not as scrap! Let's take a look at 'em, and see what way to move 'em here."

Rod picked up his hat, sent a dotted-line gaze to her chest. "You display much surface, considering the day—"

"And whose surface is it, pray tell?" She made a quick turban with a silk scarf, snatched up a light coat, and out they went. In her sedan, and by jungle trails known to denizens of deep Brooklyn, they made the long traverse. Kelty was not mentioned, but memories of Uncle Barney brought up nostalgic moments that put Rod and Belle in a quiet harmony. So tender was Rod's mood that, arriving at Barney's Acre, he handed her from the sedan with a lover's exquisite care.

The entrance to Barney's premises was peculiar. A one-lane road led through a deep narrow defile and ended abruptly at a gate, made of a section of railroad rail, pivoted so it could be raised and lowered like a crossing gate. Now it was down and locked, with a padlock and chain. Rod stared at it. The post on which one end was pivoted, and the post the other end rested on, were so close together that no truck could pass. Between the posts, and sunk in the ground so one end stuck up a foot and a half, was a thick slab of stone.

"A shrewd lad was Barney," Rod announced. "He feared thieves, and he rigged this so he could pass, in his narrow old wagon, with the horse stepping over the center post, but no truck could get in, to rob him by wholesale. Well, I'll soon have this roadblock out of here."

"Nothing of the sort!" cried Belle. "As Charless explained, this gate is on railroad property and can't be disturbed. You'll have to bring small trucks as far as the gate, and roll up the barrels, and load right here!"

"H'm," said Rod. He helped Belle under the gate, climbed over it, and stared with delight at the vista. From one high railroad embankment to another, barrels were tiered two, three and four high, and gave back a hollow roar to the heavy beat of the rain.

As Rod penetrated deeper into the lot, to make a rough count, Belle stepped into a puddle over her rubbers. "Let's get out of here! Come on, Rod. I have to be at me office for some big calls."

Back they drove, with the windshield wipers setting a rhythm for their silence. Presently, Rod spoke. "Well, me dear, with you, there's a catch to every deal. What shape does your stupidity take, in this matter of road oil?"

Said Belle loftily: "I'll make me fortune. Road oil, I'll have you know, starts with being the oil the garages put in automobiles. Then, when it's been used, they drain it off and run it into one of these Kelty and Crotty barrels. When the barrels are full, we collect 'em and sell the oil to those needing it for private lanes and driveways, like. Charless is way up, and we plan to sell oil by the hundreds of barrels to the city, for use with this stuff they have for pavements."

Rod's face was almost purple with rage, but he controlled his voice. "And what have the garages been doing with all their old crankcase oil, while waiting for Kelty's dream and Barney's bequest to put you in business?"

"Don't be clouding the issue with your gibberish!"

"You're twenty years late with your scheme!" Rod shouted. "Everybody and his cousin have had a crack at it!"

"Charless has the inside, with all the garages around—"

"So, he's had his evil hands in this oil before?"

Belle said haughtily: "Charless is in full charge of that end of it. I'm in charge of the big wholesale orders, at the yard. Your part is simple. You'll fetch in the barrels from Barney's Acre, using three trucks from Charless—"

"Hah! Now I get the full aroma of this Kelty!"

Ignoring him, she went on: "You and Whispell will help load the barrels at the gate. Once they're stacked in me yard, Charless will have a truck painted with our sign, and you and Whispell can be peddling the oil to the small retail trade."

Rod let out a bellow of rage. "Disbro Whispell, a lad with a dozen skills! Rodney McQuillan, whose talents never have been counted—and the twos of us shouting oil in the streets, from a peddler's cart!"

"Go on," said Belle coolly. "Go right ahead into your next speech, where you and Whispell resign and rush away."

Rod was startled, for she had anticipated him. He considered swiftly. Kelty's spell must be heavy on her, to make her so indifferent to her loyal helpers. "Mrs. Crotty," he said calmly, "I have a surprise for you. Mr. Whispell and meself will not desert you. And when Charless Kelty leaves you flat on your back and no redress, we'll pick you up and brush you off, and try hard not to laugh in your face."

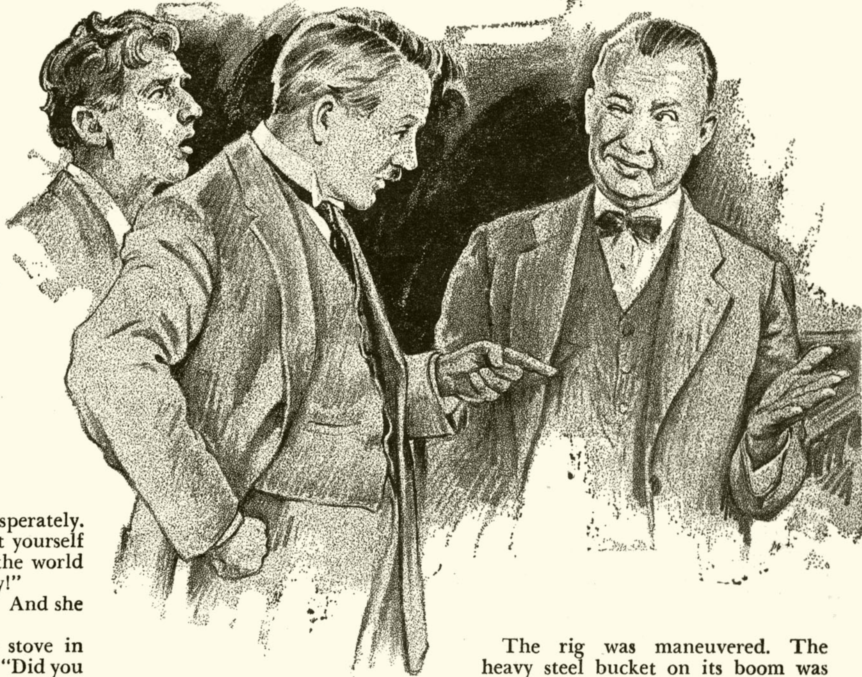
From there on, the windshield wipers did all the talking. Pulling up in front of her bungalow, Rod jumped out, started away, but she called him back. "You don't have to march off with your hip on your shoulder, simply because I want to get out of junk and house-wrecking, and into something high class."

"I hear you. And when do I start moving the barrels?"

"Tomorrow morning. I'll want them in neat stacks at the back of the yard. Have enough of 'em here by noon so I can stand in front of 'em, like, for me radio interview."

Rod started as though stung. "Radio?"

"Charless is having a radio man with a thing to take down me voice. Then they'll put it on the weekly Canarsie Cavalcade of Commerce program, and Kelty and Crotty Road Oil will get a big free boost."



"Might try it, for laughs," one muttered to the other. "Yeah, she's got the sawniest accent I ever heard."

"Belle!" implored Rod desperately. "Don't do it! Don't commit yourself by radio! Don't confess to the world that you're in with this Kelty!"

"That'll be all from you!" And she stormed into her office.

Whispell was stoking the stove in the villa when Rod came in. "Did you propose to her, Rod?"

Rodney scowled. "I did not. Pull on your coat, Disbro, till we leap into the pickup, and begin to untie the knots in the net which deceit has cast over female stupidity. We have to stop at a few garages, and the county clerk's. Then I must buy a compass and some mothballs—and I have to see a friend about a steam shovel and some ten-ton trucks."

MORNING brought a fine mood to the world. The sky was high; the sun was bright; the air was balmy; and at Barney's Acre, Rod whistled and Whispell sang, as they sprang to their tasks. Rod hadn't bothered with a key. A crafty knock with a rock made Barney's old padlock fly open. The chain was removed; the pivoted railroad rail with its counterbalance was pushed to the vertical, and the first of Kelty's small trucks backed down for its load.

Charles K. Kelty, bareheaded, and in a new blue suit, watched from a good safe distance as Rod and Disbro pounced on the barrels nearest the gate and managed to get twelve on the truck so they'd ride. The first truck pulled out; a second backed in. When the third left with its load, Kelty deemed it safe to approach. "Ah, McQuillan. Everything under control?"

Rod gazed at the shrewd lined face, under the boyish-looking red curly hair. "Your little trucks walk off with a very light load, each," he said quietly.

Kelty dusted lint from his lapel. "Light loads and quick trips will move a lot of barrels every week."

"H'm," thought Rod. "I guessed right. He's pulling this job out long and thin, and billing the widow heavy for his trucks."

Kelty cleared his throat. "Have you seen Mrs. Crotty this morning? I've tried to reach her by phone, but there's no answer, though I could swear the receiver was lifted each time."

"She sniffed your fragrance, and it made her gag," said Rod blandly. Kelty scowled, and went to the corner, where his car was parked.

Whispell, brisk in clean overalls, gave Rod a suspicious look. "Gees, Rod, you're playin' right into his hands—loadin' his trucks, and all."

Rodney shoved up his derby; smote Disbro on the back. "All is well, me lad. Kelty's trucks are on their way with a bit of camphor in each gas tank. They'll stall in all parts of Brooklyn; and crowds will gather, and there'll be hours of expert debate about carburetors." He whistled piercingly.

A huge power shovel turned the corner and came down to the gate. A fat unshaven man in a sleeveless shirt leaned from the cab. "And where'll you have us first, Rodney boy?"

Rod pointed. "See that righthand post? Give it a knock on each side of the jaw with your bucket."

The rig was maneuvered. The heavy steel bucket on its boom was swung, right and left, against the post, to loosen it. Then Rod wound several turns of chain around the post, fastened them to the bucket, stood back and waved. Up went the bucket, pulling the post from the ground. Then, the post with the gate rail was given the same treatment. With the two posts parked against the embankment, Rod wound the chain around the stone slab in the middle of the lane. "Out with this old wisdom tooth, so it won't bite you from below!"

The slab was stubborn, till a barrel of water and some work with a crowbar softened its socket; then it too came out, and was placed aside. Now the way was clear, and the big rig chugged into Barney's Acre. Again, Rodney whistled, and a huge empty truck came backing down. "Wow!" cried Whispell. "This'll sure hold more barrels than Kelty's little baby-carriages!"

"It'll hold plenty, the way we'll fix 'em," said Rod, grinning. He walked into the lot with Whispell, seized a steel drum, rolled it to a spot under the big shovel. "Now!" he signaled the fat man in the cab. Boom and bucket went up, came down, flattening the barrel into a crumpled mass. "Again?" called the fat man. Rod shook his head. "One punch to a barrel, is all."

Now two helpers from the Crotty yard appeared, and Rodney set up a routine. Whispell rolled barrels within Rod's reach. He placed them. The heavy, yard-and-a-half capacity

Illustrated by
CHARLES CHICKERING

bucket socked them, and the helpers tossed them into the truck. By using flattened barrels to make a rack, they built up a vast load. When the truck drove off, another of the same size took its place. Then a third was loaded in the same manner. As it was pulling away, there came a shout from the top of a railroad embankment. A man in overalls and a man in a business suit stood at the sky line. "What do you think you're doing down there?"

"Just what your eyes tell you!" shouted Rod.

"Who pulled out that gate?"

"This shovel, at my command!"

"Wise guy, eh?" bawled the man in the business suit. "I'll have the law on you for trespass and vandalism!"

Rod beamed at him. "Do you represent the railroad? Then be here with your law, at one o'clock sharp, and I'll be here with mine. Meanwhile, good day to you." Rod turned away, then, inspired, he whirled and yelled: "Yo! Kelty!"

"What?" called Kelty, sticking his red head into view at the top of the embankment, near the men.

Rod chuckled, waved Kelty away, and turned to Disbro. "So, he hung back, to spy on us, and he ran to the railroad to tell his tales. He wants that gate in place, and he wants only his three little trucks on this job."

"Gees, Rod, will we all be pinched?"

"Not at all," said Rod easily. He left word with the shovel operator and helpers to keep right on, crushing barrels and placing them for loading. Then, with Whispell, he walked briskly to the side-street. Taking their place, in the pickup, at the head of the convoy of high-laden trucks, they led the way to the Crotty yard.

Whispell's concern was evident. "Look, Rod, you know me—I never say anything. But—do we have to do this —the way we're doin'?"

"We do. I must save Belle from Kelty. I must save ourselves from the peddler's fate—and I have only till noon to keep Belle from making a fool of herself by radio."

"And what's Mis' Crotty goin' to say about all this?"

"Your guess is almost as good as mine," said Rod lightly. "But then, I have the advantage of long experience. Why, I believe I could write out her first thousand words, and not miss by more than a few odd shouts." . . .

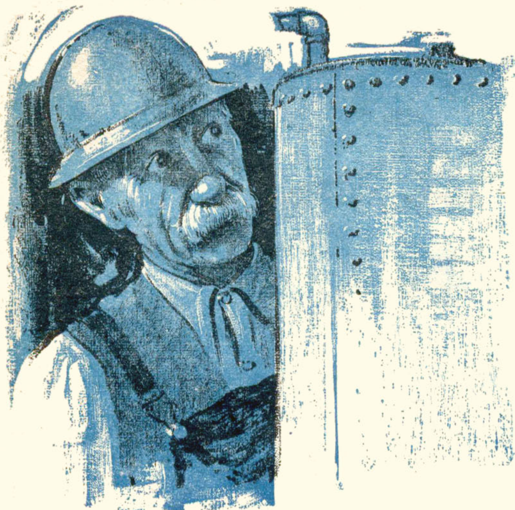
For once, the great McQuillan was wrong.

When Belle awoke, that morning, the first word she wanted to say was, "Rodney," and she wanted to say it in a friendly way, for she believed she'd been too harsh with him. She went through the usual motions of her morning routine with a song in her heart, and no suspicion that anything was amiss. As a bachelor girl, living alone in her bungalow, she had to wait till her phone rang, to find she had no voice. "Hello? Hello, Belle?" Kelty was saying at his end, but all she could do was make a few lip movements, and hang up. . . .

In a panic, since the experience was new to her, she ran to the villa and pounded on the door, but Rod and Disbro had long since gone. Back in her office, she dialed her doctor's number, and when he answered, all she could do was hang up. When the letter-carrier came, just before eight, she beckoned him in, wrote on a pad that she'd lost her voice, and had him call the doctor. . . .

The doctor came at nine; looked in her throat with a pencil light; worked in there with a spray; gave her some pills and told her she had laryngitis, and meanwhile she was to stay in bed and not try to talk. She wrote on her pad for the doctor to call her sister, Myrtle O'Rell McCarthy. Myrtle said she'd be there by noon. . . .

At noon Myrtle arrived at the office. So did Kelty. So did the special-features men, from the broadcasting station, and a technician, with a tape-recording device. The radio men took chairs, listened, and remarked to one another that they wished they could get all this on television. With dramatic gesture, Kelty reported that Rod had gone berserk, at Barney's Acre, and was smashing barrels with a steam shovel. With excitement, Myrtle was taking phone messages and relaying them. Kelty Driver No. 1 was stalled in traffic. Likewise, Kelty Drivers



Whispell, who had never lost the alertness he'd been schooled in, took a quick look, and ducked behind some old boilers.

No. 2 and No. 3. With high emotion, Belle wrote on her pad, and paced the floor with Kelty. Suddenly Myrtle, at the phone, gave a scream: "Now the railroad's going to sue us! Mother of mercy! Where's that villain, McQuillan?"

McQuillan, at the moment, was undoing the chain at the lower gate to the Crotty yard. The convoy drove in. Rod waved the first driver to a spot by the creek, where barges could come alongside a bulkhead, to load with scrap. The driver pulled the trigger. His truck body tilted, and with a slamming crash that shattered the airwaves, crumpled steel drums hit the dirt.

As the second truck was backing up to deposit its load, Whispell, who had never lost the alertness he'd been schooled in before he reformed, took a quick look, and ducked behind some old boilers. On the run came Belle, Charles K. Kelty, Myrtle and the radio men. "What's the meaning of all this?" cried Myrtle, with gestures by Belle. The truck let go its load with a roar, and when Rod could be heard, he said to Belle: "Pardon me, darling, and what was that again?"

Belle, handsome in the gray skirt and coat of a career girl's suit, with feminine flourishes at the neck and cuffs of her blouse, made lip movements and wide-armed gestures. As Rod stared, there was a mixed chorus: "She lost her voice!" said Myrtle. "See here, McQuillan!" said Kelty. "Laryngitis," said the radio men.

"What a shame!" said Rod, concerned. "Can I get you something, darling?" Then as she advanced a step, in anger, he fell back a step, turned to the radio men: "You are doctors?"

They explained themselves. "Well, well!" said Rodney. "Had I but known, I could have saved meself some moves in this game. However, gentlemen, my compliments to you both, and we regret the circumstance, but there'll be no radio chat this day."

"Who said so?" demanded Kelty, screened by the broadcast men. "They can interview me, and Belle's sister can speak for her, and the interviewer can explain the setup. Make a novel radio feature."

"Of course!" said Myrtle. "I always wanted to be on the air!"

Rodney glared at Belle's sister, who had the O'Rell beauty in face and figure, and that was all, for her expression was one of cheap shrewdness, and her voice was strident. Then he glanced at the radio men, who were staring at Myrtle, with her cartwheel hat, florid dress and gaudy wedgies. "Might try it, for laughs," one muttered to the other. "Yeah, she's got the sawniest accent I ever heard." "Come over to the office, and we'll hook up the recorder," said the first, briskly.

"No!" shouted Rod. "Mrs. Crotty can't speak for herself, but I can! There'll be no Kelty and Crotty broadcast!"

Belle worked with pad and pencil, handed the pad to Rod. *"Shut up and keep out of this!"* he read, but not aloud. Smiling and nodding, he tore the paper from the pad; crumpled it, turned to the radio men. "Mrs. Crotty agrees. The deal is off."

Belle waved furiously, grabbed the pad and pencil; wrote, then elbowing her way past Rod, she held the pad for the radio men to read. Rod peered over their shoulders. *"Postpone the interview two days and I'll have my voice back,"* she had written.

"No, gentlemen," said Rodney. "Not now, or two days from now. In fact, not at all. We regret this embarrassment, but if you haven't sensed it already, I must give you the news: You're in the midst of one of Canarsie's finest family rows. My advice to you is to get out of it."

"Is that so?" cried Myrtle, thrusting forward with the crumpled paper Rod had thrown down. "See what Belle wrote here? *'Shut up and keep out of this!'*—that means you, McQuillan!"

From his hideout, Disbro Whispell looked for Rodney to seize Myrtle and throw her in the creek. But Rodney merely smiled, cocked his derby, and waved his arm. Through the yard came four men, walking fast. Two wore coveralls, two were in dungarees, and each had a look of grim determination. Their gaze was on Kelty; and at sight of them, he cursed under his breath and sought to dart away, but Rod had him by the elbow. "Belle," he said quietly, "listen to this. Here are four garage-owners, who wish a word with Mr. Kelty."

Confronting Kelty, the four men pulled folded papers from their pockets, and gave him, not a word, but paragraphs. It seemed that in the past Mr. Kelty had hauled many's the barrel of old crankcase oil from their premises and never had reimbursed them. Now, what did Mr. Kelty propose to do about it?

"Leave me answer for him," said Rod. "He proposes to rope this poor widow into a deal, share and share alike. Her share will be his old debts, and his will be the new profits. Do I state this correctly, Mr. Kelty? And would it be more convincing if I produced a few dozen more good Canarsie garagemen who've been swindled by you?"

Belle wrote on her pad; thrust it at Kelty. "Oh, yes, of course," he said evasively. "Now I'll see you men later—"

Said Rod: "One minute, Kelty. The right to misread Mrs. Crotty's notes is reserved to meself." He snatched the pad, and read aloud: "*'Kelty, you told me nothing about these debts.'*" He turned to Belle. "You saw for yourself how he was about to squirm out of it. Now, ask him about the trucking bill he thought to build up on you, his new partner. What was he to charge for his rigs?"

Belle gave Rod a look, thought, then wrote: *"Thirty-five dollars a day, per truck, till all barrels are moved."*

Rod gave a hoot. "A full year's work for three little rigs!"

Now the four garagemen ganged up on Kelty. "Where's my dough?" "I want mine, right now!" "Come on, Kelty, get it up!" "I want my hunnert bucks, Kelty, if I have to take it out of your hide!"

Myrtle, who had been silent quite a while, for her, turned on Rod. "You great big bully, trying to frame Mr. Kelty!"

"He framed himself, on a bamboo easel for a swindler's parlor!" roared Rodney. Now, he was angry. He was worried about Belle and her affliction. The situation seemed good for a long stalemate, and it was time to relieve it. He turned, signaled.

The driver of the loaded truck got into gear, backed into position, tilted his load and let it crash with a racket that took the group by surprise. As heads turned, Kelty took a last despairing look at the heap of crumpled oil drums, and left the scene at a run. One of the garagemen started after him, but his mates pulled him back. "Let's all stick together and catch him in the courts." Then they turned to Rod and Belle. "Any chance of us getting our dough out of this new Kelty and Crotty combination?"

