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THE THRILL BOOK

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Down the Coast of Shadows—

By
Perley Poore Sheehan



SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Wycherly, the well-known millionaire, visits his office late at night contrary to all custom. He surprises the night watchman by his sudden change into a gentle person who wishes to help others. He acts more like his dead brother than himself. He tells the night watchman to visit his poor niece, whom he had previously ignored. The night watchman does so, and learns that the dead brother wrote a book called "Down the Coast of Shadows," and indulged in occult phenomena. The next morning Wycherly enters and seems to have reverted to his cold character. He curses his secretary, Grierson. The butler tells him he just came in the house; Wycherly denies this, refusing to believe even his housekeeper, Mrs. Shattuck.

CHAPTER X.

"THOU ART THE MAN."

IT was one of those odd little combinations of circumstance which are afterward easily explained, and yet, even when explained, leave none the less a lingering souvenir of strangeness, a flavor of mystery—as if, after all, there might have been some-

thing there that was unexplainable—unexplainable in the ordinary way.

Grant that Grierson himself had turned merely because he had heard the butler, Jonas, coming back with the wine. Grant that it was Jonas himself who swayed the curtains just then, and that Mrs. Shattuck, the housekeeper, was a little nervous, a little wrought up over this dispute between her employer and Grierson over an odd question of fact, and that therefore the return of Jonas, soft-footed as always, startled her. All these things were granted. It was by them, or through them, that Mrs. Shattuck explained that screech of hers.

It was she who drank the wine. She retreated in confusion.

Still, there was no denying it, she had left a little shudder behind her—something very subtle, something in the nature of a mental shudder.

"Bah!" said Wycherly when Mrs. Shattuck was gone. "I'm in a house filled with idiots."

But that was the end of the scene that had culminated in the cry. Wycherly looked at Grierson, and Grierson looked at Wycherly. At least there was some sort of an understanding between them, such as existed between Wycherly and no other man, even if it was some such understanding as may exist between a master and a misused spaniel.

"Did I leave this house last night or didn't I?" Wycherly demanded.

"I was mistaken," said Grierson.

"I'm glad you have some glimmer of sanity."

"So am I," smiled Grierson, trying to lighten the situation.

"So you've taken to seeing ghosts!"

"Shall I call the stenographer—"

"Hold on! Why did you look like that just now when I spoke of your seeing ghosts?"

"I'm nervous, sir."

"By gad, Grierson! You'll have me addled as well if you keep on. I begin to believe you're taking your nonsense seriously. Speak up! What are you twisting around for?"

"Mr. Wycherly, it was because of——"

"Say it!"

"——your brother."

"What about him?"

"I shouldn't have spoken. Forgive me. I——"

"Go on and say what you started to say, you puppy!"

"If I hadn't known that Mr. Joseph was dead, I should have sworn that it was he—— There, forgive me. I knew that you would be angry again."

"I'm not angry with you, Grierson. But be good enough to go on—if you don't want me to brain you with this inkwell."

"It wasn't only last night and again this morning. It's been a dozen times—ever since you started to make trouble for Miss Mary. I must speak to you about this, chief. I've seen—I thought I saw—Mr. Joseph standing near you—here in this room—and down-town in the offices. I thought I saw him standing just back of you yesterday when you were at the safe. Hear me, chief?"

"I hear. Continue."

"And when this morning they sent up word that your safe was open and rifled, and nothing else disturbed, I was ready to believe that—I don't know how to express it—that some influence had led you to go down there in the middle of the night."

"What do you mean, 'some influence'?"

"It was something that your brother Joseph said in that manuscript of his."

"What do you know about that manuscript of his?"

"I transcribed much of it for him."

"And absorbed a lot of his crazy views about ghosts."

"Ghosts have been seen."

"Nonsense! I suppose you will have a ghost working the combination of my safe!"

"It would be more likely than that Swansen should have done so. He has been with us twenty years."

"Long enough to learn the combination."

"We changed it last week. And there was upward of a thousand dollars in cash left in the lower drawer. He maintains that you were there, that you opened the safe, that you gave him the money, and that there was a witness."

"Who?"

"The policeman, Cavanaugh, to whom, Swan says, you also gave some money, a bank book—you know the one—and a letter——"

"He's a liar!"

"It may be hard to prove him such."

"Well, have they brought in the policeman? What does he say?"

"I thought that perhaps you'd like to speak to him first—refresh his memory. We don't know yet what has passed down there. But there would be no use in letting Cavanaugh share in this fellow Swan's delusions."

"You don't think that I'd tamper with a possible witness, do you?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Of course not."

"Of course not."

"Merkle, of the detective branch—one of our men—telephoned in that he had just found Cavanaugh and that they were headed this way."

"And the girl?"

"That is a queer feature of the case, sir. As soon as I saw what was missing from the safe I sent over to 13 Segur Place, where we had last located Miss Wycherly and the Carson woman——"

"Why?"

"On account of the bank book, I suppose, if there was any reason at all. I argued that any one who had taken that must have been a friend of this Carson person——"

"Did you tell the detectives that?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Go on."

"And there Merkle found Cavanaugh, who had already returned the book to the woman. Merkle tried to take the book, but this man Cavanaugh started to rough things—said that you had given him the book yourself—offered to come up here to prove it."

"All this, Grierson, is some damnable, outrageous plot."

"It looks so, sir."

"But I'll be eternally cursed if I let them put it over on me."

"No one has ever been able to, Mr. Wycherly."

"I'll show 'em!"

"You always have."

"As for this miserable policeman——"

The hallman came silently into the room, crossed over to the table desk, where the millionaire sat.

"It's Mr. Merkle, sir, and a gentleman as says he's Mr. Cavanaugh."

"Gentleman! Bah! Tell them to come in."

Merkle was an aggressive-looking man, dark and slender, but with an obvious punch in either shoulder, despite his natty attire and Charlie Chaplin mustache. But he gave way to Cavanaugh at the door. It was Cavanaugh who entered first, fair and pink, confident and perfectly content.

Cavanaugh gave a look across at Wycherly. Cavanaugh smiled. He spoke over his shoulder to the following Merkle.

"Sure, that's him," he said.

Then he turned again to the master of the house, saluted him in a hearty voice:

"Hello, there, Mr. Wycherly."

CHAPTER XI.

JOSEPH'S DAUGHTER.

THERE followed about thirty seconds of an almost perfect silence. And yet it was as if, through this silence, there came the small sounds of a situation settling down. It was like the silence that follows the crash of a falling tree or a demolished smokestack. During this silence the policeman and the millionaire looked at each other.

There was no change of Wycherly's expression, except perhaps a slight darkening of it. Also perhaps

there was a slight increase of the squint in one of his eyes. But all this was very slight. The change was greater in Cavanaugh's face.

"So, my man," sneered Wycherly, "you have seen me before?"

"I thought I had."

"Thought we were acquainted, too, evidently."

It was never Wycherly's way to soft-soap those he wanted to use. To terrorize them, goad them, make them miserable—that was his way. And, generally speaking, it must be confessed that he had both the will and the power.

"You are Mr. Wycherly, aren't you?" asked Cavanaugh, with a slight increase of his pinkness. And there kept drubbing in Cavanaugh's mind the things that old Miss Carson and Swan had told him about Wycherly, things he had refused to believe.

"So you're not so sure!"

"No, sir!"

"I hope you'll remember that when you're called upon to testify in court—if you're that lucky."

"What do you mean—that lucky?"

"I understand that you've already confessed to being mixed up in this safe robbery of last night."

"What?"

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, fellow."

"And I'll bid you to do the same, sir," said Cavanaugh, who was as good as any man. "I wouldn't have thought it last night that a man could change so much."

Wycherly contributed a sneering laugh.

"So I've changed so much that he doesn't recognize me!"

"That I don't, and it's none to your credit," said Cavanaugh, with increasing warmth. After all, this was the Wycherly of tradition, the Wycherly of Miss Carson's tales. "You can take back your money."

"Explain yourself."

"The five hundred you gave me."

"Ho-ho! I gave you!"

"Sure! You haven't forgotten it, have you?"

"The effrontery of the fellow," said Wycherly. He gave Grierson a mocking smile. "He would intimate, Grierson, that I run about at night giving presents of five hundred dollars to policemen!"

Grierson laughed. Merkle, the dark detective, grinned. Cavanaugh, himself fighting mad, hunched his shoulders slightly, looked about him.

"What's the plant?" he hissed. "What's so funny?" He reached for his hip pocket, and Merkle made a movement to intercept him. But Cavanaugh gave him a contemptuous look. "Git back, you stiff," he whispered, "or I'll soak you one." It wasn't a revolver that Cavanaugh drew, but a wallet. The wallet contained a slim brick of bills, which Cavanaugh extracted. "They're all there," he said. "Count them!" He spat on them and threw them on the floor. "And that's what I think," he said, "of the money of any man that's not my friend."

"Pick up the money, Grierson," said Wycherly, "and count it." To Cavanaugh he said: "So you don't consider me your friend, huh? In that case, I don't see why I should hesitate any longer in having you thrown into a cell."

"Into a cell! What for?"

"You ought to know. Burglary, and then the separate crime of grand larceny."

"Forget it! I don't like this brand of wit."

"You're not denying it, are you, that that money came from my safe?"

"Ah, what are you talking about? You give it to me yourself."

"You're a trifle mixed. You said that you didn't recognize me. You'll have to think up a better story, my man."

"Do you mean to say you wasn't there?"

"Most absolutely."

"Last night?"

"Last night I never left this house."

Cavanaugh was a brave man, but he was beginning to reel a trifle. In his heart he was. There was where he kept his image of his wife and the children. He was thinking of their joy a few hours ago, when he told them about the five hundred dollars and the trip to the country. What was it going to be like if they found that he had been arrested? The worst of it was the whole affair had a fog of mystery about it. It no longer looked good to him. There was something the matter with it—something to recall the old stories his father used to tell in the Gaelic—stories to frighten you even when you couldn't understand a word of what was being said.

"This is all a bad joke," said Cavanaugh. "It can't be. I'll ask somebody kindly to wake me up."

"And, after all," said Wycherly, "I don't see why you should be treated any better than that thieving night watchman."

"In what way?"

"Jail."

"You mean—you've let them—arrest the Swede?"

"What else?"

"Why, you dirty scoundrel," said Cavanaugh, yet overpowering his ire and speaking softly. He had a flash of recollection. It amounted to a flash of inspiration. "And I suppose," he said, "that you're going to deny that you wrote—this!" He pulled from the inside pocket of his coat the paper that Wycherly had written and had had him and Swan attest.

"What's that?"

"You well may ask."

"What is it?"

"So you don't know? May the time come when you'll dom well find out!"

"So now you're to try a little bluff!"

"Bluff, is it? Bluff! When you wrote it with your own hand and signed it in the presence of Swan and myself—Jacob—Corlears—Wycherly! How many men in New York know your middle name? And had Swan and me witness your signature."

"Let me see the paper."

"I'll not."

"Why not?"

"Because it belongs to the girl—your brother Joseph's daughter. Yourself said it: 'Let no one else see it—not even myself!' Man"—and now Cavanaugh whispered, as his thought took a new turn—"man, do you believe in ghosts—like your brother Joseph did?"

Wycherly said: "Get me that paper!"

At the same time he may have once more pushed

those electric calls on his desk. In any case, Merkle made a grab for the envelope—and got Cavanaugh's elbow under his chin for his pains. Blond and curly, Grierson snapped about the front of Cavanaugh, creating a diversion like a toy spaniel, until Jonas, the butler, and Brock, the hallman, could make an attack from the rear. But this was just fun for Cavanaugh.

"Rough-house, is it? Oh my, oh my!"

And he was just beginning to slam the hallman properly into Jonas and Merkle when there was a slight cry—very soft, very feminine—and there was a girl whom Cavanaugh was recognizing by mere intuition even before he heard the secretary, Grierson, call her by name:

"Miss Wycherly!"

Dark and fine, placid even in the midst of this shindy, she paused just inside the door and looked about her. Perhaps she was poorly dressed. As a matter of fact, she must have been. But, at that, she looked like a high-born lady in disguise.

The fight was over. No one had any interest in it any more whatsoever.

"Well, Mary!" snarled Wycherly from his table desk.

But Cavanaugh intervened.

"You're Miss Mary Wycherly?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then," said Cavanaugh, "have the goodness to read this letter—now—before you do anything else. I have a feeling it's important."

She took the envelope with a touch of wonder, slipped the message from it, started to read. Her wonder grew. Her face went white.

CHAPTER XII.

"WHOSO CONFESSETH."

CAVANAUGH had noticed that change in the girl, and he was struck by it, not to say absorbed; but he was not so absorbed as to have forgotten that struggle of a minute ago. He was at her side. No one was going to disturb her.

"Where'd you get this?" she asked him softly. There was a stress of emotion in her voice, but it was the stress revealed by an apparent absence of emotion. She had spoken to Cavanaugh, but her eyes were still held by the paper. "How did it come to be written?"

She wavered a little, like a young tree that shivers to the ax.

"It's a long story," said Cavanaugh.

Miss Wycherly slowly raised her eyes, as if they came unwillingly, and looked across at her uncle.

"I knew it," she said. "I knew it."

"Knew what?" snarled Wycherly.

"It was in your heart."

She smiled. It was a strange smile. She closed her eyes, and straightway her smile disappeared and her face became a perfect mask of grief.

It hurt Cavanaugh to see all these others there looking at the girl. He spoke to Jacob Wycherly:

"Why don't you chase all these flunkies and other hounds out of the room? Can't you see that the young lady wants to be alone for a moment?"

"Everybody get out!" stormed Wycherly, glad to

ease the tension of his own nerves by a gust of brutality. "Grierson, summon the police."

"For you?" Miss Wycherly asked in her small voice.

And there she was looking at her uncle again. The effect wouldn't have been more sensational had she thrown a hand grenade. There was a shuffling delay in the general exit.

"Don't leave me," the girl said to Cavanaugh.

Jacob Wycherly must have been doing some heavy thinking back of his own mask of a face. It was a mask that showed nothing but bitterness and evil hued over with a shade of contempt. He had done many things in his life that wouldn't have looked well in writing—like most men, perhaps, but he more than others. And what was this thing set down in the paper that the girl held—that had blanched her cheek, that had made her look at him so accusingly?

"Shall I summon the police?" Grierson whispered.

"Shut up and get out!" said Wycherly. "Take the damned crowd with you. Can't I have a little privacy in my own house?"

They filed away. But Cavanaugh lingered. After that appeal of Joseph's daughter, he wouldn't have deserted her before a legion of devils. Wycherly nervously poked at the fire, crouched, furtive.

"Now," said Wycherly, when the others were gone, "what is the meaning of this play acting?"

"Play acting!" cried Miss Wycherly.

"Take your time and steady down," said Cavanaugh to the girl, ignoring the master of the house. "I'm with you. You can count on me. I talked with Miss Carson this morning, and she let me know some of the things that you've been through."

Cavanaugh placed a chair for the girl, but she wouldn't do more than lean against it. She kept her eyes on her uncle with what the poets call "a dread fascination." She did, except when she closed her eyes, and her face again became like a marble carving—a beautiful carving—of a grief-stricken angel. It was to give the girl time to recover herself that Cavanaugh turned on the rich man.

"You needn't scowl like that," he said. "I've heard how you've been trying to starve this beautiful young lady into doing your will. Fighting a girl! Making her lose her situations when she was trying to earn her own living! Simply because she wouldn't come here and be dependent on you! Simply because she didn't want you for her uncle!"

"Silence!"

"And fighting the fine young lad that wants to marry her!"

"I'll not be insulted by a thief."

"You can't be. But if you want my opinion——"

"I don't!"

"——you're a wicked old man."

Mary Wycherly put a hand on Cavanaugh's arm.

"He has confessed."

"Confessed, is it?"

Wycherly had again turned to the fire. It would have needed no psychologist to guess that he was thinking—thinking—thinking thoughts of annihilation. He had the look about him. At the girl's word "confessed," he had slewed around, still crouching, looking over his shoulder.

"Confessed—to what?"—this from Wycherly, with

a sort of whining titter, as if he thought it was some sort of a joke.

Until now the girl must have believed that her uncle was as well aware as she was what was written on the paper. She knew his handwriting. This wasn't his handwriting. She knew his signature. This was it, attested by witnesses. But now the whole situation was becoming as much of a mystery to her as it already was to both Wycherly and Cavanaugh. For these latter two the mystery suddenly took on a darker stain.

"Murder!"

The word slipped from her lips, barely audible in one way, louder than thunder in another.

"Murder!" The echo was Cavanaugh's.

Silence from Wycherly, but he was releasing the poker. The poker fell from his hand, and this was as eloquent as a sentence from him might have been as it rang against the brass of the fender.

"I knew it! I knew it!" the girl repeated softly. "In my heart I have known it all along. In my dreams I've seen it. My father was dead, but he lived. He's been my companion. A dozen times I would have denounced you—if it hadn't been for him. But he was your brother. And he loved you still—even if you did—*kill him!*"

Her voice broke. She was taken with a little tempest of weeping.

"It's a lie!"

Wycherly's declaration had taken a lot of breath, but it wasn't very loud. His mouth had sagged open and remained open.

The girl put her knuckles against her lips. She recovered a measure of self-control. She blazed. It was like a hot sun breaking through the clouds of an August storm. Instead of a counterdenial, she began to read:

"... *For the good of my soul, I confess . . .*"

"It's a lie!"

"... *struck him with my cane . . .*"

"Blackmail!" drooled Wycherly.

"... *to save me, Joseph said that he had fallen in a fit . . .*"

"Stop! Stop!"

"... *smiled at me as he lay dying . . .*"

"Stop it, I tell you!" But Wycherly's voice remained the empty whisper. Not the crack of doom could have made the girl's voice inaudible.

"... *and even then I thought in my heart that he was a fool, but I know better now . . .*"

To have judged by his looks, Wycherly just then was at least a hundred and fifty years old and all bad. On his shrunken, gaping mouth there was a rictus of ferocious amusement. Cavanaugh, looking at him, actually felt a qualm of pity—pity none the less if coupled with horror.

So did the girl perhaps. She shrank. She gazed at him. She was tearless.

"I couldn't have written that," said Wycherly.

"Why not?"

"Because it isn't so."

His voice was that either of a very little boy or a very old man. He tottered forward a step. He appeared on the point of falling. He put out a shaking

hand. The girl understood his gesture. She handed him the accusing document at arm's length. Cavanaugh awoke from his trance a moment too late.

Wycherly, no sooner than he had the paper, had whirled with amazing agility and thrust it into the blaze of the open fireplace. He did more than this. With the same movement he had stooped and seized the fallen poker. With this in his hand he confronted Cavanaugh.

"Stand back," he panted, "or I'll brain you!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PSYCHOGRAPH.

IT was as if some other sort of warning had come to Cavanaugh—something that was neither voice nor visible sign and yet which partook of the nature of these. It was an affair of an instant. But it can't be told in an instant. It was fleeting and subtle, yet he was to remember it always, and the outlines of it were to stand out as boldly as a castle on a crag.

There was the paper crisping in the blaze. There was himself eager to save it from the burning. There was Jacob Wycherly standing there with a weapon in his hand, warning him to stand back under penalty of death.

Was it something that he saw projected by Wycherly's mind? Or was it a picture preserved by these walls? Or was it mere imagination?

At any rate, there for some measureless fraction of a second it was as if time had slipped back to that other day when a scene similar to this must have taken place. Cavanaugh was not Cavanaugh. He was Joseph Wycherly, author of that manuscript entitled "*Down the Coast of Shadows.*" And that paper in the fire was this manuscript. Here was the assassin standing by the hearth, just as he had stood that other time, ready to repeat now what he had done then.

Cavanaugh stumbled backward. He was sprung from a line of ancestors who had always been responsive to the things unseen by ordinary eyes.

"'Tis a psychograph," he exclaimed to himself, repeating some word that sounded itself in his brain. "'Tis no photograph—but a psychograph."

He perceived Mary Wycherly, without precisely looking at her, and saw that she had covered her eyes with her hand, as if she also had seen something to fill her with horror and dread. But most of Cavanaugh's attention had gone to old Jacob Wycherly himself. There was confirmation there of many things.

One would have said that the old man had already struck a blow, that he was looking at his victim, now lying there on the hearth at his feet. Not even the doctors of the universities have yet exhausted the possibilities of that thing they call "suggestion"—the suggestion of the hypnotists, the suggestion of the alienists, the suggestion of the healers. What suggestion could it have been that now spread a film of awe over Jacob Wycherly's face? The look was there. It was gone.

Then Wycherly, as if recovering himself, cast a glance down at the hand holding the poker.

"It should have been your gold-headed cane," said Cavanaugh.

"What do you mean?"

"The Swede told me what you said to him. You told him that you did it with your gold-headed cane. He told me. We wondered what you meant. Now I know. I'll tell him. It'll help get him out of prison and help put you there."

Wycherly recovered himself entirely.

"You're a vulgar blackmailer as well as thief," he said out of his throat.

"Your own soul has just told you otherwise," said Cavanaugh.

Mary Wycherly spoke up, without much life in her voice:

"You destroyed the paper, but you can't destroy the truth of it. Where did the paper come from?"

Said Cavanaugh: "He wrote it himself last night in his office; but it's possible that he doesn't know it. I have heard of cases like this. The old world is full of stories like this. Have you never heard the wise ones say that 'murder will out'?"

Wycherly listened to them with the air of one who, while listening, follows his own line of thought.

"How did he come to write it?" the girl asked.

"That I do not know. He was like a different person. He was smiling and kind. Look at him now."

"What time was it?"

"It was midnight, or just about, and he came and wrote and went away all like a man who can see in the dark."

"Somnambulism."

"I've heard the word."

They spoke with only a sidelong interest for Wycherly, but now he interrupted:

"You'll have a chance to tell this nonsense to the judges."

Mary spoke to Cavanaugh:

"I am going."

"I'll go with you."

"You'll both stay here until I say you may go," said Wycherly.

Cavanaugh ignored him.

"We'll go straight to my captain," he said. "We'll tell him all we know."

"Move and I'll have warrants out for the two of you within half an hour." Wycherly knew what would hold Cavanaugh. It was the threat against the girl. He was right. He sneered as Cavanaugh hesitated. "There are a dozen witnesses in this house," he said, "who will swear that I was here all last night, nowhere else."

"The Swede and I will swear otherwise."

"You both had stolen money in your possession."

"And you," said Mary Wycherly, speaking with strained gentleness, "had poor old Miss Carson's stolen bank book in your safe."

"That—that—was Joseph's work."

"You killed him—and now——"

"What's this talk of killing? Where's your proof? When I called you here it was to offer you once more a home under my roof. I wanted a secretary. I'm getting rid of that ape, Grierson. But listen, young woman! I will! I will! I will put you in a cell, too, for complicity in this blackmailing scheme."

"What blackmailing scheme?" asked Cavanaugh.

"Yours!"

"Was it for that you wanted to see me?"

"It was to save you from yourself—to give you a chance to clear yourself of the criminal and insane invention of that cursed Swede——"

"Come away with me," Mary Wycherly interrupted, speaking rapidly to Cavanaugh. "We'll do as you said. I have a feeling—something tells me——"

She was a little incoherent, as well she might be, considering the strain she was under, the things she had seen both with the eyes of the flesh and the eyes of her mind. She again put her hand on Cavanaugh's arm. He turned to obey her, the while Wycherly watched them with an ugly smile.

Unobserved by either of them, he had rung a signal that Grierson would understand.

Grierson came in.

"Two men are on their way from headquarters," he announced, as if no one was present but his employer.

"I've decided," said Wycherly coldly, "to put this whole business in the hands of the police, after all. I'll tell my story. This precious pair can tell theirs." He snickered. "You'll have me to thank if those blabbing reporters don't hear of it for a while."

Wycherly turned slowly and looked at the hearth.

He snatched his attention back again. He rubbed his hands.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM THE BEYOND.

WYCHERLY was in this same room that evening when he consented to see Miss Amanda Carson. Why he had consented to see her he himself could scarcely have told. But almost for the first time in his life Wycherly was invaded by an unrest, an uncanniness, even a fear, that he could not understand. His was the logical type of mind. Two plus two meant four, so far as he was concerned, and in the arithmetic of human life there was no X, no unknown quantity. Strange fancies, none the less, had crept into his consciousness this day. Was it because that silly ass of a Grierson had talked of ghosts? Was it because there were certain features about the robbery of his safe that could not yet be explained? Was it because of that alleged confession? Was it because of some taint in his blood or in his mind—some taint of that virus that had made of his brother Joseph a believer in outlandish things?

"Spirits? Faugh!"

The big room was brilliantly lighted. Wycherly was in his dinner clothes, with a black stock about his neck, for he was expecting a number of callers this night. This moment only had Grierson left him to conduct Miss Carson into his presence.

Wycherly, seated in his easy-chair near the fire, suddenly sat up and looked in the direction of the door.

"Good evening," he said.

That was strange. No one had entered. Still, he thought that he had seen some one. He wasn't alarmed. He wasn't disquieted even. On the contrary, he felt uncommonly well. He felt a little giddy perhaps. Odd that his single glass of wine should make him feel like this. Yes, he felt as he had once felt in the dentist's chair, just after the dentist's assistant had slipped the gas cone over his face—a sleepiness, a low buzzing in one corner of his brain.

He plucked at his collar. He ran a hand across his forehead. The pleasant drowsiness increased. Why not snatch a moment's sleep? Often just a moment was enough.

His face went forward as his shoulders slumped back. It was just as Grierson and Miss Carson came into the room.

"He's asleep," Grierson whispered.

"He must be a devil," said Miss Carson, "to be able to sleep with a conscience like his." She was small and dressed in black, but there was something of the fighting giant about her. "Wake him up!"

"I don't dare."

"Don't dare!" Before Grierson himself could awaken to her purpose, she came up to the table and wrapped on it with a paper knife.

"Ye gods!" hissed Grierson, and stood ready to flee or to apologize. But there was a surprise in store for him.

Wycherly had opened his eyes. He remained motionless as he had been sitting. Over his features there came a look of dreamy contentment. He spoke:

"You may go, Grierson. Miss Carson and I would have a few words in private."

Grierson gave one look at his master, another at the caller, and yet a third at the ceiling. He hurried away with the air of one who goes, as the saying is, while the going is good.

Wycherly hadn't moved. He was still as one absorbed in thought or is still under the spell of a recent dream. He hadn't given so much as a glance at his visitor. It might easily have been some one else. But he called her by name.

"Come around and sit down, Amanda. I am glad to see you."

There was a chair opposite the one Wycherly occupied. Miss Carson walked primly around and seated herself on the edge of this. She looked across at Wycherly—glared at him, had that been possible to her gentle old eyes. Wycherly, meditative and contented, to judge by his expression, still had not given her so much as a glance.

"You fiend!" she muttered.

"Now, now, Amanda," drawled Wycherly, "hard words butter no parsnips."

She gave a slight start.

"I should think those words would strangle you."

"Why?"

"Because they recall—your brother Joseph."

"Perhaps I wanted to recall him."

"Recall him? You? After what you've done?"

"There's a mystery of human conduct."

"There's no mystery about yours. What do you mean by all this persecution? I've just seen her—Joseph's daughter—my Mary—held in prison like a criminal——"

"Don't cry, Amanda. You always did have a tender heart."

"My heart is flint."

"Impossible!"

"Accuse her of blackmail, will you? I've come—as God is my judge—to blackmail you indeed."

"Blackmail me, Amanda?"

"You know—what I know. The promise I gave——"

"To Joseph?"

"You do know."

"Yes, I know. You promised him that you wouldn't tell."

Miss Carson was agitated. There was no agitation on Wycherly's part. He sat there talking like one who is pleasantly reminiscent. He had raised neither his eyes nor his voice.