Said Rod decisively: "There is no combination. The deal never started, and Kelty is out entirely. However, should Mrs. Crotty want oil from you boys, she'll deal direct and she'll pay fast, for her reputation is of the best."

The four gazed admiringly at Belle, saluted her and Rod, and walked away. Rod turned to the radio men. "So long, boys. Sorry you had a dry run, but Mrs. Crotty will give you an elegant interview for your program, directly her voice is back in all its golden tones."

They grinned, nodded, and started off. "And, good day to you, Mrs. McCarthy," said Rod, giving Myrtle a granite look.

"Oh, is that so? Well, since you're so smart, doing all Belle's thinking and talking for her, why'd you have to go and get us in a lawsuit with the railroad?"

ROD eyed her quizzically. "The word came by phone? And how would the railroad know about Belle, unless Kelty gave them her number? One more black mark for the rogue!"

Belle held out her pad. He read: *"What's this about the R.R.?"*

"Think nothing of it, Belle. Myrtle, have no fear for your acre. I'll guarantee to leave it in better shape than I found it." He turned to Belle. "And who is at the office, at the moment, to take calls and speed the parting broadcasters?"

Belle gave Myrtle a little push toward the office. Myrtle started off, paused to say, "If you make trouble for us, you'll hear plenty from Belle, when she gets back her speech."

"I believe you," said Rod dryly. Then Myrtle left. Disbro Whispell eased out of hiding, and came up in a sidewise manner, to be there, if welcome; to be gone in a flash, if prudence so dictated. Belle moved to the heap of battered barrels, stood studying them. Rod addressed his truck drivers: "Back to the lot, boys. Keep the loads rolling, now that you know the way."

Belle heard him, came up fast, but the men boarded their vehicles and trundled away. Rod glanced at his watch. "Not quite twelve-thirty, and everything has gone better than planned." He turned brightly to Belle. "And now, me dear, 'tis time I displayed me concern for you in this sad state. I can well believe you'd have expressed yourself in different words—"

Belle, writing furiously, broke her pencil. Fumbling in her bag, she found a piece of chalk; walked to an old boiler, picked up a piece of burlap, brushed rust from a boiler plate, and wrote: *"Why did you crush my good barrels?"*

"Ah," said Rod. "Did you give this lot a close look? Every barrel pitted and leaky! I fear you'll find it's the same with many of those old drums. Crushing them makes a neater shipping package, for you can't afford long hauls with barrels of air."

Belle cleaned a new place on the boiler and scrawled: *"Who pays for the big trucks and steam shovel?"*

"You do," said Rod, "but I got the lot at cut rates."

Already, she was writing, and Rod read: *"You're fired! Whispell can stay, but you're through!"*

"Now, Belle, darling! What way is this to reward me?"

She wrote: *"Pack up and get out!"* then she threw away the chalk; dusted her hands, tossed her head and walked away, her chin in the air. Rod and Whispell exchanged glances; Whispell read the last messages, sighed. Rod winked at him, made a gesture. Whispell caught up the burlap and began erasing the messages. No sense leaving them, for the yard crew to read.

Striding toward the office, a few paces behind Belle, Rod reviewed his activities, found nothing wrong with them at any point. So, contrition made quick way for indignation.

In the office he found that the radio men had gone. Myrtle was reporting to Belle that the railroad lawyers were waiting at the gateway to Barney's Acre, "And everything's simply awful, Belle! You've just got to get rid of that McQuillan!"

Rod moved front and center. "Myrtle, I'm not your husband, so I can't tell you to hush; but speaking as an outsider—shut up!" He turned to Belle. "I'm sorry about your voice, but meanwhile, we'll have to use mine. Do you feel equal to a bit of a trip?" She gave him a hard look, nodded. He reached in her desk, got out a big pad and some pencils; placed them beside the telephone. "Mrs. McCarthy, you'll stay by the phone. If you have to leave, call in Mr. Whispell and instruct him to keep the records till Belle returns. Okay with you, me dear?" Belle nodded, and they started out. Then Rod darted back, picked up a small memo pad and a pencil stub, and stuck them in his pocket.

Again they drove toward Barney's Acre. Again they drove in silence. Belle, now, was reviewing recent happenings. She burned with chagrin at the denouncing of Kelty, though intuition told her that Rod was right about the red-haired deceiver. She didn't understand what the trouble with the railroad people was, and she wished she could give herself the joy of calling Rod all the things that came to her tongue and stopped there. She stole a glance at him. He was angry. Catching her looking at him, he whipped out the writing materials, dropped them in her lap. "Did you wish to say something?" he asked. She wrote a furious: *"NO!"*

WHEN they reached Barney's gateway, and got out, the expression that always went with one of Belle's screams was on her face. She clutched Rod's arm, and pointed. The power shovel had worked its way deeper into the lot. As she watched, two men from her yard worked with a nice precision. One rolled a steel drum into the target area; down came boom and bucket; and the second man tossed the crushed mass aside and stood ready for the next. Belle lunged forward, to halt the proceedings, but Rod held her back, as two gentlemen in business suits approached. One was the fellow who'd hailed Rod that morning. The other was heavy, bald, important, frowning.

"You said you'd be here at one o'clock with your attorney, I believe? I represent the railroad. This lady your counsel?"

"She's my employer," said Rod. The men bowed, and in response to their admiring glances, Belle nodded and smiled. "At the moment, she's at odds with her larynx," Rod explained. "That robs us of the sound of Brooklyn's sweetest voice." He faced the man he'd addressed that morning. "If I may correct you, I told you to be here with your law, and I'd be here with mine." He pulled out a pocket compass and some notes. "Skipping the nonsense about the gate, which may or may not be on your land, and which we'll replace at the end of each day to protect our own property—we come to the main point, which is the railroad's steady encroachment on this acre of land."

The men stared. "What's this?"

"We have cause for an action at law," said Rod sternly. "I am suspicious of railroad embankments adjoining premises like these, for they have a tendency to spread, during the years. Acting on me suspicion, and with me compass and tape-line, I ran a bit of a survey, at dawn this morning—A rough survey, but even a careful plotting will show this acre's

shrunk to less than five-eighths its original size, what with the spread of your installations."

Belle plucked Rod's sleeve, questioned him with eyebrow work and gesture, and at his nod, she joined him in frowning at the railroad men.

"Let's see your figures," said the stout man.

Rodney handed over his notes. "There's the original figures on Barney O'Rell's deed, copied from the records. There are the lines, compass directions and distances. And there's me own scratch survey. Don't trust my figures. Have your own civil engineer plot it."

The two railroad men conferred. One of them turned to Rod. "Meanwhile, we'll—er—dismiss this matter of the gate?"

"We will!" said Rod, and glanced at Belle.

She was regarding him with awe. Over the years, she'd seen many samples of his violence, and she knew him for a man who had to have his own way and say. But, to put a chip on your shoulder and walk right up to a big railroad as calm as you please —well, Kelty'd never see the day he could do it. Such bold defiance called for a real man. It called, in short, for Rodney McQuillan. Now, she didn't know if the railroad would knock off the chip, but she gave Rod a nod, as a sign of her assent to anything he might wish to say.

Rod addressed the officials. "In closing, it is not Mrs. Crotty's wish to bring action against your company. She is one of Canarsie's foremost business women, and a great one for fair play, so you'll find her open to a reasonable offer in an adjustment, out of court. Meanwhile, you could show your own good will by letting us load a few gondola cars with scrap metal, on the siding just above us."

"I believe we could consider that matter," said the railroad attorney. Then they took their leave, after a few more admiring glances at Belle.

Rod and the fat shovel operator exchanged glances of understanding, and Rod escorted Belle to her car. "Can you get back to the office by yourself, me dear?"

Belle shook her head, took pad and pencil; wrote: *"I'll stay with you. We'll ride back together."*

Rod leaped into the car, shut the door. "Belle, this all was not pleasant for you, but by fair means and foul blows, I had to get Kelty out of your path. As to the railroad, they're deep in the wrong, as they'll learn. Meanwhile, their permission to load gondolas, right here at the lot, will mean much to you, for when you get your voice back, you can sell carloads of crushed barrels at the cost of a few phone calls to the smelters."

She reached for the writing pad, but he anticipated her. "I know, I know, and we'll crush only those that are good for nothing but scrap. I suggest hauling a few dozen truck loads to the yard, as a backlog of scrap for your local trade."

She gave his knee a little pat to show he was doing fine, so far. He hit her knee a vigorous blow, in return. "And finally, me dear, there'll be a few hundred of these drums in good condition, to be saved as such. Since you have your heart set on this oil business, give it a try on a small scale. Forget the road oil. Sell it on the waterfront, to preserve plank docks and wharfs and bulkheads and stringpieces. Neat prosperous little deal, all your own, and no evil Keltys to eat up the profits before they get to you. What do you say? Oh—I quite forgot—"

Belle was regarding him with shining eyes. She knocked the pad and pencil aside. She threw her arms around him and kissed his cheek.

"I understand every word you say, and I love the way you say it!" cried the delighted Rodney McQuillan.

Songs That Have Made History

XVII—SALLY IN OUR ALLEY

IT was a song often sung in London, and well-loved songs always have traveled fast — centuries before there was any radio to speed them. This one had crossed the Atlantic by 1776, and a little New York girl named Katharine Ball learned to sing it. That was fortunate for the cause of American independence.

After the disastrous Battle of Long Island, Washington ferried his defeated troops over to New York under cover of a fog, and commenced a hasty retreat to Harlem Heights. His situation still was desperate. He was threatened by attack from Westchester; and British frigates, sailing up the East and Hudson rivers, menaced both his flanks. Naval guns bombarded from Kip's Bay in the East River, while Lord Howe landed a force at the present Thirty-seventh Street to cut off the American rearguard under doughty Israel Putnam.

Inland marched the Redcoats until they reached the residence of the Quaker merchant Robert Murray, on the hill which bears his name today. Charming Mistress Murray stood in her doorway and called out an invitation to dinner to the passing British staff. The Murray hospitality was famous, and thought of delicious dishes and good wines was more than Lord Howe could resist. Accepting for himself, Clinton, Cornwallis and the Tory Governor Tyron, he halted his column. Had he continued his advance for only ten minutes longer, he would have intercepted the rearguard of the Continentals and had them bottled up in lower Manhattan.

That repast was all the generals had hoped. Mistress Murray prolonged it with sprightly conversation, the British officers teasing her about her American sympathies, and she replying good-naturedly. But the best of dinners can last only so long. The invaders were rising to depart when Katharine Ball asked if she might sing for them. Her father, an American captain, was lying wounded in an upstairs chamber, but no sign of strain showed on the girl's face.

"I know 'Sally in Our Alley' and many other songs," she declared.

The appeal of a song soldiers last heard at home is not to be denied. "We should be off, but sing your song, little lady," Lord Howe granted permission.

The sweet young voice, perhaps accompanied by harp or harpsichord, lifted in the lovely melody:

Of all the girls that are so smart,
There's none like pretty Sally.
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives down in our alley. . . .

Little Kate sang on to the end. Her song really was an old one, composed by Henry Carey in 1715, and revived about 1760 when it was set to a new melody. There may well have been tears in the eyes of her listeners, for in the midst of war it is not the marching song but the sentimental ditty, reminding of a girl at home, that soldiers love best.

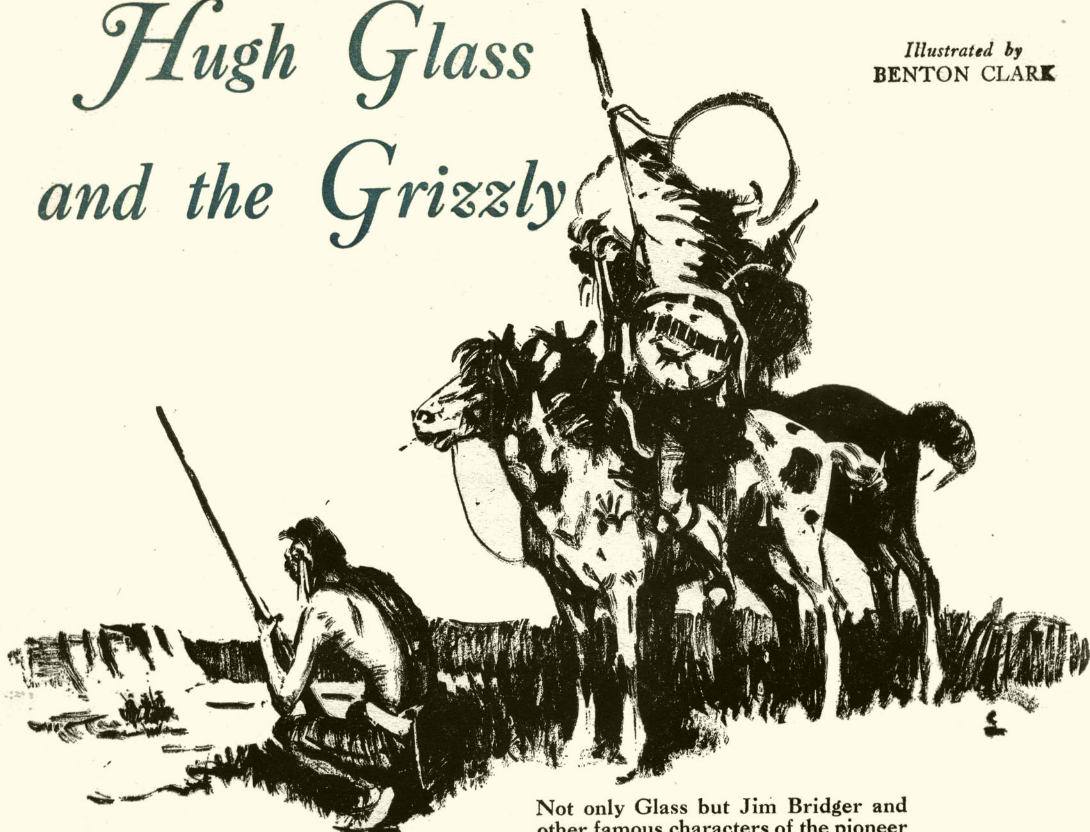
Compliments and applause. With courtly thanks, Howe and his commanders took their departure and resumed the pursuit. Afterward a remarkable bit of irony in the occasion may have struck them. Henry Carey, author of "Sally," was also, according to most authorities, the composer of "God Save the King." Now it was too late to save a lost opportunity for the King's men. Granted respite by Mistress Murray's dinner and Kate's song, Putnam's rearguard had won clear, and Washington beat off the British attacks at Harlem Heights.

Today a bronze tablet at Thirty-seventh Street and Park Avenue commemorates the services Mary Lindley Murray rendered her country. It should add the names of Katharine Ball and "Sally in Our Alley."

—by Fairfax Downey

Hugh Glass and the Grizzly

Illustrated by
BENTON CLARK



Not only Glass but Jim Bridger and other famous characters of the pioneer West live again in this colorful tale.

by MARK BOESCH

The Rocky Mountain Fur Company was five days up the Grand River toward the Yellowstone—five days of fast travel that took them out of Arikaree country, a region which swarmed with angry savages whose twin villages had been destroyed by the white trappers.

Now they were once again nearing the Yellowstone country. Soon they would be at the fort which Major Henry had built at the mouth of the Yellowstone the winter before. And from the fort they would push on up to the headwaters of the Missouri, and trap beaver streams the rest of the winter. It was late August now. There was no time to waste.

Hugh Glass, veteran hunter and scout, was sent ahead that day by the Major to secure meat. One other man went with him. Joe Shannon, Jed Smith and Bill Sublette also went searching for meat. Small parties like that could bag elk, deer and buffalo. But a big party did not see much game.

Hugh Glass knew that country around the Grand River. He knew it to be wild and untamed, where it was a common thing to run into hostile Indians. But there was something even more dangerous than Indians in that stretch of country. Grizzly bears—the big bears that were afraid of neither man nor beast. Hugh Glass knew grizzlies; he had shot several of them—shot them just as quick as he could and just as dead as he could.

Sublette, Smith and Shannon had gone inland to search for buffalo. They would rejoin the company the next day. But Glass and his companion were after deer or elk. They were searching the river bottoms ahead of the company. . . .

There was a thick clump of brush—plum bushes. That was good browse for elk, Glass thought. And their tracks were all around there. He began to worm his way through the bush. Might be a bunch of them in the clearing ahead. One last clump of brush, and he was out into the open. He was standing on a sandy beach along the river. Then a great roar brought Glass' gun to his shoulder. Sunning herself there on the warm sand was an old she-grizzly, and with her two sizable cubs. The old bear, ferocious at sight of this man who would disturb her nap, sprang at him with the speed of a hurricane. Glass' rifle barked. But there was no escaping. He was too close, and the bear was too quick. With an angry roar, the bear slapped at the man's rifle; it went crashing through the bushes. Then the bear was on the man and bearing him down to the sand.

Glass' companion, hearing the shout and the angry roar of the bear, came on the run. But the two cubs, big and vicious enough to do battle themselves, got into the spirit of things. Believing Mother had the first man taken care of, they turned on the other. The second trapper was forced into the river. He stood there hip-deep in water and shot one of the cubs. The other one sat on its haunches and watched him with interest. The man tried to reload. But his powder was wet. So he yelled—yelled like a madman, and hoped that the rest of the company coming

up the river would hear. But he yelled as much with horror at what he saw there on the sandy beach.

The giant grizzly was holding Hugh Glass to the sand and biting him in the leg and in the side. Such a big animal would seem to have no trouble killing a man. But Hugh Glass was no ordinary man. Before he had gone down, he had drawn his long hunting-knife. He had never relinquished his hold on it. And he was using it. Time after time the knife was sunk into the breast of the bear, Glass trying desperately to pierce the great beast's heart. And while he fought, he growled and snarled and raved, half from anger and half from pain. This great beast and he were locked in a fight to the finish. And Hugh Glass and the bear were oblivious to everything else. Neither seemed to hear the man standing in the water and yelling his fool head off. Neither seemed to notice the other men running toward them as fast as they could come. Neither could hear as they fought each other. And both began to lose their senses, the man from the throbbing pain of open wounds, the bear from the thrusting knife that was sending more and more of its life-blood to run across the warm sands. Bear's blood and man's blood mingled, both a bright red under the hot sun. Then a final thrust of the knife found its mark, and the huge beast gave one final slobbering shudder and became a great mass of limp weight upon the man. Hugh Glass was barely conscious of the men pulling the great weight off of him; then he too lost all reckoning.

"Old Hugh's a goner," Jim Bridger said sadly as he looked down on his friend lying there on the bloody sand. They had made him as comfortable as possible. But there was little they could do, save dress his numerous open wounds. In one place his ribs plainly showed.

"We have no time to waste," Major Henry said. "We have to keep moving. And Hugh is in no condition to travel. He still has a pulse, but that's about all. We could Injun up on him, and leave, boys. It is the smart thing to do. We're still in 'Ree country and no telling when those devils will be scouting us up here."

The Major looked at his men—men who had adopted about every habit of the Indian to survive in Indian country. Would they go so far as to adopt this one, to leave a helpless man, leaving him with one weapon and enough food to last a week or so? But the Major could tell that this Spartan cruelty would be too much for some of those men.

"Will someone volunteer to stay here with Hugh Glass and tend him as long as he stays alive?" the Major asked.

Again he looked over the faces of his men. Not a man who failed to understand everything that implied. Alone with a dying man in a hostile angered-Indian country. No telling how long Hugh might live. Maybe a day, maybe a week. But they were all certain the old trapper would die. No man could survive what he had gone through. And the 'Rees would be coming through that country very soon, trailing the whites, looking for a chance to attack. Finding an isolated trapper or two would be great sport for them.

But there was one man who spoke up.

Glass tried desperately to pierce the great beast's heart.

"I reckon I'll stay." It was Jim Bridger.

"All right, Jim," the Major said. He had rather expected Bridger to volunteer, for he knew Bridger thought a lot of old Glass. And he knew the kind of courage Jim Bridger had.

"If Jim can stand it, I reckon I can." The Major turned. That would be Bridger's pal Joe Shannon talking. But no—Shannon was out with Sublette hunting buffalo. It was Fitzgerald who spoke—a reckless sort of fellow.

"Two of you, then," the Major said. "Very well. And you can rejoin us at the Yellowstone."

Two days went by, days that saw the two young trappers keeping watch over the third—watching his breathing become more and more difficult, giving him water on occasion, but not able to feed him. Old Hugh looked like a goner sure enough.

"If he's going to die, I wish he'd do it quick," Fitzgerald said that day. Fitzgerald was getting impatient. He was wanting to get away from there now before the 'Rees came. "Them 'Rees is going to find us for sure," he said to Bridger. "Glass will be dead soon enough. Maybe we'd best to go while the going's good."

Bridger nodded. He hated to admit it, but it did seem mighty foolish to stay here with an almost dead man. If the 'Rees came along, as they were bound to sooner or later, there would be three of them dead instead of just the one. Yet Jim was reluctant to leave. Something about the old trapper's efforts to keep alive inspired him. Then again, there was something about this almost futile effort that warned him. A place of death, the warning said. Best to get out of here before it gets you.

And they would have left that day, except that Glass rallied. Of a sudden he sat bolt upright, stared at Bridger and Fitzgerald, and began talking.

"Whar's the others?"

"Lie down, Hugh," Bridger said quickly, noting how the wounds had started bleeding all over again with the sudden movement of the man.

Glass lay back down on the bed of boughs.

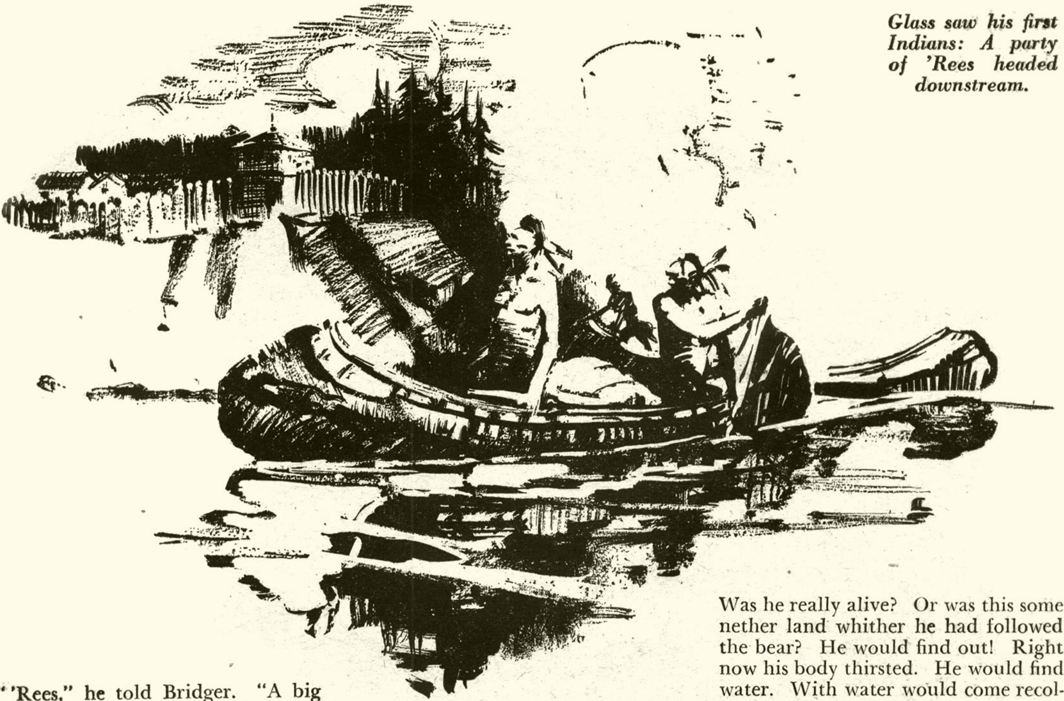
"Whar's the b'ar?" he wanted to know.

"Next to you. Too big to pack off," Bridger said. "That was sure a battle you gave him, Hugh."

But Glass heard no more. He had passed out again.

It had given Bridger new hope. But now Glass steadily grew worse. Perhaps that act of sitting up was to be his last. It began to look that way.

All that night he labored for breath. By morning he was barely breathing, and his pulse was almost gone. Fitzgerald had gone hunting that morning. He came back early, plenty excited.



Glass saw his first Indians: A party of 'Rees headed downstream.

"'Rees," he told Bridger. "A big party of them. And I think they're headed this way. We'd best to head out of here. Glass is dead, anyway."

It did look that way. Jim was not just sure. He thought he could feel the man's pulse. But it was very, very faint. No telling how long this might go on. No, Bridger was sure this was the end. The old-timer was all washed up. So Bridger nodded his agreement to Fitzgerald, and sadly left with the other, but with many a backward glance toward the man lying there on the boughs, the man who had taught him so much. It was a grim death to die, but the kind of death that Hugh Glass would have preferred. The coyotes would work on him, for sure.

Like the gray dawn that always follows the blackest of nights, there came to the man lying there on his bed of boughs the first faint recollection that he was still alive. It was the great craving for something that was inside him—the great thirst that prompted his body to bring his mind to coördinating, making his senses flow so that the muscles would function. He was like a drunken man as he crawled to his knees, and the first thing he was conscious of was the pair of turkey buzzards that perched on nearby limbs and gawked at him. That angered him. He picked up a stick to throw at them, but was amazed to find he could barely lift it. It was just a little stick, hardly more than a twig. He looked at his mangled body thoughtfully. Lucky that he could not see his back. It was one long furrow of bloodied teeth- and claw-marks, the blood dry now and the wounds healed somewhat, but still brutally sore, and aching. It was his thinness that appalled him. Blood, even his own blood, and wounds, did not impress Hugh Glass. They were a commonplace. But to be so emaciated—that he could not understand. Glass looked all around for Bridger and Fitzgerald. They were gone. A cold anger swept through him. Not only were they gone, but also gone were his rifle, powder-horn, flint, and long hunting-knife. They had left him high and dry and without a weapon to defend himself with, other than the small knife he carried inside his pocket.

He saw the bear lying there next to him. He remembered every detail of his savage fight with it. But looking at it now gave him quite a start. It was a big bear. But what gave him the start was that one side of the bear had been carved into and eaten. His own small pocket-knife was sticking there in the flesh, ready for a grasping hand to cut more of the meat loose from the hide. That had been his hand. Hardly conscious, his body had demanded sustenance, and he had found it there beside him, without having become fully conscious. Doubtless he had drunken of the blood, too. His tongue was thick, and splotches of it were on his hands. It had saved his life, this subconscious act of his. Or had it? Was he really alive? Or was this some nether land whither he had followed the bear? He would find out! Right now his body thirsted. He would find water. With water would come recollection. His brain might get to working as it should.

He had not the strength to rise; he could barely pull himself toward the river. It took him an hour to go twenty feet. Every five feet or so, he blanked out. But when finally he reached the water and had lowered one hand into it, a new feeling came into him. Then with a tremendous effort he raised his wet hand to his lips and licked his fingers greedily. That gave him new power and new desire. Now he was lowering his head into the water, being careful and thinking that it was dangerous, lest it should bury itself into the water and he not be able to raise it again. But once his lips had touched the sweet, cool water, and the parched wrinkles on them had become moistened, all care left him, and he drank greedily. Satiated, he lay back on the sand and rested, staring with half-open lids up into the blue sky of early morning. He had lived, after all. He had defeated death another time.

Hugh Glass had had a good gun. Too good! Bridger and Fitzgerald had seen no point in leaving him, a dead man, or a man about to die, with it. Some passing 'Ree would be sure to find it, and then use it on some white man. So the two had taken his gun, his powder-horn, bullet-pouch, knife and flint. The small knife was all Glass had left, the only weapon of any kind that he possessed.

"They might've buried me afore they left!" Hugh Glass muttered as he

thought things over. He had eaten more of the bear, raw and old though it was, and drunk more of the water. He was able to crawl fairly well now. He had not yet won this round with death, he knew. The odds were still greatly against him. He would have to move on. Had been here too long already. Injuns were sure to be locating this place.

But he rested all that day. And at night he crawled along the Grand River. Whenever he heard a hostile sound, he would stop and take cover in the brush. He saw his first Indians that way—a party of 'Rees went along the river-bank, headed downstream. They would be sure to spot the carcass of the bear. He hoped they would not bother to read too much of the sign. Perhaps those buzzards had returned to make short work of the bear. But Hugh Glass was afraid those Injuns would trail him back up the river. It kept him moving. He must have made five miles that night on hands and knees. He had stuffed his clothes full of bear meat. He ate it with the coming of daylight, drank water out of the river, then crawled into a clump of brush for sleep and rest. He was feeling a bit better.

GLASS had no idea what day it was, or what month, even. He must have been unconscious or semi-conscious for a long time, he thought, for his wounds were fairly well healed, and much of that bear had been hacked away by his knife. And he could tell by the trees along the river that autumn had approached. The leaves were changing color. And the nights were cooler. Old Hugh had always liked autumn. It was the time when he could hunt and not worry too much about meat spoiling. And he could begin to think about trapping season, and to get ready for it. But now autumn scared him just a little. And the cold nights would not be good. Winter would soon be coming. He was ragged, and could not stand much cold. He would have to kill a deer somehow, and make some furs to clothe himself in. But how could he kill a deer with only a pocket-knife?

He rested well that day, and he awoke just as the sun was setting. He ate the rest of the bear-meat he had packed along. The stuff was getting so rank he was glad to be finished with it. But now he would have to hunt for more to eat. He started along the river, still crawling. That bear meat did not seem to give him much energy. But he found some berries just before dark, some late summer berries that helped balance his diet just a little. They tasted good. Then he crawled on and made another five miles that night without mishap.

By daylight he was ravenously hungry. The crawling helped his appetite. And it also helped his wounds—it stimulated the flow of blood through his body and would help to rebuild tissues.

There was an abundance of small game along the river. Rabbits, squirrels and grouse. That first hour of daylight Glass spent making deadfalls. Then he crawled into the brush and went to sleep.

He awoke early. His stomach was hurting for want of food, any kind of food. It was midafternoon. He crawled eagerly to the deadfalls he had made. The first one was empty. The second one was empty. But the third had a big rabbit in it. The man shouted for joy.

And so it went. Crawling along his way by night, sleeping during the day, getting his food by whatever means he could devise—one time being fortunate enough to knock over a fool-hen with a long stick. By the fifth day he could stand on his feet for a short period of time. A week later he was able to walk.

Leaves were falling from the trees now, and frost was common in the morning. Autumn was fading. Soon winter would arrive. And Glass still had killed no deer, and his clothes were all the more ragged. Luckily, he had not been seen by any hostiles. The Indians seemed to have vacated that country. It was good.

He was walking fairly well now—not his usual long, striding walk, but now more like a walk than a stagger. His strength was coming back. But it finally snowed, and he could hardly stand the cold. Most of his body was exposed to it. His skin was becoming blue.

But that country was becoming more familiar to him. He had hunted through there. He did not need to travel at night any more. He went about boldly in the daytime, for he could walk well now, and was making better time. Some days he tried to stalk deer, but it was useless and he knew it. He would have to get along without furs. He would keep moving. It would not be long now before he would reach the Yellowstone and Henry's Fort. They would be surprised to see him. It made him smile. But when he thought of Bridger and Fitzgerald, he did not smile. He had a score to settle with those two.

NEVER could a man be so disappointed. All those days of crawling and staggering across the country, up the Grand River, to the Yellowstone and then to its mouth, Hugh Glass had thought how nice it would be to see the company again, and to see their expressions when he came walking out of the brush to their campfires. They would not believe it at first. Then the French-Canadians would shout something about ghosts. It would make for a good laugh.

But now Hugh Glass was supremely disappointed. For when finally he did reach the mouth of the Yellowstone and Henry's Fort, he found the place deserted. And so it had been for more than a month, Glass figured, from the sign about the place. There were four fresh graves, and evidence of a battle. The Indians had attacked, then, and four of the trappers had been killed. Glass wondered which four. Major Henry had probably figured it best to abandon the fort. Well, Hugh thought, trapping country was upriver, up toward Blackfoot land. That's where the Major would head. So Hugh Glass headed that way.

He was a different man now than what he had been a month ago. Now he was very much alive and quite vigorous, even though he still had no decent clothes to shelter himself from the cold.

He reached the Powder River. And there he again ran into Indians. But this time they were Indians he could trust, friendly Crows. And it was well they were friendly, for they had spotted him. They were camped along the river there, and they shouted at him as he tried to hide in the brush. So Hugh Glass came striding into the Indian camp, his body plainly showing the effects of his battle with the grizzly, but his self-assertiveness plain as he directed himself to the chief of this bunch of Crows.

Glass knew Crows: A proud tribe, the lords of the plains, horse-thieves *de luxe* and proud of it. But noble people, and warriors all. Big fellows, with intense hatred for Blackfeet.

Something else about the Crows he understood. They practiced the sun-dance, a ritualistic torture dance to the sun god, and to prove their stamina and courage, they allowed

their bodies to undergo great physical tortures.

But not one of the dozen warriors crowding curiously around the strange white man had ever tackled a grown she-bear grizzly with cubs at her side, when armed only with a knife. But they all believed Glass when he told them in their own language, which he could speak, that he had had such a fight. His body showed it. And there was nothing too good for Hugh Glass in that camp. He was treated like the distinguished guest he was.

Besides flint, a gun and furs, Hugh Glass also got some useful information from the Crows. Not long ago this hunting party, for such it was, had run across Major Henry and his men right here along the Powder River. They had, indeed, traded the Major forty-seven head of horses—which explained how they came to have extra rifles and trinkets.

The Crows were shrewd traders. They figured they had got a good bargain. What were horses? The most valuable thing a man could own, of course. More valuable than a wife. But horses were easy for a Crow to get. He could, if he pleased, go and steal the horses back from the white men. But no, a Crow would not do that.

Not much! Hugh Glass thought. But then, maybe they wouldn't. The Crows hated the Blackfeet. They knew the white men fought the Blackfeet, and that was one reason the Crows were friendly with the white men. But they would have been friendly with Hugh Glass under any circumstance; they almost worshiped him, and would have, except for their fierce pride which told them that they too, if the situation offered itself, would do battle with a great bear the way he had, and they too would of course come out the winner. Only, they would have been wiser than the white man. They would not have allowed their own people to make off with their weapons and thus be almost helpless. But even so, the white man had lived and was making himself well again. He had made great medicine. The Crows could respect him for that.

BUT what was it he wanted to know? Oh, yes; the other white men. They had gone back to the great Missouri. Then they had proceeded up to the Big Horn. There they had built a fort, like the one they had built at the Yellowstone, only the treacherous Gros Ventres had driven them out of that place. The Gros Ventres were bad, not so bad as their cousins the Blackfeet, but bad just the same—sneak thieves, and mean rascals.

Yes, the white men had gone to the mouth of the Big Horn and built there another fort. But they did not

stay there long. They had left in small parties of twos and threes, some going up the Powder here, some to the Sweetwater over the Divide. They had been gone maybe two moons. Then they had returned, and all were back now at the new fort. And they had taken some beaver where they had gone. All this the Crows knew, because the Crows made it a point to know such things.

Hugh Glass thanked his kind hosts. It was not so far to the Big Horn. And he had business there. So he took his departure—a new man now, clad in furs and equipped with a decent weapon. It was good to have a rifle again in the crook of his arm....

It was a cold night in January. It had snowed six inches, and the snow had crusted with the lowering of the temperature. The trappers had put fresh logs on the fires, then had rolled up in their blankets to sleep. It was good that the larder was well filled with meat. They had had a good hunt the day before. Now in the larder there were several elk and deer, buffalo beef, prairie hens and quail. They could afford to stay by the fires for a week or so in comfort.

The man who walked on that snow that night was bound to be heard, even a man who could walk as quietly as Hugh Glass. The crunch of his footsteps would be plainly audible in the still of the cold night. And especially if those who would hear were men whose ears were attuned to pick up such hostile sounds as the approach of a party when all parties should be in the blankets asleep.

So Hugh Glass, when he came crunching into the new fort that cold January night, was heard.

"Who's thar?" a voice demanded. It was the guard, alert to danger.

Hugh Glass knew that voice.

"Where are you, Jim Bridger?" the old trapper asked, looking about him in the dark of the night.

"It sounds like Hugh Glass!" Jim Bridger exclaimed. "Are you man or ghost? Speak up!"

Glass saw Bridger now, standing by the side of one of the cabins, rifle held ready. The old trapper chuckled.

"Thought you had seen the last of old Hugh, did you?" he snorted. "I've come back to settle with you, Jim Bridger. I'm man enough, you can bank on that."

"I'd never believe it could be you, 'cept that I'm seeing you and hearing you," Bridger said. "Reckon I'm relieved to see you too, Hugh. I been thinkin' and thinkin' about how me and Fitz left you back there. Reckon you've a right to be angered about it."

"Reckon I have," Glass said coldly. "And I reckon I'll settle with you right now, Jim Bridger."

"It's your play, Hugh," Bridger said calmly. He laid his rifle aside and stood facing the old trapper without a weapon.

"Reckon it is," Glass stalled. He wasn't accustomed to shooting a man who wasn't prepared to shoot back at him or to offer some kind of resistance. But then he got to thinking about the long days of suffering he had just been through. Slowly his rifle came up, pointed toward Bridger.

"Don't, Hugh!" It was the same quiet, firm voice, the voice that commanded respect and attention. Hugh Glass spun around. There behind him stood Major Andrew Henry, tall, straight and correct.

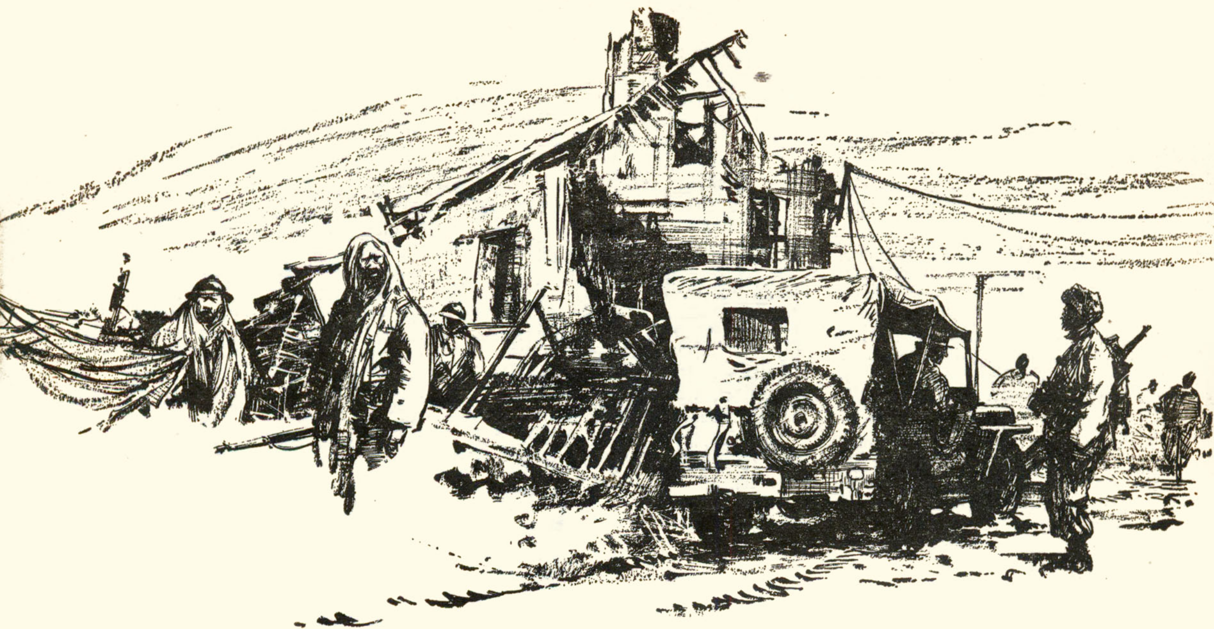
"AND why shouldn't I?" Glass wanted to know. "He left me to die. Him and his sneaking partner! And they took all my weapons, so I'd be sure to die! Robbing a wounded man who was helpless!"

"They left you only after they were sure you were through," the Major said calmly. "Bridger, here, was the first to volunteer to stay by your side. He stayed three days in hostile country, taking his chances against the whole tribe of 'Rees, until he was certain in his own mind that there was no chance for you to live. Only then did he pull out. And he took your weapons because he did not want them to fall into the hands of hostiles."

Bridger said nothing. Glass said nothing. They stood looking at each other. Then slowly Hugh Glass stuck out his hand. And Jim Bridger took it in a firm grasp.

"Now then," the Major said, smiling, "let's go into my cabin and have a drink to warm the insides of you."

"That," said Glass, "is the best idee I've heard of in a long while."



One Night in

WHEN my jeep rolled into Lauwenheim early on that bleak, sleety morning of mid-December 1944, I was overwhelmed by a poignant sense of nostalgia. I had spent boyhood vacations in this region of Alsace when it had been a part of the German Empire, and had revisited it several times between wars.

It would have been difficult to identify the village itself. It had been pounded heavily by our artillery to start with; then a very hard combat had been fought along its single street, tanks against tanks, houses stormed one by one with grenade and bayonet; and since we occupied it, gusts of German shells and bombs dropped at intervals. The church steeple had collapsed, and the pale winter sun kindled beautiful colors in the slivers of stained glass and glazed tiles mixed in the rubble heaps. There was a good deal of twisted hardware, the burned-out carcasses of armored vehicles. Lauwenheim was in ruins, the corpse of a village.

There were signs and placards about, in German, in English, in French, giving directions and warnings. There were few civilians, but the place was populated, swarming with Berber tribesmen who had transformed it into a fantastic Moroccan encampment. They wore khaki uniforms and the old-fashioned crested steel helmets; arms and equipment were American, but they looked neither French nor American; they looked phenomenally like themselves.