"I promised that I wouldn't tell unless it was necessary to save some one else. Now I'll tell. I'll tell the whole world that you——"

Wycherly had his first movement. He lifted his hand in an appeal for silence.

"Don't distress yourself. If it's necessary, I myself will confess that I killed Joseph. Aye, but I did confess it. I remember now. I went last night to my office. There—there I wrote out a confession to be sent to Mary. She was in some trouble. I wanted to protect her. And I sent you that old bank book that Joseph had used in accumulating your little fortune——"

As Wycherly became more interested and as if more awake, he raised his eyes for the first time and looked at his caller. She had leaned forward with a growing trouble in her face. It might have been a mere passing trouble—an explicable trouble, at any rate. Like most women of her age, Miss Carson was familiar with many of the human phenomena rated as tragic—death, loss of mind. But as Wycherly raised his eyes, Miss Carson was transfixed.

"Are you—Jacob?" she asked.

"Why do you ask?"

"You were speaking with Joseph's voice."

"Perhaps Joseph's spirit has returned to dominate my own."

"Joseph—it is you."

"The body is merely a ship in charge of a spirit captain——"

"Sailing——"

"——down that coast of shadows——"

"Joseph's words. Joseph! You are here——"

Things most abysmally strange—stranger than anything that would be seen through the windows of a Jules Verne submarine—pass in the most ordinary row of houses, the most respectable of houses. Here was a respectable house, so far as appearances went, on that most respectable of avenues—a house built at great expense of stone and glass, steel and copper. And yet, in the drawing-room of it——

Miss Carson, tremulous, had slipped forward to her knees before the man who had murdered his brother and was whispering that brother's name as she saw—or thought she saw—that brother looking out at her from the fratricide's eyes.

CHAPTER XV.

THE REPRIEVE.

TO explain a little of what was passing in Amanda Carson's mind just then, and something of what was palpitating in her heart, it is only necessary to remember that for years she had been the amanuensis of Joseph Wycherly, that as such she had read books without number, had been present at interviews and investigations; that, almost without noticing it, she

had taken cognizance of and cruised far into that sea of Joseph Wycherly's shadow coast.

Doctor Hodgson, Professor Hyslop, W. T. Stead, Flornoy, the gifted Frenchman; Sir Oliver Lodge, Doctor Joseph Maxwell—they were as shadowy witnesses here now, confirming her guess or her intuition; not mocking at her, but bidding her to persevere.

She remembered certain words of Maeterlinck: "A spiritual epoch is perhaps upon us . . . as though humanity were on the point of struggling from beneath the burden of matter that weighs it down."

There was the whole vast literature of dual and multiple personality, of somnambulism, spiritism, psychism.

She had not loved these studies. She had always regarded them, if the truth be told, with a certain degree of aversion. But she had loved Joseph Wycherly, loved him as she had loved his daughter. And she was suddenly and tremulously aware that all these years of blind but devoted study had prepared her—for this!

"You must telephone," she said.

"To whom?"

"Fleming, your lawyer."

"Quite true."

Wycherly reached out a hand without looking, drew a telephone from its niche at the side of the fireplace. Grierson's voice sounded faintly.

"Get me Fleming."

There was a slight babble of sound. Wycherly lowered the instrument. His eyes were bright and warm, his voice was gentle.

"Fleming is here, waiting to speak to me now. Shall I call him in?" He spoke into the telephone: "Just a moment, Grierson."

"Tell him you can't receive him. Tell him to speak to you over Grierson's phone."

Miss Carson was whispering. She was still on her knees, tense.

"Oh, Joseph! Joseph! Don't go!"

"Odd," said Wycherly, "that you should call me Joseph, when my name is Jacob. It is odder yet that it should seem so natural that you should—Hello; Fleming?"

"Tell him to hurry to police headquarters——"

Miss Carson, seventy at least, folded her hands on her breast as if she were a child again and saying her prayers. Perhaps she was. Joseph Wycherly had always loved to dwell on the eternal youth of that which Doctor Geley calls the superior subconsciousness, and which Maeterlinck calls "the Unknown Guest," but which he himself had simply called the soul. And what else Miss Carson had to say just then she said silently, by telepathy.

"You are to hurry to police headquarters, Fleming, and there give bail—— No, no! Immediately. Disregard all previous orders——"

There was a straining lull. Wycherly looked at Miss Carson.

"He insists on seeing me."

She set her lips. She shook her head.

"Later, Fleming. Not now! *Not now! Damn*——"

Wycherly was seized with a slight tremor. He spoke to neither Fleming, at the other end of the

wire, nor to Miss Carson, kneeling there in front of him. His voice was a mere murmur:

"*Not yet! Not yet!*"

Thereupon Wycherly closed his eyes. Miss Carson as if flung herself forward, reached out a hand.

"For Mary's sake!" she cried in her whisper.

Wycherly opened his eyes, spoke with a new energy:

"You will do what I say, sir, immediately. A misapprehension—explain it as you will—rouse out a magistrate. You've done it before. Do it now. Get Miss Wycherly out of there——"

"Praise God!" breathed Miss Carson.

"And the policeman, Cavanaugh——"

Wycherly had read her thought.

"——and that other, the night watchman. *Hurry!* Turn heaven and earth——"

There must have been another sort of consternation and excitement in the room that Grierson used as an office when he and his employer were here in the house. Grierson was there now, with the lawyer, Fleming—Fleming fat and material; Fleming with the hard lawyer mind that had schemed and lurked through dark and crooked legal byways for years at Jacob Wycherly's bidding. Fleming himself was up, against something that he couldn't understand. Never had he heard Jacob Wycherly speak so softly; never had he known Jacob Wycherly to be so eager to perform a deed of kindness. And, besides, hadn't Wycherly, earlier in the day, rasped and snarled about what he wanted done to these very persons he was now insisting should be released?

"There's something the matter with him," Fleming whispered to Grierson.

"There must be."

Grierson didn't dare communicate all of his misgivings. Grierson had been sure that he had seen Wycherly leave the house the night before. What had happened when he mentioned it? He had been browbeaten and insulted. He wasn't going to be browbeaten and insulted again. Grierson had had the creepy sensation of having seen some one or something that no one else had seen. A phantom! A specter! A ghost! A fine thing to mention to a man of Fleming's constitution!

But Grierson had a fad, or a hobby, or call it an avocation—a secret garden, so to speak, into which he escaped whenever he could from the torture chamber of his daily work. It was a secret garden which had first been revealed to him when he read that manuscript of Joseph Wycherly's—the one that Jacob Wycherly had subsequently burned.

In that manuscript Joseph Wycherly had written much on the riddle of personality. Persons passed but a fragment of their time in the so-called physical body. Independent of this body that wanted ham and eggs for breakfast, there were other bodies that came and went—in sleep, in trance, in so-called death. One personality might relinquish his body, as a captain the command of his ship, and another captain came aboard; or some hitherto inconspicuous passenger aboard that ship might suddenly manifest himself——

Fleming was sweating at the telephone.

"He talks like he's hypnotized or something. Who's with him now?"

"Old Amanda Carson, who was——"

"Joseph Wycherly's secretary! Wasn't she some sort of a damned trance medium?"

"Do you believe——"

"Bah! Sneak in! House the old man up."

Miss Carson heard Grierson come in. Every faculty she possessed was straining to the breaking point. She was on her feet in an instant. She faced the secretary.

CHAPTER XVI.

DEFIANCE.

WHAT do you want?" she asked.

"Mr. Fleming wanted me to speak to Mr. Wycherly."

"What about?"

"He—wanted a word with him——"

"They've talked over the telephone."

"But Mr. Fleming thought——"

Miss Carson, with the delicate perceptions of her intuition, was aware that there was a change coming over the Wycherly just back of her. There wasn't an instant to lose. Indeed, there was that in the presence of Grierson to recall as no one else could have done the personality that had been in abeyance—the personality of Jacob Wycherly. She turned.

"Tell Fleming to hurry," she commanded.

"Hurry, Fleming. You may see me later."

Miss Carson took the telephone from the millionaire's hand, thrust it back into its niche. She saw a wavering of that familiar and beloved presence that had been visible in Jacob Wycherly's eyes.

"Mr. Wycherly," said Grierson.

"Yes?"

"Mr. Fleming——"

Wycherly straightened up in his chair.

"What—*what's that?*"

His voice had finished with a rasp. He sat there glaring about him for a moment or so. He saw Miss Carson as if for the first time. He scowled.

"If you've come to speak to me about that ingrate niece," he began.

"Joseph's daughter," Miss Carson put in. "Joseph, who was just here—who may be here still——"

"*What!*" roared Wycherly. "You dare begin again on that blasphemous folderol that embittered my life while Joseph was still alive? I shan't have it. State your message."

"Mr. Wycherly," said Grierson. "I beg pardon, sir——"

"Curse you, Grierson, can't you come to the point without all this 'beg-your-pardon' stuff? What do you want?"

"Mr. Fleming thought——"

"Fleming! Where is he?"

"In my office, sir. You were just talking to him."

"So I was! With twenty-six people all harping at me at the same time, no wonder I lose my wits. Tell Fleming——"

"Stop!" said Miss Carson. She knew that her only chance now was to play for a little delay. She also knew something about Fleming, knew that he would not tarry long after what had been told him over the telephone. "You forget that I also am in a hurry."

"He's waiting," said Grierson.

Miss Carson turned again to confront him. "Mr. Grierson," she said, with a sort of meek rage, "surely you will not wish to interrupt me when I have a few moments with Mr. Wycherly."

Grierson looked from his master to Miss Carson. He noted Wycherly's scowl. He was aware of Miss Carson's tension. He wondered what had been passing here. There flitted through his mind a flock of little souvenirs—stories of spirits, of haunts, of possession.

"Tell Fleming to come here," growled Wycherly. He spoke to Miss Carson. "You show a most amazing readiness to make yourself at home."

Grierson turned.

But Miss Carson seized upon a weapon that she understood. She had seen it used a hundred times, at least, in all sorts of conflicts. She had seen it used to the end that trickery might triumph. She had seen it in the strange and sometimes terrifying conflicts between the spiritual and the physical. She had seen it used not as a weapon but as a tool—at sittings with famous mediums. And this weapon, or tool, was one that Jacob Wycherly feared more than any other.

It was darkness.

As Miss Carson's hand went out to the electric switch, there swept in upon her also a flock of souvenirs. She knew all the tricks of the fakes and charlatans who dealt in necromancy. Also she knew what real powers lurked unsuspected in the dark—powers that would come obedient to the will of any one who understood.

From Wycherly, as the darkness swamped the room, there came a strangled gasp. From Grierson nothing much but an exclamation of vexation. There was a momentary silence. Then, very quickly:

"*Take your hands off! Take your hands off!*"

It was a strange voice. It might have been Wycherly's. It might have been Grierson's. It was a chatter.

"*Agh!*"

That was from Wycherly—the ugly sound that any man might make who felt cold fingers on his throat in the dark. It was followed by a silly, senseless laugh—from Grierson unmistakably.

Again that silence. It was broken by a childish, birdlike voice:

"This way, Joseph! This way, Joseph! Can't you see me, see me—fluttering white—white and fluttering?"

The retina of the eye is itself a mystery—mirror of the most solid fact and the most shadowy hallucination. There floated into view that fluttering whiteness the child's voice mentioned. It was like a nebulous drift, a luminous small cloud, out of nowhere, that came to an unstable rest between the table and the flickering glow of the fireplace.

"Don't be afraid, Joseph," came the childish voice out of this whiteness. "Bruvver hasn't got his bad old cane any more."

Grierson had taken to attending spiritualist meetings. Himself he had, ever since that time he had read the late Joseph Wycherly's unpublished work. He didn't have the scientific spirit, Grierson didn't. He was only half convinced that much that passes

for phenomena at such places are but snares fabricated for the taking of the credulous. On the other hand, there was something that he did know—that, year after year, down through the centuries, there had assembled a mass of incontestable evidence that life *was* but a passage down a coast of shadows, where misty continent touched misty ocean.

Grierson, overcoming his first shock of fear, had drawn a little closer. He saw the whiteness waver. Then he saw something else—or thought he saw it.

Lying there on the hearth where Joseph Wycherly had died there was stretched a dark form now. It was from this apparently that the voice of Joseph Wycherly himself now came:

"My God, Jake! No, no! I'll tell them that I fell."

There was one of those changes, as swift and inconsequential as the change in a dream. It was caused perhaps by the cry that came from Jacob Wycherly, who sat there in the darkness, prey the Lord only knows to what emotions:

"Lights! Lights! Turn on the lights!"

"Don't be frightened, Jake," came the voice of Joseph Wycherly. "You're not alone. Don't you remember how you always feared to be alone? I've come back. You'll never—be alone again."

"Lights!" And Wycherly's voice was the voice of a man being strangled.

Grierson saw him stiffen suddenly, grow violently rigid. He stepped down. The eyes had set and there were red marks on Wycherly's throat. He was dead.

THE END.

The Inefficient Ghost.

By Isra Putnam.

TWAS midnight in the ancient baronial castle. Reggie Scattergold, the impoverished heir to the estate, looked at his watch, noted that both hands stood on the twelve, and sat up in bed to listen anxiously. It was time for the family ghost to make its appearance.

From far down the winding corridors there came a sound of clanking chains and the clicking of bony feet on the stone pavement, accompanied by hair-raising wails and groans. Reggie scowled discontentedly; 'twas plain to see that he was most unhappy. What man would not be so, who must suffer nightly such ghostly manifestations?

The door flew open to admit a tall, spectral figure clad in glistening white. Bony arms uplifted, it stood triumphantly as though it expected to see the terrified heir, overcome by fear, hide his head under the covers as an ostrich seeks concealment in the desert sand.

But Reggie shook his head peevishly. Then he fixed his monocle firmly in one eye, and looked the disconcerted and astonished spook up and down, disappointment and reproach mingling on his noble countenance.

"Is *that* all the noise you can make, my good ghost?" he complained. "The rich American who is bargaining for this castle won't take it unless I guarantee a first-class family ghost, and your performance is way below par."

Tummy Strikes.

A few leaves from the Diary of A. Stomach.

10 a. m.—Oh, dear! Another warm day. Wonder if I'll be abused as I was yesterday. If I am I'm going to strike. Just disposed of a half-chewed breakfast. We ran for the train, which meant that I was so jiggled about and tired that it took twice as long to do my work. Hope she gives me an hour or two of complete rest before anything more is sent my way.

10:30 a. m.—Two glasses of ice water have just arrived. It will take all the energy I can pump up in the next hour to warm me up to normal again.

10:50 a. m.—That half-chewed breakfast did not satisfy her, so she has bought some peanuts and started again.

12 m.—Peanuts have been dribbling along steadily ever since last entry. Think she has finished them, though.

12:30 p. m.—Decided she wasn't very hungry, and instead of a good solid dinner sent me down a cold eggnogg, heavy with chocolate. Could have managed it all right if it hadn't been so cold, but that makes it terribly hard to deal with.

1:10 p. m.—More ice water.

1:40 p. m.—Was mistaken about the peanuts; she found another handful in the bottom of the bag, and now I have them to tend to.

2:05 p. m.—More ice water.

3:10 p. m.—She has been lifting some heavy books, and, as usual, used my muscles instead of her arm muscles, as she should have done. Tired me more than digesting a six-course dinner.

3:20 p. m.—Some one has brought her a box of caramels, and she's started on that.

4:30 p. m.—Have received something like half a pound of caramels since last entry. She just said: "Oh, dear, I don't feel well. I know the milk in that eggnogg must have been sour."

6 p. m.—We played a set of tennis before dinner, and here I am all tired out and dinner to handle.

6:50 p. m.—We were invited out to have a soda before going home. Had a lemon phosphate and then ran for the train.

7 p. m.—Fried potatoes, cucumbers, veal, and canned blueberries. What do you know about that?

7:50 p. m.—We're going down for a chocolate walnut college ice.

8:20 p. m.—Got home and found that some one had made lemonade. She drank two glasses. That on top of the college ice settles it. I strike.

8:30 p. m.—Have sent back the college ice and lemonade.

8:40 p. m.—Returned the blueberries.

8:50 p. m.—And the veal.

9:10 p. m.—She has sent for the doctor. Says the college ice must have had something the matter with it. Her mother says it is probably the weak stomach she inherited from her father.

9:30 p. m.—The doctor says it is just a little upset due to the weather.

GOOD NIGHT!

The Devil's Own—

By Chester L. Saxby

A Two-part
Story
of the Sea
and Its
Ministers



CHAPTER I.

THIS is not a nice tale. For those who would ramble amid pleasant odors of cultivated gardens and dally a while over a delicate bloom it were more profitable to have done with these pages and seek elsewhere. In what I have to tell there is only the coarse smell of the sea breeze and the stench of sordid truth. Such a recital is not pretty, God knows. But I have kept silent too long; in my throat is the gritting taste of eternity that will soon strangle me, and I must speak once for all. Judge as you will. It's not that judgment I fear.

Jeval Hogarth is dead. May the fiends of hell have mercy on his soul! Not that I forgive one act of his nor one foul word that fell from his perjured mouth. Jeval Hogarth had no mercy in life and expected none, but when a man comes to die he cannot curse another if he would. My own soul is smutted with evil and marked with the taking of a human life, for which God forgive me! I make no whimper, but Jeval Hogarth was blacker of crime than any ten men, and there was no crime he did not commit—aye, and revel in it as a jackal in the carcass of a doe.

I was born and raised a gentleman's son. My education was good, and why I didn't hold to it and follow the professions like my uncle and cousins, or the trades like my own good father, only the fate that rules men can say. Somewhere away back in early times our folks were sea captains, and the blight of it, skipping the others, fastened on me to my doom. I hankered for the freedom of the sea life. I laughed at my poor mother's sobbing and my father's sharp warnings, and signed before the mast at twenty. Even at that there might have been no trouble if in the fourth year I had stood away from under the scowl of Jeval Hogarth.

Jeval Hogarth was a ship's master, captain of the Bowaine brig, *Wings o' Morning*, out of Walaka. And for that—God help me to tell the utter truth!—he was a good sailor, with his heavy hand and his shrewd seamanship. Born of a witch, they say of

him, as they say of many, for never a storm could drag him under and never a hand could drop him. He handled his men cruelly, but he kept them and the Bowaine brig afloat when all ships but her were bottled up in port. And there was a reason. It was the dirty masters he served, they said. Winked one old salt, the cause of the Bowaine brig's staying up in the screaming gales was that Jeval Hogarth was on the devil's errand, and the devil guards his own.

I came ashore in Walaka from an honest cruise, my mind made up to steer for home; but you can't escape a jot or tittle of your dues.

It was in a street of Walaka I come upon Jeval Hogarth, or he it was that came upon me, for as I turned a corner he swung from the opposite compass and ran square afoul of me, near felling me with the thrust of his bilging shoulder. I gasped for breath and leaned against the brick side of a building while my thoughts collected. He let out an oath and looked black with anger; then quick as lightning the blackness was clean gone and he was grinning. Aye, that was the man; a fiend incarnate one minute, a humor-loving rogue the next; the two fighting for expression in him and neither remaining long.

"Well, sir!" he roared out at me. "You carry too much jaw and you wear it too far out. Haul in when you tack, my hearty!"

I was mad clear through with the lubberly course he steered, and I spoke to him smartly, for my head was aching with the precious stiff blow.

"If you set a ship as ill as you make it on land, you ought to be ruled off the coast," I growled and felt my head.

His eyes fascinated me. They seemed black, but every minute they flared up like live coals, with some kind of green color in them. His hands clenched.

"Just so my own hull can stand the going," he answered with a quick laugh, "let the others put their helms down hard and save themselves as best they may."

It was cruelly said, but with a twinkle that I thought labeled the words . . . the idle answer of a good-hearted pride. His horny right hand leaped out to grip my shoulder in a vise. The marks of his fingers stayed by me many a day, but I held my pain by cutting my teeth into my lower lip. A bear he was for brute strength. Grinning with an even watchfulness, he shook me playfully and loosed his hold.

"Where do they sign up such stout men?" he queried, measuring me top and toe. "The *Wings o' Morning* is short-handed. Do they pay you three American dollars aboard your craft, boy? I reckon not; it's a long hand that does that."

"Are you baiting me?" I flung at him. "And who commands the *Wings o' Morning* these days? I've heard of her darkly. Maybe you're fearing to speak your name."

"Fearing?" he repeated in a gentle tone, although I thought I heard the lion purr in his deep chest. "Fearing, say you? Jeval Hogarth's not known to you?"

"That rings right," I cried. "I knew it. Jeval Hogarth you are! And you offer me a bunk, eh? You take me for a fool, then. I've sailed with devils of many sorts, but the half of rumor paints you blacker than them all. I'd as lief——"

"Well said," he rumbled with a loud guffaw. "But you stand back and count yourself satisfied for that? Is it the color that you shy at, my man?"

I liked not a bit his saying I was a coward, and I flushed up.

"I'm no stickler for color," I made haste. "The darker the better. But I'm no mast hand these two years. Did you want a mate we might talk." I shrugged my shoulders and would have passed him by. He grunted and jerked me round. His dead black eyes were on me, boring into me, sizing me fore and aft.

"I'll give you five and a two years' cruise," he hurled at me before I had well opened my mouth. "Now what do you say? Mate on the *Wings o' Morning*—well!"

His hard look I met with one harder and talked up to him.

"First tell me where went the mate that was?" I questioned him with caution.

"Hell!" he swore at my impudence, and——

"I thought so," said I, at which he grinned amiably.

"Say, you're the right cove for me," he chuckled. "And I don't mind telling you that the mate tried to run the brig."

"Maybe he was the better mariner," I suggested, still conscious of the throb of my head, while into his dark eyes shot the yellowish green, and his hands were fists.

"No question of seamanship did it. Nor he wasn't a better swimmer for that matter," he commented meaningly. The meaning chilled me. I had seen them go overboard once. What a terrible sight it was! He went on: "I say, a mate's a mate, and he's not pointing the course of the *Wings o' Morning*. A man hadn't ought to do more than he's asked. How does five dollars a day look to you?"

"Looks like a mighty nice bequest for my mother," I replied plainly.

He stood off and chinned his hand, trying to make me out.

"I've heard of Jeremiah and Hosea and Daniel," he reflected, "but I never knew that any of 'em was living yet. Whereabouts do you preach?"

"Not all history has been written," I said. I had read it somewhere.

"No, not all," he smiled slowly. "There's history that never is."

"That's interesting," I came back at him. "I suppose you're making some of it. I'll draw up a will and ship with you. What business?"

"Ivory—off the Madagascar coast or thereabouts;

ivory and anything else that looks good. I'm not so particular. Coffee and rubber once in a while."

"Ebony, too, eh?" I smirked. "All kinds of black material, I reckon."

He stopped to favor me with a blank stare; then laughed outright.

"Slave trade is out of style, my man. Went out a hundred years ago."

"But lots of folks don't keep up on the styles," said I. "And history is not all written, you say. It's no matter. Have the articles ready."

"You're cool, by God!" he roared. "I've been looking for you for months. We sail at sunup. Come aboard to-night at the inlet." With that he got into motion and plowed off down the street, his head low and forward betwixt his shoulders, a hulk of a man, as my thrumming head attested.

I wondered then and afterward of my thoughtless decision to throw in my lot with a man whose reputation for rough ways had spread over all the coast. Had my wonderment brought cooler reason to a reckless spirit this tale might have lain unconceived in the womb of destiny, but upon the heels of wonder came the careless laugh to follow up every clinging objection and hurl it far in the wake. I would sign with this Jeval Hogarth, the devil's half brother, and play him even at his own game. So I then thought. I was young in those days, with little fretting for what might come. I am older now; I have lived and seen, and one thing at least is clear—that the fuming salt waves are less to be shunned than some of the two-legged beasts that swarm over it.

At nine that same night I was rowed out to the anchored *Wings o' Morning* and scrambled aboard to make my way over sprawled and bloated forms of drunken sots to the captain's cabin aft. When I clambered down into the smoky, ill-smelling place Jeval Hogarth thrust up his head from the long table and greeted me with a mild volley.

"You've kept your word with the devil, have you, mate? Then I read you for what you are and not a white-livered pup. Welcome to this paradise of souls!"

"You have a rare sense of humor," I retorted dryly. "When did paradise lodge in a hole of hell? Some of the damned souls lie outside on the deck now."

"Some of them," he scowled, "will never get up. Water can't bring them to life when a gallon of raw whisky is swimming in their bellies." He brought down a huge fist upon the table top. His next statement set me staring. "This deadly rum; I wish the man that first made it had been sliced and salted in brine. Hanging's too good for the hound. I'll kill the son of a sea dog that brings liquor aboard my ship. Hitch to that! Now sign the book and let's see your papers."

I handed him my license without a word, stunned by this view of him. Taking his pen, I wrote my name large on the record, threw down the pen, and straightened up.

"There goes my hope of heaven. Small mercy to the mate of Jeval Hogarth——"

"Mister!" he shot at me in swift fury, to which I nodded coolly.

"Mister, if you like," I agreed. "I didn't know you used disguises."

He seemed to be controlling a chuckle that I shouldn't see. His lips moved.

"Malin—Malin—George Malin——" he mused over and over, a deep line showing in his forehead with the force of his hard thought. "None of that name that I remember. Short and easy to say. I'll put you down at five a day. Go on deck and sort over the stiffs, Malin, and drop——" I halted him promptly.

"Mister!" I corrected him in his own tone, and folded my arms.

He did not respond at once. I was half expecting the chuckle to follow, but I didn't know the man. Very slowly he withdrew his gaze from the book and very slowly lifted his eyes to mine. Notwithstanding the terrible calm in his manner, the muscles of his jaw knotted and writhed and loosened again. He rose—as a cat might steal upon its prey. And yet there was no belligerence; only hard fighting for control.

"Mister, was it?" he rumbled in a tone of study. "Mister—hell!" The light shot up in his eyes—that pale-green light. His hand shot up as suddenly as did the light and drove against my jaw with the force of a mule's hoof. But for an instinctive drawing back my neck had surely been broken. As it was, my consciousness wavered for a second and next to left me. But I steadied myself and tried to laugh.

"When I hit," I taunted him sarcastically, "I always knock down my man."

The light in his eyes burned to ashes. He seated himself heavily.

"You're the first that's kept on your feet," he grated in what I took to be an apology for his anger. "Go on deck and get the crew sorted, Mister Malin."

"Aye, aye, sir!" I sang out, my own boiling rage cooling in appreciation for his deference. All in a moment I had seen into the depth of the man.

I ascended to the forward deck and went among the snoring and gaping men, kicking them and shaking them and getting but ill results. However, with the assistance of the grinning cook, who hauled up pail after pail of sea water to douse over their faces, we roused all but two, these we flung into askiff and set ashore. The rest of the sputtering, reeling crew I then ordered below and made all secure for the night. Ignorant of what awaited me, I reported to the captain's cabin.

Jeval Hogarth regarded me strangely when I came in, but I purposely avoided his gaze and dropped nonchalantly into a chair. My jaw pained me and was swelling.

"You have some education, Mister Malin," he commented out of the silence. "Can you read and write good letters?" He was fishing in his pockets.

"I can write a fair hand," I told him. "As to the reading, I suppose——"

He tossed me a small envelope almost hatefully and leaned forward.

"Read that. No, wait!" I paused when about to pick it up. "You've signed for mate to me; mark that. There's no crawling out and showing a pair of heels, mind you. A contract's a contract, and Jeval

Hogarth sees they're kept—with him. Yonder's a bit of private correspondence, as you'll see. A mate's not always a scribe, but I spotted you right off for a handy man with the pen. I'm trusting you." I felt his dark look burning into my flesh, but I remarked casually enough:

"That's as it is. What do you want done?"