Their gait was the same in hobnailed boots as in sandals; their fierce, bronzed, bearded faces were as unmistakable as their guttural speech and their harsh laughter. They had added strings, straps, beltings, loops of telephone wire, from which hung an incredible array of personal articles; many wore blankets over head and shoulders like native cloaks. They'd improvised shacks from canvas and planking, recreated the Mid-Atlas.

"Eh, tirailleur, where's the P.C.?"

"There, *ma qobtan,*" a turbaned corporal pointed.

I found the regimental P.C. in the shell of a house at the end of the street. The tile roof had been blasted off, but portions of the floorings remained. In a wrecked room, I faced a young man wearing an American jacket and the four stripes of major.

"Captain Merlier," I announced myself, saluting. "Division Headquarters has—"

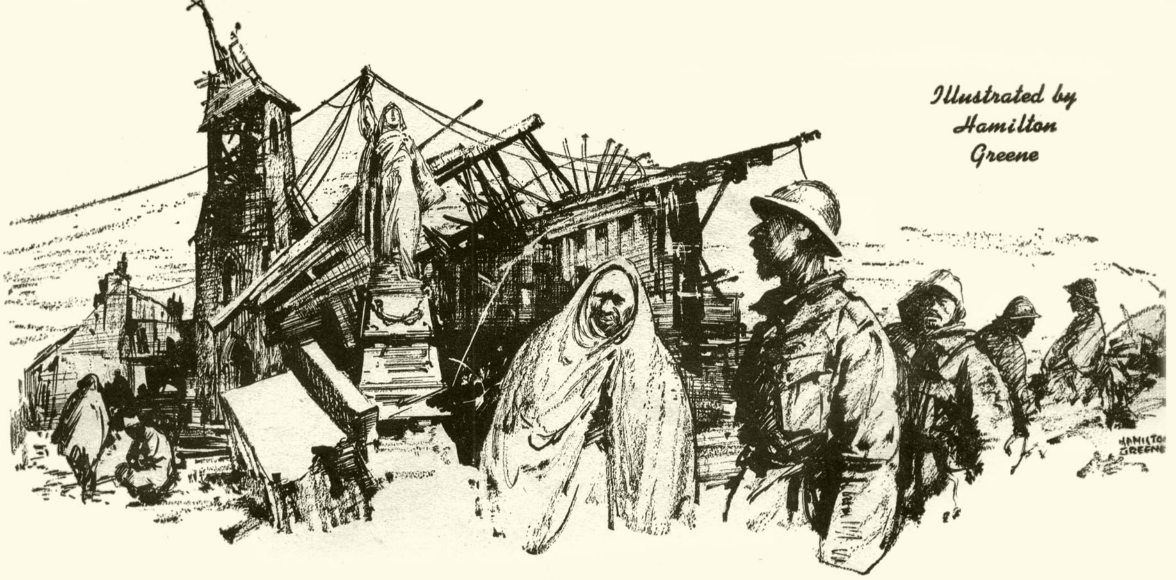
"Sit down, Captain," he said. He pushed a packet of cigarettes across the table, looked over several glasses, picked out one, poured hot coffee into it, then fluid from a thin-necked bottle: "This will warm you up a bit. You have another eighteen hundred meters to the crossroads, then three or four hundred across the fields. Sorry about your colleague. Our surgeon did the best he could, and shipped him on to Belfort. Friend of yours?"

"No, I reported twenty-four hours ago, Major."

"I'm afraid he'll lose a leg. He alighted from the jeep, and a mine went off. The Legion platoon reported by radio, and we sent a car. Odd thing—their lieutenant caught it too, a few minutes later, around six forty-five. Fractured jaw. Looks horribly messy, but usually heals well."

"Do you know anything about—"

"Not a thing." The young Major shrugged. "Some sort of a Legion palaver. That outfit is from one of the Combat commands of the Fifth Armored Division. They slid a detachment down this way when things looked bad at Raugenkopf. The lieutenant radioed for an Intelligence officer to come up, and we passed the



Alsace

As Kipling's *Mulvaney* long ago remarked, many things happen in the field that do not appear in the field orders. . . . In this memorable novel, a German who has served in the French Foreign Legion makes a strange deal with Legionnaires across the lines.

by GEORGES SURDEZ

message on. They took a number of prisoners yesterday evening, but they've been cleared through here." He looked at a slip of paper. "Thirty-Fourth Ersatz Battalion, and some chaps from a Frankfurt reinforcement. But they're not the guys who kicked us around the other day; those were Elite."

"The lieutenant did not say anything?"

"No. He couldn't talk very clearly, and then he seemed cautious. I spoke on the phone to the man in charge, Adjudant Radgens; but for one thing, we have to be careful about what goes over these wires; and then —he speaks French like a Spanish cow. He seems to have something he thinks important."

"Let's hope it is, Major."

"Yes—this isn't the place or the weather to go riding about for fun." The Major beckoned me closer, indicated spots on the map with the handle of a tin spoon: "You follow the river to here, swing right. Better stop your jeep here—you get an occasional mortar shot; but around the bend, you'd be in sight. I would say you'd find that Legion bunch about here. I'll send one of my sergeants with you—"

"No need to do that, Major," I said. "I know the region quite well."

"Then why did they send you here?" he concluded with a grin as we shook hands.

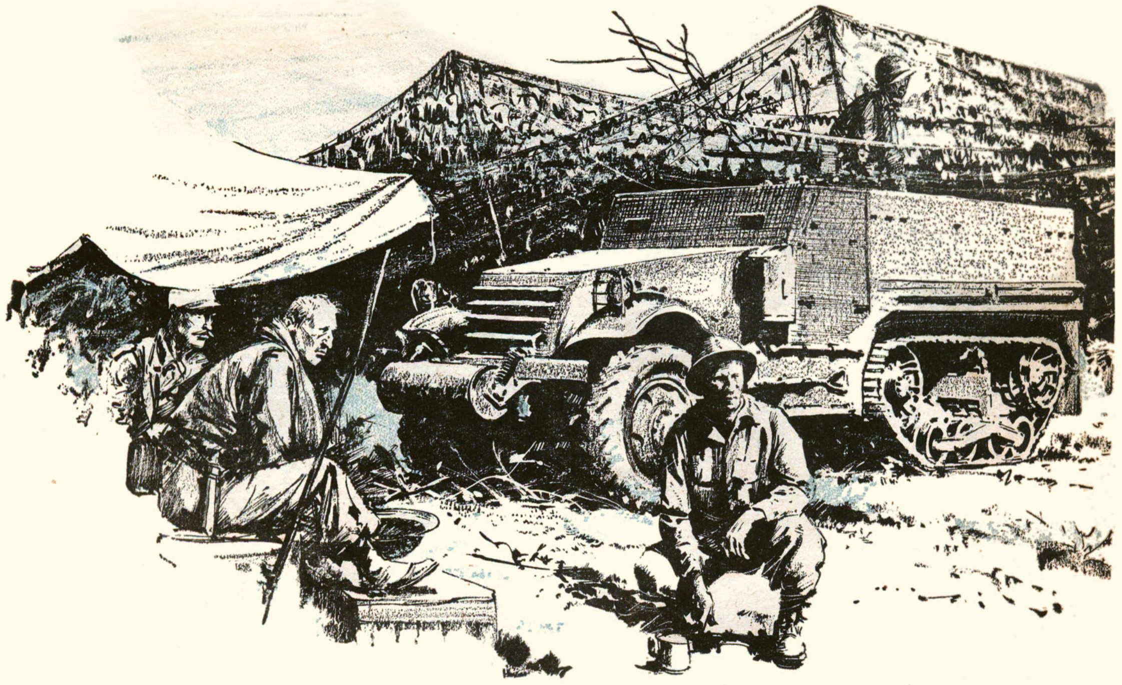
Why had they sent me? The Major meant to imply, of course, that it was extraordinary for a staff man to know anything about what he was supposed to do. I might have made the same remark a few weeks earlier. Passing through an "evacuated" village near Montbeliard, lolling on top of a tank in my squadron of armored dragoons, a sniper had put a bullet through my left thigh.

WHY had they sent me, I thought as I got into the jeep and gave the driver directions—why? Second choice. The first man had been hurt. And if I was lolling in a jeep toward the outposts on this rotten morning, it was my fault. As soon as I had been able to walk, I had asked to be used in some capacity, professing knowledge of German, English, Arabic, pointed out my good and faithful services in combat, my decorations and three wounds in four years.

We were rolling through country that was half snow and half mud, through sleet. Everything appeared sodden, miserable, depressing. The beautiful woods, the pride of the district, had suffered severely in spots, trees shorn by shelling and machine-gun fire, hacked down for abatis, cracked by tanks, blasted by mines. The war was continuing; the sky vibrated to the thuds of distant engagements; detonations crackled and ripped everywhere; but no movement was visible, on the open slopes or on the road—nothing but my jeep scuttling along like a bug.

I was very far from cheerful that day, for that was a period of muck and despair. After taking Belfort, the First French Army had expected to advance to the Rhine rapidly. But the Germans who had been scuttling away for months had turned suddenly and made a strong stand. What was most heartbreaking was that they appeared to have everything they needed: tanks of all types, Jagdpanthers, limitless artillery ammunition, and an assortment of murderous hardware. Fortunately, the American aviation had control of the sky.

Just as our divisions were checked by very stiff resistance, jolted by well organized counter-attacks, we had news of the German offensive in the Ardennes. We knew, at the staff,



that several American divisions were racing north.

German propaganda was active, and while one might not credit statements made by notorious liars, where there was a bit of confirmation offered, one could not help wondering. According to rumors launched by the Germans, the Ukrainians had risen behind the Russian front, and the Russians had been forced to divert ninety divisions to handle the situation. The veteran German units thus freed had been rushed westward and would be thrown into the battle inside a few days.

It was certain that the quality and morale of the troops opposed to us were improving very fast. The German system of offensive-defensive was clicking perfectly, functioning as it had in Italy during the bitterest period of that fumbling campaign. The prisoners we took were no longer the tired, defeated men we had seen for months. The officers, especially, showed the cockiness I had seen in their kind in 1939-'40: "That's all right—you caught us, but we'll be free again inside a month. Antwerp is ours, and we're due back in Paris by Christmas week."

In Alsace, at this time, the situation was confused. Our armored rolling material had outstripped its supplies; stocks of gasoline, oil and ammunition were depleted. We could not help but realize that if the Americans were seriously shaken, we might well be stranded, for they supplied us with most things.

On the maps, the operations beyond Belfort and Mulhouse, complete with arrows and curves, looked orderly, methodical. But it proved somewhat different on the terrain itself: Our troops had contrived to shove along the crests toward Cernay, but we had been checked in the plains and hurled back in spots, so that our penetration was uneven, our lines tangled with the enemy's, and there were pockets of resistance.

The Forces of the Interior had been well organized and very active in Alsace throughout the Occupation, but the hopes aroused by our swift advance had brought some elements into the open prematurely. Not all the inhabitants of Alsace were pro-French; a good many had much to lose through our victory, and so the enemy was very well informed.

When Belfort had been about to fall into our hands, when the German Staff had realized that Alsace would have to be defended in Alsace itself, special detachments of S.S. had been brought to the region, had circulated in trucks from village to village, collecting the valid men by the hundred, shooting them on the slightest of evidence supplied by informers, shooting them when in doubt, shooting them on general principle. Every village had new graves in its cemeteries.

Our partisans had been thinned out with ruthless efficiency, further reduced because the more daring and younger had come to enlist in uniformed units. We could not retaliate, as we were on French soil, forced to question and probe before taking drastic action. Aside from the normal instinct for justice, our military leaders undoubtedly remembered the investigations and scandals that followed the stringent measures taken by some generals to maintain discipline during the First World War. So the German agents were busy. . . .

I had not been taken into the confidence of the top men; but I could discern certain signs: We had promised to hold Strasbourg against a threatening German offensive in Alsace. We had a limited stock of armored stuff, gasoline and ammunition that might not be replaced too easily if the situation got worse up north. So our general trend was to keep the enemy bluffed that we were driving on as before and checked by their resistance only, while using as little of our supplies as possible. Our side did not want to precipitate an all-out fight down this way.

The jeep halted suddenly, and I snapped back to the present. My driver said: "This must be it, Captain. The road forks fifty meters ahead."

There was a house by the road, a squat building, its straw roof burned

"Captain, there's a guy across the way, wants to make a deal: He'll let us pop over, pick up a guy we'd like to have, He wants to do us a favor."

off, the walls pretty battered. A man emerged from some cover. He wore an American-style helmet, carried an American tommy-gun, but the Legion's emblem showed on the tabs of his collar.

"Get the jeep out of sight—park there." He indicated the side of the house. "Their planes may come over again." The soldier was young, twenty-five or so, stocky, swarthy; he spoke with a marked Spanish lilt: "Captain, our Adjudant is up that incline, in the bushes. Follow the ruts and watch our markers—we haven't had a chance to clear away all the mines." He shifted the gun under one arm to gesture: "There's one risky stretch, when you pass by those two stumps up there. They've got a heavy machine gun trained on it—six, seven hundred meters away. It's only thirty meters, and if you move fast, there's no danger."

I looked through a gap in the wall of the house as I walked by. There were several bodies on the shattered floor, under blankets. A man sat in a corner, smoking. He was tanned, bearded, and on his head was a képi covered with a startlingly clean white cloth. He saw me, sketched a salute, grinned and nodded toward his leg, which ended in a ball of bandages.

"Good for a peddler's license!" he said.

I started up the slope, along the churned ruts. Thin ice crackled here and there; I sank to my ankles in mud. There was that immense sense of emptiness ringing with detonations—nothing moved, yet death was all around. I trotted across the dangerous zone, and saw some missiles splash a long distance beyond me, then heard the trepidation of remote shots. They were alert, our friends!

Less than five minutes later, rather breathless and muddy, I reached a bushy area, came to a half-track parked under camouflage. I motioned for the men to remain as they were, some seated, others sprawled under a sort of canvas flap. However, a tall, bony fellow arose, came forward. He wore the white-covered képi and the braid of *adjudant-chef* on his sleeves.

"Adjudant Radgens, mon capitaine," he said, saluting. He added the additional information called for.

I shook hands with him. I liked his appearance, liked the type—he was a professional soldier in his every gesture, in the way he saluted, in the easy yet formal fashion he came to attention, just long enough, without affectation. He was obviously German in origin, of the slender, lean, angular breed, with a long, sharp nose, thin lips and muscular jaws.

An ex-German, to be correct, for he must have been naturalized to be facing his compatriots. He kept me some distance from his companions by holding his ground.

"What's up, Adjudant?" I asked.

"Well, Captain, it's a long story," he started, staying some distance away: "Our lieutenant was wounded this morning, and—"

"They told me at the P.C. in the village."

"Yes, yes." Radgens peered at me, seemed embarrassed by some thought or other. He started to speak at random, and his attitude held some of the patronizing air that veteran soldiers often take with staff officers—nothing you can say much about, but as irritating as a grape-seed between your teeth. His French was correct, but I felt that when he was speaking over the telephone and being vague, the Major might have had trouble understanding him. He saw I was getting impatient and explained: "Well, it was the lieutenant who insisted we should inform Intelligence—"

He could not have asked me more clearly to get the devil out of it. But one of my colleagues had been crippled on this errand, and I had not come miles to be chilled off by Radgens.

"Why didn't you contact your own regimental headquarters?"

"We did, Captain," he replied in a gentle tone, "we did that. But the Fritzes got between us and our command, around four o'clock yesterday. There's at least three Jagdpanthers camouflaged down that way, and some patrols of parachutists. So our officer would have had to circle the way you

"They said for me to come out and show myself. Then they shot a light up in the sky."

came, by Lauwenheim, and as it's something they said should be handled by Intelligence—"

"I know all that. What's up, Adjudant?"

"Well, Captain — " He hesitated and then blurted out: "There's a guy across the way wants to make a deal."

"He wants to surrender on special terms?" I smiled.

"Nothing like that, Captain. What he wants is for us to agree to do something, if he does us a favor."

"I don't quite understand," I said. "Who is the man, what is he, what favor does he offer, and what does he want in exchange?"

"He's a senior lieutenant or even a captain, Captain. Anyway, he has charge of things facing us. He says he'll let us pop over, pick up a guy we'd like to have, if we agree to evacuate right after."

"Evacuate what?"

"A house, Captain. He's supposed to hold it, but he says he could let us in for thirty minutes if we agreed to get out again and start even."

"It doesn't make sense."

"It does, if you know, Captain. I tried to explain to the lieutenant, but he said he could not take the responsibility of making a deal, in case we got double-crossed. He tried to get authorization to pull the attack on the level, with what we have here, but he couldn't get it. Our orders are to hold, with occasional demonstrations. But nothing serious. He couldn't explain much on the radio, because the Fritzes listen in, and if they hauled out our particular guy, it might queer the whole business."

"It might," I agreed wearily.

"If you wish, Captain, I'll take you up where you can see the place; then you'll understand the set-up better. After that, you can question the kid."

"What kid, Adjudant?"

"An Alsatian kid who brought us a message. He's having chow with the purveyors. I've sent for him."

"I have to report. You have a line to the P.C.?"

"I reported you'd arrived safely, Captain. To the Moroccans' P.C. They'll pass it on. There's no hurry —we can't do anything for a while. Not until the guy is on the phone again." Radgens rubbed his clean-shaven chin—he was turned out as for inspection. "It's kind of complicated, Captain, but it may turn out to be pretty good. You'd have to know the Legion to get it."

"I might qualify," I told him with some irony. "I was two years with the Second Regiment, Mid-Atlas."

RADGENS looked at me, broke into a happy laugh. I thought he was about to embrace me.

"I should have known!" he asserted. "Then you'll get it right away, Captain: The bird opposite us used to be in the Legion, and he doesn't forget it. He wants to do us Legionnaires a favor, but he doesn't want to pull anything dirty on his own mates. He knew there was Legion around here somewhere; they have an Intelligence Service too, over there, and he got word to us."

"He wants to come over to us?"

"No. Maybe he'd like to, but he can't very well, not the way things are. He's got to finish out, because of his guys."

"He's on one side or the other. Which?" I pressed.

"Captain, as a German he is a German. But that don't alter the fact that he was a Legionnaire. See?"

I nodded. I remembered something of the double-allegiance quirk in many members of the Foreign Legion. During the period contracted for, they served France faithfully, returning to their original status after discharge. But somewhere within them there lurked, forever, a sense of comradeship and solidarity with those who wore the green trims and the grenade badge.

KNOWING a little about Legionnaires, I was beginning to realize that war or no war, rank or no rank, Radgens would think first as a Legionnaire, and that I would learn only as fast as he made up his mind to explain. I was in a somewhat ridiculous position, but what could I do? Radgens had not served half his life in the Legion and attained the rank of senior noncom without learning how to evade questions from a superior respectfully, and I could not force him to talk by training my pistol on him.

He went to the half-track, placed his white-covered képi in a coffer, put on a helmet. Then he led the way up the slope, slowly and carefully, but without any show of tenseness. The woods around had not suffered too much, and snow-laden tree branches formed long white screens. Just short of the crest, we passed a self-propelled cannon, then a tank-destroyer. They were well camouflaged, and the recognition canvas was rolled nearby. Radgens pointed out a mortar, some distance farther on.

"We've got some guys farther down the slope," he told me.

"No officer?"

"The lieutenant was the last one. We had three, naturally. But we lost two in Lauwenheim. It was our Group rolled in first—against Jagdpanthers and Panzer-Grenadiers who were not so moth-eaten! The Moroccans got checked awhile, and we had to do some of the cleaning out. Here we are."

He slid into a hole, and I slid after him. There was a man there, a corporal. He hunched aside so I could look through the glass. I adjusted the sights and shifted my field of vision as Radgens indicated.

"Find it a bit cold, Corporal?" I asked without turning.

"Not too bad, Captain. I'm from around here, you know—Colmar. But I don't say it doesn't make me think of Egypt!"

"You were with the Thirteenth Half-Brigade?"

"No," Radgens replied for him, with a chuckle, "—with Rommel. The English nabbed him in Tunisia. Being Alsatian, you get it?"

I got it: Being Alsatian and enlisting in the Legion in preference to a prisoners' camp, he had volunteered to come to France, and had started in the war, in 1939, as a private

of French Infantry. His case was not exceptional in the Legion, I knew. For instance, the Spanish Legionnaire down by the road had probably started military life as a Loyalist militiaman, against Franco.

"Over to your left, Captain, down by the path—"

"Got it."

There was the house, down the slope, in a sort of depression beside the road so that its second floor was about level with the paved surface. The main building had been roofed with tile, and the holes were covered with planks and canvas. The straw roofs of the outbuilding had been burned. I could see into a courtyard, with a watering-trough and a bulging heap of white, the dung-pile covered with snow. What was grimly amusing was that I knew the place well, very well.

The people who owned it had kept a farm, but also an inn. The rooms were old-fashioned, without running water, without modern plumbing. But the dining-room had been mentioned in most guidebooks, for its specialties of sauerkraut with homemade sausages and bacon, goose liver in crocks, apple and cheese tart, and special Rechesy cheese. Not to mention a white wine that made cripples dance.

"I think they've got a telescope in the attic, Captain."

"I don't see anything."

"No—they know their business. They've got armored stuff back there somewhere, and some rocket guns. But you see, Captain, it wouldn't be too far for a quick raid, if it was dark or it snowed real hard. We could make it in eight to ten minutes, back in maybe ten or twelve—wouldn't need to be more than ten guys. So even if they double-crossed us, it wouldn't be so bad."

TEN killed or taken, of whom I knew well enough he would be one —that would not be so bad, no. Any reasonable officer knew it would not be so bad. Provided—

"Have you got any idea who the guy is your friend wants to let us grab?"

"Yes, Captain. I remember seeing him around."

"You've seen him?" I turned the telescope over to the corporal and crawled out at Radgens' heels. He nodded. But he led the way at such a pace that I could not question him further for the moment.

Radgens knew by sight, the man to be surrendered. That was fantastic. In this war of millions, he knew an individual, at a given spot. But I recalled that this was Legion business, Legion palaver, as the Major had called it. So one should not be amazed at anything. Legionnaires specialized in the cockeyed and the incredible.

All this while, the war had not stopped; the shots, the explosions continued at ragged intervals. Two or three times bullets slashed through the branches; snow fluttered and oozed down. But somehow I was getting back into the *ambiance,* accepted this scaled-down, impersonal danger as normal.

Back at the half-track, nothing had changed. Radgens looked at the signal-sergeant questioningly; the man shook his head.

"Nothing. They bellyache once in a while because the Fritzes have a section fooling around on the right, and they think we might send something that way. But they can't get confirmation from our bunch, so we can wait."

Radgens handed me a slice of canned American ham on a piece of bread, and a tin mug of black coffee. The Legionnaires appeared well installed and well supplied. He sat down beside me to eat. With his mouth full, he asked:

"Where's Julot?"

"Present," said a childish voice, and a boy appeared from somewhere under the vehicle. Without particular reason, I had expected a boy fourteen or sixteen years old. This was a kid not much over eight years old, certainly not more than ten. He wore boots much too large for him, stuffed with woolen socks, and a man's shirt, dark green, with patch-pockets, served him as a cape or overcoat. A gray scarf was bound around his head, knotted beneath his chin, and a German military tam was pulled over it. He was a handsome, blond little chap, with apple-red cheeks, and did not look as if he had suffered from hunger.

"That's the boy," Radgens announced needlessly. "Julot, tell the Captain what happened."

"Well, I was with my mother in Strasbourg—" he started.

"Tell what happened yesterday," Radgens suggested mildly.

"After I got lost from my mother in Cernay, and nobody could find her, I knew she was headed for Mulhouse, so I got with some people. Then the Germans stopped us and took the men —there were two of them; and the women said they'd stay till the men were let go. So I got on a truck that was going this way, and when it stopped, I sneaked away and walked. Then, in the woods, some soldiers stopped me."

"What kind of soldiers, Julot?" Radgens prompted.

"Aviation Regiment. They'd been in Russia, then in Denmark, but they didn't get to stay as long in Denmark as they'd been told. They were sore about that. There was a captain. He was very nice to me. He gave me hot meat. At first, he said I had to go back to Cernay with some trucks; then I told him about my mother being in Mulhouse or going there, and he said the French had Mulhouse.

"So I told him it was all right, that I was French too, and they wouldn't hurt me. Then he spoke to me in French—kind of an accent, too. So he said like this: If he got me over to the French, would I take a paper and not give it to anybody but men who wore white caps, képis. He said to give it to a sergeant, not an officer. He said for me to ask if he was a Legionnaire —did I understand that?"

AND the boy chuckled amusedly. "I asked him if he meant a Foreign Legionnaire, and he said yes, how did I know? And I told him my grandfather was a Foreign Legionnaire for fifteen years, because he was an Alsatian who sided with France. So he gave me a piece of paper, and I rolled it up and put it in my ear, and put the cotton for against the cold that my mother makes me wear right over it. That made him laugh.

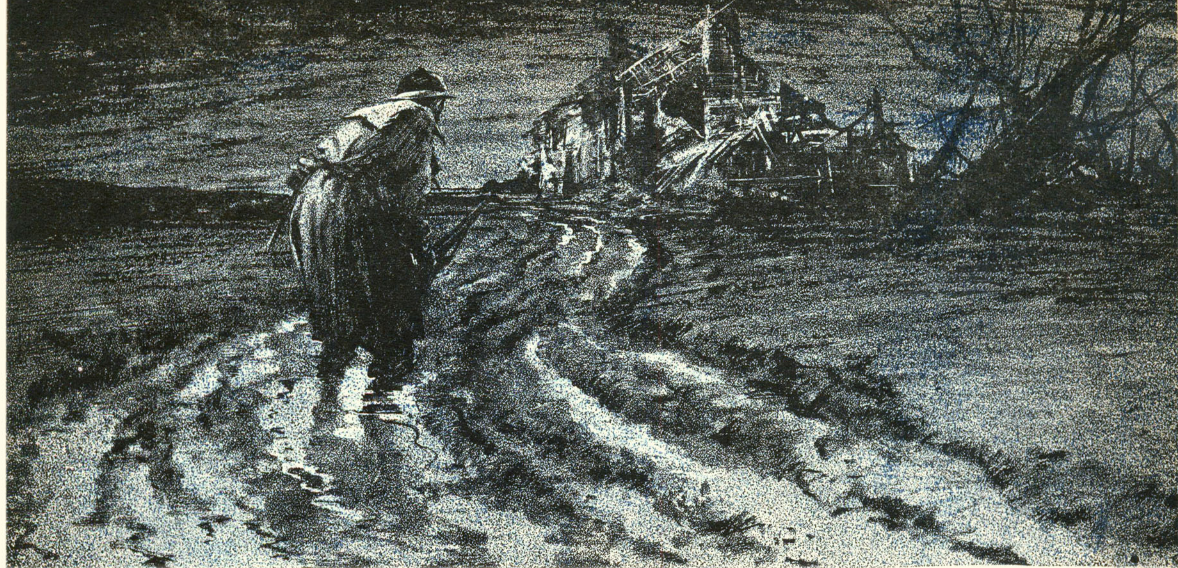
"Then, when it was getting pretty dark, he took me and four of his men, and we walked through the woods down there and came up this way. We waited awhile, sort of hiding, until we heard people moving around. Then the captain got up on his knees and shot his pistol twice into the air, and fell flat. The others shot a lot, just above us. Then they waited for us to move some more, so they'd know where to shoot.

"When it was quite quiet around our spot, he shouted in German, then in French. The others shot at first; then they listened and talked back. He told them about me and my mother being in Mulhouse. They didn't believe him; then he had me talk to them in French. I talk French very good, as you know, because my father was brought up in Nancy, and my mother is from Dijon.

"After a while the others said for me to come out and show myself in a clear spot, and they shot a light up in the sky. The captain told me not to forget my favor for him, and I walked out. They, the new men, walked me back and back. Then I was in a house down by the road, and they were storing dead men in a room. I saw that some of the fellows had white képis, and I picked out the sergeant. So this adjudant came to talk to me; then the officer who gave me the twenty-franc bill.

"They said I was to wait until somebody came up. I want to go to Mulhouse and see if my mother is there. I can find her, we know people there, and she'd see them."

I looked through my pockets, found some chocolate and other minor gifts. I took down Julot's name, his address



"The lieutenant got to the house, but with his jaw broken. It was still dark . . . He was afraid of being crossed."

in Strasbourg, the address he was headed for in Mulhouse. His father was somewhere in the German Army, mobilized in 1940 as an Alsatian, hence a German subject.

"You can go back to Mulhouse, Julot," I told him. I looked at Radgens. "Do you think it's better to wait until dark—"

"Can't tell. If they bombard us today, or attack, this won't be so good. I wanted you to see the kid. You'll see why. But it's pretty overcast, and your jeep could get him to Lauwenheim quickly, and from there it's plain sailing to Mulhouse."

JULOT took leave of us politely, but without emotion. He was a hardened traveler, grown accustomed to frequent partings. A man led him down, with a note for my driver, and I must admit I felt a certain tightness in my throat as I watched him sprint across the risky stretch—and elation when he made it safely, yards ahead of his escort.

"Now, Radgens, will you tell me—"

"Thanks, Captain."

"Whatever for?"

"You've been calling me 'adjudant' with a mean glint in your eye, as if you didn't think I'd be called that long. I know that with an outside officer, I'd have been playing with my stripes. But you understand now the situation wasn't usual?"

"Yes. But still, that exchange of compliments between patrols wasn't regular . . . Perhaps we better—"

"You see why I was careful? Here's the paper."

It was a small piece, a page torn from a notebook, with ruled lines. The crumpling into a ball, the sojourn in young Julot's ear, had not improved it. I had to put on my glasses to read it, which always causes me unjustified embarrassment when among young soldiers. It showed a few lines in German, addressed to any Legionnaire in service between 1936-'39, announcing that Albert Schubiger was well and alive, in that order, and that further information could be obtained by listening on phone at spot indicated. There was a map sketched, in blue pencil through the writing in dark lead, which I could not understand.

"It's an observation post, Captain," Radgens told me. "We don't occupy it, because they know where it is and have it cold. It's on this side, nice den, shored-up. They had artillery on the other side of the hill, and guys there could watch whatever moved out of Lauwenheim or across the plain to the East. The lieutenant and I went to look, and of course we found the place stripped, but we'd guessed the idea; our guys found the wire, connected it with our apparatus.

"It was past ten at night by that time. We tried to raise somebody and couldn't. But at eleven-ten, the guy we had left to listen in reported that somebody was on the other end. The lieutenant took hold first, but the other guy wouldn't talk to him and asked for an old-timer. I'm that, all right. I've been in since 1927. I told him who I was, where I'd served, at what time—all of it information that wouldn't do the German Army much good now!

"Then I checked up on him, asked questions myself. He wouldn't give me his name, not even his Legion name, but he said he'd been a sergeant in the Third Regiment. He knew Oran, Bel-Abbès, Fez. You know, you can't fool a guy who's been around; you ask who commanded this outfit or that, and so on. He checked up all right; he had been in the Legion, and for some years.

"He said he had known we were there, and just across from his lot; he even told us who commanded the Combat Group. So I said all right, I knew he was clever, but what the devil did he want, what was all the secret rigmarole about?

"Well, he said he'd got the dope about the observation post from the guy from whom he had taken over the sector. I told him to get to the point, so he asked me if I had ever heard of a guy named Schubiger, and I asked if he meant the commercial traveler with the big fat wife and the two kids, and he said that was just who he meant. I remembered Schubiger, all right, and I got sort of excited.

"He said Schubiger was around, under the name of Albert Naefeli. He'd been working in Alsace as a sort of religious lecturer. He was staying at a house close by, but he wouldn't be there very long.

"I asked: So what? And the other told me he didn't want the slob to get back into Switzerland and survive the war, when so many decent guys had caught it. Yes, he admitted he had a personal grudge. But he wouldn't take a chance on paying it off himself, as he had folks in Germany. I asked him what he had in mind.

"HERE's what he explained: There was a major in the sector, but he was a dugout baby, only popped up for brief visits and left him, the guy speak-

ing, in effective charge. Now, he didn't want to come in and give up; it was too late for that, and he was not a traitor or a rat.

"He suggested we fake an attack way on our right, and he would bring up his chaps. Nothing to worry about; they were for him, even if they smelled something funny. He would strip the farmhouse of its guards, and we could shoot in a patrol to pick up our bird. It would have to be done that way, because if we tried to cross him and started a real raid, the fellow would lope out of it like a hare at the first squeak, and it would be farewell. You had to surprise him at night.

"Then he said he wanted my word as a Legionnaire that after collecting our game, we'd leave the place. He was responsible for it. It would be all right if we got in if he could say he'd kicked us out again. The lieutenant had not been in the pre-war Legion—he's only twenty-two; and he said it sounded phony, that it was liable to backfire and land him before a court-martial. You know, general orders are to stick to our positions and not start a mix-up."

Radgens shrugged, then went on: "But we can't tell the guy at the other end of the wire that. The lieutenant takes the phone from me and starts arguing in French and in poor German, trying to talk the fellow into coming in with his men. The guy laughs at him, then asks to talk to me again, and he says to tell the young sap it's take it or leave it. He said if he had wanted to surrender, he knew how that was done; he had taken enough prisoners of all kinds to know.

"I told him how the lieutenant was afraid of being crossed, and he said why—he was ready to take our word that we'd carry out an agreement. He said he had put his neck out far enough, that as it was, he'd be shot if he was found out dickering with us. Then he told me he had to go, that his people were waiting for him. He hung up.

"That's when the lieutenant sent in word. They sent an officer, but he got hurt. The post at the road reported it, and the lieutenant started down the slope. He got to the house, but with his jaw broken. That was just before seven, and still dark. About an hour later, when it was growing light, the guy on the phone signaled to me, and it was our pal again. He told me that now the young sap was gone, would I for the love of Mike try that stunt. It was sleeting and snowing; there was only an hour to go.

"That made me think that he had put snipers to lie in wait just for the lieutenant, and I got sore and cursed him out. He reminded me there was a war on. He said that every time he talked to me, he took his life in his hands. Some of his kids were pretty wrought up by the situation, and although they'd follow him through hell and give him the benefit of the doubt, they wouldn't stand for phony business, even from him. He said to fire a signal if I wanted to talk again—he'd try to make it to the phone.

"I gather, Captain, that it's hidden and that he doesn't do his talking where anyone can hear."

Of course, all armies frown upon pacts made between units. They lead to various disorders and to treason. But such local agreements occur in all wars, whether by agreement or tacitly. Anyone who knew anything of the inside working of the Legion was aware that noncoms commanding outposts in Morocco had often had understandings with hostile natives: If the wood-gathering party from an outpost was not attacked, mountaineers would be left alone, unnoticed, when they went to some village inside our zone for supplies—for salt, sugar, flour, we hoped, but on occasions for cartridges. Along the Western Front, in 1915-1916, Legionnaires and German soldiers had exchanged newspapers, magazines, food and even souvenirs.

But this was a shade more serious: The ex-Legionnaire, whatever his rank, was betraying his country, and he knew it. Being, from other indications, a brave soldier and a loyal German, he must have a powerful reason. One had to consider the possibility that he might be acting on orders, to have us capture a man who had been given certain information to mislead us. I was not worried much about a minor betrayal—all these preliminaries did not have for motive the wish to trap, capture or kill a patrol.

Not at all by chance, because it was my business, in my new assignment, to learn such things, I knew something of Naefeli. I even knew he had been in North Africa for several years. But I did not know too well what his activities had been. There was time, as Radgens had assured me several times, so I asked him for details.

He could not remember exactly when Schubiger had appeared in North Africa; he thought about 1935. The man was a traveling salesman for a Swiss firm manufacturing imitation jewelry, and procured other articles on commission, such as typewriters, phonographs, fountain pens; but sales on these were few because of the high rate of exchange. He was a very big, stout man of perhaps forty, with a fine laugh and a jovial, informal manner.

His wife was Swiss also, and also very big and stout, with a fine pink-and-white skin and thick blonde-red hair. He had two daughters, eleven and thirteen when Radgens first recalled them, also large, cheerful persons, pink, blonde, full of good health and spirits. All of them spoke good German, good French and had notions of other languages—Spanish, Arabic, Italian—because Schubiger was a family man and had taken his little clan with him.

He would park wife and daughters in some fairly large center, Meknès, Fez, Marrakesh, in some small, cheap, comfortable place. On his trips to smaller towns, he would of course meet Legionnaires, on trains, in stations, in cafés. He would give them his family's current address, invite them to drop in when on leave or passing through, suggest that they were welcome to give the address to comrades they thought would like a few hours of home atmosphere.

You could not call Legionnaires home-loving men by definition; most of them would find a routine existence in family surroundings unbearable after a short stretch. The Legionnaire is a nomad. However, the average Legionnaire has a wistful longing for something resembling a home, if he is not trapped in it.

Madame Schubiger knew German cooking; her sauerkraut was celestial, her apple pancakes beyond comparison. Wherever she might find herself, she contrived to have Alsatian beer and Bavarian beer, and the cheeses, pretzels, delicacies of various sections. The little girls were musical, and when Schubiger was home he would entertain with an accordion. At Christmas, they decorated a little tree, not always a fir, oftener a cedar. The little girls asked their guests to send them postal cards, and they replied, kept up correspondence.

There seemed to be nothing wrong with these friendly, hospitable people. Nothing could appear more innocent and even touching than the friendship between little blonde children and the homeless wanderers in khaki and white képi.

And yet the Schubigers, man and wife, adult or children, were engaged in as dirty a business as can be imagined. They were spying on Legionnaires, hounding the poor devils who had enlisted to be granted some peace in the midst of violence, peace of mind, peace of heart.

The scheme functioned as follows: Many of the Legionnaires for good reasons did not keep in touch with their families in Germany. Some of the reasons will appear soon. In her motherly way, Madame argued with them, urged them to reassure the dear mother, the loving father, the worried, lonely wife. She understood, she said, that they did not want letters delivered with a North African stamp, which would reveal to prying neighbors the whereabouts of the missing

lad. Having a son, a brother, a husband, serving France was not invariably considered an honor by a German family.

She had a sister in Basle, Switzerland. The Legionnaires could give her their letters, which she sent to that sister for remailing: There was nothing suspicious about a Swiss postal stamp. And the replies could come the same way. The little girls were in on this too, corresponding in their childish, simple fashion, with families in Germany. For instance: "Hans was in to dinner Sunday; he still loves the potatoes done brown," and so on. After the meal, with coffee, cognac and free cigarettes on the table, it took a very cautious Legionnaire to refuse to give an address for the postal card with a view of the Lucerne Lion, to be mailed from Switzerland.

What was happening, of course, was that the Schubigers were collecting a long list of Legionnaires' real identities and relatives at home. As a sideline, they procured a good deal of information on the Foreign Legion, the movements of its units, the transfers of officers, the morale in this or that battalion. And as the Legion is a part of the French Army and participates in maneuvers, that brought general information too.

LOOKING back, Radgens realized that the artless, naïve, amusing questions of the little girls had been carefully prepared. For him, it did not matter much; he had come to the Legion very young, had lost his parents and did not care to correspond with the cousins and such he had left behind.

But there were the others. After Hitler reached power and started turning the screws, a good many military men of the best type could not stand the strain. They reacted to feelings we do not necessarily approve of in some cases. A traditionalist, for instance, could not tolerate as a superior an upstart corporal, a loudmouthed, extravagant clown. As German officers, they could not endure Hitler, whom they never saw, and much preferred a life in French uniform with a Corsican sergeant howling at them. Others honestly detested the Nazi ideas, the return to the Middle Ages, with the Nordic myths clamored through loud-speakers.

The Nazis did not forget these men. Some of them serving as ordinary Legionnaires, had been valuable militarily for various reasons. Located in the Legion by an agent, their assumed names known and recorded, at the proper time they could be informed that their families would be held as hostages, punished, unless they carried out whatever orders were sent them.

Schubiger had lasted for several years without being suspected. Then he had made a serious slip, probably through overconfidence. A Legionnaire had been recalled to Germany, under the usual threats—family sent to concentration camp unless he complied; and in his bewilderment at finding that the German police knew his Legion name, he had gone to Schubiger for advice: He was asked to desert, but how could he do that, even if willing?

The commercial agent had given him the address of a woman in Casablanca, who would supply him with civilian clothing, forged papers, funds. Unluckily for Schubiger, there had been a slip-up in Germany, a minute of inattention on the part of a minor official—the man's family had obtained passports and reached England! With his family safe, secrecy no longer indispensable, the Legionnaire had gone to his superiors, given his real name, his technical qualifications that made him important to the Nazis. He had also revealed the clandestine road of desertion.

By that time Hitler had reached supremacy; the bloodless Waterloo of the Munich Conference was history; and so Schubiger was not arrested and tried as a secret agent. He was asked to leave French Territory.

But the efficiency of his work and that of other agents of his kind was made plain after the French collapse of 1940. France was ordered to liberate immediately all German and Austrian Legionnaires, regardless of the unserved time. A considerable proportion of those falling in that category were glad to leave—they were German stock, serving in a military outfit of a beaten nation, and they had the opportunity to join a victorious army.

On the other hand, quite a few disliked the idea of going home; they did not apply for liberation. Then the German Government, through a special commission, asked for them by name and number, and they had to leave the Legion and report to their officials. Those who were simply dissident Germans were incorporated into the armies of the Reich; others who had charges against them went into the dreaded camps; still others were executed.