"Read it," he ordered with finality, and I plucked the paper, a several-times folded sheet, from the envelope, and commenced to read.

"Jeval, boy," it ran, "when I promised to wait for you in this desolate place, I hardly expected you to take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea and earth away from me. Time does not fly with you, but drags heavily. To hasten it I have left Mazrahel with one who exacts no promises. The world is large, and a sailor may find love in every port, they say. Then I hope that you may come upon a woman lovelier and more deserving than your Loraine."

For several minutes I kept my eyes fastened upon the page, hardly daring to look up into that terrible gaze that I knew was leveled on me.

"Well," he said at last, and the soft, inquiring tone startled me out of countenance. "That's gracefully put, eh? 'The world is large'—true, but not so large for some things." Now I recognized the deceptive purring of his voice.

"Perhaps," I nodded, experiencing involuntary sympathy for him that my paining jaw rejected in expression. "This hand is rather big and pointed for a woman's. Seems more like the writing of a man. The young lady must be a bold type."

"What's that?" he snapped. "Oh, yes, it is big writing. You see why that is, Mister Malin. Would any but the boldest, most heartless woman write that?"

"It doesn't concern me," I murmured. "But I'm—I'm sorry, sir."

"Think first, then speak all you're a mind to," he grimly counseled me. "This thing concerns us both. Be damned to your sorrow! How much have you dealt with women?" His leaping thoughts confused me. I was midway betwixt anger and inquiry.

"Women are not my stock in trade," said I. "I yaw wide of them, and such villainy as this has never come to my knowledge."

"Then I'll give you a lesson in their practices," he stated with emphasis. He bridged the table with his elbows and half closed his compelling eyes. "I loved that woman—but that doesn't matter. She is as sea rot to me now. And yet Jeval Hogarth has never been cheated at any bargain. The world is large, but it's got no sanctuary or dungeon that Jeval Hogarth can't reach. This adventuress that fooled me, she thought herself secure there in Mazrahel, so she wrote in her insolence to make the wound deeper. That's plain—so much of it, eh, Mister Malin?" He seemed waiting for my nod, and at once resumed: "Now from Mazrahel nobody goes by land on account of the mountains and the desert behind. By ship they tramp it to Cambela; no regular lines."

He got up and paced to and fro. To ease my emotions I spoke my opinion:

"Then she is gone, and you're well rid of her. As she says, there are more deserving women in the

world, and even the blackest devil can find consolation——"

He cut me off short with a wave of his hand.

"We sail for Cambela with the dawn."

"What for?" I cried. "They'll have fled the place long before." I searched the envelope for a post mark and failed to find it. He was watching me closely, and now he smiled, a rare smile that I didn't understand. "That letter wasn't touched by government hands," I challenged in astonishment. "There's no stamp."

"Of course not," he retorted. "It drifted here by tramp. It hunted me. She knew how to find me. Jeval Hogarth has many keys to the doors of the world. And they can't get away, those two, Loraine and the other. As for business, there's a cargo of rubber below. Our market is Cambela." In two strides he had covered the space that separated us and had wrenched me round by the arm. His jet eyes were inscrutable. "This is a matter for no man but Hogarth and his mate. Understand? I'm paying you well for your part. Keep a close mouth and stand by for orders."

"Keep your hands off me," I warned him. "Now what's my part in this thing?"

"That letter," he indicated the paper in my hand, "calls for a reply. To sail a ship and write to a woman are different. I need your writing hand."

"I won't be bullied into anything," I was stung to remark. "You've been done for by a worthless woman. I'm sorry for you, and I'll do what I can to help you, but not for fear of you. Put that in your head right now."

"Good!" he responded. "That's the spirit! See here! I'm a little bit hasty. I struck you when I didn't mean to. There's my jaw. Your turn now." He projected his jaw, smiling his good will. I gasped out my incomprehension and stammered a refusal of the offer. He only stood there, smiling, leering rather, and if it was not clammy distrust that laid sudden hold of me, then it was a sort of loathing admiration for his brute will. "Come on!" he sang out. "Hogarth plays even. Where's your courage, you suckling babe? Are you afeared to touch me?"

At this my blood surged hot, and a fire of resentful rage launched me forward, meeting his offensive jaw with the knuckles of my clenched fist. So great was the impetus of my attack that I lost my balance as I charged, and sprawled beyond him like a weaklimbed infant that has not learned the use of his feet. With the rage sucked out of me, I scrambled up to throw myself into a posture of crouching defense, expecting him to be on me the next instant. The pain in my bruised hand sickened me. For days thereafter I could not grip a bowline or a stay, much less turn the wheel. Yet in the gently swaying lamplight there stood Hogarth, his arms folded, the smile more than ever a leer. I thought him to have been felled like a log, for I had hit with the whole weight of my hurled body. His composure brought a hot prickling to my spine. What fiend of iron was he to halt such a shock?

"You strike like a boy," he said, and I read plain disgust in his tone. "If you match fortune with me, get more power into your blows. Are you satisfied?"

Under my very eyes his jaw was beginning to swell to a ripe red, and the sight held me.

"Aye," I growled, and dropped my hands to my sides, weak with the shooting ache in wrist and knuckle. "I'm satisfied. No wonder men call you the devil's own. What is it to be? I guess I'm ready."

"Sit down, Mister Malin. There's pen and paper. No, the paper's laid away." He made to the chest in the far corner and brought out a small, square box that, unlike anything else in the stale-smelling cabin, held not a spot without or within. It was fine white linen paper he drew forth, ludicrously tasty with its water stripe and pitifully pure for such surroundings. I thought it much like the paper which contained the woman's brash communication. On the moment of settling myself, I could not forbear expressing a thought that appeared strange in the light of Hogarth's seeming education.

"Do you mean to say that you can't write? Did you never learn?"

The darkness that enveloped his whole countenance intimated a touchy subject. Later I understood, but now he only shook his head and replied with an oath:

"A seaman am I. Let others make their fingers do such fancy work."

"All right," I announced, but the clutching of the penholder brought fresh stabs to my hand. "What am I to write?" I was in no mood to talk further.

But he, for his part, retained no animosity or else scorned to display it, for he seated himself at my left and began to scowl as if in deep thought.

"Date it from the Hotel Paole in Walaka. Now start this way—Little Angel—that's the way I used to name her." He laughed cold and hard. I paused with pen uplifted and essayed to raise a second question, but quickly clamped my lips shut and wrote. Very slowly he dictated, with painstaking care for every word: "I have just heard the news, which should have reached me weeks ago. You have gone where I couldn't find you, but I'm sending this to your mother's home, because you will maybe be back there. Of course I know why you went from Mazrahel and that you left with Giferth Barthold. I can't blame you; no, not even with my dislike of Barthold. He's a good man, if he has treated me bad. He perhaps loves you, and I hope you'll be happy. But that's not all I have to say. I'm not the Jeval Hogarth you knew years ago and since. I've changed, as all men must change who live as I have lived. You expected a different letter than this. You thought I'd hide away where you would never see me, or else act like a wolf and hunt you down. Maybe I wouldn't be writing this if something had not happened to turn me. These two years have made Jeval over. I fell into a fortune that my father's mother left me——"

I put down the pen and regarded him dourly.

"Stuff!" I spat. "Do you think she'll swallow that? A woman as wise as she is will laugh and tear up the letter and hide herself deeper. She knows you. At least she knows you better than to fool herself that you want her now."

He gripped the table and leaned forward to sneer his emphasis.

"You'd be a child with women. A man would think

of that, but a woman thinks of nothing but holding every man by her apron strings. She knows I wouldn't leave go, and I won't." His great hands were knotted on the deal top. I looked at them and inwardly agreed with him. He had the tenacity of a bulldog, no doubt.

"It's your business," I shrugged, pretending indifference, but his face came yet closer. My flesh writhed to draw away.

"It's yours, too," were his blunt words. "We've signed together, you and I. You never drew five a day for mate in these seas. Well, I'm paying you that—see?" I saw plainly enough, and I kept my tongue behind my lips and settled once more over the paper. He brooded over me a while with his fierce eyes, and then his voice took up the thread of the letter: "I quit the sea; it's no place for a man with money anyhow. I took writing lessons. You will know why; this is a specimen of it. Now, listen here, little angel—Have you got that?" he broke off to ask me. "You get that little angel?"

"Yes," I answered, and shivered with the foulness of it. It was pathetic.

"Look here, little angel, I'm tired to death of roaming around without a home. It's up to you to make it easier. You can do it, you and Barthold. I've got to have peace. That's all that counts now. I've tried the other way. Give me a chance." I who heard his actual voice of pleading wondered if I hadn't misunderstood the man; he was so human after all, so forlorn and friendless. I had not looked for this. "You never meant to hurt me," he went on. "I didn't know that, but I know it now, God knows. Well, I can make it square. I'm going to Cambela to-morrow. I want to see you—yes, and Barthold, too. My quarrel with him is over. Bring him along and meet me either in Cambela or in Cadiz. As God is my witness, I mean good to both of you! For a time I hated you, but I can't hate you." I started at the sound of hoarse mirth proceeding out of his throat. In a breath I came back to the ugly intention of a blighted man. "Get word to Zarvonez where I can find you. Give me a chance. You're too beautiful to have nothing but Barthold's poor earnings. You need pretty things that real money will buy. I owe it to you. It's a lot to you; it's peace to me. Don't run away from me any longer. I hoped it would be more than peace once, but it can't be that. I can do for you, at any rate." He grasped my arm. "That's no lie, matey. It's God's truth. I will do for her. If I rest before I get her in my hands, may my carcass rot in the sun! Now sign it just Jeval." With that he sank back spent, his breath coming with a ripping sound across his tongue, like the wash of surf over coarse sand.

I signed the letter and pushed it along the board. An envelope I addressed according to his direction, then flung down the pen and rose. He watched me, and noted well my disgust. By the narrowing of his eyelids I felt that he was calculating how far he could lead me unharnessed. I suddenly turned on him.

"This is all mysterious. There's not a single word of love in that whole letter, as near as I can make out. It's a fool game. And not a mention of her note, either. Besides, you say for her to bring Barthold. That won't help you."

"A woman reads love where a man couldn't see any," murmured Hogarth in weak justification. "As for Barthold, he's got to come. I want him. I want him bad."

"I won't stand for murder," I protested. "I've got to know more."

"I'll tell you more later. Murder is a nasty word. I don't like it."

"That's encouraging," I remarked, but I trusted nothing that he said. "There is work in the morning. I'll hit my bunk now. Where do I sleep?" Following the jerk of his thumb and an accompanying indication of his head, I chose the upper of the two berths. Turning from him with no further word, I tore off my cap and coat, loosed and kicked off my shoes, and climbed into the blankets. I was done up with the strenuous exertions of fighting below and clearing the decks above. My healthy mind would not keep me awake in a vain review of past incidents or in a vainer contemplation of the future. In those days I was a rough man amid rough men, used to taking buffets and giving them with a hearty disinterest. Furthermore, I had sailed with more than one man of nasty temper and eccentric habits, and I was not to be lightly moved by this or that. But the last thing that my dull eyes glimpsed as they fell shut was the picture of Jeval Hogarth, hunched over in his chair, staring with a frozen moroseness into the shadowed corner, while from over him the evenly swaying lamp sent ineffectual rays of green light that glinted yellow upon his evil eyeballs in sinister reflection and that touched his heavy jowl with a gross savagery. Thereupon I fell asleep and dreamed of a figure, three times enlarged, that reared above the muck of swirling horror, holding in its talon hands the slender form of a beautiful but deceitful woman and grinning as it twisted the white limbs into misshapen gruesomeness. And the face that sat atop this ogre form was the handsome, diabolical face of Jeval Hogarth, the eyes alternately black and flaring like live coals. But even this vanished and left me sound sleep.

CHAPTER II.

IN the gray of dawn I was up and about deck, and so was Hogarth—here, there, and everywhere; cursing, shouting, pulling on a rope like a common seaman, encouraging in one breath and whitening the face of a laggard hand the next. I came upon him later on the after deck when half sail was set and anchor up. He was humming a tune such as falls naturally and softly from the lips of a man in love, a rather sad-aired love song. He did not see me approach, for his eyes were staring far out to sea, as I have seen the eyes of unsalted men who have just left the ones they love best. I knew that Jeval loved no one best or least; not the unhappy mother who suckled him; not the villainous father who must have granted him the wretched inheritance of a baleful temper. Love! I thought of the woman called Loraine whom he had loved, as he said; then I looked across at him, humming there, perhaps, to the memory of what had been. But like a cold mist out of a northern sea the incidents of the night before swept down over my thoughts and suffused them with the chill desire to be rid of him.

By now, however, we had dropped down the harbor, and under filling sail were making straight out to sea. Behind us the low-lying shore spread its dismal barrenness; scraggly palms, brown-leaved in the burning glare of a tropical sun, wilted above the baked village of adobe. Near at hand, the deep green of the ocean surged white over a thin line of reefs. All about drifted the saturating smell of the salt breeze that was growing in velocity. High overhead the square-rigged stays were creaking and thrumming as the bellying canvas champed for freedom. Surely there was no escape now. I was a prisoner, and I laughed easily at the glum reflection.

I suppose I laughed too loudly or with too little reason, for the next moment Hogarth had moved from the rail and was striding toward me. The tune was gone from his lips with the wave of dark color that flooded his cheeks.

"What joke's tickled your ribs?" he asked shortly, and his eyes were peacefully black, when I had guessed they would be flaming.

"Joke enough that I am sailing with such a master," I retorted, keeping my front and measuring glances with him. "But it wasn't that I laughed at."

"Might it be"—he began, and stopped impressively. I read his mind, but held his glance—"that you laughed for my standing like a weak-livered boy that's lost his appetite?" A scowl was deepening between his eyes and darkening all his face.

"That I saw, too," I made answer nonchalantly, "but I took it to be a good sign. I would not laugh at a heartfull man. It becomes you more than the anger."

The frown faded before a gentler look, and he turned again to the sea.

"I was wondering," he said in a voice that was almost low, and I heard the singing wind aloft through his words, "how I would find the deepest hurt to Loraine."

And so I knew how deep was the hurt to his animal heart.

The wind held strong and unvarying all that first day, with the spicy cut of those southern trades whipping us along like a thing on wings. More than once I reflected on the brig's apt name, *Wings o' Morning*. More than once my gaze rose to the white canvas, spread like the pinions of a gull. But for the most part, I was busy betwixt wheel and mastheads, taking the hoarsely sung directions and easing her off in rudder and sail, for she carried a main load fore and aft, square-rigged fore and schooner-rigged aft; and with the dropping of the sun the breeze was gathering mist and quickening until it fell hard off the west quarter. Short-handed we were, what with the unshipping of two drink-soaked devils the night before; and when the wind changed it gave no warning and heeled us over on our bilge in desperate shape.

And then it was I saw the kind of sailor we had for a master. Hogarth was none of your slave-driving sort, sending men aloft with a kick and a snarl and adding to the tempest with a tempest of his own creating. Amidships he stood, cool as the coolest, and he let go no single word that was not necessary. The brig lay perilously heeled to leeward, and with the

first gust every man dug his feet into the place it found him and hung on for fear of sliding into that yawning hell of water. I saw the cloud of it, and fell flat, with both arms wrapped about the windlass, but not so Hogarth. With the masts groaning and trembling, he snapped out the names of the nearest two hands. They heard him and turned a sickly yellow.

"Swarm aloft and lay in the missen royal," came the order.

The two men made no move. They were the shade of ghosts, for I was up again and watching them. Hogarth shifted his hold of the hatch head, and his right hand held the gleaming steel of a pistol. Deliberately he took aim and fired, point-blank, at one of the two, splintering a board not an inch from the poor fellow's foot. Startled, the sailor released his grip and rolled clear. In that same instant he had lost all chance of safety. The heave of the vessel thrust him downward. Slipping and sliding full ahtwart the free deck toward the abyss of foaming water, he was lost, if ever I saw a man lost at sea; lost for all that could be done by any but the man who had jeopardized him. It was that man who did the brave thing.

Hogarth seemed to sense the peril to his victim in advance, and, daring a dangerous move, threw his body forward, while his right foot hooked the hatch head. Clawing and grasping with a futile zeal, the unanchored sailor shot past him. Out darted his great hand and caught the plying arm, jerking it taut and so holding the weight of it with but his boot toe. In the presence of a multitude the act would have drawn a frenzied acclaim, but here was no more stirring sound than the ripping of the high-strung stays and the thunderclap of a sail that had torn loose.

Instantly I sprang to Hogarth's assistance. I wormed my way cautiously from the windlass to the forward galley and around it to the capstan, coiled with a rope. The rope I loosed and flung, shouting, to the dangling men. Hogarth's head was turned back. He anticipated the rope and reached it with his fingers. Disregarding the violent throes of the man he gripped, he worked his way up on his stomach, dragging the other after him. The affair was over in the fourth minute of its starting, and immediately Hogarth was on his feet. Balancing himself with wide-sprawled legs, he flung off his coat, and with incredible swiftness reached the mizzenmast. Up he swarmed agilely and out upon the tilted starboard arm. We were cutting through the sea at a terrific pace, and I remember bawling to the man at the wheel to put it hard over. Even as we swung about, Hogarth laid hands on the outer ropes and hauled in the fighting sail, hand over hand, clinging to the yardarm by no more than his wrapped legs. Gradually the ship righted as he worked there on that precarious perch. Then down he came, silently picked up his coat and donned it. Among the sailors there was a covert watchfulness of him, for they expected, as did I, an outburst that did not come. Amidships, he halted and sang out orders in an even voice that was not so much as forced in its breathing. I own that from that moment I gained a new respect for the man,

retaining, nevertheless, my original unsavory aversion to his unbridled temper.

Far into the night we flew before that howling gale, now nosing deep into the trough of some mighty wave that sprayed high over bows and galleys; now reeling upon the tip of some churning crest that spun away and dropped us with scant courtesy to the valley of its making. There was no rest for any until the gray of dawn, when the threshing wind subsided. Then Hogarth called to me to go below and get some sleep, and I stumbled off, knowing that he held to the deck well into his thirtieth hour, but precious little I cared for that. Sea-soaked and flayed by the buffeting of the storm, I threw myself, wet as I was, upon the unclean blankets, and scarcely remembered when I awoke that I had reached the cabin under my own power. And so I lay in the bottomless chasm of that sleep that comes to physical exhaustion, and it was the early afternoon when I opened my eyes and blinked at the whitewashed ceiling.

The air in the still room was heavy. My lungs felt choked, as if a gaseous vapor were filling them to suffocation. In semilethargy my fingers groped to my neckband and loosened it. Thus relieved, I lay slowly collecting my thoughts, while the pitching of the vessel tossed me like a straw man on the hard boards. For perhaps ten minutes I continued to cudgel my mind for a clear focus, and each time that I felt a certain grip on it the narcotical stuffiness of the cabin's atmosphere drove more deeply into my throat and diffused the ordered thought.

I think it was the growing upon my dull consciousness of an uneven but ceaseless scratching that finally assembled my mentality. Feebly I remonstrated inwardly that it was the gnawing of rats, but this delusion I could not seem to accept, for my awaking ears laid the source of the sound, not in the walls, but in the center of the room. Still I was not for interesting myself, but while I cogitated absently there came a creaking of the chair that stood beside the table. I considered that I knew already the peculiar creaking that was given forth from that chair, and at once I was led to conjecture the presence of Hogarth in the cabin room. Straightway I gulped down the fumes that stifled me, and, lifting my head, peered over the edge of the bunk.

Seated in the chair, drawn up to the side of the table, was Hogarth. His powerful shoulders hunched themselves over the plain deal top, and betwixt them his huge head was thrust low and forward. The posture was indicative of concentration upon something that lay before him. What it was I quickly saw, and my addled head whirled with the contradiction of it; for this man who had confessed his inability to use a pen and had obviously signed me to a mate's berth for want of a secretary—this Hogarth sat writing in a fair hand and with wonderful rapidity. I gaped with astonishment, and, had I gaped only, it had been far better for me who was to be hurled into the vortex of a horror beyond my painting. But with this gaping issued an exclamation, and Hogarth had dropped the pen to wheel and fix his hawk stare full upon me. In that stare I beheld a

new component; I saw what I would to God I had not seen—that Jeval Hogarth was *afraid*.

The loathing that had sprung up in my heart toward the demoniacal Hogarth, whom I had faced already in his unwholesome rage, became a monstrous dread as our eyes met and froze in their tracks. I know now that the fear which shrank behind the spotted red in his eyeballs drew from me no answering compassion; no, not even pity. I know that I held his scrutiny with a fearful effort, yet it was not the man in his new guise that gave me dread; it was the uncanny mystery that lay back of him. It was more; it was the snarl that hissed from his throat, that hissed and rattled as over a dry surface, for it was borne in to me by that wolfish sound that Jeval Hogarth was not merely a being whom blind and pitiless rage had spied out for victimizing, but an unscrupulous and lying schemer who had deliberately cheated my ignorance. And to what purpose? It was this question that haunted me throughout the remainder of the voyage. He had taken me into his confidence, but what part of his confidence was locked for eyes more probing than mine? In the silence that swiftly became malignant it was I who spoke:

"What's wrong? Did I disturb you? Why didn't you call me?"

The unobtrusiveness of the question seemingly snapped the tension. He removed his stare from me and gathered up the papers that attested to his hasty labors with the pen. He even picked up the pen, but as quickly dropped it as if it had been a hot coal and glared at me again. But I assumed an indifference to his movements.

"Why aren't you on deck?" he barked. "You were called an hour ago."

"I woke up a few minutes ago," I said. "I'll get up there right away."

Thereupon I leaped down and pulled on my boots, and, putting my arms into my coat, made to hurry from the cabin to the deck. I had got to the steps when he plunged ruthlessly forward and swept me about. The fear in his face was expunged. In its place shone the baleful glitter that is seen in the beady eyes of a snake inadvertently trodden upon, a snake that is about to strike.

"Well!" he flung at me, and waited. I had, perforce, to appear unsuspecting of the reason for this peremptory manner. "You look innocent," he said then, "but you saw, and you think I lied to you. Did you—did you see what I was writing?"

I shook my head, and perhaps he was satisfied with the truth that he read in my eyes.

"All right. Now I'll tell you. I did learn to write two years ago. But that's got nothing to do with you. I wanted you to write to her. See?" I did not see, and I wonder now that I did not, for it was as plain as if he had told me. I suppose it was his face so close to mine and his savage eyes boring into my mind to lay bare what he feared I had discovered that thickened my perception. I merely shrugged.

"I'm not asking questions," I essayed, and turned to the stairs. This time he let me go, and I came up on deck with a turmoil of doubts and distresses churning about to keep the stupor from passing away.

One glance to the windward sufficed to assure me

of one thing; that the sudden storm of the night before had mainly died. We were heading before a light breeze that bade fair to shorten our time to Cambela. In the privacy of my heart I swore that when we cast anchor in Cambela harbor I would get me ashore and wash my hands of this treacherous Hogarth. And so I would have done had fate not entered in to wreck my plans. And again fate was Hogarth.

He came on deck an hour later, and paused by the side of me with so jovial a word and so smiling a face that after a half hour of unresponsive guardedness I felt my tingling dread and suspicions oozing away. He talked of the brig as his dearest pride, and laughed outright at its weathering the late gale. He halted the sailor at whom he had directed his terrible wrath but the evening before and asked him brusquely but kindly how he fared. I watched the poor fellow shrink from him and stammer out an almost inchoate answer that meant nothing. Truly a man cannot change his character in the winking of an eye and be greeted with understanding.

Thus it came about that fair weather fore and aft was met with fair weather aboard, and my grinding antipathy for this Hogarth was transformed to unreasoning admiration. All went well for the remaining days before we put into Cambela; too well, indeed, for with the change in the captain the men became more easy in their hours off duty, so that there was singing before the mast of a night. This practice seemed in no wise harmful, yet it met with no uncertain treatment.

It was in the evening of the fourth day out. I paced the deck, plunged in thoughts of my own. The moon sailed high and luminous and spread upon the waters a silver track into which the wheelsman steered us as into a glittering fairyland. To my ears drifted the soft wash of the passive waves against our bows, and then the uncertain testing of rough men's rougher voices, humming and rumbling through familiar airs. I walked with bent head, preoccupied with such fancies as the night brings on one, and drew near to the fo'c's'le. The men were just then blending their notes in a chant that had been, a few years previous, the favorite song of the coast. I stopped and lifted my head; it was as if my gaze had been dragged to the far rail. There, looming against the flecked water that swept away behind him, stood Hogarth. In his face was a galaxy of emotions out of which swiftly gathered a consuming hate. The night cloaked the worst of it, but there was no mistaking it nor the forward movement that brought him in among the men, who checked their voices in consternation and gaped at sight of him. Black glowed his knotted features, and out shot his right foot, drawing a growl of pain and anger from one unhappy wretch. But none moved; none cared to attract attention with so much as a question.

"Stop that damned noise!" he hurled at them. "I'll have order on this ship, if I have to string every yellow skunk of you to a yardarm." It was over almost as soon as it was begun. He spun about and left them in dumb stupefaction. Thereafter there was no singing aboard the brig.

We came at last to Cambela harbor. With the

letting go of the anchor and the reefing of the sheets, Hogarth buttonholed me and led me below into the dismal cabin which we had shared for a period of a week. He acted with a strange nervousness of eye and hand, but this I supposed due to the reaching of the goal that had led him a thousand knots across the sea. I found nothing to say while we stumbled and clattered down the steep steps. Once more within the comparative seclusion of the oil-scented place, he turned sharply on me.

"You are mate of this brig," he shot meaningly at me and scowled.

"Aye," I carelessly rejoined, "at five dollars a day I can afford to be. But we've made Cambela, and I'd like to go ashore on my own hook."

He favored me with a hard, calculating scrutiny that somehow smacked of suspicion. He was reading my inmost thoughts all right. I tried to assume a mask of indifference and succeeded rather badly. His next words were stern and to the point:

"Ashore, yes; but we go together. I'll hire lighters and set them at the unloading. You and I will turn to a more important duty. I need you, Mister Malin."

It was the tone of his speech that nettled me. Apart from the dislike of his purpose here, I chafed at his manner of impressing me with it.

"I'm mate of the brig, sir," I retorted. "Ashore I'm my own master."

"Ashore or asea, you're my man," he snapped harshly, his eyes glowing to the accompaniment of his knotting hands. "No squealing now! Are you ready?"

"I'm ready for honest ship trimming and the like," I told him with some heat. "For the rest, I won't be mixed in it. A Malay can serve as well for bringing down your quarry. If it's to be more writing, you can do it yourself, it seems."

I think he rather expected that, for no surprise showed in his face, but a whiteness reached about his swarthy cheeks while he looked out of furious eyes which darkened with each moment of silence that hung round us. Then the storm broke and shook him in its passion. He did not lay hands on me, as I feared he would do. He fought out the battle alone, snarling under his breath like a beleagured beast. Up and down the cabin he pounded, his arms threshing and striking together. I stepped back and kept from his path, drinking my fill of this animal madness. Then as suddenly as it had come it died, and he sank exhausted into the chair by the table, whence he raised haggard eyes and put them upon me. I had seen those eyes once before—when I had discovered him at his writing five days earlier. They were eyes of fear.

"I was a fool! I forgot you'd be there. You saw me. You know that I lied of the writing. Well, what of it?" He was fast regaining his excitement. "What if you saw me write? It means nothing. What could it mean, eh? Aye, I can write! I can write! Look!" He grasped the pen that lay next the wall and a strip of paper that listed on one side a bill of ship's goods. With an incontinent laugh he jerked open the ink bottle, thrust in his pen, and rapidly, recklessly, blindly wrote a few words. "See for yourself!" Without himself looking at the writing, he thrust the paper

into my hands and watched me with a preying glance while I surveyed the sentence. The characters were plain; the message trite. He had written:

"Dead men tell no tales. Arthur Graff."