How many hundreds of human beings found their fate changed, how many died, how many suffered long detention, because of Schubiger, his wife and his ingratiating little girls, no one could estimate.

No more than I could surmise just how much the man who had communicated with the Legion had suffered. He had been taken out of the Legion, had entered the German Army, and he was an officer. What means of compulsion had been used, when had he left? Had he deserted, had he been summoned after the German victory? Had his parents, his family, been persecuted?

We would never know. But by now I understood as well as Radgens that the man could be trusted, that he had some excuse to put personal vengeance ahead of blind patriotism in this particular case.

I COULD have told the Legionnaire something of Naefeli's local activities and I was tempted to do so. I decided against it. There were others within hearing distance, and one never quite knows in war what is important and what is not. In the one afternoon I had spent 'picking up details' at the staff, I had consulted a number of dossiers. Those files were marked *Secret.*

Naefeli, Albert, had spent considerable time in Alsace in early 1944, traveling with his family, all sound and Swiss, and pretending to be connected with some Helvetic society for welfare, or temperance or both. He had credentials, he wore a semi-clerical garb, he organized meetings, lectures for children, with lantern-slides; his wife played organ, harmonium or piano; his two daughters, big, good-looking blondes, sang hymns.

He had vanished for a time, then reappeared recently, coinciding with the raids of the S.S. Clergymen who had entertained him in good faith then became conscious that very few of the promises of help, food, children's vacations, had been fulfilled. He had been seen in a car with German officers; it was rumored that he had identified a number of men as connected with the Resistance. And such identification meant the firing squad.

I felt that he was in the region now, within a few hundred meters of this outpost in the snow, on some such mission of death. The man was evil. The dossier included other information about him, other names. Under the identity of Monsieur Frouché, for instance, he had been in Occupied France, in 1942 and '43, as a French-Swiss who loved the French and admired the patriots who fought against the Occupation. The Gestapo and the S.S. had progressed in his wake.

I remembered what the unknown ex-Legionnaire had told Radgens: That he did not want the man to get to Switzerland and escape punishment. And I knew that he was well informed: Schubiger, or Naefeli, or Frouché, had in fact been born in Switzerland. His crimes would be hard to prove; he might even claim, as a number of people have done, that he had the right to take up any employment abroad as long as he did not break laws—ordinary, common laws. Extradition would be impossible to

obtain, and his crimes were not common-law crimes. After a few years, as nations cannot nurture hate forever, there would be a general amnesty, and I might some day see that repulsive fellow, grown older and fatter, stroll down a Paris boulevard with a fine cigar between his teeth, bought with his savings from blood-money.

It may also be that my two years in the Foreign Legion had somehow affected my outlook, and that I was subconsciously impatient with semi-legality and sedulous observation of rules.

Radgens, who had been watching me, seemed to read my mind.

"I knew the Captain would understand," he said.

"But the Captain is going to cover himself, Radgens."

"I don't know if you should—" he started, looking concerned.

"You're connected with the P.C. in Lauwenheim—"

We both climbed into the half-track, and I got through to Lauwenheim. I asked for the Major I'd spoken to a few hours before. "Don't worry, Radgens," I said while waiting; even if they're branched in somewhere, I can do this without giving anything away. . . . Major? This is Captain Merlier—"

"Your package arrived in good shape."

"Package? Oh, the child. Glad of that. Can you get me through to Sun-Bees at Swallow?"

It took a little time and some palavering, but I finally reached someone with special prerogatives. Radgens watched me, crouching at my side. He did not think well of the consultation. He had the combat soldier's idea of staff officers.

"I have the opportunity to make a deal for an article on List Four. I would like to know how far I can go."

"What article have you in mind?"

"I don't remember the exact listing."

"I'll read you a few figures." That Colonel was charming to work with. He read numbers and initials until I stopped him, then asked: "How wide a margin do you need?"

"Not too wide, really, despite appearances. Is the deal worth a personal initiative?"

"I should say so! If you are short, I authorize you to borrow. Is there anyone I should contact to help along?"

"No; it's quite a simple matter, possible with the means at hand. Merely somewhat unorthodox."

"We'll fret about that at the Peace Conference."

THAT was that. I enjoyed Radgens' surprise.

"Does he know who it's about?" he asked.

"He does." I allowed this to sink in. Of course, Radgens was laboring under a misunderstanding; he did not know that Naefeli was on our list for the sector, and probably imagined that Army Intelligence had checked back to Morocco in 1936!

"You mean you got authorization for that stunt?"

"I mean this: If we try it and it works out all right, I'll have had authorization. If we run into a mess, I didn't explain fully, I was misunderstood and everything is my fault. But since I shall be dead or a prisoner if we fail, it doesn't really matter."

"You'll come along, Captain?"

"Certainly, Radgens."

"But your leg?"

"My leg is fine, thanks." I looked him squarely in the eyes. "If I come along, I may avoid a premature accident. After all, if you have an axe to grind, I have my job to do."

"Very well, *mon capitaine.*"

"Now, give your signal."

WE left the truck and climbed the hill almost to the crest. There was no shooting in the immediate vicinity, and Radgens waited for comparative quiet. The sleet had stopped falling, but the air was opaque, fleecy. He lifted his gun and fired a short burst, looked at his watch, fired a single shot, waited with his eyes on the dial, fired another shot, and a third after another space.

"A burst, five seconds; a shot, three seconds; another shot, five seconds; then the last shot," he explained. "You don't get that exact timing by chance."

"Suppose he's not around to hear?" I objected.

"I don't think that guy misses much. Anyway, if he doesn't call up inside an hour, as he said he would, I'll signal again."

Radgens, for all his stony outward calm, was nervous. I wondered if there was something he had not told me. I wondered if I was headed for one of those superb blunders that smash a man's career.

Here I had been back among Legionnaires for a few hours, and already I had snapped back into an approximation of their attitude. I felt little amazement at the series of seeming coincidences which had led me to my old soldiers just in time to help them settle a score several years old. But what was coincidence and what was consequence? Why look for logic in a crazy world?

Why wonder at anything when an ex-soda clerk born in Hawaii of Japanese parents exchanged shots in Italy with an ex-butcher's apprentice from Hanover? When Spaniards fighting in France for the Resistance battled Hindus in German uniforms? Skipping the phenomenal Foreign Legion,

I wondered if I was headed for one of those superb blunders that smash a man's career.

why wonder because thousands of men born in Germany, in Italy, fought for America? Because middle-aged Frenchmen, veterans of a war once termed Great, supported German police against other Frenchmen?

Only a few days ago, in this very region, Moroccans who had fought hard against the French had met Ukrainian troops, shot them, bayoneted them, captured them, for Greater France. Moreover, if one thought of the ramifications and implications of what was happening elsewhere, in the Pacific, for instance, of who were allies today, though foes of yesterday and tomorrow, one's mind gave up.

As I accompanied Radgens on a rapid tour of inspection of his positions, I said something of the sort. He shrugged, and the skin around that thin mouth pleated into a mirthless smile. "I see what you mean, Captain. But one war's enough for me to worry about at any one time."

Now and again one saw a string of silhouettes plodding from a clump of woods snake jerkily to another cover.

phone with German officers several times in the past. Before I had contrived to get to Morocco, through Spain and Portugal, I had participated in some work of the Resistance. Then we would connect a line to the telephone wires at some spot in the country, and put through calls to German officials—for various informal bargains struck even then, exchanging one prisoner for another, the kind of activity nobody puts on written records.

And I had noticed that invariably those talks were courteous.

"The Adjudant has told you what I have in mind?" he resumed.

"Yes."

"And I have your word that the position will not be occupied and force me to retake it, arms in hand?"

"You have my word as a Legion officer, yes."

"And you have mine as a German officer, *and*"—I could hear him chuckle—"a former sergeant of the Legion, that all will be carried out as stated. You have a map of the sector? Good. I'll outline the little comedy, and you can suggest changes—"

We were given hot coffee when we returned to the half-track. Like the Moroccans, the Legionnaires were settled in war. This one, perhaps somewhat bigger than others, would be followed by others, for the majority. Where could they go when the fighting stopped? The Legion was their home, and I felt a fresh surge of disgust toward a man who had ignored their special status and tormented them in their refuge.

The Adjudant had been right in his belief that the former Legionnaire would not miss our signal. For less than an hour later Radgens and I made our way across the slope, skidding in the sunless stretches, almost wading elsewhere. I had noticed that a few men had changed from képis to helmets and started out at the same time. Radgens explained that they formed a security patrol in case the enemy tried to take us as prisoners. That only half-reassured me, for what would have prevented the German from ordering the spot blasted with mortar fire?

The abandoned observation post was well camouflaged, would have been comfortable. But the odors were rather strong. I took the apparatus—it was a German instrument, captured *Fernsprechgerät*—from the watcher. The connection was not too good; there were crackling and frying sounds. The man at the other end spoke in a very low, quiet voice, more muffled than normal, as if he were speaking through or under a cloth. He used German at first, asked me if I was an Intelligence officer—*Nachrichtenoffizier,* and I replied that I was a Legion officer. He shifted to French, and it was obvious that he had not picked up French, but had studied it—in good schools.

"Do not worry about being overheard, monsieur," he assured me. "There are no micros in this sector at present. I was careful to see that this line was separated from others. But I must be careful to keep my voice low, as I have men within a few yards, so you will pardon me if you find it hard to hear. I shall repeat if necessary."

"I hear you very well, Lieutenant—or Captain?"

"What matters? It is quite agreed, isn't it, that the whole thing shall be between us, and that you will not take a disloyal advantage that would damage my military honor?"

I wanted to laugh at his phrase, "Damage my military honor," but it was not the place to be amused. For his own reasons, he wished to be sure I was Legion and not Intelligence, and that I was a pre-war Legionnaire. He asked me a few questions, rather well chosen for his purpose. I named several colleagues, and at one name he exclaimed with pleasure. "He was my captain for eighteen months."

So much for extreme caution and secrecy: the man mentioned had been through military school with me, was a very close friend; he had married a cousin of my wife. We had corresponded right along, met on leaves. I had collected the photographs he had sent me, and it was quite certain that in an album at home I had the picture of the man to whom I was speaking!

"He is well, I hope?"

"Quite well." I could have added that he was not twenty miles away, in charge of an armored command.

"I understand that his promotion to general is through," the calm voice continued. So much for caution and secrecy again. We talked a few minutes longer, neither one wanting to bring up the real subject of our conversation, despite the urgency.

The situation was not absolutely strange to me. I had spoken over the

He talked rapidly for some time, along the general lines indicated by Radgens. I did have one or two suggestions to make. I did not want any group on my right flank when we plunged down the slope to the house by the road.

He understood that perfectly.

"It is well understood, monsieur," he added, "that where our detachments clash, the fighting will be real. I cannot take my subordinates in on this too far, and orders to shoot high, to miss purposely, would arouse suspicion. My men are veterans and not easily deceived. But my defensive plan tolerates a temporary evacuation of the house.

"Please do not accuse me of treachery if there is some action from your left. My authority extends but four hundred meters on the other side of the road, and there may be an intervention from the unit next to mine. Knowing its commander and its composition, I rather doubt it. In any case, striking fast, you will be in and out again before they could intervene."

We checked times and movements again, and Radgens noted them in a little notebook.

"Everything clear?" the ex-Legionnaire asked. "I must be going soon."

"Yes," I agreed, "everything's clear. But wouldn't it be simpler, as long as we both know the end is just a matter of time, for you to come in?"

"I hope that you are joking."

"Just doing my job, you understand."

"Glad of that. It is impossible, of course. I cannot abandon my men.

And we have orders that anyone who talks of surrendering may be shot on the spot. By the way—I would not delay matters too long after taking the fellow. He looks like a fathead, but he is really very clever, and has talked his way out of similar situations. You have a moral obligation to see that this rather dirty trick I am playing is not wasted."

"I understand you have personal reasons to dislike the chap," I said. "And I have wondered, naturally, why you didn't—operate in person."

"Again, there are reasons, several reasons—three reasons."

"Ah?"

But I had no time to question him further; he said good-by. I went over the plan for the fake demonstration on our right, sometime during the late evening; I had a conference with the massive blue-eyed Swiss noncom who was to command. I had another conference, with a liaison officer from the Moroccans, and guardedly told him enough so that a general alert would not spread all along the plain front.

I felt like a miniature Foch. Planning my own battle! I speculated on just how my opposite number would arrange his end of it. He would have to strip not only the house but the guards between it and our line. He did not sound like a man who would sacrifice two or three sentries.

But it was probable that our informer's soldiers would obey without question. And if they noticed something odd later on, they would simply think that their chief had pulled a boner. If they were as loyal to him as he was to them—when he said, "my men, my chaps," his voice rang with pride and confidence—they would say nothing and even lie to cover him.

I WAS learning that the slightest contact between members of enemy forces on a friendly or neutral basis led to serious leaks. The ex-Legionnaire had not intended to give me more information than served his immediate purpose. But his few words had supplied me with valuable items.

He did not expect any change in his sector that night; no reinforcements were awaited, no inspection by a superior officer; hence I could gather that no sizable attack should be feared the next day. The troops to his right—which was our left, across the road from the house—did not have a high morale nor an aggressive commander. Further, the Jagdpanthers reported in that direction under camouflage must have been called away, sent elsewhere, or he would have had to figure on their quick intervention.

On the other hand, he must know that our side would be passive that night, from my accepting. I recalled that I had mentioned my name to the Major in the village over the phone. The enemy probably had had a report about my new assignment. My presence here might worry them! I laughed suddenly at the poor chap's care not to reveal his name: Our information service kept a pretty accurate list of enemy units and their chiefs, and I would find his real name written down on our records when I went back to my desk!

There were several flurries of snow in the late afternoon; the entire ground was covered again with a clean mantle, and the camouflaged positions, the tank-destroyer, the vehicles, were perfectly concealed. Looking back from our post toward Lauwenheim, during the lulls when the yellow sun came out, it was hard to imagine how many corpses, how many heaps of wreckage, metal churned with flesh and enameled with frozen blood and oil, were hidden from sight. Once again I saw the peaceful, beautiful Alsace of the text-books and the Christmas calendars. . . .

Now and again one saw a string of silhouettes plodding from a clump of woods snake jerkily to another cover: Moroccan tirailleurs. And now and again, something scuttled along the road, or waddled through a field—a jeep, a destroyer, a tank. The armored cars were not visible long, merely in shifting positions, and the jeeps did not linger by the wayside. Now and again also, we were startled by the gliding shadows on the snow, the shadows of planes somewhere in the gray emptiness above us.

There were brusque rattles of automatic weapons up near the crest, a warning to patrols that they were intruding. Again, one had to make an effort to think that someone might have been hit, that a man might be stretched in the snow, his blood oozing and smoking on the snow, sogging his garments, his eyes filling with the whiteness, his fury giving way to pain, pain to despair, despair to acceptance. One more corpse, humble and anonymous, lying in the snow of Alsace.

Night fell, and the line of the plain was streaked with tracers, with the brief, almost furtive flashes of explosions. Guns thumped through the shriek of the wind. Then there were lengthening pauses as the troops settled for the night, silences punctuated by interrogative shots. Once or twice, I heard faint music, probably a harmonica some distance down the opposite slope.

At nine precisely, Radgens gave the word to get ready. The demonstration to our right was to be made with a couple of mortars; no vehicle would be moved: The two light machine guns were dismounted from the half-track, to be used in the show. The adjudant was taking six of his men; we would be eight on the raid. I was offered a tommy-gun, but judged my pistol to be sufficient.

Again, and for the third or fourth time, we went into details with the Swiss sergeant: He must remember this—that after launching his attack, he must pull away to the right, but not too far, and so on and on. From a certain spot, he was to work back left, to prevent a sudden swerve of the enemy behind the vehicles. He left us at nine-fifteen.

RADGENS and I and the six men crept up to the crest. At nine-thirty-five, a grenade exploded far on our right; then a second, a third grenade. Colored flares rose jerkily, guns hammered. We heard shouts in German down the slope. The fight waned, rekindled again a little farther away. Right and left, firing started by contagion; there were small spurts of flame in the distance—just as one dog baying in the middle of the night will be answered by other dogs, as if to say: "We're here; we're awake; don't fool around with us!"

Radgens murmured:

"Let's go, Captain."

We went down the incline. The night cold had glazed the surface, and every footstep cracked. We did not run, but we trudged along very fast. There was no shooting around us, and I had the odd sensation of gliding down a tunnel of quiet through the tumult.

The back door of the house was locked, but Radgens struck it with some tool he had in his hand, and we rushed into a kitchen. Someone clicked on an electric torch; someone else slammed the door shut. We reached a rather large living-room just as some people appeared with a lantern, first an old woman, then an old man with a younger woman. They were half-dressed, and quite terrorized. They blurted protests and pleas in German.

"I'm French—we are French—don't worry—" I started.

They shifted to French at once and continued to chatter.

"Shut up!" Radgens cried roughly, and he lifted his gun. They shut up at once and started to shake. "These live here, Captain! You, the old chap: You have someone staying here—get them down here."

"You mean the Pastor?" the old man asked.

"I don't care what you call him. Get going."

There was a stairway to the second floor in the hall, and the old fellow went up, his unlaced shoes flopping. Through the telescope I had seen that part of the house was damaged, but the section we were in was intact.

There were heavy drapes over the windows, to keep light from showing outside.

"Three minutes gone," Radgens said. "I'm going up—"

The two women had sat down on a sofa. They kept looking from me, of whom they approved, because I wore a uniform somewhat like their idea of a French uniform, to the Legionnaires, whom they distrusted, because of the American-type helmets, which, to them, looked like German headgear.

"You asked for me, gentlemen?"

A huge man had entered the room. He wore shoes, but we had not heard him come down the stairs; he moved like a cat. He was tall, and he was massive, but he had the kindest, gentlest face I can remember, round and broad and smiling. He was in the fifties; his head was getting bald; what hair was left had faded from blond to gray; but there was a boyish expression about his clear blue eyes, his skin and fleshy mouth.

"Your name is Naefeli, Albert?"

"Yes, Captain." He extended his arm, offering me a passport.

I brushed it aside. "There is no time. You are coming with us. Get your clothes, and what baggage you can carry. You have three minutes."

"Look here, Captain, I cannot leave here so hastily. I am a Swiss, a neutral. I have my family with me—"

"Your family?"

"My wife, my daughters. We have been traveling about, helping where we could, bringing a little cheer to this unfortunate country. . . . You cannot drag us out in this weather, at night—"

I hesitated, then said: "You can leave them here. We want you."

He smiled patiently, kindly. "I cannot cope with violence, Captain. But I warn you—" He turned and called out: "Adèle—darlings—"

As if it had been rehearsed, the call brought three women rushing from the foot of the stairs to the center of the room. Any one of the three could have been a sergeant in a regiment of Amazons. They were tall and broad and deep. They had round sweet pretty faces. They had taken time to dress; they wore modern clothing, but they were so blonde, so milky, so homey, that they could have graced the lid of a cream-cheese container. One could distinguish the mother, because her shape was even more imposing, her hair a brighter blonde, and the milky complexion was definitely curdling.

What followed was so exaggerated, so utterly comical, that I almost broke into a laugh. The oldest one looked at me, gasped, threw her hands forward in a joyous gesture, and she screamed:

"A French officer!"

More incredible still, the two daughters immediately loomed up on either side; there was a pause for breath, and all three cried out: *"Vive la France!"*

"Five minutes gone," Radgens announced.

"We have to leave here in five minutes at the outside," I said. "You ladies may stay—"

"We won't let Papa go—we won't let Papa go!" The three women clustered around the big man, wove their arms about him. "You can't be so harsh! You cannot separate us. If he goes, we go."

Naefeli shook his head and smiled sadly in my direction, as if to say, "You see how it is? I cannot break the hearts of these dear women," while he said aloud: "Be reasonable, darlings! The Captain will not take me when he understands who we are, that we are here for a charitable organization that has tended to French children through this horrible war—"

His garb was decidedly clerical, black frock-coat, linen shirt, black tie. With his embroidered waistcoat, the cloth-covered round buttons, he looked as if he had stepped out of a portrait of 1885.

"Six minutes, Captain." The Legionnaire looked at me.

"We'll have to hurry," I said.

"We can't go—there's the snow; they're shooting outside— Papa, Papa! Oh, dear—" The three women were going full speed, screaming when I took a step forward, covering my voice. On the sofa the two other women, trembling, were weeping great sympathetic tears.

"If you'll only look at my papers, Captain!" Naefeli said.

"Seven minutes, Captain; the most we can take is fifteen, and that's dangerous." Radgens considered a moment with something like pity, shrugged and resumed: "Fake, all of this! I'll show you how it's done."

He stepped toward the group, struck down at the feminine arms stretched forth to halt him, and without a word of warning struck the big man squarely on the mouth. The man reeled back, sat down, dragging the three women to a squirming, squealing heap on the floor. The Legionnaire calmly stood by, slapped hard with his open hand on buttocks as they emerged. When the females had drawn aside, he grabbed Naefeli by one of his small ears and lugged him erect.