The intimation was not lost. I felt that this message was meant for me; that my discovery had brought with it a menace; that he warned while yet he withheld his hand from striking. But much of the keenness of this feeling was dulled by the sight of the name appended. He had not signed Jeval Hogarth but—Arthur Graff. At first I was possessed of a desire to ask what this signified, this easy use of a name not his own. Then while I hesitated and wondered he leaped to his feet and tore the paper from out my fingers and glued his eyes to it as if devouringly curious of its contents. At once he crushed it and swore a horrible string of oaths. He was not himself.

"I did it. There it is. I wrote the damned thing!" was his choked but coherent statement, following a deficient pause, during which we exchanged unformulated questions with our eyes.

"Arthur Graff," I muttered in a voice that was not meant to be heard.

"Why not? Would I sign my own name for some prying fool to see when none but you know that I understand writing?" To my ears it rang untrue and shrewd.

"Arthur Graff. I've heard the name," I hazarded like a simple idiot.

"And so have I," he viciously spat. "Is it so uncommon, my man?"

"Common or uncommon, it's the name of——" I stopped, and my confusion cleared.

"Go on! Have it out and relieve yourself. Whose name is it?"

"The name of a forger escaped six years ago from the States." I was seeing it all again in great black letters. "It was in the papers for a week. There were other crimes, too. It's a nasty name to use, as the world knows—as you must know." I spoke too bluntly. His rage returned, cold rage now. He thumped the table.

"Don't give me orders, Mister Malin. If I see fit to use that fellow's name, all well and good. Your memory's first class. I remember it, too. But don't forget, Arthur Graff's dead, died on the sea in a gale off the Cape of Gueleras—all souls lost and the ship sunk. The poor brute got his just deserts. All the world knows that, don't they? Shut your mouth and make ready to go ashore. That writing is a secret of yours and mine. We'll keep it so. Maybe this cargo'll sell high in Cambela. If it does, the mate of the *Wings o' Morning* draws six a day. How does that sound? Is it a bargain? Jeval Hogarth has an open hand when he knows a friend."

I laughed, but not loudly, and shrugged my disgust of the man and his palpable childishness of cunning. It was a weak bribe he was offering. He took my shrugging for indifference, and was satisfied for the time. However, from that hour he rarely let me out of his sight, and his spirit seemed to follow where his physical presence did not. I knew myself for a marked man.

"All hands on deck, Mr. Malin. Get the unloading under way. Put the men at the hatches. I'm for

arranging with the lighters." He sprang to active command and swarmed up the steps, I following at his heels. Soon the deck was quick with bustling men, in the hold and out of it, passing, carrying, swinging bales over the sides to the shallow barges that bobbed and bumped against the ship in the light, rolling sea. Off to the lee the town lay, rising from the shore to the low range of hills which shone well-nigh nude of verdure in the tropical glare. The town looked dirty and dun colored and prideless. I had never seen Cambela, and it made small difference. All these South Sea ports were alike, except that some were more evil than the rest. I surmised that Cambela was not least in evil, for evil had brought us hither.

A lighter, filled to the gunwales and stacked high amidships, shoved off and nosed toward the sand. It rocked and veered wide while the one-piece sail was being hoisted; the few inches of free board were no deterrent to the combers licking at the cargo. Up swung another lighter and grappled us, her men singing out in their blighted English. Down dropped a bale over the brig's side, another and another as fast as the rope could be loosed and drawn up again. Hogarth's hand touched my arm.

"Mathews will hold them at it. We're for Cambela in the gig."

I turned without reply and fetched my coat and hat from the cabin. Hogarth was waiting at the aft rail. I gripped the rope and let myself down into the small boat that two mast hands held off from breaking against the brig's stern. Hogarth came after me hand over hand. We pushed off, and the two settled to the oars. Hogarth was silent for the whole distance. The boat grated on the sand, and we leaped into the water, all four of us hauling the skiff high.

"Back at ebb tide, Ralt," spoke Hogarth to one of the two hands. "Have the boat here in plenty of time. Mark that timber sticking up. Make your landing so."

He waited for no answer, but set off through the sand. We went side by side. The tidesman came from the first lighter to ask him the regular questions, to which he gave gruff enough response and halted no more until we stood at the head of a squalid street foul of odor. It was only hesitation; then we were off again through the midst of it, taking the center of the way to avoid being struck by figures that reeled out of dejected doorways. Hogarth walked with head down and hat pulled far over his eyes. I recalled his colliding with me the day I first clapped eyes on him; he was approaching in this manner likely. Men moved thus when they did not wish to be seen and recognized. "Arthur Graff," I mused.

He broke in upon my thoughts by pulling me suddenly into a doorway. The room into which we came was large but gloomy and smelled of stale beer and strong rum. A scrawny figure of a man drowsed in a chair, propped against the baked wall. He batted his eyes at our entrance and spoke Hogarth's name with a jerking, upward inflection.

"My friend Torquet," said Hogarth briefly, and seated himself on a stool beside the only table the place afforded. I took the place across from him. Torquet got up, cast a cursory glance at me, and spoke to Hogarth in some surprise.

"Ten months, Jeval, and not to touch at Cambela." The man's tongue was not molded for English, and he was not more than half alive. "What brings you now?"

"My friend seeks one who came three weeks—four—maybe only two," shrewdly stated Hogarth, and I would have answered him hotly had not his eyes been upon mine. Torquet showed his teeth as he grinned into my face. It was the devil's leer.

"A woman, is it, señor? Or do men sail days and days to seek other men?"

I was prepared to say that men like Hogarth did, for I liked little his ugly comment that slushed from a mouth half filled with rotting teeth.

"A woman, aye," nodded Hogarth, and he veiled his interest well. "Tall as your shoulder, did you say, Malin, and dark, dark as—as a ripe apricot, a golden woman of the tropics, Torquet. Is she yet here, or has she taken passage?"

"How may I see all who come and go?" complained Torquet listlessly. "Women—they are all beautiful, some golden, some like ivory. Your friend, Jeval—he expects much of Torquet." He shrugged and looked innocent.

Hogarth drew from his trousers a silver piece and spun it on the table.

"You see much that otherwise might go unseen, Torquet," he said. "A little thought maybe—a golden woman—a golden woman—she was not alone, Torquet."

Torquet's dullness passed before the gleam of the silver piece. His gaze fastened on it; his hands rubbed together. He scratched his head at length.

"Not with a man, señor; a big man like Jeval, with a beard—the woman—was she of brown hair, brown with the blaze of the sun in it; and her eyes, brown, too, with the whole sunrise——"

"She!" growled Hogarth all in a burst, so that Torquet regarded him in gaunt astonishment. "Malin used the same words to me of her," he added and frowned.

"She came—they came together twenty and three days past," leered Torquet. I noted the absolute certainty of time. Hogarth pushed the silver piece nearer and nearer to the edge of the table. "They stayed with Coquahl on the hill." Torquet's eyes watched the coming of the silver piece. "Twelve days, and a ship from the north—the golden woman, the bearded man, they sailed with her."

The silver piece shot from the table to ring on the hard, baked floor. Hogarth swore and banged the table.

"Gone! Another week, another month. Come, Malin." He started up, and his eyes were live coals. "Torquet, where will they go? To Spain? To France?"

"I thought," remarked Torquet, rising from the floor with the silver piece in his grasp, "the friend it was that sought the woman. Jeval finds women everywhere."

Hogarth swayed on his toes toward the leering Spaniard, swayed forward and lifted his great hands. I looked away; but nothing happened. He was at the door.

"They go to Cadiz, maybe," Torquet called softly, "or so the captain said."

Hogarth wheeled and strode out into the blood heat of the low-walled passage. I held back and spoke low to this Torquet. Through my mind was coming constantly the name, Arthur Graff. I balanced a coin in my palm.

"Have you known him long?" I jerked my head toward the sunlit doorway.

"Oh, yes, señor; maybe five years, maybe ten. Time is slow here in Cambela."

Torquet was misleading me, I surmised. But I kept one eye on the door.

"He is always Jeval Hogarth?" I asked offhand. "Is there no other name?"

"The Devil's Own, they call him," said Torquet, without winking; "no more."

I thrust the coin into my pocket and crossed to the door. As I had expected, Hogarth stood just outside. His face was dark beneath his hat brim. He stared hard into my eyes, then relaxed his jaw and sank his head forward.

"Our business here is done," he said. "We'll go back to the brig and hurry the loading."

But the loading would not hurry. From the sands we saw that the cargo of rubber was not yet out of her. The lighters moved without haste; likewise the men on them, a torpid lot with no interest in dispatch. Furthermore, another vessel rode the harbor swells; a steamer of long, graceful lines. She was taking up greater attention of the lighter men, and would probably clear the port that night. Hogarth left me on the sand and strode off to a knot of trimly uniformed men. I saw him address one of them, who nodded and at the second interchange of words stretched forth his hand. Hogarth drew from his pocket a letter—I had no doubt of its identity—and, before delivering it over, scribbled something across the envelope. Then he came back to where I remained. The gig was not due for some hours, so we boarded a lighter and returned to the brig.

We took on coconuts and coffee, the loaders moving with that listless and supine air of having no goal for their efforts. To each of Hogarth's scorching expletives our own men responded with a fresh burst of speed, but this counted for little when the lighters were swinging and tumbling in the surf and gaining only a foot with a dozen lazy prods of the long sweeps. We watched the other vessel get steam up and move out to sea; I indifferently, but Hogarth chafing and pacing up and down.

CHAPTER III.

THE morning of the third day the brig was loaded and the hatch doors battened down. It was a morning that a landsman would have termed superb, with the sun not too hot and a veering wind taking us lightly from both quarters. But experience means much in the tropics, and the smell of the air was tainted with omen. The sea was gentle in smiling blue, but off to the east crept a haze such as sailors fly from. I had no liking for what the afternoon might bring, and I said so plainly to Hogarth, who stood gazing at it. At my words he gave a short laugh and sang out to haul in the anchor chains.

Under jib and topsail we stood out, drawing away from the harbor before quick-dying gusts that rattled the shrouds as they bellied them and sucked them in. It was slow running, yet we could not trust more cloth with a squall off the bows. The men muttered in an undertone and even grumbled aloud, some of them, but Hogarth paid no attention.

"There's no wind can do for this tidy little boat," he bragged to me while the haze pointed jaggedly toward the sun. "Never was a sea ever whipped up that could bury her for more than a minute. Black or white the day, the *Wings o' Morning* cringes in no port like a scared rabbit. Jeval Hogarth and his mate have business in Cadiz, and it waits for none. Have the cable stretched fore and aft, Mister Malin, and see that all's snug. Look how the green darkens in that cloud! There goes the sun!"

I ran to order in the scant canvas we had bearing, but even as I ran the squall pimpled the water, and with a howl the vicious wind smote the topsail and snapped off the stay clean. Down it tumbled and hung, thrashing against the mast. Two hands swarmed aloft and cut it away, while Hogarth, springing to the wheelhouse, wrestled to hold the brig's head into the rising sea. During the first lull the jib came in, and, bare-masted, we scurried ahead of a lurid tempest. All in a moment the land was blotted out of sight. In ten the reckoning was lost; we knew not south from north, nor east from west. The world had fallen away and left us in chaos of water and water-filled air. The helmsman could not see ahead. The lookout shook the spray from his eyes and was often deceived into shouting out the warning, "Land!" now upon the starboard, now upon the larboard, when there was only the gray-green wall of vapor curling, heaping up, seething as it built, deepening and thinning. In the skeleton crosstrees there was music uncanny and many-voiced. A formless shadow, incased in eddies of fog, made a trumpet of its hands, but there came no voice. The hands waved, though the message was past divining, and we slashed on like a wild thing that has lost its head, on to a sightless bedlam, rearing, yawing wide when the rudder wrested free of the horny hands that fought over the wheel. To a madman it might have been boundless exultation, with all order forgotten and sea and sky mingling tumultuously. To us who knew the sane man's desire to live there was abject terror that no length of experience lessens.

In an hour the wind died, suddenly as it had risen, and the sea changed its hue from lusting green to peaceful blue. The piling haze drifted round us still, but it held no harm, and shortly it, too, was devoured by the sun, which shone hot and sultry from a bronze sky. Land hung upon the port side not ten miles off, a perfect jungle of palms and darker trees. Hogarth took a reading and reset the course. Then followed hours of drifting, first with half sail, later with every stitch spread. Not a capful of wind crept up, and the surface of the ocean stretched limitless in mocking transparency. The deck, drying rapidly, gave off a choking heat; heat danced on the water like a wraith and in streaks ascended to the sun; heat drifted down from the soggy sails in a motionless breath that did not burn, but only stifled the lungs; heat drove us to the shadows and from the shadows

back into the sun, thence into the farthest recess of cabin and deck house, where we lay, panting and swearing. Such a calm I have never known, even in the horse latitudes, where one waits aimlessly, helplessly, but does not suffer. Here the heat of the hold and of the canvas rose from us not a hand's breadth, but closed in to deaden impulse and life itself. The body heat of the men remained to close every pore; my own clothes suffocated me. Others tore off shirts and lay gasping and glistening.

Hogarth neither loosed his shirt nor sought a cool spot, but strode ceaselessly from bow to stern, from stern to bow, and to us who sprawled in lethargy came his vitriolic protest, futilely blasphemous, raging through the long hours of the day and far into the night that settled down with not a break in the implacable setness of the air and the ocean floor. I could not go below to the reeking cabin, and so tossed about on the boards. There was no moon. The clinging blackness pressed downward and inward; a suffocating blackness, out of which beat Hogarth's heavy stride and nothing else, for he was voiceless now. I, who knew what the loss of time meant to him, waited and listened to hear a heat-crazed word concerning the woman, Loraine, and the bearded man, Giferth Barthold. Yet through hours of madness there was formed no word, no hint of that lone obsession. Then merciful sleep bound me and shut out the preying distress.

Dawn was cloudless, motionless, and bloody. There was food laid out, but few rose to taste it. The water barrel suffered minutely, until Hogarth stood guard over it and apportioned every man a small cupful once an hour. Resultantly buckets were flung over the sides, to be drawn up and their contents dashed over sweating men. The decks were constantly sluiced, as were the sails. Another midday stood above us and swelled to the second afternoon. A stir quivered in the sails, but made no ripple on the sea. An hour dragged by. The sails once more showed movement, relapsed into stillness, shook feebly, and were quiet. A puff of breeze ran the length of the deck, and instantly the men all jumped to their feet and cheered. Another puff blew high and low, and the ship got into motion. We bathed our faces in the warm current. The puffs steadied to a timid zephyr and lifted the heat. The shrouds creaked again; the water lapped against our bows; the horizon thrust up some white clouds, and the land blurred on our stern.

Hogarth did not quickly respond to the change in the weather. On his forehead the deep-lined scowl still held, and on his lips was framed many a silent invective. But the wind grew and freshened and sent us bowling along at a merry clip, and little by little he joined the general rejoicing. By evening a happy culmination to a common calamity had brought an appetite and a joke to the most pessimistic, and Hogarth threw no bullying orders into the thanksgiving. The next day showed no change; the smart breeze held stout and true, a point south of west, and the little brig raced north as straight as human hands and human calculation could guide her. North was the long-delayed goal, north around Senegal and the gold coast, north to the straits and that gaunt rock that kept them. I saw Hogarth's brows relinquish their fury; I saw his eyes blend into a placid black;

I saw the smile that grew day by day into his face—and I shuddered with the knowledge of what was in his mind.

Days were fused into weeks, the third week fraught with rain and contrary winds—then Hogarth altered the course and steered almost due east. The water drew into the land on either side—tall land that on the north built to an unscalable height which brooded over the commercial gateway to the East; and in a choppy sea we slashed on to Cadiz. The Atlantic gave place to the Mediterranean. The evening brought us into the harbor, where we dropped anchor and swung about.

Here was no Cambela. Crafts of many sizes and kinds rode high and low on every quarter. The Orient met the Occident and traded spices for grain. The Old met the New; wood met steel; there was bustle and commotion; there was a babel of tongues.

Hogarth, from being silent and somber, broke into his natural domineering self and fell to ordering the men about for a smart disposal of the wares that the brig carried. Yet it was all a spiritless bluster, and at the first opportunity he was beside me, whispering in my ear:

"Mister Malin, Cadiz it stands, and something tells me that here rests one it gives us joy to meet. We will take the skiff and try the town for what it holds."

My gaze wandered off to the white walls and spires of the port, to its long wharves and warehouses and hodge-podge disarray of crooked streets. I smiled grimly.

"Cadiz will not be as easy as Cambela," I argued, although with indifference. "Cambela was a stunted village; Cadiz is a city with many hiding places. I am not of a mind to seek needles in haystacks." But Hogarth jarred the low rail with a blow of his fist and spat into the churned water vindictively.

"I would spend years of my life, if not all of it that is left, in sifting any haystacks that held such a needle. It may be a day; it may be a month—no longer; and the brig lifts no anchor till it's done. But this haystack's not large to me."

And so we went ashore in the skiff, threading the lane of vessels to a quiet landing, whence we unknotted our sea legs and strode into the town. The sun was set by now, and twilight cast over the white walls the streaked grayness of quick night. The streets were shedding their occupants, dropping them into gloomy doorways ensconced betwixt balcony windows, thrusting them into tall alleys where they disappeared utterly, sending them like rats into holes that appeared too small to hold them. As we went the odor of drying fish grew less, and the way mounted higher. In no time it was dark, with the moon a sharp crescent high in the sky, giving us enough light whereby to scan each face that was still abroad. Music drifted from somewhere, stringed music and the wail of a melancholy song in a man's throaty tenor. My imagination divined the rest as, it was evident, did Hogarth's, for his features were not masked in their customary ease, but twisted into a slight sample of what I was to see later.

We strode through many streets and came upon few men and fewer women, all Spanish and bearing so little resemblance to Hogarth's prey that he gave each but scant attention, except to swear under his

breath when they were by us. The lights of the town were of no account. With the dropping of the moon issued a dimness too great for the purpose at hand. Hogarth turned to a tavern near the water's edge to which we had come again and pushed me in ahead of him. I was in need of food, and gladly welcomed this, but when he determined to spend the night ashore in this place I boldly gave him my opinion, which was that the brig held no officer to the necessary peace and ordering of its crew. He waved aside my notion with but a gesture.

"The brig can fend for herself. Did you ever see a woman who could not?"

And so we remained in the tavern and got us early to bed. I thanked God that I could sleep, for that is the difficulty now—no sleep, no peace.

The morning found him at the side of my bed, shaking me and bidding me get about. He appeared heavy-eyed and pallid for all his hardy seaman's constitution, and I concluded that he had had little or no sleep. I was even ready to believe that he had not lain down, inasmuch as the smell of the dank water mist was all about him. He vouchsafed nothing, and I sourly got into my outer clothes. During these minutes the disflavor of the affair that had drawn us hither obtruded more and more, so that by the time that I faced Hogarth again I was ripe for mutiny. I found him pacing about below.

"Back to the brig I go," I grumbled. "This search concerns you, and I have no part in it. We only waste two men's service here. You can find me aboard ship."

"You'll stay here, my man," he said, evidently uninclined to parley. "I don't complain of the market we had at Cambela, and you are mate of the *Wings o' Morning*. It's five no longer; the mate of the brig draws six American dollars a day."

"And if I prefer not to draw six dollars a day, but go where a man may be an honest sailor and keep him to the sea, what then?" I turned upon him stubbornly.

"Then, by God, we'll see as to that!" he thundered so loudly that the miserable partitions of the room vibrated. "I will have out your papers and hound you off the seas. You signed with Jeval Hogarth, and with Jeval Hogarth you go—or none else."

"Bah!" I answered him back, for I was aroused at his tyranny. "There's no master betwixt London and the Cape would take a word of yours. Any line ship would see no broken faith in jumping from the tramp ship, *Wings o' Morning*."

"Maybe," he said; "maybe; but the man can't live that breaks oath with me. You jump and you jump to hell. Mark that! You can't complain of my treatment. I've doubled your earnings. I call you *Mister Malin*." I marked a change in his tone. He was reasoning now. He was bent on keeping me by him, whether by bullying or pleading.

"I don't like your business in Cadiz," I stoutly returned. "What will you do when you find this woman and her bearded lover? Tell me that."

His eyes cursed me for such careless talk, for there was movement in the room behind us. I wheeled and faced the door. From where I stood I saw a woman pass the corridor that led to the stairs. Her grace and beauty attracted me. She had appeared to

pause for but a second of time, and her eyes had looked across into mine with an emotion in them that I could not fathom. That she was dismayed by something I only vaguely hazarded; that she was possessed of pagan and voluptuous features I swiftly noted. Her color was not so dark as olive nor so light as the pale women of the colder climates; her hair was burnished, but not copper; her eyes, hastily sweeping from my face, gave an impression of gold in their glint.

"Keep a tighter mouth, Mister Malin," Hogarth warned me. "Get some food and make short shift of it. I'll sit here for you. We must be off again."

I answered nothing, but sought out the room in which we had eaten on the night before. Here the landlord served me with plain fare, and I was at once left to myself. I ate in thought, and was about to rise when a rustle betokened the entrance of some one in silks. It was the woman I had seen, and she approached me uncertainly.

"Your pardon, señor," she said with an accent that proclaimed her of a south European race, "but you were speaking with him." She spoke breathlessly. I could see that she was almost beside herself with a strange fear or distress that dilated her eyes. She was wonderful in face and figure.

"With Jeval Hogarth, do you mean, madam?" I returned boldly, at which she cast a quick look toward the door and nodded. I thought she caught her breath.

"Yes, it is Jeval. Why is he here? Oh, in God's name, why is he here?"

Into my mind flashed the description of Hogarth's own tongue—a golden woman. This woman was golden in eyes and hair and even in complexion. The rich tints suffusing her full cheeks might have been cast there by the fondly imaginative brush of a Murillo, who was, after all, truer to life than we Americans understand; or was this not that deep-dyed beauty that the Greeks sang about, a Helen of Troy or a Cleopatra?

Her radiant eyes, however, were hunted, and the indolence of the fictitious Greeks was tragically beaten from her nervous movements of head and body. She gazed at me, but every second of her lingering seemed to endow her with fresh dread—for it was dread, nothing less, that shone there in those bronze eyes. I was conscious of the unusual glow in them, and in another place I could not have been conscious of anything else. But here it was different. Here lay in wait a tragedy to swallow beauty and grace and womanliness—if my swift intuition stood in the light of truth. And that truth—I stared at her and was seized by the contagion of her dread. The truth was bearing home to me more terribly than I had anticipated. She was trembling; her shimmering hair was not still; the face beneath it vibrated in a tenseness that reflected fear. It did not require a glance at those well-formed hands, hovering over the back of the chair at which she clung, hovering and restless and fear-driven in their groping, to tell me all that gripped that tumultuous bosom.

"You know him?" I feigned disinterest. "You do not go to him and ask what he does here? Perhaps you fear him as—as many men do. Who are you, madam, to be told his business in Cadiz?" But I felt that the truth was already told.

Her white arm made a gesture of impatience that ended at her breast.

"I must know," she supplicated, and as she continued her words fairly tumbled over one another. "Sir, be merciful! My name—my name—it does not matter. He must not see me. Señor, will you be friends with me—señor—señor!"

I warmed before her ardent voice. I was no more than human, and a man always feels the protector of helpless womanhood; how much more then when womanhood that implores is of the mold of a goddess?

"Aye, that I will be," I told her on impulse. "But no man opposes Jeval Hogarth. Are there two women who shrink from him? Or are you this Loraine?"

In the start that came to her her gaze fastened wildly on the door, swept back to rest on me, and her trembling increased pitifully as she answered:

"Ah, señor, you are right. I am Loraine."

TO BE CONCLUDED.

The Dummy and the Ventriloquist.

By Harold Hersey.

WHO shall say that his love was not good
For the dummy of cloth and wax and wood?
I know that more curious things exist
Than the love of a dreaming ventriloquist.

He liked to perch her on his knee,
Combing her black hair lovingly,
Then talk by the hour, just as though
She understood and ought to know.

Her chatter merged with his, and twice,
I know, he struck her . . . it wasn't nice . . .
Repenting, he bought her costly things—
Gowns, rare necklaces, and rings.

She would sit at the table talking to him,
And cry if refused the slightest whim.
Once in a rage of jealousy
He even tried to strangle me.

One night they found him on the floor
Stark dead . . . each year I wonder more
Why killing himself he never wrote
Of the dagger he sank in her wooden throat.

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Life.

By Roy Le Moyne.

ONE horde that struggle through the dusk
With eyes that look in keen despair
Upon life's radiant, hollow husk
And find no hint of beauty there.

One horde that laugh and loiter here,
Who drink and clothe their bodies well,
Who sing away the whole rich year
And haunt the twisted streets of hell.

A few that work and watch and pray,
Who dream new worlds from out the strife,
A few that will not turn away,
But linger heart and hand with life.



The Stone Image—

By
Seabury Grandin Quinn



WHY is it, I wonder, that there must always be a rift in the lute, a fly in the ointment, a gnat in the ice-cream soda?

Take Betty and me, for example. If I might be allowed to borrow a term from our Spiritualist friends, I would say that never were husband and wife more thoroughly *en rapport* than Betty and I. When I call down from the bathroom and ask her where in blazes her what-d'ye-call-it is she knows perfectly well that I'm inquiring of the whereabouts of her Crème Shalimah, with which I desire to anoint my newly shaven face. When Betty calls up from the living room and asks me to throw my thing-a-bob down to her I know, as well as if she had told me, that she wishes my pocketknife for the purpose of retipping the pencil from which she had just chewed the point. This far all is well with Betty and me.

But the high gods, who are ever greenly jealous of human happiness, took an underhand method of revenge when they afflicted Betty and me with diverse tastes in things artistic. I have a partiality for etchings, pastels, and aquarilles—clean Western art—and everything savoring of the East, from teakwood to tea, is detestable to me. Betty dotes upon Oriental embroideries, bronzes, and carvings—and thereby hangs this tale.

One bright afternoon last autumn, when the florists were beginning to display chrysanthemums in their windows, and the September haze hung over the hills in the country, Betty took me for a walk down the Avenue. Her cooing amiability ought to have warned me that she was hatching up some dire plot against my peace and happiness, but what married man can fathom the depths of his wife's depravity? So, before I had time to rush madly to the nearest police station and demand protection, I found myself gently but firmly piloted through the yawning portal of a certain little shop where a soft-spoken, coffee-colored descendant of the Forty Thieves' exchanges lacquered metal, embossed chinaware, and kindred junk for real money, and beheld my life partner standing rapt in mute admiration before the most horrible concoction of carven stone that ever offended the eyes of civilized man.

In a very general way the thing resembled a human being. That is to say, it possessed the number of

pectoral and pelvic limbs customarily enjoyed by man, and there the likeness stopped.

Beneath a brow as shallow as an ape's, and as sloping as a mansard roof, the creature's agate eyes stared forth from above its bloated cheeks with a look of unutterable hate and fury. To right and left of its knoblike nose great tusks of shining ivory protruded from the painted lips, which writhed and twisted in a snarl of rage, and the talon hands it brandished above its head were armed with claws like those of some giant vulture. It was like a vision from a nightmare, a fiend from Dante's *Inferno* and a djin from some Eastern horror tale rolled into one, and my wife stood there and looked at it as she had looked at me in the days of our honeymoon!

"Isn't he per-fect-ly adorable?" breathed Betty ecstatically.

I regarded the hideous thing with a look of deepest loathing. "Now I know what the hymn means by 'the heathen in his blindness,'" I commented as I turned my back squarely upon it.

"Ye-es, sair," volunteered the Mocha and Java-colored bandit who owned the shop, "eet ees a var-y rare piece of carving; eet ees the great god Fo, the ruler of the air. I var-y much doubt that there is another like it in the world."

"I hope you're right," I assured him. Then to Betty: "If you're through admiring that monument to delirium tremens, we'll be going." And heedless of the thousand dollars' worth of bric-a-brac which my flouncing coat tails menaced I marched from the store, followed by a thoroughly indignant Betty.

We walked the next sixty yards in stony silence; Betty in a white heat of fury which set her quivering from the backbone out; I in that not altogether unpleasant state of mind experienced while devising "cutting" remarks.

I had composed the introduction to a beautiful little lecture by the time we had reached the corner, and was about to settle down to three hundred yards or so of enjoyable monologue when the opening words died on my tongue. Betty was crying, right on the Avenue, and at four o'clock in the afternoon!

"I t-think you're perfectly horrid," she sobbed, as the big, pearly tears began to chase each other down her trembling cheeks. "You know how I w-wanted that lovely statuette, and you wouldn't let me g-get it or anything, and I don't believe you love me any more, and——" The sentence ended in a wail, and, unlike Lot's wife, who turned back and congealed into salt crystal, my wife looked despairingly back at the shop we had just quit and nearly dissolved in salt water.

"Damn!" I muttered under my breath as a brightly painted woman cast a glance of commiseration at Betty, and her escort glared at me as if he would have liked to wring my neck. Aloud I said: "For the love of Michaelangelo Casey, stop crying and we'll go back and get the awful thing; but if we go to the poorhouse trying to pay for it, Betty Haig, don't say I didn't give you fair warning."

Betty's tears evaporated before she could bring the absurd little dab of lace she calls her handkerchief into play. She pinioned my arm in both of hers and snuggled her cheek against my shoulder. "I just knew you'd buy it for me, Phil, old dear," she gurgled. Of course she did. The world's greatest clairvoyants could take lessons from Betty when it comes to reading my mind.

Between the living room and dining room of our house is a narrow, nondescript sort of room which the real-estate agent called a reception hall and Betty calls her fernery. In it she keeps a wide variety of potted ferns, palms, and flowering plants, over which a man can stumble and break a leg with the minimum expenditure of time and effort. From one end of this little room the stairs which lead to our sleeping apartments curve upward; at the other extremity is a small stained-glass window letting out of a little bay. Against this window Betty set up the petrified horror from the Orient, where its evil sneer greeted me each morning as I descended to breakfast and its misshapen shadow fell across me every evening as I went in to dinner.

For the first few days after the loathsome object was installed in its alcove I merely favored it with a disgusted frown as I passed; but my passive dislike hardened into an active detestation before it had been there three days.

It was Chang's encounter with the thing which made me realize how violent my hate for it was.

Chang was Betty's Siamese cat, and a more courageous grimalkin never walked the back fence by moonlight or gave battle to a wandering cur. I have seen him take on two rivals for his ladylove's favor at once and put them both to ignominious flight; I

have seen him charge full tilt against a bull terrier twice his weight and send him yelping off under a veritable barrage of saber-clawed blows and feline billingsgate; yet before the Eastern image all his valor melted into nothingness.

I had paused before the statue one morning to pay it my profane respects, when Chang, who was very fond of me, came marching from the dining room to take his usual morning's ear-rubbing constitutional around my ankles. Halfway round my legs he came face to face with the image's leering mask, and stopped dead still in his tracks. The hairs of his tail and along his spine began to rise, his small ears flattened against his head, his mouth slowly opened in a noiseless "spit," and his legs bent under him till the white fur on his under side touched the floor. For a long moment he regarded the statue with the fierce, silent glare which only an angry cat can give; then from the nethermost pit of his stomach came a low, rumbling growl, the defiant war cry of a cat about to close with a stronger foe. Slowly, as if stalking a bird, he crept, belly low to earth, toward the image's base; then, with his black nose almost against the stone, he paused, looking up at its malignant face, and suddenly, as though shot from a cross-bow, turned and bolted, yowling, up the stairs. I had never seen Chang turn tail on anything, living or dead, and the sight of his abject terror almost unnerved me. Why such a valiant warrior should fly from a piece of carved stone was more than I could understand. But Chang was wise; he, too, came from the East, and he knew.

Next morning we found Chang lying dead at the creature's stone feet, an ugly wound gaping from the blue-gray fur of his breast, and on the statue's twisted lips and on its gleaming ivory tusks was a dull, brick-red stain, the stain that drying blood leaves.

Betty wept inconsolably at the loss of her little pet, but she refused to blame the image for it. "Poor Chang hated it so he dashed himself against its face and was killed when he struck its teeth," she explained between sobs.

I picked up Chang's little corpse and stroked its stiff gray fur gently. "He died like the knightly gentleman he was, defending his home against barbarian invasion," I said, shaking my fist at the hideous face grinning into mine. "If you'll listen to me, dear, you'll have the beastly thing thrown out before it does more damage."

"Indeed we won't!" Betty answered. "I'm sorry for poor Chang, but I won't have my lovely idol thrown away just because he committed suicide." Then she added with mock seriousness: "You'd better be careful how you call my image a 'beastly thing,' Phil; who knows but it has the power of injuring its enemies?"

Lightly spoken as the words were, they sent a quick chill through me; for they voiced a thought which had been vaguely gathering in my subconscious mind. "It will be a bad day for one of us if that stone thing and I ever run foul of each other," I promised truculently as I bore Chang's body away.

The second member of our entourage to be driven out by the stone interloper was our cook, Nora McGinnis. Nora, who was a veritable virtuoso at the

kitchen range, had been with us since our second month at housekeeping, and was at once Betty's pride and the neighbors' despair. She was devoted to Betty and me, too; so much so that offers of higher wages from several near-by households had been productive of nothing more than indignant refusals from her and severed diplomatic relations by Betty.

However, Nora was too thoroughly Celtic to be able to share the same roof with that Oriental abomination. Before Chang's murder she had sidled by it like a stray cat passing a group of boys on a snowy day; after that she crossed herself devoutly each time she had to pass through the hall. Finally she came to Betty and announced her intention of leaving forthwith.

"Oi've cooked fer yez an' Oi've washed fer yez, an' Oi loiks ye bot'," she explained, "but that there haythen thing out there"—she jerked her thumb toward the hall—"wunk its oye at me whin Oi came through there jest now, an' Oi'll not shlope another noight in th' same house wid it, so Oi won't!" And she didn't.

If a predisposition to baldness and three years of married life hadn't rendered the operation well-nigh impossible, I should have torn my hair. "See what your precious image has let us in for now," I stormed at Betty. "First he kills Chang, then he drives Nora off, and now I suppose we'll all have to die of starvation."

Betty pursed her small lips stubbornly. "I'll do the cooking myself until we can get another maid," she promised.

"Please, Betty," I besought, "let's go to a hotel and board until the new cook comes." I had to spend the rest of the morning explaining that remark to a very much insulted wife. But we went to the hotel just the same.

We menaced our digestions with hotel fare for nearly a week before we managed to secure a Swedish girl who cooked our meals, broke our best china, and regarded the stone image with an equal degree of bovine indifference. The very sight of her passing the hateful thing with never the tribute of a sidelong glance had a steadying effect upon my nerves which more than atoned for the havoc her clumsy hands wrought among our Royal Minton cups and plates. After observing her indifference for a week or so, I, too, got so that I could go by the stone monster with no more than a shrug of disapproval.

The violence of my aversion to the image might have simmered down to nothing more than an artistic distaste if Betty's infatuation had not seemed to increase in geometrical progression as time went by. She would stand gazing at its ugly painted face for minutes on end, almost in a state of hypnosis, till I grew actually jealous.

If it had been a piece of noble Greek artistry claiming her admiration I could have understood and condoned her love for it, for Betty is an æsthetic little person, with an intense appreciation of the beautiful. But her regard for this carven Calaban—

"Upon my word, my dear," I told her one day, somewhat nettled by her attitude, "I do believe you're letting that Eastern nightmare make an idolatress of you."

Betty laughed, a little nervously, I thought. "I don't know what there is about the thing that's so fascinating," she confessed. "Sometimes I think I hate it as much as you do, Phil. But"—she hesitated a second, as if doubting the wisdom of taking me into her confidence—"but sometimes, when I look at it for a while I *do* feel as though I ought to go on my knees before it."

"And if I ever catch you doing such a trick," I said, "I'll be up in police court next morning for wife beating."

It was a few days after this conversation that I was puzzled and annoyed by a faint odor of Chinese punk hanging in the air of the dining room when I came down to breakfast.

Incense of all kinds is distasteful to me; so much so that I never attend high-church services when I can avoid it, and of all the scents with which the nose of man is insulted I particularly detest that of Chinese punk. Even as a pretext for keeping away mosquitoes we have never burned joss sticks in the house; yet there the scent was, as plain as cabbage on a New England Thursday.

I sniffed the air like a restive hound for a few moments, then concluded that my olfactory nerves had been playing a practical joke on me, and dismissed the matter from my mind.

But the odor persisted. Some days it was more pronounced than others—occasionally it was so faint as to be no more than a reminiscent annoyance—but always it was present.

There seemed to be a subtle connection, too, between the varying strength of the perfume and Betty's health. On mornings when the bitter-sweet effluvium hung like an invisible fog among the rafters of the hall and dining-room ceilings there were great, violet circles against the white flesh beneath her eyelids, and her eyes themselves were dull and lackluster, as though she had been troubled in her sleep. As the pungent tang of the incense waned and faded from the house, her face regained its wonted color, and the old-time sparkle returned to her eyes.

The mystery of the odor baffled me, and the changes in Betty worried me. So, like all modern philosophers, I thought much, drank much, and smoked much over the problem—and arrived nowhere.

Betty, too, fretted about the perfume because it annoyed me, and about herself because, except for toothache, measles, and similar childish ills, she had never been sick a day in her life. Betty is neither the broken lily nor drooping-violet type of woman. She can shop all morning, go to a matinée, and fox trot half the night, which is a considerably larger contract than I should care to take on. Also she can handle a canoe like a red Indian, swim like a Sandwich Islander, and play stiff enough tennis to command the respect of any man. And here she was developing nerves and headaches and listlessness, just as though she were an ordinary woman instead of being my wife.

"I think I'll go to see Doctor Towbridge," she announced. "It's not like me to be all done in at breakfast time."

I agreed with her enthusiastically. Next to having

no Betty at all, a sick Betty was the worst thing I could imagine.

When she returned from the doctor's she was more puzzled than ever. "He couldn't find anything wrong," she said, "and that worries me all the more, 'cause people don't get this way when there's nothing the matter with them."

Doctor Towbridge and I rode downtown together next morning, and I begged him for some clew to Betty's indisposition. "Wel-l," he answered, after the manner of all physicians who find themselves in a tight place, "I don't know that I'd care to say positively at this time just what Mrs. Haig's trouble is. Organically she's as fit as a fiddle, but she seems to be suffering from a lowering of vitality, possibly induced by insomnia. And I discovered traces of hysteria, too."

"Insomnia!" I scouted. "Why, man, Betty sleeps like a top; she sleeps as well as I do, and I'm almost as hard to rouse as Lazarus."

Doctor Towbridge lit a fresh cigar and stared for a minute at the rows of near-colonial villas racing past the car windows. "Did Mrs. Haig ever walk in her sleep as a child?" he asked. "Somnambulism may have the same effect as insomnia, you know."

Now, Betty and I had known each other just three months when we were married; so I had no more idea whether she had walked in her sleep as a child than I had what colored pinafores she wore when she was attending kindergarten. But Doctor Towbridge's question gave me to think. Suppose Betty were sleep-walking! And our sleeping rooms were on the second floor. Good Lord, if she were to walk through an open window! I determined then and there to do some watchful waiting that night.

But if the old saying concerning the ultimate destination of good resolutions be true, I must have paved several blocks of infernal highways with mine; for midnight found me in bed, wooing Morpheus in no uncertain nasal tones.

Two o'clock, though, found me awake; very wide awake.

I sat up in bed. The big, white November moon, swimming easily in a surf of frothy clouds, splashed an intermittent spray of silver light over the bedroom's polished floor. Outside the window the wind set up a shrewish scolding in the branches of the tall chestnut which grew beside the house, and up the stairs drifted the acrid, unmistakable perfume of burning joss sticks.

I looked at Betty's bed. The covers were thrown back and there was the dint of her head in the center of her pillow; her kimono hung in its accustomed place across the back of her slipper chair. But Betty was nowhere to be seen.

"That infernal incense again!" I exclaimed as I scrambled out of bed and hurried to the stairway. "There's something devilish going on in this house."

Half a dozen angry strides took me to the stair-head; two more carried me to the curve of the steps. There I paused, looking down into the evilly grinning face of the stone image. Before it was Betty, clad only in her pajamas and straw bedroom sandals, lighting the last of seven joss punks set fanwise in a vase upon the floor. The stick took fire and sent its

writhing coil of smoke upward to the idol's head, and Betty, with her hands crossed over her breast, her body bent nearly double, retreated three steps, paused, and groveled to the floor; rose and backed away five more steps, repeated the genuflection; then rose to her full height, rigid as a carven thing herself.

Hands held stiffly at her sides, she continued to stare fixedly into the monster's agate eyes as she slipped her little pink-and-white feet from their straw sandals and took one step forward barefoot. Raising her hands, palms forward, till they reached the level of her ears, she went to her knees and bent slowly forward till hands and forehead rested on the floor. Once, twice, three times she did this slowly; then her prostrations increased in speed until the soft thud-thud of her head and hands against the floor was like the ticking of a slow-movement clock.

As she swayed forward and back in this act of mad adoration she recited gaspingly:

O Fo, the Mighty, O Fo, the Powerful,
O Fo, who holdest the thousand-starred heavens as a sun-
shade in thy hand,
O Thou who governest the moon and the tides,
O Thou who placest the mighty winds upon the great seas,
O Thou who bendest the skies above the earth,
Have pity upon me.

O Fo, who orderest the sun and all the lights of heaven,
O Fo, who makest the lions to roar and the little beasts to
keep silence,
O Fo, who bindest in the lightnings with thy grasp and
whose voice is the thunder of the clouds,
O Fo, who standest upon the white mountaintops and liest
down in the green valleys,
O Fo, who driest up the rivers with thy wrath and encom-
passeth the dry land with thy floods,
I lay myself before thee.

Inch by inch she had crawled on her knees to the idol's base, and that stone abomination, that misbegotten son of Eastern heathenism, leered triumphantly down while Betty—my Betty—put her soft little lips to its misshapen feet.

"Hell and furies!" I yelled, covering the distance intervening between Betty and me in a single leap. "I'll smash that damned image if it's the last act of my life."

Before I put my iconoclastic threat into execution I bent above the wretched woman crouching on the floor, mad enough with berserker rage to grind her under foot.

I seized her by the shoulders and wrenched her upright, ready to shake her as an ill-tempered terrier worries a rat. But my vengeance died stillborn. Betty's eyes stared unseeingly into mine; her face had the set, unwitting expression of one in a hypnotic trance. She was sound asleep with her eyes open; bound fast in the fetters of somnambulism.

"Betty! Betty, dear," I whispered contritely, drawing her slender little body to me and nursing her head against my shoulder.

A shiver ran through her, and her hands gripped my arm till the polished nails bit into my flesh through the sleeve of my robe as she nestled her face close to my breast. "Oh, Phil! Phil, dear, I've had such a terrible dream," she whimpered. "Put your arms around me tight, dear; I'm so frightened." And her hot tears wet through the silk of my robe.

With a sobbing, hysterical Betty to comfort and pacify and carry upstairs to bed, I had no time for smashing images that night, but before Betty went to sleep, with my hand cuddled in both of hers, we agreed to oust the stone demon from the house before another night.

Getting rid of a statue, however, especially one like ours, is often more easily discussed than accomplished. First, the thing weighed nearly two hundred pounds; second, it was fragile to an unbelievable degree and had to be handled as carefully as high explosive; lastly, it had cost us nearly five hundred dollars—and wasn't entirely paid for. I would gladly have forfeited the unpaid balance for the pleasure of smashing the hateful thing into smithereens; but Betty's frugal soul revolted at the mere suggestion. Ready as she is to pauperize herself—and me—for new things, Betty would sooner part with an arm than suffer a loss on any article once in her possession.

Then, too, the image had to be crated and packed before any drayman would consent to handle it; so, pending the time it could be properly prepared for its journey to the auction rooms, we wrapped it in rugs and stood it in a secluded corner of the back yard, where it stared in hooded fury at the blank wall of the garage and attracted the speculative interest of all the small boys in the neighborhood.

I was forever going to take a day off and box the thing up properly, but like the man who pleaded inclement weather as an excuse for not mending his leaking roof when it was raining, and lack of necessity when the weather was fine, I delayed the operation from day to day, while the image stood unpacked, save for its covering of carpet.

"You'd better get some one out from the city to crate that thing to-day," Betty advised me one morning about three weeks after the statue had been evicted from the house.

"Um-m?" I answered absently, engrossed in a combination of toast, coffee, and the morning's paper.

"Yes, you would," she repeated, "or I'll be leaving the house. Look!" She pointed through the dining-room window to the back yard.

I looked, and set my paper down suddenly, swallowing several mouthfuls of air in quick succession as I did so. "It can't be!" I ejaculated.

"But it is," Betty insisted.

And it was. The image was nearer the house by twenty feet than it had been the night before.

"How the devil did it get there?" I asked querulously of nobody in particular.

"I—I d-don't know," Betty faltered. But from the shakiness of her voice and the wideness of her eyes I knew that she had her own opinion.

"Well, it can't have walked there, you know," I argued.

"N-no, of course not," Betty agreed a trifle too readily.

I went out to investigate, not stopping to put on either hat or overcoat. There was no doubt about it; the thing had moved nearer the house since darkness the day before. "Some of the neighborhood boys must have decided to play a joke on us, and moved the thing during the night," I explained, after looking

the ground over. "They probably intended to set it up on the front lawn, but gave it up when they found out how heavy it was."

"Yes, that must be it," Betty concurred rather unsteadily. "It simply couldn't have walked there itself," she repeated, as if anxious to convince herself of the impossibility of any such thing having happened.

With the aid of our Swedish maid, who was as strong as any man and twice as clumsy, we replaced the statue and returned to the house, I to finish my interrupted breakfast, Betty to chirp happily over the details of the dance we were going to attend that night.

By the time I returned to the house that evening I had developed one of the worst head colds it had ever been my misfortune to acquire, due to my hatless excursion into the yard that morning. Every other breath was followed by a sniff, and each time I spoke the remark was punctuated by a sneeze. In such a condition my attendance at the dance was quite impossible.

"Another score I owe that cursed image," I muttered as I discarded the fifth handkerchief I had used that day and unfolded the sixth.

Betty's sympathy for me was matched only by her disappointment at missing the dance.

"Miss the dance?" I echoed as I brought my seventh handkerchief into play. "Who said you'd have to miss the dance? You can go with Frank and Edith Horton in their car, and they can drop you here on the way home."

"And you won't mind staying here alone, and won't get sick, old dear?" Betty asked as she picked up the telephone to tell the Hortons to call for her. "Doctor Towbridge will be there to-night, I know, and I'll bring him home with me, if you wish."

I gave the simple homemade cough remedy I was compounding another vigorous shake. "If you bring any sawbones into this house to-night, Betty Haig," I threatened, "I'll surely do him bodily injury." I added a bit more rock candy to the flask of whisky.

"You'll be in a state of beastly intoxication when I get back, I know," Betty said as she viewed my bottle of rock and rye dubiously, "but that doesn't prevent your tying these ankle ribbons for me now." And she put a slender, pink satin-shod foot on my knee.

I laced the ribbons about her trim ankles and kissed her left shoulder blade as I dropped her evening cloak over a party frock which, like Gungha Din's uniform, "wasn't nothing much before, and rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind."

Betty gone, I changed my coat for a house jacket and settled myself on the lounge before the fire to read, smoke, and treat my cold with copious drafts of the mixture I had prepared.

Efficacious as rock and rye is in the cure of a cold, it has one great disadvantage; it has a tendency to make a man lose count of the number of doses he's taken. After my seventh or ninth dose—I forget which—I ceased counting, and adhered to the simple formula of a dose to a sneeze—and sometimes I caught myself sneezing without legitimate excuse.

A couple of hours' course of this treatment, com-

bined with the sizzle and crackling of the logs burning in the fireplace, set me nodding.

"Ol' stone image doesn't like it out there in the cold. Ol' image jealous 'cause I wouldn't let Betty worship it—wants to come back to house and get revenge on me," I mumbled, half maudlin, as I dropped my pipe and book and thrust my head deep into a sofa pillow.

How long I slept I do not know. Certainly it must have been several hours, for when I opened my eyes and sat up with a start the fire had burned itself to a bed of dull ashes on the hearth, and a chill had crept through the living room. My reading lamp, too, had burned itself out, and save for the fitful gleam of a near-by street light, shining through the window, the room was in darkness.

Lying there in that no man's land between sleep and waking, I heard the grandfather's clock in the hall strike off the half hour, and put my feet to the floor sleepily. "Half past something or other," I yawned; "must be getting late. Wonder how soon Betty will be getting home?"

The crazy little French gilt clock that Betty keeps on the parlor mantel, and which is always half an hour slow, chimed twelve times nervously. That meant we were in the middle of that eerie hour which belongs neither to the day which is gone nor the day which is to come, and which, for want of a better term, we call midnight.

The fumes of the rock and rye I had taken earlier in the evening still hung in my brain, dulling my perceptions and clouding my vision a little. In the uncertain light from the street lamp it seemed to me I detected a movement among the inanimate objects in the room.

I opened my mouth in another prodigious yawn, and flung my arms wide in a mighty stretch, striving to shake off the remnants of my sleep. Before either yawn or stretch were finished, however, I was sitting bolt upright on the couch, listening to the sound which came to me from the veranda. It was a slow, heavy, scraping, thumping sort of noise; the kind that would be produced by the dragging of a heavy weight across the floor, or the rolling of a ponderous chest, or the walking of some great-footed animal.

Thump, thump, thump, the footsteps—if they were footsteps—sounded on the planks of the porch, around the corner of the house, across the width of the piazza, up to the very door of the vestibule. Then a silence, ten times more ominous than the noise itself.

The breath in my lungs and throat seemed suddenly impregnated with nitrous fumes, strangling and burning me at once, and tiny globules of cold perspiration seeped out upon my scalp and the palms of my hands as I sat there in the dark, resolutely closing my mind against the thought of what waited outside the door.

"B-r-r-ring!" the shrill clamor of the doorbell cut in on my terrified vigil. I jumped up with a relieved grin. Doorbells are comforting things to have about at such times; there is something reassuringly modern and human about them.

I got to my feet almost cheerfully and reached for the electric switch. My groping fingers found it readily enough; but no flood of warm, yellow light fol-

lowed their pressure. As frequently happens, the current was off.

In darkness, then, I shuffled along the hall to the front door.

That vague, nameless horror we all feel at times when entering a dark room alone was on me as I fumbled with the knob. Very cautiously I put back the curtain from the glass panel in the door and peeped into the shadowy vestibule. There was nothing to be seen.

"Humph!" I grunted. "Nobody there. Ears must have been playing a trick on me; bell didn't ring at all." Emboldened by the emptiness of the vestibule, I swung the door wide.

"Who's there?" I called, feeling quite sure that my challenge would go unanswered.

A moment later I regretted my rashness. Just within the door, dimly outlined against the gray darkness of the outer night, crouched an ungainly, squat figure. Its staring eyes glared with a hellish phosphorescence; its ivory tusks gleamed from writhing, blood-red lips; its hideous painted face twisted in a grimace of deadly hatred.

"Why, it—it—it's the *image*!" I gibbered fatuously.

It was the image. The same image that had slain poor little Chang; the same stone monster that had forced Betty to worship it; yet it was not the same. Its loathsome, bloated face changed expression; it moved; it was *alive*!

Shaken in a very palsy of fear, I shrank back into the hall.

Swift as my retreat was, it was not quick enough. With a swaying, ungainly bound, the thing was upon me. Great hands, cruel and relentless as the coils of a serpent, closed round my neck, choking the breath from me; huge, fiery eyes glared vengefully into mine; long, gleaming tusks were gnashing at my throat, seeking the living blood in my veins.

With arms and legs and stiffened back I strained against the monster, striving to unclasp the cruel hands throttling me, pushing vainly against the terrible embrace which drew me nearer, ever nearer, the champing white teeth which flashed from the misshapen face so near mine.

As I fought against the accursed thing crushing me in its relentless grip, I thought wildly, "This is how poor Chang died," and I braced my knee against its swollen belly.

Cold, acid sweat stood out upon my forehead and rolled down into my eyes; my lungs were bursting with the air imprisoned within them; great, sonorous gongs seemed booming in my ears; lights flashed before my eyes, and the walls of the vestibule seemed toppling in upon me.

The image and I swayed back and forth in a death grapple, went down; there was a crash, a blinding flash of light, my hands relaxed their grip on the stone shoulders, I was deathly sick at my stomach—

"Bring me another cold rag; he'll be all right in a minute," Doctor Towbridge's voice sounded close beside me, and his firm, capable hands replaced a cold-water pack on my forehead.

I sat up and stared about me. I was lying on the couch in the living room. Doctor Towbridge was

bending over me, and a very frightened Betty stood behind him, a cloth saturated with cold water in her hand.

"Young man," Doctor Towbridge bent his sternest professional look upon me, "next time you feel inclined to cheat an honest physician out of his honest fee don't risk a case of alcoholic poisoning trying to drink up all the rock and rye in town."

"But I wasn't drunk," I expostulated; "that cursed image——"

"Yes, yes, we know all about that, too. We found it broken to pieces in the vestibule, and you've done nothing but rave about it for the past half hour. The neighbors' boys evidently carried out their design of putting the thing against your front door, and when you went to the vestibule it fell through the door and was broken. Too bad, too; it was a valuable piece of bric-a-brac, wasn't it?"

I looked at them out of the corner of my eye. "Yes," I answered meekly. If they already thought me drunk, what would they think if I were to tell them how the image really came to be broken? "Yes," I agreed, "it cost us a lot of money; but I think we can worry along without it."

Doctor Towbridge may have been right. Perhaps I did take too much rock and rye that night; maybe the neighbors' boys did put the stone image in the doorway. Possibly my fight with the grisly thing was all the figment of an alcohol-inspired dream. But there is one thing I'd like the doctor to explain—if he can. For a week after that horrible night there were great purple bruises on my throat, where I had believed the monster's terrible hands had been.



Plot, Punch, and Style.

AFTER all, although style and character and other things aid and strengthen and embellish, the one essential without which all the others are useless is the story itself. They talk about building up or constructing a story, but does that give the right idea? We think that George Moore's expression is a truer and happier one. "Finding stories," as he puts it, is the calling of the fiction writer. To "find" them in the life about him needs a sort of insight on the author's part. It is like the ability a man might have of discovering a coherent message in an apparently meaningless cipher, or the power to discern the design and pattern of a rug only half and confusedly woven. Life as most of us see it in the raw is a sort of confusion and disorder. Its rhythm and design are hidden from us. The story-teller catches up the tangled threads of many colors and casts them into a pattern of beauty and coherency; he discards the useless rubbish, and builds out of the broken fragments of experience the palace of our heart's desire. He finds the stories; he does not make them up. It is not the mere narration of the event. It is discovering its drama, its real meaning, its humor.

This instinct is what we continually search for in the manuscripts we get. We want to give you style

and character, good taste, wisdom, and knowledge; but all these are secondary to the fact that we must give you real stories. We read and reject manuscripts written by men who teach English literature in the universities. We buy stories from those who have acquired their knowledge of men and things on the street, at their work, by some sort of miracle. If a man has the ability to discover stories he may become a writer, and he may not. It depends on his latent powers of growth and development, but to start with he must be a born "finder of stories."