"If everybody isn't ready to leave in five minutes, and I mean five, I'll shoot this old swine. You can believe me, ladies, on the word of a Legionnaire." He looked from one of the suddenly silent women to the others: "I see that it strikes a note, eh? You possibly remember Legionnaires? A Legionnaire is something you fatten on sauerkraut, sausages and beer, and then sell to the Germans."

They were stunned, but the mother recovered fast: "I place myself and my daughters under your protection, Captain. You are a French officer."

"Get your duds," Radgens advised: "and you, Schubiger, you can go up and get your stuff, too. Only"—the Adjudant nodded to his men—"a couple of you go along. Bring them down when I whistle, ready or not."

After looking toward me in the vain hope that I would interfere, the lot went up, the ladies shouting that it was an insult to have men watch them, that they would protest to their Government. The man said little. He was very scared by now, and he wiped his lacerated mouth. Radgens had stored up that one punch for some years, evidently.

They were back well inside the limit, having probably packed in prevision for quite another destination. The man, the three women, all wore good fur coats. Schubiger-Naefeli carried a large bag of good leather, with brass buckles and fancy straps. The women each had bags and boxes and packages.

With fantastic lack of comprehension, they undertook to get the men to carry them. Radgens did not argue with them; he went up to the man, his fist clenched, and Naefeli ordered his tribe to tote its own luggage.

We herded them out of the house into the snowy night. Radgens suggested that I take the lead, with a man familiar with the sector at my side, while he brought up the rear and made sure that nothing went wrong.

I remembered that Radgens had scheduled a certain number of minutes for the walk to the house and a longer time for the return trip. He had figured we would be driving prisoners, reluctant prisoners. And I realized that he had known all along the women would be there. I should have known it too, for the Schubigers seemed to work as a team.

We reached the crest, passed our outposts. At the half-track, we halted and waited for the Swiss to report. After thirty minutes, with the shots dwindling constantly, he appeared out of the night.

"Everything went off slick, *mon adjudant.*"

"Any breakage?"

"Some. Cocles was killed; we just brought him down halfway, we'll take him out in the morning. Two wounded, not bad—" He gave the names. "Sent them down to the house."

"Maybe," Radgens said, "maybe that's where we better go."

So our little caravan started out again, down our side of the slope. Even at night, that damned machine gun was alert, and rattled in our direction for a few seconds. Somewhere in the distance, toward Thann, I believe, the sounds of our fake combat had made others ambitious, and a lot of guns, up to one-fifty-fives, were thumping away. Our little fake combat, which had cost us one dead and two wounded, and probably caused casualties on the other side! People should not trifle with firearms, even in sport!

At the house by the roadside I found the driver of my jeep. I was tempted to try for the village, with my prisoners. But Radgens advised against it. I would be packed in with the lot, he pointed out, and I might have a sad adventure. Unless, he added, I had the women trussed up, which he did not think I would stoop to!

The Legionnaires set to work covering up holes to make another room habitable, for me and the prisoners. The empty window-frames were covered with boards and cloth. A lantern was brought. Beds, couches, had been moved into the front room for the wounded. There were only two chairs and one table for furniture. The prisoners huddled against a wall, four bulky, furry masses, resembling stranded walruses. The pile of baggage was not as imposing as at the start; several pieces must have been abandoned on the trek. Somewhere along the line, Madame Schubiger must have tried to impose her will, for one side of her face was swollen, the eye starting to darken. Part payment for her Borgian sauerkraut feasts!

The three women considered me without affection. I felt that they no longer desired to sing out, *"Vive la France"* in harmony. Radgens had taken the other chair, and drummed on the table with his fingers.

"What are you going to do, Captain?"

"Take them to Lauwenheim in the morning, as soon as I can have a car sent out."

Radgens rose: "Would you want a breath of air, Captain?"

I looked at him in astonishment: The room was drafty; we had only a small charcoal stove for heat. Then he indicated the prisoners with a wink, and I understood and followed him out. We walked side by side in the darkness along the deserted road, back and forth. Nothing passed by; the enemy was around the bend. In the distance, trucks rumbled, but it was quiet here.

"Mon capitaine," said Radgens, "you know I am an old soldier. I don't talk at random. But that guy doesn't leave here alive. We didn't go to all this trouble to let him go. It's a private affair for the Legion."

"I understand how you feel," I replied; "but the man may have information valuable to us. He's been traveling inside their lines for days, and he has been trained to observe. But don't you worry; he will be shot. He is known to us."

"He may talk his way out of it, Captain."

"Do you think we're all utter fools, Radgens?"

"No. But the man is intelligent, and he can get delays if he is tried; he can manage to inform his consul. Anyway, even if he is shot, it won't be the same thing. It's our job."

I understood what he meant. It would make a good deal of difference when the story passed into the legends of the Foreign Legion, whether the Legion had concluded the episode in its own style. Radgens, alas, had an artistic soul, and aspired to a picturesque ending. If I drove off with the man and his three women, the Legionnaires would have merely assisted in the capture of a spy. While if he was shot right here, by the Legionnaires, the Legion would have avenged its own.

"He must be questioned, Radgens."

"Question him."

"I haven't the records, the maps, to check on—"

"In other words, Captain, you insist on taking him away?"

"It's out of my hands. And Radgens, he knows perfectly well what I am supposed to do, so do you think he'll open up with me? He knows that as long as he doesn't talk, he has a chance to be held for questioning elsewhere. I could have you and a couple of chaps go over him, but he can duck real answers even then. I have nothing to break him down, nothing."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, if we can read him his record, with places and dates, tell him where he was, whom he saw, he'll see that we have him. He'll talk a little at a time, to gain a day, two days."

"He's not leaving here alive, Captain."

"You know what that sounds like, Adjudant?"

"Yes, Captain."

"And you know what I could do with just what you've already said?"

"You could have me broken, reduced to the ranks—"

"With five years in the jug on top."

"Or even shot, Captain. But what I say goes."

"And I suppose"—I stopped and looked about me,—"something could happen to me. We're quite alone, you know, and one shot's much like another."

"He said to fire a signal. . . . You don't get that timing by chance."

Radgens laughed, an easy, friendly laugh.

"You don't get me that way, Captain. What I'll do is just shoot the guy myself, or if you ask me for my gun, order some other chap to do it. He'd obey me, because I'd be responsible. He wouldn't listen to you in a pinch; you're an outsider now. No, I'll let you report me. I give you my word as a Legionnaire that I would not harm you—"

"Kind of you, Radgens; but why do you say that?"

"So you won't think I'm trying to scare you and get pigheaded about everything."

Adjudant Radgens was not a bad psychologist, along his own line of study. I laughed in my turn, and we walked back to the house. I recall that stroll with Radgens at times, and get a bit tense—there were mines here and there; and absorbed as we were, we might have trod on one.

I was not too sure of myself. Radgens was a determined chap. But

there was no use fretting; something might happen before dawn—an officer of Legion might show up; one was surely assigned in replacement. He could then handle the situation as he pleased, order Radgens arrested—and what was important, officially forget the whole thing.

I FOUND my clan of prisoners gathered around the little stove, brewing tea and eating some sweet crackers. Evidently they traveled with provisions.

Two of the women reluctantly gave up their chairs as Radgens gestured with his thumb.

"Would you like a cup of tea, Captain?" the older woman asked.

"Thank you, no."

Radgens and I sat down; a Legionnaire brought us hot coffee from the improvised infirmary. We lighted cigarettes. A cigarette is something one can offer even an enemy, especially an enemy doomed to die.

"Cigarette?" I said, holding out my packet to Schubiger.

"Thank you. I do not smoke, Captain."

"The ladies?"

"No decent woman smokes," Schubiger informed me. "I have never tolerated such habits."

Radgens shot me an oddly humorous glance, and I smiled. And one picture was wiped from my mind: that of Schubiger strolling along the boulevards with a cigar between his teeth. He did not smoke.

"Will you look at my passport now, Captain?"

"No. I don't doubt that it's in order."

The man came to stand before me, across the table. He was big, looming almost to the ceiling. And despite all I knew about him, he seemed a kindly, troubled old chap, with no evil in his face.

"I don't know what this is all about, Monsieur le Capitaine. Oh, I know that this is war, that we are at the front, where we should not be. I even excuse the brutality of your men, and will forgive them and make no complaint. But I demand to be taken to more comfortable quarters, for my wife and my daughters to have at least some personal privacy. It is shameful for them to have to go out with a soldier for escort for—" Schubiger-Naefeli covered his eyes with one hand, sighed. "You understand."

"It will only be a few hours longer, monsieur."

"I do not comprehend, Captain, this talk about Legionnaires addressed to my wife and daughters. You were ahead and could not hear. There is a misunderstanding."

"You never lived in North Africa?"

"No."

The man had remarkable nerve. He explained that he had a cousin, who looked like him, and who had been in business in Morocco. It was understood that he had not been too honest, had been expelled. Not only did his cousin resemble him, but his wife and his daughters resembled his, Naefeli's wife and daughters! I thought at first that the man's cleverness had been exaggerated; then I realized that he did not expect me to believe him, but was working to create a doubt, to gain time, investigation.

It was possible also that knowing Legionnaires, he knew that he was in a very bad plight and was fishing desperately for an out. He sat down and huddled in a corner. Then, incredible though it may be, the four of them sang a hymn. Probably in my honor, they sang in French, with good voices:

"Sur toi je me repose, O Jesus, Mon Seigneur. . . . On Thee I lean, O Jesus, My Lord."

Then a heartbreaking incident occurred. From the infirmary, a weak voice rose, singing the same tune, in a language I could not understand—I believe Norwegian or Swedish. I realized the power of faith. Even sung by these four wretched, hypocritical creatures, the hymn had brought solace to one of the poor chaps in the other room. I allowed them to finish; I was moved, and even Radgens' face had softened. We were snapped back with a shock: The women had not missed our emotion, and one of the daughters rose and said dramatically: "At least, allow us to tend the poor wounded!"

Radgens' expression changed again, and she did not insist. I leaned back on my chair and dozed in snatches of a few minutes.

Sometime later, I opened my eyes and saw Schubiger standing as before, across the table.

"I am a man of peace, Captain," he was saying, "and I am a neutral. But what human being can fail to be on the side of France, or of Democratic America, fail to pray for their victory?" His speech was rather long, but he finally came to the point: "I believe that I saw things that would be of interest to your generals. If you could get me to someone who would know the questions to ask, to guide me, I am sure I could give useful answers."

"You may get your interview," I told him.

"I don't think so," Radgens remarked, yawning.

The big man looked at him a moment, his lips twitching: "Please ask that man to leave, Captain. I am afraid of him."

"You have reason to be," I said; "but I am afraid he would not leave. This happens to be his post."

"I could give valuable information, I am sure. One cannot help noticing things. The numbers of regiments, the tanks and cannon. I could describe the uniforms—I have a good memory; and from that, your superiors might gather information."

"What's opposite us in this sector?" I asked him casually.

"Right before you are elements of the Twelve-Twelve Air Regiment, what you call parachutists. Just reformed, they cannibalized several units, some from Denmark, some from Russia. Farther on your right, before the Moroccans of your Fourth, there's the One-fifty-ninth Fusilier Feldkompagnie. On the left, across the highway, you have the Thirty-fourth Ersatz Alert-Bataillon."

"Artillery and armored?" I pressed.

"That I could tell to some higher-up. I know."

"For an untrained observer concerned in charity only," I pointed out, "you are pretty glib with military terms. Also, who told you it was the Fourth Moroccan on our right? You can read numerals a thousand meters away, quite by chance, looking up from your Bible—"

"One hears such things."

"From German Intelligence officers preparing you for a mission? By the way, being among Frenchmen, would you like to resume your name of Frouché?"

He showed that the remark had struck hard; unconsciously, his left hand groped for the chair that was not there; he vacillated on his thick legs.

"Or was Monsieur Frouché another first cousin, who happened to have a bevy of colossal blondes hanging on to his coat-tails?"

"I don't understand you, Captain."

BUT the three women had risen. Without thinking, from habit, they stepped forward in a group. I half-expected them to shout a patriotic slogan or to sing a hymn. But it was the mother who spoke, and to her husband: "You absolute fool, what did I tell you? We've been tricked; they're getting rid of you." She shook off her daughters, leaned toward him and screamed: "Putting us in that farm, right on the outposts! Didn't I tell you?"

"Adèle, Adèle," he protested; "do you know what you've done?"

"Betrayed you, I suppose? I suppose the Captain over there needed that, when he knows you were Schubiger and Frouché? I never liked this business, never! Dragging me and your children—" She recapitu-

Radgens had scheduled a longer time for the return trip. He had figured we would be driving reluctant prisoners.

lated his sins, less to berate him than to pose as a victim and gain sympathy. "Now, you tell the truth, and if you can't save yourself, at least see that we are not harmed. . . . I told you we'd be known everywhere, that people had put two and two together. But no! You're smarter than anyone else—"

That was a fantastic family. The daughters joined in, protesting that they were innocent, mere tools, who had been used shamefully. They demanded to be taken away, to be sent back to Switzerland. Those four larger than normal, rather handsome people, with their gesticulating and tremendous voices, were amusing but somehow pathetic, agitated by the fear of death.

Naefeli, under the shower of reproaches and abuse, winced and lifted his hand, which brought simultaneous shrieks, "Right, now strike me!" from the mother and, "Papa, don't hit Mamma!" from the daughters.

"I'll talk to the Captain—I'll talk," Naefeli announced.

"And tell him the truth, not what you were told to tell him," his wife ordered spitefully. "You owe them no loyalty—you did what you were paid for, and now they've arranged this to get rid of you. You ass, didn't you even notice that there were no German soldiers to defend the house?"

"Adèle, I beg of you!"

The women babbled and stamped, gave signs of nervousness from excitement and cold, and to my amazement, Radgens turned diplomat and ended the scene: "The Captain and this—gentleman would like to talk alone, and you ladies would have more privacy in a sort of little cabin out back, where they stored supplies. I'll have somebody screen the holes in the roof and find you a charcoal stove somewhere."

"Thank you, Adjudant," Madame said in a colonel's voice; "this room is really abominable." But I was not through with surprises: the three women filed by the huge man and exchanged affectionate kisses with him. "Now, Bertie," said the mother as she left, "you tell the captain everything, and I am sure we will all be sent to Belfort."

THE man slumped into the chair vacated by Radgens, sponged his face with a large handkerchief: "Ah, women, ah, women! What do you want to know?"

"Everything, Monsieur Naefeli—what you were supposed to tell the French after they had slipped you back into our lines, and what you believe to be the truth."

"Naturally, I have your word that I shall not be shot, that my family will be freed?" When I shook my head, he modified his claim: "That I shall have a trial, a chance to see my consul, to obtain a lawyer?"

"I can make no promises," I told him. "A man with your experience should know that. I am a captain, that's all. My word would not bind anyone else. You supply me with information; I'll send it on, and the final decision about you will come from my superiors."

"You will protect me from the Legionnaires?"

"I have made it clear that I intend to take you back."

"Good, good." His relief was obvious. To a man who fears he will be shot inside four hours, a reprieve of a day or two is eternity. "In brief, here is what I was supposed to reveal —I shall fill in details at Headquarters: This part of the lines will remain on the defensive, while the drive concentrates on Strasbourg in Alsace, on Antwerp in the north."

"Antwerp has not fallen?"

"Oh, no, you can believe your own news. That rumor was spread for the deserters to carry to you. To resume: I was supposed to tell you that stocks of supplies, fuel and ammunition in this zone were depleted.

"The truth seems to be this, Captain: There will be an attack on Strasbourg. But there will be another attack here. I can even tell you that the Feldherrenhalle Panzerdivision will be in the lead. A number of formations now fighting as infantry, but composed of men trained for armor, will receive tanks, destroyers, self-propelled cannon. After reconquering the Belfort Gap, the general direction will be Dijon. Hitler has appointed Himmler to direct operations in Alsace."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Positive. He is due the end of the month. There is something brewing. The attitude of the officers alone is a proof. The officers in the Elite units look expectant and pleased, even though their comrades are winning battles without them up north, while those of the Ersatz units look very worried, which shows they expect to see hot action.

"The morale of the German Army is higher this minute than it has been since the Americans landed in Italy in 1943. The top brass knows something and that feeling of a miraculous recovery about to happen has inspired the troops with fresh hope, even if they don't know exactly what is planned."

"Do you, Monsieur Schubiger?" I asked.

"I have an idea, yes." And he smiled that kindly smile, the smile of a Sunday-school superintendent distributing Christmas baskets. Even knowing all I knew about him, looking straight into his face, I was not sure the man was a liar! "But you will understand, Captain, that, to use one of your French proverbs, I am keeping it as 'a pear against thirst.' I shall not reveal it to you."

"Suppose I decided you are lying and do not bother further?"

"You will know I am not lying. You see, before being assigned to Alsace this year, I did some research inside Germany, among subversive groups and foreign conscripted labor, nosing out organized slow-downs, sabotage and so on. By a process of elimination, learning the spots where only carefully investigated, trusted workmen were employed, I learned where the secret arms are being prepared—where the V-I and V-II rockets are turned out, for instance. But they will be obsolescent shortly."

Oddly, it was at this point that I lost the last shred of compassion for him. He had spied on Legionnaires, on the French; and now he admitted spying on the Germans—a man-of-all-work, all dirty work! And I saw clearly that his success had been based on the same tactics, bringing hungry, lonely men into a family atmosphere, feeding them, relaxing them with kindness, hymns and music! One should kill him as casually as one squashed a bug!

RADGENS reappeared, stood in the doorway. He seemed to have something to say and I joined him. He whispered: "How is it coming along, Captain? Did he spill his guts?"

"No. Look here, Radgens: I don't want to save him, but he either has important information on something we are looking for, or he has kidded me in grand style. He's holding on for a final dickering; and quite seriously, I don't know if it isn't big enough to dicker for."

"That's what I want to tell you, Captain—how to break him down so he'll empty his whole sack. You know, slobs who don't care what they do to other people, are always great family-lovers. Just like a man who's too crazy about dogs will usually beat his wife. This one loves that cow; he loves those heifers of his. Sure, he gets them to help in his dirty work; but otherwise he thinks they're pretty wonderful. Remember that crack about smoking?"

"I do, yes."

"Go back and start talking. I'll stay here. He'll ask the question himself, give me the opening."

I went to the table, asked more questions, took notes. I got regimental numbers, geographical indications, but he would not yield on the main point, which he had dangled before my nose. He was growing very confident; he was sure of my interest, hence of my protection. Deliberately, he took a small box from a pocket,

swallowed two big pills against chest cold, and spoke to Radgens as if he had been a hotel clerk.

"I hope the ladies are comfortable?"

LIKE a cinema villain, Radgens plucked the cigarette from his lips, looked at the tip as he blew smoke from his nostrils, then said slowly: "Comfortable enough just at present. They're taking a walk with three of my men."

"A walk? I hope you can trust your men."

"My men? Oh, yes, they're finicky. However, as I need them back here, they won't go very far, a kilometer or so. After that, I don't guarantee anything. The ladies will be entrusted to a section of Moroccans."

"Moroccans?" Naefeli repeated with a start.

"Yes. I thought that as they had lived in Morocco, they'd like to renew old times."

Schubiger lost his head, rushed for the door. Radgens was ready for him, kicked him in the groin, and as the big man bent to clutch at the point of impact, swung hard with his fist and felled him like an ox. He licked his knuckles and looked at me:

"I think that'll loosen him up."

Schubiger sprawled on the floor, remained stunned for a few seconds. Then he stirred, rose painfully, readjusted his dental plate, and shuffled to the chair, moaning and wheezing.

"You must stop it, Captain. It's inhuman. Frenchmen do not harm women—"

"Not needlessly," I conceded.

"Moroccans! Do you know what Moroccans are like?"

I knew Moroccans of old, and I knew as well what our enemies and some of our allies thought of them. Moroccans are true warriors, with old-fashioned ideas. Like the Greeks of old, the Romans, the Franks, the Huns, they consider a warrior as deserving loot and women. That is the rule in their game of war.

But their officers had them well in hand; their discipline was stern; they knew that they would be shot if caught, and honest statistics would prove that they did not behave much worse than other troops. Because they themselves saw no harm in taking advantage of their victories, they had a bad reputation. The Germans, for instance, who had flooded occupied countries with mercenaries, with bands of Cossacks, Hindus, Ukrainians, Mongoloid tribesmen, who had drafted young girls for the entertainment of their troops from one end of Europe to the other, disapproved of the Moroccans, were shocked by the Moroccans—Moroccans, they declared, had no respect for womanhood!

Nevertheless, in all honesty, the encampment of a Moroccan section on a snowy plain, in the dead of night, was not the safest place for a lady.

Radgens' invention was working; the big man was in agony, physically and morally. He shed tears.