New Writers.

WE suppose that every one who has ever made a conscientious effort to do any one thing as it ought to be done has some fear that is always haunting him. Our pet ghost, or banshee, or whatever you care to call it, is the awful thought that some great but unknown author will send his first story to us, that we won't discover in it the hidden fire, and that the author will be lost to us forever. We can never quite rid ourselves of this fear. We have read and reread stories by men we have never heard of; we have poked at random into bulky and most unengaging piles of manuscript; we have discovered false alarms who have flickered out after one or two fair stories; we have written encouraging letters; but always we have the haunting fear that the good story will get away from us. It takes a lot of will power for us to send back a manuscript that seems at all available. It is the hardest thing we do. What consoles us is the thought of the good stories that don't get away. Grege la Spina was almost unknown until her first story came to us—"Wolf of the Steppes"—which appeared in our beginning issue—a story that for unusual style and weirdness of plot is not to be duplicated anywhere. The reader is already familiar with her name. This story added tremendously to her popularity, and we can promise you now at least two more of her unusual tales in the very near future. Her stories are fascinating things. They set a new standard for such work in THE THRILL BOOK.



The Battle.

By Arnold Tyson.

YOU delved in grim philosophies; in creeds
 Outworn with ancient handling; both in frail,
 Creative spurts of beauty and in stale
 Forgotten volumes of forgotten needs.
 You saw the flowers, catalogued the weeds
 With gritty fervor, while the dull and pale,
 Sad poets claimed your heart, and now you fail
 To sing because your wasted spirit bleeds.

You sought the unexplored on the earth,
 Pursued faint shadows like a thoughtless elf,
 You theorized on love and death and birth,
 Lived years with dusty books upon the shelf,
 Then gave life up as though it lacked all worth
 Because you lost the battle with yourself.



By Ronald Oliphant

MORTIMER CLAYTON was terribly sick,
His mind was unraveled; he'd lost all his kick.
His pulse beats were feeble; he lacked animation,
And most of his joints seemed to need lubrication.
All vain were the efforts of doctor and nurse,
For Mortimer Clayton grew steadily worse.

One night as he lay, wrapped in blankets and rugs
Surrounded by eight or ten gallons of drugs,
And looking a desolate picture of gloom,
His friend Bings, the Thrill Hound, came into his room.
Now Alpheus Bings was a shark on psychosis
And speedily came to this shrewd diagnosis:
"Throw out all these drafts and vibrators and pills,
What *you* need, my boy, are some genuine thrills.
I'll give you a tonic; you'll find it a treat.
You'll rise on your hind legs and howl for raw meat.
No longer you'll mope, like a half-witted dunce——"
"Good!" Clayton agreed. "I'll try anything once!"

Alpheus Bings left his patient a while,
But shortly returned with a gratified smile
Of triumph impending, and confidence bland,
And a bright little book tightly held in his hand.
He quickly unrolled it and spread it out flat,
Remarking to Clayton: "Old fellow, read *that*!"

With the martyred air of a man much abused,
Poor Mortimer Clayton politely perused
Chapters One, Two, and Three of the volume and then,
The following chapters, concluding with Ten.
At this point he paused and looked up with a sigh,
But Alpheus noticed a gleam in his eye—
A gleam of new life and a dare-devil air
Of reckless bravado. Moreover his hair—
Which heretofore slicked closely down to his pate—
Was on end with excitement; each strand stood out straight.
Yet Alpheus wanted a little more glory.
"Go on, man," he urged, "and lap up the next story!"

Five minutes later, he cried: "Hold! Enough!"
For Clayton was thoroughly out of the slough
Of despond and boredom in which he had floundered,
And, only for Alpheus Bings, would have foundered.
His muscles had tautened like thongs of new leather,
His eyes crackled briskly, and then *clicked together*!
So strongly the radiant energy came
From within, that his clothing stood out from his frame.
He was thoroughly set on the road to recovery
Through Alpheus Bings' clever little discovery.
So Mortimer Clayton, who'd been nearly dead,
Ere Alpheus left him, delightedly said,
As he passed him a "century" out of his bill book:
"Old man, you're a wonder! And so is THE THRILL
BOOK!"



Nothing but Dust—

By Frederick Booth

THE house of John Emory stood at the top of the hill, from which point of vantage it looked down upon the little green-and-white county seat with its red heart of brick business houses, and commanded a long vista of the dusty pike that trailed through the town and away like a straw-colored ribbon laid across the checkerboard landscape of wheat—and oats—and cornfields dotted with orchards and white farm-houses. The house gleamed chastely white among its trees and flowering shrubs—a place good to look upon with orchards and gardens and a spacious lawn. The house was well designed for country comfort and country hospitality; such an establishment indeed as befitted the prosperity of its owner and the public esteem in which he was held.

When he was fifty or thereabouts, lest having been somewhat too busy in garnering the good things of life, to miss the best, he married Lucretia Bennet, and since to those who have the best the best is added, his twenty-year-old bride was the fairest in Fairacres or anywhere around, with an unspoiled complexion, sweet and tractable—apparently—and of incomparably winsome manners.

John Emory was just a trifle shaken by good living and rather self-indulgent habits, but still of an attractive personality, jovial and good-humored and fond of a certain kind of a good time; withal a church member. The neighborhood, kindly disposed toward its solidest citizen, approved the match; the rather humble parents of the girl, who had prepared for this success by an excruciating expenditure of money for clothes and frivolities for the girl, were transported with delight; the bride went home with the groom like a lady with her lord; and to outward appearances here was a wedding match of such suitability as to make even the cynical god of matrimony nod his head in approval.

But the hardest thing in the world to understand is that doubtful manifestation of energy popularly designated as human nature. Lucretia, the young wife, a beautiful creature in a goodly setting, envied and admired of all her young friends, might look out



upon a world of green and gold below, of blue above—a lovely world where for her there was no such thing as care; might pet her simple country vanity with all that was required to satisfy it; might sink back into the country comforts and country triumphs of her estate, but at the heart of the business there lived and grew a canker of duplicity and selfishness, for she married him not for love.

The splendid house and grounds, the shining carriage, John Emory's money and position, were the gewgaws, dangled before her eyes by indirection both by the man and by her parents, which tempted her simple, barbaric soul and before which she fell. That a lovely woman, soft and rounded, with a musical laugh, may be moved more profoundly by sordid things than by pure love is one of the ugly paradoxes of life. To make the betrayal of herself all the worse, Lucretia loved another man—a double-edged duplicity. The man she loved, who loved her, and who, with all the other youths of the village, had wooed her desperately, was in the employ of John Emory, was the head accountant of his business. Arnold Stillman was his name. He was a young man, keen, fiery, rather moody in disposition, and vindictive when beaten.

To his employer, after the marriage, he gave no sign of his disappointment, nor did that gentleman

or any one else, since everybody had been after Lucretia, suspect deeply his bitter chagrin; but there fell at first a coldness between himself and the faithless woman. To this coldness after some months, since before the lure of the house on the hill she had responded to his love, there succeeded an interim of sly watching on his part—at church, at card parties, at town dances. Well he knew the old story of a middle-aged husband and a young wife—of cooling enthusiasm for frivolous pastimes on the part of the former, of resentment and a renewed desire for girlish pleasures on the part of the latter. He knew the crochety temper that sometimes showed through the joviality of John Emory—fruit of a weak heart from too many cigars, of a questionable digestion from soft living. Soon enough, the young man told himself, he would have his way; he would win this woman—run away with her, perhaps.

He was wise in the subtleties of human nature. He was wise in the nature of the woman he wanted to steal.

Before they had been married a year, on the nights that John Emory went into town, to lodge or political affairs in which he was prominent, Arnold Stillman began to meet the young wife by stealth under the trees of the Emory home. The first time he came on a pretext. After that nothing of the kind was needed.

Below them, on these nights, the lights of the town gleamed like the stars of a nether and miniature heaven; the placid and velvety sky contributed to their tryst the radiance of its countless luminaries. The perfume of the summer flowers, the soft wind, the odor of the grass, the gossip of nocturnal insects, the plaintive call of some night bird, the road stretching across the landscape below, silvery white, altogether made the night a time for love and romance. But consider, O gentle and thoughtful reader, that although love is the prime and moving factor of romance, romance has its limits set and perfidy lies beyond.

At these secret meetings young Stillman would urge her to skip the country with him.

"Come away with me," he would whisper. "I have enough money in the bank. We can go away off. They'll never find us. We can be happy."

But though she yielded to his importunate embraces, she was adamant to his importunate demands; she loved him, but dearly she loved the place of safety she had won in the world.

"It is impossible," she would whisper back, "impossible. Can't you see? Father and mother would be broken-hearted. We should be caught. It would be awful; let us wait."

So between her obstinacy, which was all the more maddening by reason of her sweet complaisance in other matters, and his importunance, which at times was almost savage in its intensity, their secret trysts resembled at times a truce between bitter enemies, he accusing her of merely pretending to love him, she accusing him of cruelty, of having no thought for happiness, her safety, only for his own pleasure. Seeing at last that Lucretia was obdurate in the matter of cleaving to her home, Stillman no longer urged her. He fell into a gloom, into long and silent cogitations, the nature of which he kept to himself. And

now the woman, as if she divined the nature of these thoughts and wished to urge him on, fell into the trick, on those nights, of uttering some plaint of her sordid married life. True some of them were, others false; but all were full of artifice—an artifice which perhaps she herself did not wholly comprehend.

First she told of her husband's growing indifference, then of his crochety temper. From these tentative hints of unpleasantness she went on as her instinct and the ripening occasion prompted to further revelations of cruelty endured under the marital roof—breathed in snatches in her lover's ear as a tired and sleepy child at bedtime lisps of the Gargantuan adventures and pitfalls of the day. With her fragrant, silky hair against his cheek, her exquisite shape pressed against his body, Lucretia sobbed once, and as if reluctantly showed Stillman a bruise on her arm, and whispered in her sweet voice that Emory had clutched her there in a senseless fit of rage. Must she endure that? Could she? Oh, heavens! But she would not leave him, no. There were her parents to be considered, her good name. She would stay and suffer. Did Lucretia know what she urged her lover to? Or was her mind but a creature mind and ignorant of right or wrong?

Stillman, hot, high strung and unscrupulous when his desires were crossed, coveting another's wife, but still with some manly qualities, ground his teeth in an agony of jealousy and hate. Those softly worded plaints of his sweetheart lent him imagination of a moody sort. Some night, he told himself, that brute Emory might kill Lucretia. Plunged into such bitter thoughts, all the more bitter from those nights of felicity which to him were as a drop of water to a man dying of thirst, naturally he cast about him in such desperation as usually animates those who are without hope for some solution to the ugly tangle. His own desires and hatred of his rival put an edge to his thoughts, and a solution was suggested him, some of the possible consequences of which were fearful to contemplate, but which, accomplished without mishap, was a plausible means to a desirable end. Stillman weighed this thought while the precious summer waxed and began to wane.

One afternoon young Stillman, in his mail, received a note from her. It said simply: "Come to-night and stand in the shrubbery at the front gate. If possible I will meet you there. This is important—nine o'clock."

Something in the tone of the note made Stillman feel a little cold. He had noticed his employer looking a bit heavy-eyed that day, but he had attributed it to his being up late at a lodge affair. The note put a different meaning upon it. Was he becoming suspicious?

That night, at the appointed time, Stillman waited at the gate. Lucretia came to him breathless, white, tragic. She put her hand in his hand, and it was cold. She leaned against him and trembled. She looked up at him in the starlight, and her exquisite mouth was pathetic in its sorrow and woe.

"Arnie," she whispered, "he has found me out—no, not you, only me. This morning he saw my slippers, the ones I wore last night. They were wet with dew, and he noticed it. He asked me where I had been, and I—I didn't know what to say. He was

fearful. I thought he would kill me. I am afraid of him; he is a brute. What will I do? I cannot run away; he will come after us. He would find us out. He would ruin you, Arnie. What will I do? He is terrible! He—tried to make me tell everything; he shook me, struck me. If he knew I was out here he would kill me. What will I do?"

Stillman shook as in a chill. "He struck you," he repeated mechanically. "He——"

Stillman paused suddenly and looked hard into the woman's face. "You're lying," he said.

Lucretia's head dropped on his shoulder, her hair was against his face, she wept softly like a tired child.

"If you desert me now, if you don't believe me," she said, "I shall kill myself."

One hand stole up around his neck, the other stroked his face. "If I only had you with me always," she whispered dolefully. Then she clutched him in a paroxysm of fear.

"To-night," she whispered in a voice that made a hissing sound, "to-night he will kill me. Did you ever read 'Othello?' He is like that. He looked at me in a terrible manner. He said nothing. What will I do?" Flimsy persuasion in printed words, a flimsy tale, mostly lies, that tale of fear, of a husband suddenly raging mad from jealousy; but histrionic art has saved many a lame passage at words. Her hair brushed his face, her breast was pressed against him. She seemed consumed by fear and woe. She became fierce and clutched him by the shoulders.

"I wish he were dead," she whispered. "He is loathsome. I cannot go into that house again while he is there. If I were a man——"

She looked at him, and his demeanor changed; a cool resolution seemed to possess him. He put his arm about her with a certain degree of roughness; he put his hand under her chin and upturned her face so that he could look into her eyes.

"Where is he now?" he demanded.

"Asleep; I put sleeping powders in his tea to-night."

He looked at her intently, and read her secret thoughts, even if she herself could not.

"Will you stand by me—will you marry me afterward if——" He bent his head and whispered the awful word.

There was a silence while she leaned against him; then she whispered, so low it might have been the night wind:

"If you don't, nothing will ever save me. You know I'll stand by you. But is it safe? Will they ever know?"

"There is no danger," he assured her. "I know the way. The coroner is an old-fashioned dunce. The undertaker is a worse fool. It has been done before; the safest way in the world."

"How will you do it?" she wanted to know, but he silenced her roughly. "Leave that to me," he said.

They walked through the yard hand in hand and stood beside a tree under the bedroom window.

"You wait here," he told her, and went into a wooden building at the rear in which the tools for the garden and stable were kept.

Lucretia stood and waited. A gentle wind soured through the branches of the tree, which made a tap-

ping sound against the side of the house by her husband's window. Lucretia trembled a little, but she hardened her mouth. She could hear her lover fumbling in the tool house. When he came out he carried something in his hand that looked like a short cudgel, but he would not let her see it.

"Stand under the window," he told her; "wait for me here. I will be down presently. It will be all right."

He took off his shoes and went into the house. He knew his way about. Lucretia, listening, heard nothing but the wind in the trees at first. It seemed to her that the house was wrapped in a greater silence after the entrance of Stillman than before. The house seemed to be listening. Lucretia strained her eyes up at her husband's bedroom and trembled again.

And presently, out of the oppressive stillness above, there sounded faintly a dull blow, as of wood striking metal; a sort of moan; then another blow like the first; then silence.

Lucretia leaned against the house, plucking at her throat, and she almost screamed when Stillman joined her, very cool and matter of fact.

"It is done," he said.

In the dark hour before dawn Stillman, having instructed Lucretia, went home by stealth. He was sure of the woman, and Lucretia did her part well. That she did it well is proof of her courage or her brutality, whichever you will. At dawn the doctor, who was also the coroner, came. To him Lucretia, who had donned herself in her night clothes, said that her husband had died in the night while she slept. The doctor was one of those old-fashioned gentlemen who made a diagnosis or an autopsy chiefly by inference because they knew no other way. He saw the tears of Lucretia, heard her story. He knew of no motive for murder. He called it heart failure, because he knew John Emory had been troubled thus. The undertaker, unskilled even in that unskilled day, saw nothing; the man was mourned for, buried, and forgotten.

After a decent interval Stillman married the widow. He succeeded to the former husband's business. Nay, he ate in his dining room, slept in his bedroom, drove his horses. Perhaps these considerations of advantage had quickened his hand as much as jealousy.

It is fear more often than remorse that drives those dark birds of society we call murderers to insanity or suicide. Stillman and his wife were secure from the law. They lived together more or less happily for twenty years.

II.

A NEW railroad was being built into Fairacres from the capital city, twenty miles away. During its whole life the little county seat had had to conduct its traffic over a jerkwater spur to Champlain in the other direction. But now this jerkwater track was to be joined to the new line and rehabilitated, and at last Fairacres, to quote the editor of the local paper, was to be a bead and not a pendant on the necklace of commerce.

It was a great thing for the town and the surrounding neighborhood as well. Business men and farmers talked of better shipping facilities and cheaper rates.

Arnold Stillman, as owner of the grain elevator and buyer of all the grain raised in the vicinity, looked

upon this common good fortune as an added rise to his own prosperity.

He was commenting on this matter to his wife, Lucretia, at the breakfast table and reading items of interest anent the matter from the local paper. His wife, only half regardful of what he was saying, fussed prettily with a new morning gown she had put on for the first time that day, and wished half consciously that Arnie would hurry and finish with that dry news so she could read what the local society editor had to say about the dress she had worn at the last Elks' dance.

Twenty years had dealt rather kindly with Stillman and Lucretia. She was still undeniably beautiful and much more youthful than many women of less her age; very placid, still slender, and with a certain air of distinction that is noticeable and hard to explain in a country town. Arnie, as she affectionately called Stillman, had not only successfully taken up the burden of business laid down by his unfortunate predecessor, but he had doubled it. A dominating figure in local business and political affairs, he was also something to look at and consider personally. He was rather tall and commanding, heavy chested and dark, with scant eyebrows and a thin mustache and a thick jaw; a man rather given to wearing heavy jewelry on his hands and coat lapel, to talking a great deal in an abrupt, domineering manner. He and Lucretia got on rather well together. If she wanted to make a rather startling society splurge, he only smiled in his elusive way and told her to go as far as she liked. And, on the other hand, if he wanted to load his new motor car with some choice friends and go flying down the pike to the capital city for what he called a hell of a time, Lucretia only laughed and listened with genuine enjoyment to his account of their doings when they returned. That was their life—engrossed pleasantly in the making and spending of money, in going it a little stronger than any of their neighbors, in indulging themselves in all the creature comforts of life, which to them were the real comforts; life was very agreeable. No black bird of remorse perched above their door and croaked to them of things done in the days of youth. They never spoke of that; they never thought of it.

"It will be a great thing, Lucretia, this railroad," Stillman was saying in his rather throaty voice; "money in my pocket."

"Our pocket, you mean," Lucretia remarked, still fussing with the lace at her throat and preening herself with her pretty fingers.

"Oh, sure," Stillman laughed. "They say here," he went on, "that the road will make a bee line right into town, and they're driving the construction like sixty. Shouldn't wonder if—um, what's this?"

He shook the paper out briskly, and was suddenly plunged into a perusal of something that had caught his eye.

"What is it?" Lucretia wanted to know, still preening herself.

For a time Stillman was silent, knitting his brows and intent on the page. At last he said rather gruffly: "Oh, nothing!" folded the paper over to the society column, gave it to his wife, and shortly afterward was on his way to the office.

But he had read something in the paper that occupied his mind for the whole day in spite of his efforts to dispel it. It was of no importance, he told himself, but in spite of this the thought of what he had read would come back again and again to send him off on morbid speculations.

What the paper had said was in regard to the old cemetery on the pike west of town. The surveyors had found, it seems, that the road, in making a direct line to Fairacres, would bisect this yard. To cross it with the right of way would be against the law; to dodge it would necessitate an expensive and time-killing curve. For this reason the railroad company had entered into an agreement with the town board, said the paper, by which they were to disinter the silent occupants of the plot and move them to the new cemetery east of town, where they would be decently buried again, each one under his own epitaph.

This arrangement was eminently a matter for self-congratulation for the community, said the paper. No longer would Fairacres be flanked on either side by a graveyard when only one was necessary, especially when the one to be moved had for ten years or more gone unkempt and was an eyesore to the community. As a guarantee that this work would be done properly, the services of old Simons, for thirty years sexton of the town, had been secured to superintend the work, which would be begun as soon as enough laborers could be secured.

The old cemetery lay west of Stillman's home, perhaps a mile, on another hill; a product of old-fashioned and lugubrious ideas regarding graveyard architecture of another generation, which, in its turn, had been laid to rest in the ugly city of its building. From the westerly windows of their house or from their broad veranda he and Lucretia could look across to it, with its black evergreens thickly arrayed, its dark-green matted ivy, and pointed white stones. It sloped to the eastward so that they could see its little streets and the bright spots where flowers grew; when a new grave was made—this had not happened in recent years—they could see the yellow patch where the clay had been thrown up. When John Emory had been put away there they could plainly see the spot from their dining-room window, but it had never harried them in the least. Rather they had been pleased at this substantial evidence that he had been put forever beyond human testimony and human suspicion. They had marked the place with an expensive monument for appearance sake.

But now this thing was to be brought again to the light of day.

Arnold Stillman had no desire to jog back again over the road of the past and raise up any old landmarks of his career, for the present, with its prosperity, health, and respectability, was too pleasant a time in which to live; but here was one landmark, it seemed, that was to be fetched along down out of the past and hauled by his very door.

He found this fact to be food for rather serious thought.

That old Simons was to superintend the work did not make the matter any less worthy of consideration. The burying of people was to old Simons what spring planting was to the farmer. His mind dwelled upon

it as a unique vocation and one therefore conveying to its practitioner a certain amount of distinction. He had been in it, to use his own expression, boy and man, and, above everything else, the work itself even, he liked to talk shop. Not a citizen of the community who had died in the last thirty years that he could not and did not love to tell about, when he died and how, where he was slipped beneath the sod, who helped him dig the grave and fill it up again, and what they talked about.

These unvital statistics were his meat and drink, and Stillman could picture to himself the old reprobate telling the life-and-death story of every set of relics fetched again to the light of day in his grisly task, fingering the bones even in the way of renewing old acquaintances.

What would happen when they unearthed the bones of John Emory? Stillman found this question interesting enough to plunge him into the most profound abstraction, in which state of mind he went home to supper.

Lucretia noticed his mood in the evening, and chided him for it. By an effort he recalled himself, confessed to himself that he had been rather worried, and by the very force of his natural vitality drove himself into an opposite frame of mind. The lights of the dining room, the flowers on the table, his still-beautiful and very desirable wife, these present and very real facts of his lot in life made his speculations of the day seem very weak and puerile.

"What nonsense!" he told himself. "What was I thinking of? Twenty years have passed. The things that happened back there, they belong in the limbo of old men's gossip. Those bones—they are nothing but dust."

He poured himself a stiff glass of whisky from the sideboard to reenforce his returning spirits, and with perfect ease entered into the mood of his wife, who happened to be particularly merry. For the next two or three days so sanguine was his natural temperament that he forgot his speculation on the matter.

One morning, as was often his wont, he walked down the hill to his office. He was just about to turn from the pike into the side street whose shady pavement led in the direction of his office when from behind the tall hedge that hid the street from his view there came a great clattering of wagons, and a cloud of dust drifted over the hedge in the wind. As these wagons would have to turn into the pike he stood aside on the grass to let them pass.

Almost immediately the calvacade debouched into his view—a strange sight. It proved to be six or eight gravel wagons drawn by mules and hauling a strange freight, for each wagon was full to its capacity of men. They were the riffraff of Fairacres, those small-town hoodlums who infest every middle West village of any size. There were negroes, young and middle-aged, white, unkempt, yellow of face, with stringy hair, discolored eyeballs, and drooping shoulders; the odd-job class of men who work only when they are offered employment of unique nature and exceptional pay and the rest of the time earn their beer and scant skittles on any sort of hook or crook.

These men were crowded together in the most promiscuous manner, as if they had been tossed aboard

the vehicles in which they rode, some of them sitting on the sides of the gravel beds, some with their feet hanging out behind, some lying down, others standing up and lurching from side to side with the jouncing of the wagon.

Every man held in his hand a tool of some sort. There were long-handled shovels, spades, pickaxes, mattocks, axes, and crowbars. An uproar of motley and unintelligible conversation went up from these slow-moving vehicles. Heads turned this way and that; mouths continually moved, eyes rolled, and every voice spoke at its highest pitch, the yells of the drivers at the lazy mules adding to the din.

When this procession turned into the pike, as if by a prearranged consent the whole party broke into a loud-mouthed song. There was a merciless lashing of mule hides with black-snake whips, and the seven wagons took the beginning of the hill at a trot. It was as if the scum of the earth had organized a picnic of its own.

Stillman observed the approach of the evil-looking procession in stupefaction, turned his head as it passed oblivious of his presence, and was gazing after it when a sharp, "Gid-ap, gid-ap!" made him turn his head again.

Hunched over in his rickety buckboard and belaboring his hide-bound roan, with a shovel between his legs, a pencil behind his ear, and a new yellow day book sticking out of his vest pocket, old Abie Simons was coming around the turn from the street into the pike.

"Howdy, Mister Stillman! Howdy!" he piped, the roan coming automatically to a stop at the sound of his voice. "Walkin' to yer work this mornin'? Well, I'm ridin' to mine. Yep," he went on as if Stillman had said something, "I'm goin' up on the hill to unearth 'em."

"So you're going to begin moving the graves?" said Stillman, feeling in a queer sort of way that he should say something.

"Yep," Simons nodded; "about the biggest job ever give to a man in this community, I reckon. But I kin do it, you bet. Not a man, woman, or child up there I don't know the pedigree of an' all about 'em. I'll bring 'em down an' put 'em away under their own tumstones, you bet."

He drove on, a cloud of dust flying up behind him. Stillman looked after him, at the old buckboard with its crooked wheels weaving in and out, the loose spokes playing a dismal rattle-bones tune, the thick dust falling on the old man's shoulders and brown straw hat, his stub-ended whip waving up and down over the back of his nag like an orchestra leader's baton. Then Stillman turned and went on into the village. Somehow his legs felt weak under him.

That evening, as he went home rather late, he saw at the western edge of the cemetery some heaps of yellow clay in straight rows; but the wagons and the men were gone.

Supper was half finished in an unwonted silence that evening before his wife spoke, evidently having been busy with her own thoughts.

"I suppose you noticed, Arnie," she said, nibbling at her salad with evident relish, "that they're digging up the old graveyard? The wagons went by all afternoon with boxes in them, and the drivers singing as

if they were on a holiday. Isn't it awful?" She glanced up at him with her blue eyes rather wide, then bent them again to her plate.

Stillman observed her rather narrowly. Perhaps the unhappy train of thought that all day had plagued him had quickened his perception, for all at once the smooth and untroubled comeliness of his wife struck him as having something about it resembling the sleek demureness of a well-fed cat.

Undoubtedly his nerves were on edge a little. He had never had such a thought before.

"I don't believe," he said to himself, "that Lucretia has any heart."

To be sure, she had not the cause for thought that he had. He had told her repeatedly during the first years of their married life that he had left absolutely no trace of that thing behind him; absolutely no evidence. She had believed him. He had never told her, nor intended to tell her, how he had done it. But even so——

He slept ill that night. Continually the picture of Simons jogging up the road, and the row of yellow patches, as if the two were one, haunted him in a repeated dream, and each time the dream awoke him and set him to twisting and turning in an agony of thought. His wife awoke at last.

"What is it, Arnie?" she wanted to know in her soft and sleepy voice. "Are you too warm? Would you like me to get you a drink?" She half raised up in her bed, her cool hand on his forehead. Something in her manner, which always was kind, soothed him.

"No, honey; just too tired to sleep, I guess, but I'll be good now." He put his hand over hers, and she dropped again to sleep. Naturally strong of will, sanguine, with a great belief in himself and his star, Stillman composed himself. Why should he be scared by an old gravedigger? Ten to one old Simons would not be there when that particular grave was opened, and those hoodlums would observe nothing. "There'll be nothing but dust, anyway," he told himself; "nothing but dust. They'll crumble like straw when they fetch them up."

He went to sleep.

Nevertheless, for two days thereafter, to avoid meeting that unsavory procession he walked to his office through his orchard, and so into town by another street. Both evenings he found himself, when his wife was not looking, strolling as carelessly as possible around the porch and gazing off toward the cemetery. The yellow patches were growing in number, he noticed, coming slowly down the hill.

At the bottom of the yard was the little plot occupied by John Emory. His monument stood up taller than the rest, like a landmark.

Stillman, gnawing his mustache, would stand for an hour or more observing these gloomy details. At that distance the yellow patches, all in even array, looked like straw rugs. Scattered about between them were numerous objects of a darker hue. He judged they must be the rotted boards of coffins. He jibed at himself rather testily for looking at these things. No one, he told himself, was interested in those remains of a past generation. Let them find what they

would; who would listen to old Simons? Besides, there would be nothing but dust.

He observed with relief that Lucretia, busy with the usual occupations of her life, said nothing and seemed to think nothing of what was going on up there. Her attitude, he told himself, was more sensible than his. That picnic party in the gravel wagons had rattled him a little. Twenty years was a long time.

Stillman, as we have said, was of a sanguine nature. On the third day after having met with Simons he walked home again by the road as a matter of habit.

Upon turning into the pike he saw again approaching from the direction of the cemetery the string of gravel wagons. Now, as when he saw them first, these men sang or badgered each other with the most empty jests. They sat upon long boxes, of which there were two in each wagon. Their boots, covered with yellow clay, hung over the sides of the sides of the wagons and beat an unrhythmic tattoo on the sideboards, and whether they sang for joy of the work or for another reason, Stillman could not say. Simons brought up the rear, his roan creeping like a sheep dog after the herd.

"Well, Mister Stillman," he called out, "we're gettin' 'em." The roan came to a stop. Simons pointed after the wagons. "Good bunch o' hands there," he remarked, "but nervous. Hear 'em sing? That's to keep their courage up. They'll dig fer me, but not a human remainder will they touch. I do that."

"So the bones——" Stilman began with a dry throat.

"Sound as a nut; sound as a nut!" The old man spoke as if it were a credit to himself, cracked his roan across the back, and drove away.

It is unnecessary to say that this intelligence was a mortal shock to Stillman. He was in great danger. True, it was a matter of chance, but the odds were against him. He walked the rest of the way home rather unsteadily. He must begin to think.

He sat down heavily on the porch, and mopped his wet brow. They were making great progress up there on the hill. The yellow patches were so thickly arrayed now that they formed a great yellow carpet. The feeling that somehow that work would have to be stopped in one spot, and that he was powerless to do it overwhelmed him. If he went up there in the night and opened that one himself, that would arouse suspicion; he might be caught at it, and besides he could not dig a grave by himself on one night.

No, he told himself, he would have to wait and trust in Providence.

Providence? That was the thing he feared. He mopped his forehead again.

Lucretia came out and sat upon the arm of his chair.

"Doesn't it look—ugh—scary up there?" she said, but her tone was light and unconcerned. Stillman again found himself appraising her as he had before. "She has no heart," he told himself, but it was not so much disgust as it was the thought that she could not help him that made him say it.

Shortly afterward they went in to supper, and not until then did Lucretia notice anything wrong with her husband. He sat at the table very gray in the face, and touched nothing. His courage was wholly

gone, and Lucretia, by sheer intuition, divined something of the cause.

Afterward she cornered him. "I know what it is," she said quietly. "You're afraid—of that up there." She pointed toward the cemetery. "But why? You told me no one could find you out, but now I know better. You've got to tell me."

Stillman was in no condition for clever evasion. He told her. "Old Simons is the one that will know," he told her at the last, "and the only one. He acts like a fool, but he's as wise as a serpent. Those hoodlums would only joke about it, and think nothing; but if he sees it we're done for."

Then Stillman knew that he had never understood the woman, that he had never known the law that governed her being. She clutched him by the shoulders. Her eyes were hard and bright.

"You've got to kill Simons," she said, "to-night."

That night, near twelve o'clock, he went stealthily to the mean house in which the old sexton lived. It was his intention to call him out and strike him down in his dooryard. He carried a club for the purpose. But he was rather puzzled to see a light in the kitchen window of the house; the wind blowing prevented him from hearing anything. Approaching the window stealthily, curious about the light, he peered in; and there, sprawled about the kitchen table, in their clay-stained clothes, were the old sexton and a half dozen of his workmen playing cards. Then he remembered that some one had told him that Simons was boarding some of the workmen who had come over from a neighboring town. There was no use, he told himself rather weakly, in trying to do anything here. The risk was greater than up yonder. To call him out would fetch that crowd howling about his ears. The odds were against him. Better trust to luck. He had lost his nerve. He went home and told his wife of the hopelessness of the situation.

Thereafter, grown hard and bitter, Lucretia avoided him and shut herself in her room. Stillman went no more to his office, but sat on the veranda, looking off toward the hill. For only two reasons did he leave his post, when night came to try to sleep, and in the daytime when the wagon train came down the road. Then he hid himself until the clatter passed.

From the hill, during the day, came a confused noise—the shouting of men, rattle of wagons, clinking of tools, the tune of a song, all blended together. They seemed to be happy at that unhappy task. It made him feel sick.

On the third day after she had been apprised of this peril, Lucretia, who sat in the spare room upstairs with her chin in her hands, looking off toward the west, saw from her casement Stillman going up the road toward the cemetery. He walked like an old man. He must go up there, he had told himself, and look the place over; he must find some way out. That was the thing—find some way out. But Lucretia, watching from her window, saw him hesitate after he had gone but a short distance, stop and come back.

Not yet, he told himself. Let him think up some idea on which to work.

Lucretia, from her place, saw him that same morning start twice more up the road, each time getting a little nearer, but each time he came back.

In the afternoon he went all the way.

It seemed to Stillman, as he went through the gate, that the noisy men were trying to celebrate some hideous victory. He could see old Simons in the distance, gesticulating to two men who were digging a hole. Stillman told himself that he would stroll among them casually and engage them in talk. Perhaps he could persuade them not to open that grave—a little smooth talk. He was good at that. They would never suspect the motive. His legs wobbled a little as he approached the workers.

Somehow this was a ticklish business. What would he say? He must not arouse their suspicions.

He leaned against a tree for a moment. He must appear very careless and unconcerned. He had walked rather rapidly up the hill; he had better rest.

As he stood there one of the laborers looked up and saw him. He must have said something, for all at once the whole crowd had fallen silent and were staring at him.

Then Stillman awoke to the fact that he had gone up there in the hot sun without his hat; that his hair hung down in his eyes, and that those laborers were staring at him as at a specter.

He made shift to get away, walking as unconcernedly as he might. But he knew those men at his back were still silent as he went from the yard, and silent when he had gone far down the road. He knew they were gazing after him. Well, let them gaze; he would fool them yet. He had fooled them for twenty years. To-night he would lie awake and think a way out. That was the thing.

Mumbling aloud, dragging his feet along in the dust, he made his bewildered way down the hill and perched again, a doubtful shape, in his aerie on the porch.

On the porch he still sat three days later, as if he had not moved nor shifted his gaze from the yard in that time.

Quiet for hours, in the middle of the afternoon he roused himself convulsively and got up. The workers, hurrying hither and thither in the distance like ants, but drawing nearer and nearer, had at last left a part of its army gathered about the particular spot on which his gaze had been fixed.

He must have dozed. Already the stone had been thrown down and a good-sized heap of dirt thrown up. He went up the road, half doubled, in a half trot. He reached out in front of him first with one hand, then with the other, as if to pull himself along. The dust flew up about him.

Lucretia no longer watched from her window. She lay on her couch, her face in her hands.

Stillman crawled through a broken place in the fence about the lot, and, going upon all fours like an animal, keeping as much as possible behind bushes, got near the place without being seen. Now was the time, he told himself with his throat twitching, to do something. He had forgotten again that he was bare-headed, his clothes dusty. Only let him do something!

At last he could see the men at work and hear their picks striking into the ground. It seemed to him that they threw up the dirt terribly fast. He wanted more time. He would do something sure.

The two men in the grave went lower and lower, the dirt flying up from their shovels. One of them

stooped once, pried at something, and presently fetched up a good-sized stone, which he laid at the side of the grave.

At last the two men both stooped, fetched up a great quantity of rotten boards, which they tossed on the grass, and then themselves leaped out with visible alacrity.

Old Simons came forward. He wore long gloves, and as he climbed into the grave all the noise that filled the yard seemed to center in his high voice.

"I knowed him," he was saying, "boy an' man. I buried him. He died suddint——"

At this moment Arnold Stillman came out of the bushes. His eye was fixed upon the stone by the hole. That was the thing. He would throw that in; he would crush that skull. That was it. Only he must do it as if by accident. That was it. He lurched forward.

One of the men standing by saw him. He said a word, and again a silence fell on the men about. Again they stared at him in wonder.

Stillman raked his hand across his face and leered back at them.

Only the old sexton was unaware of his presence. "Yep, he died suddint," he was saying in his imbecile singsong. "Arnie Stillman married his widder——"

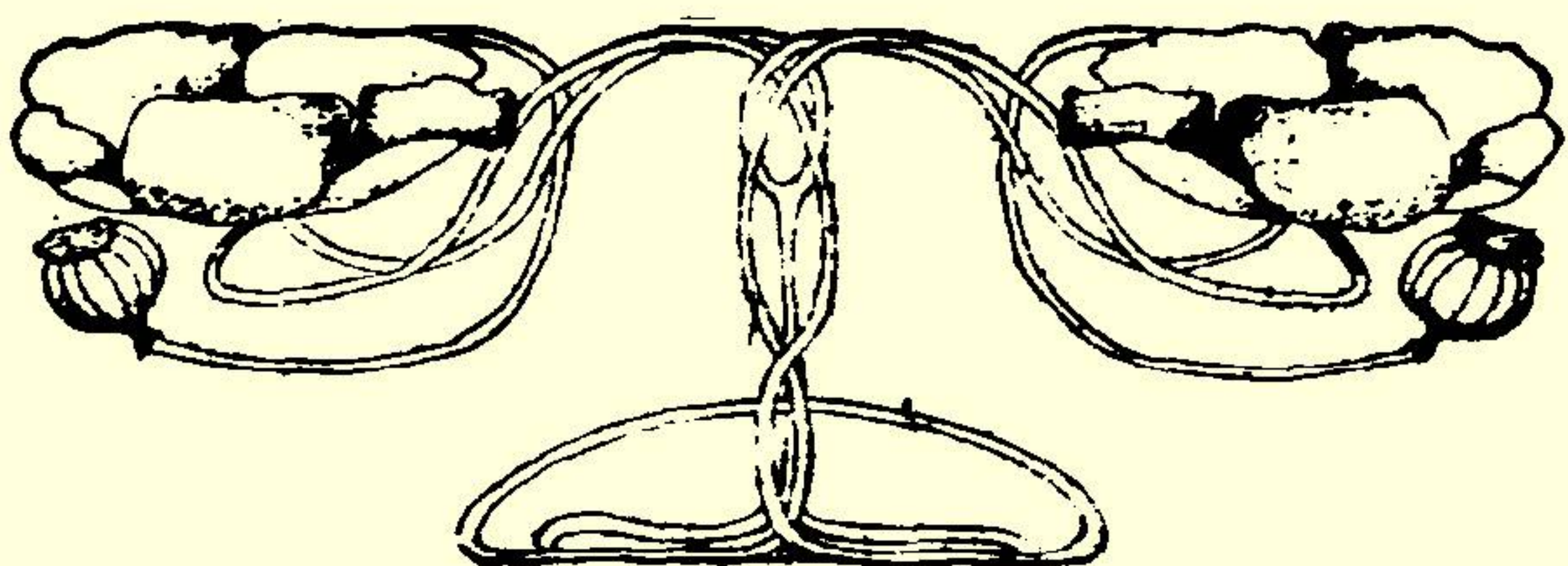
At this moment he stooped, and when he stood up again he held in his hands that object which is imbued by popular fancy with such horror, but which is, in fact, the homeliest of objects; upon which indeed old Simons gazed as at an old friend, with a forgiving eye for the lost habiliments of flesh. And as he called for the box, perhaps to free it from some of the loose particles of clay, he shook the skull violently in his hands. It rattled like a dice box.

It is probable that Arnold Stillman never knew what he did. But they who were watching him remember. They say that whereas he had stopped stock-still at first, when the skull rattled he ran forward, gasping and choking like a man shot through the lungs, and flung himself into the grave, crying out and begging the astounded Simons not to do it again.

When they had seen to this madman—for he was mad and continued so for the rest of his life—and had bound him to a tree, they examined the cause of his fear, and found driven through the back of it a tenpenny nail, the head battered as if by a tremendous blow.

When Lucretia Bennet was accused of complicity in the murder of John Emory she first fainted, then went into hysterics and confessed the act. Afterward, under the chilling effect of the county jail, she thought better of her position and sent for the best criminal lawyer in the State.

She went very well with her defense until they faced her with Exhibit A and rattled it in her face. Afterward they sent her to the pen.



EXTRA PAY.

The following editorial, taken from *The Mess-Kit*, March, 1919, a magazine published monthly by U. S. A. Base Hospital, Camp Merritt, New Jersey, expresses some of our ideas exactly:

"Considered from every viewpoint, and looked at in all its bearings, the proposal that a sum of money equivalent to six months' pay shall be given to every soldier on his discharge from the Army of the United States, is an act of justice. It is a payment of debt. It is due from the nation to its enlisted men. By the application of sound business principles to the consideration of pensions, the United States quite easily concluded that the whole system of pensioning was old-fashioned, stupid, unjust, and costly, and substituted the wiser, and at the same time, the simpler plan of War Insurance, thereby, at a stroke, taxing the pay of the soldier to provide the money needed to pay the Death and Injury Claims in large part, and relieving succeeding generations from the incubus of a gigantic bill for pensions. War Insurance was a sound and right measure. Whether Uncle Sam is actually in pocket because of it is a matter for actuaries to determine, and does not concern us one way or the other. The important thing is that War Insurance did a certain thing in a right way; as it should have been done.

"Now comes to the front the doing of another thing in a right way, the payment to the honorably discharged soldier of a sufficient sum of money to enable him to purchase the civilian clothes he needs in civil life and permit him to pay his way while he is obtaining employment. We need not enter here into details of the hardships that are being endured to-day by honorably discharged soldiers who have no work and no money. These hardships are evident. A case in point is that common one of the soldier in civilian clothes who is still wearing the army overcoat because his money did not go far enough to allow him to complete the civilian dress.

"It should be evident to any one who will give a little thought to the matter that no discrimination in favor of any soldier based upon his Overseas or Domestic Service is right. This is no matter of favors. This is not a reward of trench fighting. It is an acknowledgment of *Service*, and the honorable discharge is proof of *Service Rightly Rendered*. Therefore, any attempt to make a distinction between soldiers in this matter, as by giving six months' pay to the Overseas man, four months' pay to the Domestic Service man, three months' pay to the man permanently stationed in a Washington, D. C., office, et cetera, et cetera, is *wrong*. It is an absurdity. It is unjust. The enlisted man is not asking for a feverish gratitude from his country. He did his work; the work is finished. He is asking for *Justice*. Three-fourths of the men who served in the United States Army have suffered serious money loss because of that service. It is right that the nation should show its recognition of that loss by a grant of cash to the amount of six months' pay to every soldier upon his discharge from the Army. *The Mess-Kit* hopes to see this act of justice taken up, discussed, insisted upon, and put through, regardless of what may have been done in the meantime in the way of tinkering with the plain terms of the plan."

The One-Man Log Drive—

By
Raymond S. Spears



YOU get those logs down through, and you receive your money," Manager Betes, of the Bandsaw Company, said coldly to Trisco Kame, the jobber.

"But, look-a-here, Mr. Betes; can't you understand the fix I'm in? I ain't got the money to pay the loggers; I can't——"

"That's none of my concern," Betes replied coldly. "The contract says that when the logs come down into the boom you are to be paid for the job——"

"Then——then——" Kame stared at the man, unable to believe his ears. "Then you—I can't get paid——"

"Oh, you'll be paid—when you bring the logs down!" Betes permitted a cruel twinkle to enter his eyes and a cruel smile to flicker on his lips.

"And if they—if they don't come down?" Kame whispered.

"Oh, if you throw up the job—if you don't show proper energy in taking advantage of the spring high water, we'll have to bring them down ourselves, of course."

Kame staggered back two steps, big, strong, courageous old woodsman that he was. Betes had pronounced sentence upon him. Kame had put all his money into felling, skidding, hauling, and dumping two million feet of spruce and pine into the lower stillwater of Clearwater Creek. Now the spring was at hand, and it was time to go up to the camp with forty loggers to begin the drive.

A few hundred dollars to pay any log drivers who quit, to meet the incidental expenses, to buy supplies at the store—owned by the Bandsaw Company—would see him through. But he had stretched his credit to the last, utmost dollar. He was unable to borrow money anywhere. The Bandsaw Company, masters of credit in the valley, refused him the thing that would save him his contract, save him his life's saving.

In refusing him the credit, they were exercising their privilege, and in exercising their privilege they

could save all the payments due to Kame for the previous summer's cut, winter haul, and the final profit on a good drive. They would get all the work done for the cost of what they called a "sheriff's drive," or a "bondsman's drive" down the river. The scheme would add a matter of twenty-five to thirty thousand dollars to the profits of the company. It would greatly satisfy the manager, who was part owner, and his silent partners as an exhibition of acumen. It was excusable, because it had not been specified that Trisco Kame, the jobber, should receive any payments until the logs were in the boom. That was a detail which five glasses of whisky, during negotiations, had caused Trisco Kame to overlook.

Kame walked backward, as though he expected to be attacked by a man with a club, and as though he was powerless to defend himself. A qualm entered the heart of Manager Betes. Kame was hard hit, and Betes had not expected him to show his wound. Kame was a big man, strong, brave, and a good sport. He had not expected Kame to weaken, break down.

"I say, you——" Betes began, and at the soft words Kame's face flushed from its pallor. Into his eyes returned a certain strength, a certain bracing up under the blow, and at sight of that Betes smiled a very little, for Kame would be strong. "You're not going to give up the contract, are you?" Betes suggested.

"Give it up?" Kame repeated slowly. "You mean quit?"

The woodsman was growing stronger under the staggering blow, which would cost him twenty-five thousand dollars and leave him five thousand dollars in debt instead of with a little fortune of twenty thousand dollars to the good.

"If you are going to give up," Betes suggested, "we'll see that your creditors receive their money. You can start free of debt after your—after the unfortunate enterprise——"

"You dirty scoundrel hound! You cur that yaps at a man in the road! You dog owned by the valet of dogs!" Kame suddenly whispered, and, leaping, he caught the manager of the Bandsaw Company a blow with the flat front of a fist five inches wide and three inches long. Under that crash the nose of Betes flattened down like rubber, and his two eyes popped out as the face left the vicinity of the hand and led the way across the ample office into the corner.

Kame stood staring at the man tumbling in agony on the floor. He looked around expectantly. No one arrived to interfere. It was after nine o'clock in the evening. He had ridden in from Woodsend to Bandsaw Mills, after days of agonizing search for money, to make the final appeal to the company for mercy.

Kame saw the manager spitting out two or three teeth as he sat up on the floor. He saw the tongue of the man wagging and heard choking noises, which gradually turned into mumbled, understandable words.

"Now we will get you!" Betes whimpered. "Now we will fix you! You'll get yours for this! We got you! We got you!"

Kame started toward the man, and swung back his fist for another blow, but from the manager's expression, from his mumbling, from his sitting posture, the logger knew that Betes could not ward off the blow which he could not see coming. Betes was half unconscious. He was broken, and the blood dripped and ran down his face, over his scraggling mustache. Kame could not hit any man who was down.

"I guess you'll look bad 'nough as it is," Kame muttered, and then aloud: "That's what you git, Betes!"

Betes listened to the voice. He struggled to his feet. He leaned weakly against the wall. Whatever else he was, Betes was no coward. He fought his scattered wits and herded them so that he could speak.

"You can kill me, Kame, and they'll hang you for it, but I tell you now you got to get those logs down—or—or you'll——"

"And if I bring 'em down? If I take my crew and bring 'em down——"

"I'll keep the contract!" Betes choked. "You know that, Trisco Kame—I'd 'a' paid your debts but——"

With the flat of his hand Kame slapped the bloody cheek of the manager and sent him spinning around three times, till his legs twisted under him and he fell over his flat-topped desk.

"And I'll keep my contract!" Kame exclaimed. "I'm through beggin', Jenk Betes, d'ye hear? I'm through begging!"

Then Kame left the office and strode out into the chill, sap-weather night. He jumped into his cutter in front of the office and started the horse back up the creek ridges. When he crossed the bridge to the south side of the stream, and turned up past the great boom, he could hear the water flushing over the dam in long waves; he could see the black streak of thaw along the banks of the millpond boom; he could see by the pale moonlight that rain was coming soon and that the days for the spring drive had arrived—and he hadn't a dollar with which to pay a livery man to take a log driver up the creek to his job. He didn't even have a man to drive his mortgaged team with the dinners of the crew, supposing he had a cook and grub to serve a crew.

So he drove on up the creek, looking down into the deep valley from the ridge. It was a narrow valley, with many new washes along the stream bed. It was a wild, swift stream, with no falls, but with a constant succession of shoals and rifts, with but few short, poollike still waters.

He looked down into the gorges with such emotions as ruin gives a man. He was tempted to spring down into the ice, and, stopping at one point, he did walk out on a ledge of granite which the wind had swept bare of snow to look at the stream far below. Looking, he witnessed the opening of the rifts by the passing down of the ice.

The stream seemed to invite him to leap, and he turned back to his cutter with some difficulty.

"I might's well quit," he pleaded, only to think, "I'll go on up; I'd better go on up!"

Beside him the telephone wires sang in the light, frosty breeze. Sometimes a length of wire would whistle, sometimes he passed a humming wire, and sometimes he heard a rattling, metallic growl. The various sounds distracted his attention. He kept looking at the wire, thinking how often he had called down to the mills over it, thinking how many loads of supplies he had ordered hauled up to the camp, and he had paid for the supplies as long as his money lasted. Then he had begged for and received credit. He owed a store, a blacksmith, a harness shop, and a hardware-supply company.

The thought of the debts pressed upon him, and he choked with emotion as he drove along. It seemed to him as though there was nothing left for him to do. If he jumped down into the stream that would end it, and that would also begin many unhappy things for his wife and three children, two of them school-girls, and a son who was a brave, strong lad.

He rode on with his sleigh bells ringing loudly in the night and the hoofs of his horse rattling on the crusty ruts of many sleds and sleighs. It seemed to him as though he had never had so many things to think about during his life, and among the things that mocked him were the glasses of liquor with which Betes had plied him sociably before getting down to the business of signing the contract. He had hardly recognized his signature, but it was properly witnessed.

"I was trapped!" Kame sobbed. "They got me foul and they caught me and now they'll sell my hide for the dirty money they'll make out of me having put down the timber and hauling it to the dump. They

get it free at the dump and they pay only the floating!" His wrath choked him. Never had he known before what it was to be helpless. He had realized how helpless he was, even while the manager slumped to the floor, his face broken under the fist of superior physical power. Groveling there, Betes was the better man; Betes had the log chains on Kame!

Kame went on up through the clearings to the big woods, and along the road to the log camps twenty miles from the mill town. He drove to the stable and put up his horse. It was a big, cold stable, but there was a warm little den for the light roadster, which began immediately to munch the oats and corn Kame threw into the feed box for it. Then he crossed to the camp just at dawn.

He walked out to the little shed under the trees a hundred yards from the camp, with big signs painted in red and black on all sides:

"DANGER!"

He found the snow shoveled from the door, and opened it with the key on his ring. In all directions from the shack ran squirrel tracks on the crust, and when he looked inside he found the eight boxes of sixty per cent to be used in breaking log jams on the stream stacked in the middle, with coils of fuse hanging on nails, and boxes of detonating caps in a cigar box nailed on a two-by-four beam of the frame. The squirrels had stacked a pile of leaves in the back of the shed and filled it with several bushels of beechnuts, hemlock cones, and seeds.

"Well, that'll sure do it!" Kame grimaced as he looked at the mass of explosive. "It's lucky I got it in here when I did."

He took down a fuse end and cut a length of about two feet and fitted a cap on it. Then he needed an ax to open one of the boxes. It occurred to him that he had better thaw the stuff out first, and with that he started for the lobby with one of the boxes. In the lobby, he began to thaw the sticks.

While he worked an idea came to him. He went out and brought in all the boxes of dynamite, and determined to thaw them.

"When I get ready to go," he said to himself, "I'll take the whole camp with me."

The narrow gorge where the dam stood reached all the way down to the mills, except for a few narrow flats. The water was backed upon over a thousand acres of old beaver meadow and lake. The overflow was more than four miles long and a half mile wide.

"I've a lot of water here. If I had a crew I could get those logs down in a hurry——" Kame mused, and then he thought: "I can get them down——"

He looked down the narrow valley. There were the logs on the ice, tens of thousands of them. They were stretched along for more than a mile, piled up in rows.

"I could do it, if——" He hesitated.

He laughed and cackled at the idea which now possessed him. Returning to the camp, he piled four of the boxes of thawed sticks on the wood sled and hauled them to the dam. He returned and brought down the other boxes, and then looked the cribbing and filling over for the best place to put the stuff

to lift the structure out of the way of the hundred million cubic feet of water held back by the dam.

"Yes, sir," he said to himself. "When that water starts I expect it'll take those logs right down to the boom—them that ain't washed out over the hills. Some'll get down!"

"I'll just go tell Betes what's coming," he said to himself. "It'll give him some ideas to look ahead to."

So he returned up the trail to the camp, two hundreds yards away, and, taking down the telephone, he called the Bandsaw Mills. The reply was gratifyingly prompt.

"I want to talk to Betes," he told the office.

"You'll have to get him at his house," the stenographer replied.

"What—he ain't sick, is he?" Kame asked.

"No, sir; he fell down stairs last night and hurt his face——"

"Yes, he did!"

"Really, he did!" the girl replied.

Kame laughed aloud.

"I can get him on the private wire, Mr. Kame, if you wish," she suggested. "He said important business could——"

"I wish you would," Kame assured her. "He'll think this is important."

Kame soon heard the muffled voice of Betes.

"Hello, Betes," Kame called cheerfully. "How are you?"

"I'm sore," Betes replied. "Don't you forget that."

"Well, I'm not," Kame assured him. "I'm all over being sore. I thought I'd tell you; I'm going to start those logs down all right."

"What—you got money?" Betes asked sharply and surprised.

"No—I'm a white-water man, you know; I'm pretty good on my feet. I'm going to start 'em right down. It's a one-man drive this time, so here goes. I thought you'd like to know it."

"Oh, what you giving me!" Betes jeered. "One man drive those logs down? Not in a hundred years!"

"Well, the ice was going out last night, and I thought——"

"It's all down against the boom this morning. Didn't know for certain if it'd stop." Betes laughed. "Broke chains on the inside strands. We got 'em fixed this morning, though. We're all ready for them; I'll telephone when the first log comes down."

Kame hesitated. Betes was mocking him.

"I mean it," Kame declared. "The drive begins to-day."

"Glad to know you found the money," Betes replied. "We couldn't do it, you know; it wouldn't be business to let you——"

"Money? I've no money!" Kame retorted.

"What? No money! How did you—what have you got to start 'em with—a song and dance?"

"No, sir, Mr. Betes, I've got no money at all. But I got it fixed all right. I got a tune they'll run to!"