"You must stop it, Captain. You are a French officer—"

"Naturally,"—the Legionnaire was smiling widely—"my men will make clear that these are German women, to be considered as a present from the Legion, with no strings attached. I don't know if Moroccans prefer blondes, but I do know that they are passionately fond of tall, husky women." He shrugged. "They know that their officers are fussy about such things, and they won't want to be reported."

"Captain, do something, do something—"

He was tempted to rush for the door again, but a look at Radgens reminded him he could not go very far.

"We have business to conclude here," I reminded him.

"After, after! There is no time to lose—"

"It's up to you." I did my best to imitate Radgens' sinister look. "I am quite certain that the Adjudant has arranged for a signal to inform the men whether they should bring them back here."

"I did, yes, Captain," Radgens agreed.

"You mean that this is a trick? That you make my family's safety, my daughters' honor, their lives, dependent on what I do, what I say?"

"That's rather an accepted technique in your business, I take it. We are learning." I tapped on the table with my fountain pen: "We are not bluffing, man. Your women will be left with the Moroccans unless you talk."

"I have told you all I know, Captain."

"I'm sure you can add to it. The locations of those secret factories, for one thing, the names of German officers you dealt with, any number of things."

SCHUBIGER started to talk. He had learned a lot while working in Germany. He spoke rapidly, but without confusion. He had been trained to observe, to make quick concentrated reports. He rattled off initials and numbers of various corps, corrected certain information he had given me—not even realizing that he was convicting himself of lies and deceit in this very room. Somehow, one knew he was not lying now; his whole being, his whole mind, was tensed toward rescuing the women.

I was worried at times, fearing that the women would start to sing, or that one of them would manage to talk the guards into letting her come in. But that was doubting Radgens' efficiency, and he had given me little reason to do that.

"We have been helping where we could—bringing a little cheer."

"That's all, I'll give other details later. We must start."

"Just a moment." I looked over my notes and started asking questions again. A man in his state of mind could not remember just what he had said, and if the answers matched it was likely they were true.

"I'll hold you responsible, Captain, if anything happens—"

"Understood. . . . You said eighty tanks by rail to Cernay?"

"Eighty, yes." He belched, sweated. "But they're for bluff, for your agents to see. They will run through the town and a couple of villages, circle and be re-loaded for the north. How do I know? It's the trick they used at Belfort, to stave off your attack, to make you think the 11th Panzerdivision was around. I've told you that and told you that!"

"How do you know?" I insisted.

"I had to know. I went over the route with an engineer—to tick off the

It was justice: How many men had he caused to be killed? His turn had come, and he did not like it—few do.

most likely spots for your agents to see what we wanted them to see."

At last, I felt that he had, as Radgens said, "emptied his sack." I nodded, and he picked up his fur coat, his broad black hat, fussed to adjust his glasses and ear-protectors.

"Are you through with him?" Radgens asked me.

"Yes."

"You don't think he has anything more to say?"

"No."

I had done my duty, squeezed out all that could be squeezed. I was somewhat nauseated; it was a practical system but not one of my choice. Turning him over to Radgens was in reality doing him a favor—he was doomed; nothing could save him. Whether here or at Mulhouse or Belfort after a summary court-martial, what did it matter where he died?

Schubiger came forward. Radgens did not make way.

"Captain, order your subordinate to give the signal agreed upon and to take me to meet my family."

"He has my permission," I said.

I thought that Radgens would lead the spy some distance on the road and quietly shoot him. But the Adjudant had other plans. He motioned for Schubiger to go back into the room, indicated the chair. The big man seemed to realize that I was out of it, that no appeal to me could alter events. He obeyed mechanically. He took off his hat, laid it on the table.

"You have brought them back?" he whispered.

"Did you ever bring back other men's women?" Radgens asked. He turned his head and called: "Are they back?"

"Just back," a corporal answered from the other room.

"Send them in."

Three men entered, carrying guns, fully equipped. Their clothing was damp.

Schubiger jerked up his massive head and stared at them.

"How did it go?" inquired the Adjudant.

"All right."

"Any trouble?"

"Nothing much. They got the idea something queer was going on, after we'd gone a few hundred meters, and they wanted to stop. The young ones started to cry and beg off, but the old one bawled us out until she got scared. We didn't say where we were taking them, but they were scared."

"You didn't pull any funny stuff yourselves?"

"No, Adjudant. You'd told us not to."

"Didn't touch them at all, did you?"

"Only to make them keep walking, Adjudant. They tried lying down and we had to lift them up—"

"You delivered them all right?"

"Yes, we did."

"What did the others say?"

"They thought we were kidding at first, and that it was a trick to get them into trouble. Then they got the idea and they said thanks a lot."

"What happened then? The gentleman over there is interested."

"Oh, nothing. They clung to us and started to yell. But the *bicos* quieted them right away. There's a French noncom nearby with another lot, and they didn't want him butting in. But they sent guys to tip off pals."

Schubiger broke into a laugh.

"Well played," he said, with something of the unctuous ring in his voice. As I feared, Radgens had overdone things, crowded his effects. The three soldiers appeared embarrassed, like small boys reading lines.

"It is the real thing," Radgens declared. As the other shook his head, the Legionnaire drew his pistol, a large automatic, of German manufacture—of course. "I intended to let it soak until morning, but what's the use if you prefer to go crazy and pretend not to believe me?" He turned to the three armed men, to the others who had crowded behind them in the doorway: "I'm doing this all myself; nobody is responsible but me if there is a kick-back. Some of you have heard of Schubiger and his women; the rest will hear about them plenty later on.

"The women have been taken care of. Now, I'll finish the swine."

I HAVE seen a good many men die. I have seen many executions. I have seen the body of a seventeen-year-old boy lying by the roadside, head battered in, beaten to death like a mad dog by the German police. So the spectacle held nothing fresh, nothing interesting. I did not particularly want to see Schubiger die; it would have been better for me to go and stand in the snow outside. But say what you wish, there is a certain fascination in violence, in killing—I wanted to go, yet stood rooted to the spot, with the breath of a soldier on

my neck as he leaned forward, not to miss anything.

Radgens stood on the threshold, turned a bit sidewise, the gun in his fist, arm extended and rigid. Schubiger sat in the chair, facing him, a motionless, frozen target. I watched for the puncture to appear on his wide high forehead.

THEN, as I thought all was over, he realized what was about to happen. Perhaps his mind accepted, but his body rebelled. He rose and started to scurry around the room, knocked the table and chairs over. There was a door leading to the back yard, but it had been fastened with boards and nails. He flung himself against it so that the walls shook, tore at the boards.

Radgens could have shot him from behind. But he smiled, relaxed his arm a bit. He was enjoying this. Schubiger went from the door to a corner, to the next, foolishly, forgetting that he was a big target. Behind me, I heard the nervous laughter of the men watching; one of them laughed high, like a girl. Round and round went that big clumsy-looking shape, like an enormous furry mouse in a wire cage.

It was justice—he had put many men in cages, brought many more to the point of helpless panic. How many men had he caused to be killed, in Africa, in France, in Alsace, in Germany? His turn had come, and he did not like it—few men do.

"Turn around and stand still," Radgens cried at last.

The result was an increase in the frenzied speed. Schubiger was everywhere at once. At first he had yelled incoherent words, such as "No, no!" and "Wait, wait," in German, in French. He had been concerned for his women, but not quite as much as for himself. But he was no longer young; he carried much excess weight; and probably without being aware of it, he was slowing down; his breathing was formidable; it came in gulps and snorts.

When he was near collapse, he flung himself down, facing into a corner, on his knees, presenting the widest and least dignified target. He was panting; his body shook as if he had a motor concealed in his chest—yes, it throbbed like a machine.

Radgens uttered a little grunt of disgust, took two steps to the side, to see the head, and fired a bullet into the skull. The thick soles remained as they were; the body did not fall over. Only the hands moved, clawed down the wall and drooped to the floor.

"All right, you chaps, it's over," Radgens said. He turned to me. "Do you want to wait here until morning, Captain, or walk up with me?"

I had seen enough of Schubiger; I did not want to pass the night staring at the behind of a dead man every time my lids flew up. I walked to the half-track with Radgens, over the crackling snow, with the thin sleet whipping my face. It felt very good, very clean.

Radgens talked as we strode, not too loudly, for voices carry far at night, in cold weather, carry above the wind and the detonations.

"You know, Captain," he explained in the tone of a good surgeon discussing a difficult operation, "that guy acted like an awful coward. But he wasn't, not that much. I'd bet you that if he had been taken before a firing squad, he'd have stood up to it decently—a bit green around the gills, maybe, but steady.

"Here's what got him: He was in bed over there, comfortable and warm, and we pulled him out and shoved him through the snow. He thought then that he might get killed right away. Then he talked with you, thought he was getting along all right, that maybe he had two, three days, maybe years. Then that fool woman jumped right in the middle of his act and gave away everything. Again, he thought he had only a couple of hours.

"So what happened? I took the dames out. And he thought we wouldn't shoot him without giving him a chance to kiss them good-by. Then I pulled the stunt about turning his women over to the Moroccans, and as I told you before, even if he was a rotten spy, he had old-fashioned ideas about his honor being involved. I am not kidding; I'd bet he was worried about his honor!

"So he talked his head off, thinking that we'd take him and the women to Mulhouse or somewhere else in the morning. He didn't believe what my guys told him. He thought he saw through it all, that it was all a lousy trick to make him talk.

"All right; it went that way for hours, hot and cold; *I'll be shot, I won't be shot, I'll be shot*—so that when he saw me aim at him and suddenly realized that I was not kidding, his nerve broke. Why not? It's just like a piece of steel wire: you bend it back and forth, back and forth, and suddenly it snaps. So he goes nuts, thinks a hole will open in the wall to let him out. I've had that feeling, when in a tight spot."

"The belief in miracles, eh?"

"You could call it that. Watch out!"

Out there in the night, the machine gun tapped out; bullets rustled overhead, whispered along the crisp snow: we had reached the open stretch. How those fellows knew when to shoot even through darkness and sleet was a mystery. We drew up after the short run, and my Legion philosopher resumed talking as if there had been no interruption.

"So I shot him. I'll try to get word over to our pal on the other side that I settled the Schubiger account. You know, Captain, I am not going to try to find out who our pal was in the Legion, or what happened to him. A Legionnaire's past concerns nobody but himself."

"I'll bear that in mind, Radgens."

"Anyway, that guy won't live long. When you've pulled a stunt like that, it preys on your mind. Communicating with us, I mean, when after all he is a German in service. . . . And he got a couple of guys knocked off, faking that shift in defense. He's fed up; he doesn't believe that Germany can win; he knows it's a matter of time now. But he's got his guys to think of, young guys that he probably trained and broke in, who believe in what they're fighting for and believe in him. He can't quit, can't let them down, any more than I'd leave my fellows.

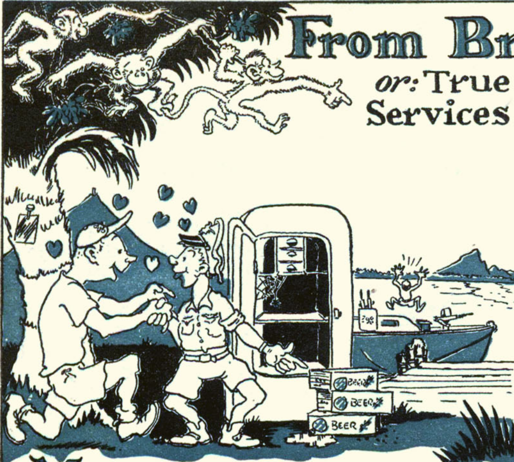
"It's mathematics, Captain, just mathematics. Sooner or later, he'll get orders to hold on to the finish, some place or other, and he will do just that. He'll be killed, or he'll shoot himself rather than surrender, because he is a good soldier. You know lots of them have done it. It's not because I was born a German, Captain—I seldom think of that: but you got to admit that they can fight."

"Yes." We were getting near the half-track. I could not see anything, because of the darkness and sleet. But I could smell stewing meat. We were two very weary workmen, heading for our supper, our job done. Done? There was something more to learn, something I would have liked to forget and could not. There was such a thing as perfect justice, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But justice can hold a touch of the horrible. I had to speak: "That was an inspiration, an idea of pure genius, old man, about the women. But all the time, I was afraid one of them would break loose, pop in and spoil our bluff."

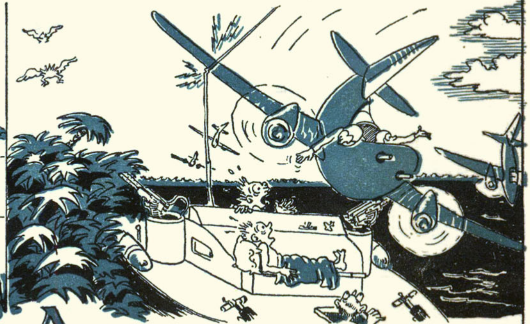
RADGENS came to a stop, so suddenly I almost bumped into him. I could discern his tall, helmet-crested silhouette before me. He coughed to clear his throat before answering, after a rueful chuckle: "I couldn't quite carry it through, no more than you could. And my chaps wouldn't have done it; you know Legionnaires —tough rinds and soft cores. It means more bother for you, Captain; you'll probably have to testify against them at Belfort, at their trial. I'd like to have saved you the trouble, but there are some things you can't do, and some things you can't duck."

From Branch to Branch

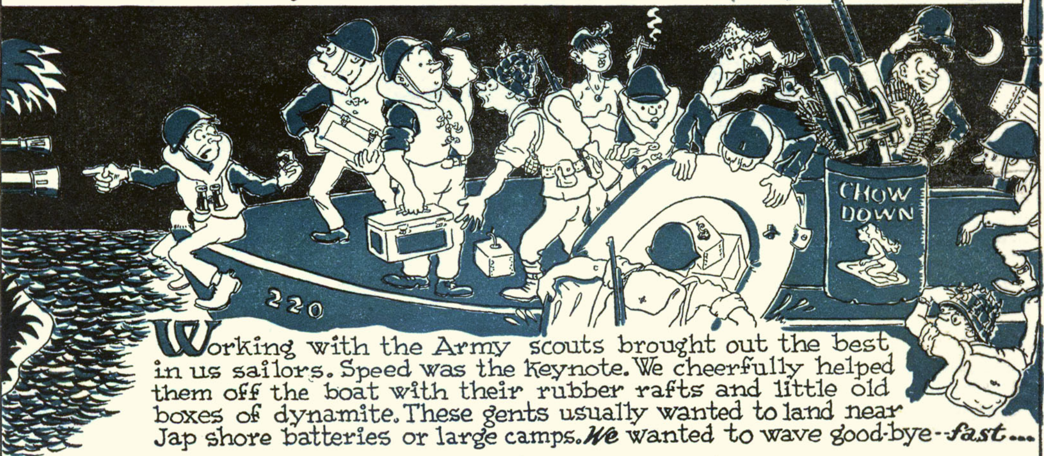
or: True Coöperation between the Services ... *as seen by* Peter Wells



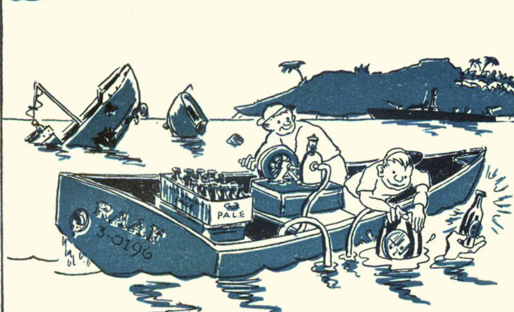
Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 16, in the South Pacific, found that a policy of ***close-coöperation*** with our Air Force allies was most important... ***We*** had Ice-boxes--***they*** had BEER...



And our new buddies helped us. Every morning at 0500, squadrons of A-20 Bombers on their way to work buzzed the boats. How we welcomed this after we had patrolled all night!



Working with the Army scouts brought out the best in us sailors. Speed was the keynote. We cheerfully helped them off the boat with their rubber rafts and little old boxes of dynamite. These gents usually wanted to land near Jap shore batteries or large camps. ***We*** wanted to wave good-bye--***fast***....



We *really* cooperated with that brave Aussie Sergeant-Major in charge of the Salvage operations in Brunei Bay. He had one (1) pink rubber diving suit. His prime salvage: Beer...His nature: Generous.

My experience with Marines was all stateside, when I was a green Ensign Marines always pop up with a snappy salute when you are too busy to return it. Coöperation with Marines is impossible.

Who's Who *in this* Issue

Victor H. Johnson

THE first trip I made to sea was twenty years ago this past April. It was a fine trip, but it ended disastrously. For when my ship got back to Baltimore from South America, I was hauled off by a police launch and kept in storage until my father, a country justice of the peace, came up from Rock Point, Maryland, and claimed me.

The papers said: "Police End Sea Career of Boy." The headline proved true for eight days.

Had my tense moments during the war, but was on the lucky ships. Once a storm off Crete saved our convoy from an expected air-attack; another time, when we were really expecting it as we crept by Calais, nothing whatever happened.

The following day, safe in England, we read that Calais had had its own problems that night. I believe it was 300,000 tons of bombs—or some such stupendous figure—that kept the Germans entertained while we crept by, with orders to disperse and crawl under the English cliffs to escape the radar of the enemy if the business started. The Navy of course knew all about what Calais would be doing before we were ordered through what had been a tight spot.

Four times around the world, and up and down and criss-cross the globe until I can't recall all the places I've been until I look at them on the map or hear some other seafarer gassing about them, I'd like now to confine my traveling to a typewriter. 'Tis the old saying, I suppose: That all of us are looking for a stump ranch.

Happily married, with a daughter just big enough to give me a tough wrassle. I'm working on my second novel to that end—along with other writing as an idea strikes.

BORN August 20, 1909, in Baltimore, Md.; descended from John Gresham, who settled in Maryland in 1641.

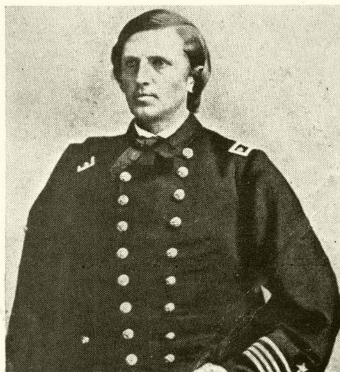
Family moved to New York City in 1917. That Christmas he received a box of magic tricks, and has been interested in magic ever since.

During the depression he was forced to leave college and was in turn a typewriter salesman, a demonstrator of magic tricks, a canvasser, a laundry worker, a secretary in a private detective agency, salesman for a kitchen equipment jobber, and sub-section foreman in the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Started out as a free-lance in 1936. In 1937 one of his closest friends was killed at the battle of Brunete in Spain, where he was serving with the International Brigade of the Republic. Gresham volunteered. He made his way through France and with a group of volunteers from every country of Europe climbed the Pyrenees in the middle of the night and by dawn had crossed the border, where he became a soldier of the Spanish Republic, serving in the artillery and later with an anti-tank battery in the 129th Infantry, where he met some of the Yugoslavs who later formed the nucleus of Marshal Tito's guerrillas.

Cut off in the South of Spain after Franco's breakthrough to the Mediterranean, Gresham and the other Americans finally ran the blockade on a tramp steamer on a misty night to Barcelona, crossed the border into France the night Franco attacked Barcelona with artillery, and proceeded by a sealed train to the port where they took ship for the United States.

His first novel, "Nightmare Alley," was published by Rinehart & Co. in 1946. A picture, based on the novel, was released by Twentieth Century-Fox. His short fiction has appeared in *Collier's*, *Atlantic* and *Esquire*. He is an accomplished amateur magician and mind-reader. He lives on a farm in New York State, with his wife and two young sons.



William Cushing, who sank the Albemarle

Brumett Echohawk

Brumett Echohawk

I AM a Pawnee Indian.

I was born at Pawnee, Oklahoma, in 1922. Attended school there until mobilizing in 1940 with the 45th division—then a guard unit.

Went overseas to North Africa in June, 1943. Hit Sicily in the first wave with a demolition team. A month later landed at Salerno, Italy. Got ashore with a rifle and helmet after discarding my equipment and sketch-paper in the deep surf.

Was wounded at Venafro, Italy, in November, 1943. After being hospitalized, two months in Africa, I went A.W.O.L. to rejoin the 45th. Was hit again at Anzio in February, 1944.

N.E.A. syndicate published battle sketches that I had made in pencil—most sketches were lost in the field. Later I illustrated for "Yank."

Discharged in 1945.

I studied art in Detroit and at the Art Institute of Chicago. While in Chicago I was an artist for the Chicago *Times* and have since free lanced.

My father was in the first World War and my grandfather was an army Pawnee scout.

I attribute much to hunting as a boy in Oklahoma for emerging safely from the war.

"We liked our own sign-language better than regulation army," Echohawk says, "and used it among ourselves on patrols." He adds that his Indian outfit may have had some special value against German morale, for according to prisoners, they were afraid they would be scalped.

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