"What have you got, credit? That's better than money. Good joke, Kame, dandy! Credit's sure better than money!"

"No, sir, it ain't money ner credit," Kame replied. "Better yet than that."

"I can't see how——"

"Let me whisper in yer ear, Betes," Kame called softly. "I got dynamite!"

"Dynamite! What good——"

"The reservoir is chuck-full, Mr. Betes, and the dynamite's in the dam, with the fuse laid. You'll be hearing of it likely in about ten minutes. I thought you'd like to sit by yer windy and see the logs come down into the boom—with two miles of water behind them—ah!"

Betes gasped. Kame listened for the signs of the man's anguish. Now the crooked manager caught the significance of what the tricked jobber had in mind to do—but not the full significance at that.

"You'll go to jail for twenty years!" Betes cried. "Why, they'll hang you! It'll wash the mills out—people will be——"

"Sure it'll wash the mills out, and your own house, where you set now, with them. That's what I intend. But I'll go up with the dam, old boy; no hanging for me! Good-by!"

"Wait! Wait! Man, you don't mean it!"

"Don't I? Listen!"

Kame caught up the watchman's rifle and fired it.

"Hear that?" he asked Betes.

Yes," breathlessly.

"That's a cap. I'll leave the receiver off and you'll hear the jar. Good——"

"Say, old man, I was only fooling," Betes cried. "We did not mean to hold you up. A gang of loggers will start up, your own men——"

"And take me wit' a sheriff's warrant! Not me, old boy! Too many fools have waited for that kind of game."

"I'll tell you, then; I'll send you money——"

"Too late, old man——"

"Then the contract, and a new one, signed to you. I'll send it by any one—and any one else that shows up you can kill."

"I think you are a dirty liar," Kame declared.

"I told you that if the logs came down you would be paid," Betes reminded him. "We live by the contract. I'll tell—I'll tell you the truth. The ice to-day broke the south crib and we could not let the logs come down till it's repaired and a new one built. If you set the dam down—Lord! You know what'll happen."

"Sure I do! But go on; your voice is music in my ear as I get ready to die——"

"You don't believe me! You wouldn't—— Say! Say! Wait! I'll tell you! I'll bring in witnesses!"

"Call them in, and I'll hear you talk to them," Kame jeered. "'Tis sweet music, you scoundrel. I would hear you beg now!"

"I'm begging. Why, it'd ruin me to have the mills washed out!"

"Call over the telephone, then, and I'll listen. But mind! Now call for Jerry Wilks an' Tim O'Brien and Sam Higgins, all friends of mine. Yes, sir!"

Then Betes caught central, who had been listening in to see if they were through talking. Central called the hotel where Jerry was found, and Jerry brought Tim and Sam down to Betes' house, and they sat by while Betes talked to Kame over the wire. Then,

one by one, the three verified the statements that they were there and listening to Betes himself.

"Now tell them that I broke yer old face," Kame ordered, and he heard the narrative of what had happened the previous night, including Betes' statement to Kame that Kame must find money, as his credit was ended.

"Tell them why you choked me down!" Kame ordered, and he heard Betes explaining that if Kame could not bring the logs down he would not get the money, and that thus the company would profit by twenty-five thousand dollars.

The friends all told Kame that they had heard this statement. And Kame laughed with delight.

"I sure like to hear the scoundrel beg!" Kame said. "But I have no faith that he'll keep the contract here while he has the written contract," Kame declared to Jerry.

Jerry, a shrewd hotel keeper, who had been a log jobber himself, talked to Betes, and Kame could hear the gist of it.

"He says," Jerry called into the wire, "he says that he'll draw a check for five thousand——"

"Tell him to go to blazes!" Kame said. "He owes me twenty-five thousand this minute and five thousand for bringing the logs down. Tell him that!"

Jerry said just that.

"I'll draw my check for thirty thousand," Betes said.

"His own check is no good!" Kame declared. "Tell him a company check and have it certified."

In two minutes Jerry talked into the phone again.

"He says it shall be done; he's got the company check book here now, and he is drawing the check. And he is sending it to be certified at the bank."

"I'll wait, then," Kame answered.

In twenty minutes Jerry said:

"I have the check, certified and signed by the bank and by Betes, for thirty thousand, Kame."

"You mean it?"

"Sure I do!"

"Then beat it for the camp and I'll meet you on the way!" Kame shouted.

"That I will," Jerry chuckled.

So Kame went down the road, rifle in hand, and met his friend, who was behind a swift team in a good sleigh. He brought the check with him, and when Kame had read it tears rolled down his face, but he was laughing aloud.

"What now, Kame?" Jerry asked.

"You'll go down and pick me forty drivers that'll take the winter crop down easylike," Kame replied. "And I'll—well, I'll go make sure the logs and the water do not all go down the valley at once. I'll take the dynamite back to the red house."

"You meant it? You'd 'a' blowed the dam up!" Jerry exclaimed. "I thought you was bluffing!"

"Oh, no, Jerry, not me!" Kame grinned. "But if Betes would of thought twice he'd known the logs would have jammed within ten mile and never a log reached the dam—just a drop of water is all. So far it was a bluff—that he dared not call, and no man dared call, for the drop of water I'm mentioning would 'a' been the drop of water too much!"

Soldiers and Sailors Personal Relief Section

Conducted by a former officer of
the Adjutant General's department,
U.S. Army.

Questions and Answers.

P. L.—Question: What regulations have been drafted to date concerning discharged officers and enlisted men wearing service chevrons, buttons, et cetera?

Answer: Officers and enlisted men returning from overseas for the purpose of discharge, whether as casuals or with their units, are permitted to wear divisional, Army Corps, or Army insignia until they are discharged. They may also wear the overseas cap and retain the same after discharge. Officers who do not contemplate remaining in the service are permitted to wear the trench coat during the present emergency.

The wearing of the Sam Browne Belt in the United States is not authorized.

The scarlet chevron, which is worn on the upper left sleeve, point up, is for honorably discharged enlisted men only, and indicates, while the uniform is being worn, that the wearer responded to the demands of the country, performed creditable service in the Army, and finally received an honorable discharge therefrom. Any soldier who was honorably discharged since August 18, 1918, and who did not receive such chevrons, may apply to the Quartermaster General of the Army, Washington, D. C., therefor.

Gold chevrons are worn on the right arm to indicate wounds, and on the left arm to indicate service in a theater of operations, one chevron for each six months of such service.

Silver chevrons on the left arm indicate service outside a theater of operations, one for each six months of such service.

A blue chevron is worn on the left arm to indicate less than six months service in a theater of operations.

Gold, silver, and blue service chevrons are worn on the lower half of the left sleeve, points down, and service chevrons of different colors will never be worn at the same time.

These chevrons are for wear on the Army uniform only, and should not be worn on civilian clothing. Neither gold, blue, or silver chevrons will be issued



to men after their discharge from the Army, but the War Department has no objection to honorably discharged officers or enlisted men, who rendered the necessary service, purchasing service chevrons from private firms, provided they wear them *only* on the Army uniform when that uniform may be worn, and provided also that they make application to the Adjutant General of the Army, stating service rendered, so that the same may be verified and the right of the applicant to wear the chevrons determined.

No badge or medal has yet been authorized by the War Department for service in France, or any other European country, or merely for service in the present war, but the Fine Arts Commission is working on the design of a medal to be presented to all who served honorably in the present war; and the adoption of a button to be worn in the lapel of the civilian coat, after discharge, by officers and men, is also under consideration. This button will probably indicate whether the wearer served abroad or in the United States, and whether or not he was wounded in action.

The citation of an organization in orders of the American Expeditionary Force does not carry any decoration.

"Around the World"

Twenty-two Chinamen Unable to Best Giant Sailor.

Metaphorically and literally speaking, twenty-two Chinese members of the crew of the Danish freighter *Arabien*, which arrived at San Francisco, Cal., from Honolulu, had their hands full when, returning from an unauthorized joy jaunt ashore, they essayed to toss R. Geisler, chief engineer, overboard. Geisler weighs between three hundred and fifty and four hundred pounds, and he put up a mighty battle.

A riot call was sent in, but before the police had arrived the twenty-two Chinese had fled the ship, leaving Geisler minus most of his clothing, but with all of his four hundred pounds intact. The police then turned their attention to rounding up the crew. Twenty-one were captured and booked at the city prison.

The battle was precipitated when Geisler reprimanded thirteen members of the crew who had returned drunk from a night on shore without leave. At a given signal the entire crew rushed Geisler. Geisler didn't budge. The Chinese fell back for another attack. Again they hurled themselves as one man upon the chief engineer. Again they fell back, gasping for breath.

At this instant the chief officer, F. Heisterberg, made his appearance with a revolver in his hand. The twenty-two Chinese then fled.

Wild Man Escapes Posse With Dogs.

The alleged wild man that caused such excitement in Webster County, W. Va., last fall, by running at large in the woods, killing farmers' hogs and chickens, and who chased three schoolboys a distance of over two miles, but was unable to overtake them because of an apparent lameness in one of his legs, is again creating a reign of terror in that section of the country.

More hogs and chickens have been killed lately, and several families have been aroused after midnight by terrifying disturbances in their barns, coops, and pens, accompanied by unusual sounds that only a wild animal or a dangerous lunatic could utter.

The disturbances were so terrible to hear that courageous men freely acknowledge that they had made no effort to solve them during their occurrence.

At last, however, a party of eight resolute men banded together, and with dogs went out to run the wild man to earth. Here is what happened, as related by John Forbes, a member of the posse.

"We started up through a thick patch of woods with the dogs well in advance. As we neared a large boulder, a big red rock measuring about twenty-four feet in circumference and at least eight feet high, the dogs came running back and seemed inclined to skulk behind the men. They were scolded and switched, but not one of them would again take the lead.

"As we approached the big boulder, which had

seemed to stampede the dogs, out jumped a figure that resembled a gorilla more than it did a human being. It was clothed in rags and tatters of various hues—all kinds of cloth—the remains of a woman's calico skirt being a part of his covering. He was a white man—that much is certain—but he resembled a weather-beaten scarecrow more than anything else.

"He had no shoes on his feet, which were almost black with grime and dirt. His hair was long and lay like a mat on his broad shoulders. His whiskers reached down to his belt, or to the piece of cheap yellow rope he wore for a belt. We all feel pretty sore that he got away from us."

According to Mr. Forbes and his companions, the wild man, when he saw the posse approaching the big boulder, leaped out, and, brandishing a huge club and uttering a bloodcurdling scream, bounded away with the swiftness of a deer, his lameness of last fall evidently having disappeared.

Shots were taken after at his fleeing form, but no bullets reached their mark. The hunt was continued, but no trace of their prey could be found. The hunt will be kept up until the horrible creature is either captured or killed. The men have an official order to shoot to kill as a last resort.

Woman Held on Track Until Car Crushes Couple.

In what they believe is the most peculiar case of murder and suicide, one in which a man seeking death stood in the track of an onrushing street car holding a woman who struggled to escape, the Philadelphia police thus far have been unable to establish even the identity of the young couple who met that tragic death.

Both Philadelphia and Montgomery County officials are working on the case, and have come to the conclusion that the man lured the girl to Seven Stars, below Norristown, where they met their death, and then, without her suspecting what was in his mind, seized and held her until the car crushed them to death. Both bodies were badly crushed, and the man had carefully cut from his clothing all marks of identification.

According to the motorman of the car, the man deliberately stood between the rails holding the woman, who struggled to get away. Despite that the brakes were applied, the car was going so fast that the motorman could not avoid hitting the couple.

The motorman caught a glimpse of the man's face in the rays of the headlight. He said the man faced the onrushing car unflinchingly while he held the woman in his arms.

Bluebeard's Castle.

You remember, of course, the story of Bluebeard, the mysterious room in his castle, and his unfortunate wives, whose bodies were found therein. That Blue-

beard belonged to the realm of legends, but there was a Bluebeard in real life. It is not believed that he had a lot of wives and killed them, but it is known that this man Bluebeard was a very wicked pirate who killed sailors and sunk and robbed ships.

Many years ago he made his headquarters on St. Thomas Island, one of the three Danish West Indies that our government bought a while ago.

In the days when pirates sailed the seas a great many of them lived on the islands in that vicinity, among them Morgan, Kidd, and Blackbeard, a brother of Bluebeard. It is part of the history of this island that Bluebeard, the pirate, made his home in a strong stone tower there, high on a hill overlooking the sea, where he could sight ships and either go out after them or send out his men.

Many years afterward a Danish planter bought the property and built a good house next to the tower. Some years ago Mrs. J. B. Nies, of Brooklyn, N. Y., bought Bluebeard's castle, as it was called, for a winter home. You may be sure there are no mysterious rooms or dungeons in or under this old tower, but it makes a good landmark and observatory.

Actress' Crime Laid to Hypnotist.

Judge Thomas C. T. Crain, presiding in the New York court of general sessions one day recently, acting on reports submitted by a lunacy commission, Doctor Frank A. McGuire, Tombs physician and insanity expert, and his probation officers, accepted a plea of guilty entered by Norma McLeod, an actress, to a charge of forgery, and then suspended sentence on the ground that the young woman had been in a state of psycho-hypnosis at the time of committing the crime. At the same time Judge Crain signed a bench warrant for the arrest of a vaudeville hypnotist alleged to have been responsible for Miss McLeod's mental condition.

"When I passed that check, your honor, I do not believe I knew what I was doing," Miss McLeod, who is only twenty-one and lives in East Fifty-fifth Street, told Judge Crain when her case came up for discussion. "I met a hypnotist out West, and he said I would make a good subject for his act. He told me that if I would lend myself to him the act would be a headliner. In time he gained complete control over me and made me do many unusual things while I was under his hypnotic influence."

The actress, who had been charged with passing a forged check for one hundred and fifty dollars on Louis Missi, proprietor of a West Forty-eighth Street rooming house, last November, also informed Judge Crain that she could not remember her parents, but that she was brought up by a family out in St. Paul and ran away from home when sixteen years old to go on the stage.

Doctor Frank A. McGuire, Tombs physician and insanity expert; Probation Officers Daniel Kimball and Mrs. Katherine Sprague, as well as the young woman's attorneys, W. D. Embree and Louis Fabricant, testified to the woman's condition. She has been under observation in the Tombs since her arrest, and a lunacy commission was appointed at once time to make an investigation. When Miss McLeod was first arrested she appeared to be in a trance.

Doctor McGuire testified that it was his belief that

she was suffering from an acute form of psycho-hypnosis. The report of the lunacy commission, composed of a doctor, a lawyer, and layman, rendered an opinion that the young woman was suffering from a mental condition which could not be classified, and which was believed to have been brought about by her having been hypnotized so often.

Investigation of the young woman's story confirmed her statements, and Judge Crain suspended sentence and placed the actress on probation. The name of her alleged theatrical partner was not made public.

Spirit Raps on Coffin Lid Heard by Mourners.

Whether one can return to earth after death and manifest his presence is being discussed by friends of the late Ervin A. Rice, of Chicago, since a most mysterious incident at the funeral of his widow the other day.

Here are the facts:

Mr. Rice was always interested in supernatural phenomena, and, like Sir Oliver Lodge, devoted much study to the subject. His friends consider it certain that, if he could, he would communicate with them from the other world. He died last April.

His widow was buried a short time ago from her old home, 6615 Yale Avenue. The son, Victor Rice, and two married daughters, with about fifty friends, were in the house.

The Reverend Doctor Rufus A. White, pastor of the People's Liberal Universalist Church, a lifelong friend of the family, was delivering the sermon—more in the nature of a familiar talk to friends than a formal service.

On the wall above the coffin was a painting of Mr. Rice, and across the room two fine photographs of him.

Speaking of the changes wrought in the world in the few months since Mr. Rice's death, Doctor White was saying:

"I know that if our dear friend Ervin could return to us now, he would be greatly surprised——"

The speaker was interrupted by three loud and distinct raps, slowly given, from the vicinity of the coffin. Everybody heard them. The speaker paused and turned his head, but recovered himself and went on with his remarks. The undertaker walked over to the coffin.

There were no further manifestations, but the impression on those present was most profound. It is declared that some of them firmly believe that the spirit of Mr. Rice answered the words of his old friend with three raps—an unmistakable "yes."

After the services several of the men examined the room to see whether the wall might have cracked and made the sounds. They found nothing.

"It was a most remarkable occurrence, coming just as it did," said Franklin Symonds, attorney, living just two doors from the Rice home. "I have no explanation to offer—we all heard the sounds, and they sounded like raps on the casket."

"I know that if Ervin Rice could return he would, and he'd try to make us understand. Whether he did there is no proof one way or the other."

Doctor White was loath to speak of the matter.

"Yes," he admitted, "I did hear some sounds. I heard what sounded like a rapping three or four

times, and finally there came three distinct sounds so loud that all heard them, and I paused for a moment. But I went on and nothing more happened."

Doctor White did not admit that he thought it anything supernatural.

"I didn't give it much thought," he said. "Of course I don't know what it was—there isn't any way of knowing."

Loses Memory, Recovers it in Philadelphia.

A victim of amnesia, whose case is puzzling the police, has now recovered his memory and said he was William Meyer, sixteen years old, of No. 400 East Twenty-third Street, New York City.

William Meyer, sixteen years old, living with his parents at No. 400 East Twenty-third Street, lost his memory when he went after a pair of eyeglasses one afternoon. His father, Christian Meyer, was overjoyed when he learned from Philadelphia that the boy had been found. The boy is a graduate of the Washington Irving High School, and has been working as an office boy in the Little printing establishment. When he disappeared he had thirteen dollars, which he was to use to pay for the eyeglasses.

Blue Ridge Mountains Yield Treasure.

The Blue Ridge Mountains and their vicinity proved a favorite hiding place for the wealthy person or miser during the Civil War and days before that, according to the many stories that are being told of the finding of crocks and glass jars filled with gold coin and rare jewelry hidden away in secluded places, in an old house or under the stump of an old tree—the latter probably being a growing tree when the treasure was placed there.

One of the latest finds was reported a short time ago, when an earthen crock of an antique design, a pattern dating back possibly more than a half century ago, filled almost to overflowing with gold coins of various denominations and rare old pieces of jewelry of almost priceless designs, evidently imported to this country from England and France, was found by a carpenter while repairing an old dwelling on the farm owned by Emanuel Lorsbaugh, of Hagerstown, Md., located near Cearfoss, about ten miles west of the former city, near the mountains.

The house, an old structure, erected long before the Civil War, was being renovated by workmen, when the treasure was discovered in a unique hiding place.

The crock was found hidden well back among some braces that support the studding, between the plastering and weatherboarding. A square hole had been made in the plastering and the opening then covered with boards, which were whitewashed, making it appear like the rest of the plastering.

When the carpenter came to the spot and sounded it with a hammer, he discovered it was made of a different material, and, through curiosity, proceeded to remove the covering. Upon doing so, he was astounded to discover an old earthen crock filled with glistening gold coins tucked far back under the braces that acted as supports to the studding.

The building, which is located far back in a densely wooded region, has changed hands so often during the past half century that the owner of the treasure

could not be determined, but it is likely the present owner will lay claim to the money and trinkets.

The coins, dated between 1830 and 1855, were probably hidden in the crock some time during the Civil War days, when General Robert E. Lee and the members of the Army of Northern Virginia marched through that portion of western Maryland, and where battles were staged at Sharpsburg, Antietam, Shepherdstown, Leitersburg, Smithsburg, and other points. The scene where the old house stands is near where many skirmishes took place between Union and Confederate soldiers, and at that time money or jewelry were not safe and banks were few and far between.

This is the third lot of treasure found near and in Hagerstown. About three years ago workmen unearthed a can of gold coins in an old residence near Smithsburg, in an old log house, which had been hidden during the Civil War by an old miser who wanted to be sure that his wealth would remain intact from the depredation of robbers who infested these regions during those days. Several thousand dollars in gold were found at that time.

It is estimated that the crock found near Cearfoss contained gold worth \$2,000, while it is impossible to place a price on the jewelry, which is very rare.

A few years ago, while several workmen were excavating for a foundation for a house in Hagerstown, where an old brick house had been dismantled, one of the men struck his pick into a glass jar, and gold, silver, and copper coins flew in every direction. These were gathered up, and a hunt was made for more treasure. Ten more quart glass jars were unearthed filled with coin, making the find worth several thousand dollars.

Two years ago, while a couple of hunters were hunting in Frederick County, Maryland, near the Blue Ridge Mountains, their dog jumped a rabbit, and, after a long chase, the bunny took refuge in an old stump in a field. When the hunters came up they of course, attempted to rout the rabbit by poking the barrel of their gun in the opening that led under the stump.

After a few stiff prods they heard some crash, and several pieces of gold coin rolled into sight. The men could hardly believe their eyes. Was this a fairy tale bordering on the hidden treasure of Captain Kidd or Bluebeard? Or were they confronted with a story of the real cloth? To be sure, such was the case, as there was the gold all right, glistening in the sun.

They lost no time in gathering up the pieces that were in sight, and a further investigation proved more interesting. After chopping away about half of the old stump the rabbit emerged and was soon lost from sight, which was, at that time, immaterial to them, as they thought it was deserving of its liberty after leading them to a gold mine.

The hunters were rewarded in their search by coming across a broken half-gallon glass jar, which had been filled with gold coin in all denominations, from \$2.50 to \$20—and the amount ran well into the thousands of dollars.

Premonition of Death in Dream Comes True.

Edward Shafer, sixty-two years old, a contractor of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., dreamed one night recently that if he went to work the following day he would meet

with a fatal accident. He told his wife about his dream, but decided to take a chance, declaring that he was a bit alarmed, but that it was only a dream.

Shafer would never speak the words "good-by," saying that it was time enough to say them at death. When he left home daily he always did so with a "good day." It was fate probably that caused a change the last time he left home, for he said "good-by." The family thought it strange.

Three hours later the body of Shafer was brought home. The walls of an old building on which he was making repairs collapsed and he was buried under the debris, being instantly killed.

He Soaked U. S. Dice in German's Blood.

"Spud" Thomas, gentleman of color, who has seen blood spilled on several of the battlefields of France and who likes his little game of chance, more especially with the spotted cubes, has been cleaning out crap games with great regularity. In fact, he never failed to drive the civilian coons to cover.

Spud used a pair of dice which he said were made from the bones of a dead German, and the professional negro crap shooters, superstitious as they are, just simply could not win when they faded the dead man's bones. Anyway, that is the way they told it to the police after Spud was carrying the bank rolls and loose change of all the rollers of the negro section of Dallas, Texas.

But Spud met his match. Another dusky soldier wearing a gold stripe or two on his coat sleeve blew into town. He heard of Spud's reputation, and immediately went to work to wreck it. The game was easily arranged, and Spud agreed that he would shoot his own dice and permit the other soldier to do the same.

More than a hundred darkies who had been cleaned out by Spud were present at the little game between the two soldiers. And the newcomer went away with all Spud's coin, his watch, surplus clothing, decorations, and everything else of value.

When the game was over the two soldiers who had stuck a few Huns each with their bayonets and killed a few more with bullets, shook hands. Spud was anxious to learn of the great power of the newcomer's dice, since he knew they were not loaded.

"Why, nigger, I soaked dem dice in the blood of a German I killed at Château-Thierry," said the newcomer. "Dey simply ain't no way to beat a man with these craps."

"My Gawd, man, why didn'tcha tell me? I ain't never shooting agin' good old American dice soaked in blood of speared Germans," said Spud, and he went his way to his quarters, believing that his luck had been destroyed.

Aged Chinese Woman is Encoffined Alive.

An unusual case of filial ingratitude is reported from Huchow, China, in the *Japan Advertiser*. A very aged woman lived with her son's family, who were so poor that they did not have necessary food. To reduce expenses the son, forgetting his country's traditions regarding filial piety, conceived the idea of disposing of his aged mother. He secured a coffin, placed his mother therein, without protest on her part, nailed on the cover, and deposited the coffin in a vacant

lot. Neighbors informed the police, and the coffin was taken to the stationhouse, where it was opened. The woman was still breathing, and, when revived, asked: "Why did you disturb me? I am a burden to my son and do not want to live. Please put me back in the box and let me die." The request was refused, and officials are detaining both mother and son in the yamen, awaiting a judicial disposition of the case.

Zoo Chimpanzee Shoots its Trainer.

Henry van Ness, an animal trainer, was shot in the right leg on a recent night by a big chimpanzee that is one of the attractions at the Sheesley zoo in Baltimore, Md. Luckily the revolver contained a blank cartridge, and the wound inflicted in the trainer's leg was only a burn, caused by the explosion of the powder.

The chimpanzee imitates the trainers and other employees of the zoo. This night the animal had watched the bear trainer point a revolver at one of the bears when the animal refused to go through his act. The trainer then placed the weapon on a stand in the big caged arena. When he had finished with the bear act, he forgot to take the revolver with him.

The chimpanzee watched the bear act from its cage, and when Van Ness placed the chimpanzee in the arena the animal picked up the revolver and fired it at him. The trainer refused medical attention, stating that he did not anticipate any serious trouble from the wound.

Women Pay \$1,480 for Forty-five Gallons of Water.

Two women of Prince Rupert, B. C., who thought they were buying forty-five gallons of whisky, paid a man \$1,480 for the keg and then discovered a capsule containing only one pint of whisky had been fitted beneath the bung-hole and the remainder of the container filled with water.

Town Attacked by Wolf Pack.

A pack of twenty-five timber wolves attacked the town of Machens, Mo., twenty-five miles north of St. Louis, and were driven away by men armed with shotguns. The wolves are believed to have been carried down on ice floes from Northern States. Hunger is believed to have caused the pack to make the attack.

Skeletons Found in Cave.

Only twenty miles from Phoenix an Arizona man, Joseph Yberri, in exploring three caves on the edge of a gulch, came upon the traces of an old conflict, whose cause and date are still a mystery to the community.

Observing that one of the caves was protected by a breastwork of stone and timber, he entered and discovered among scattered saddles, spurs, and cartridge shells eight skeletons.

Seventeen more were found in the other caves, but there was no clew to show how these men had perished. A sack of tobacco was there, and empty flour bags, coffeecups, and pails which bore labels indicating that they were in the market no longer ago than 1903. A Mexican herb, such as the Papago Indians carry, was found.

When the Shoe Fits

In five complete issues of **THE THRILL BOOK** we have already gathered together stories which the reader couldn't have found in any other magazine in the world. Take this number for a concrete example. Where could you find stories as good as Frederick Booth's "Nothing But Dust," Seabury Grandin Quinn's "The Stone Image" and Chester L. Saxby's curious tale, "The Devil's Own?" Not one of them but has a strange, wild element that holds the interest absorbingly from the first line to the last. These are stories of virility in the finest sense of the term. Not a line of namby-pamby, milk-and-water philosophy from cover to cover. Not a trace of the usual, the dull, the average. It is in stories such as these that one discerns hope for such a necessary outlet as **THE THRILL BOOK**. We know this for a certainty now. The American public is responding in its wholehearted way to our efforts. We have filled a distinct need. It is so strange that no one ever realized the importance of the occult and the bizarre in a practical way until this magazine appeared. Why, it is as plain as the nose on our face that Edgar Allan Poe is a great figure in American literature. Why? Simply because he dared to do the unusual, the fantastic, the occult in fiction. He, literally, opened up worlds of feeling, and thought. Yet it was normal, sane and interesting. It is a start in fiction which **THE THRILL BOOK** is bringing to concentrated light.

In this magazine we are making it possible for the public to read at a small price the type of story that other magazines frown upon for the simple reason that they deal with the unseen, the unusual. Let us say that we have a desire to stick to our convictions. We believe in the extraordinary tale. We feel that **THE THRILL BOOK** story will soon become synonymous for all that is fascinating and bizarre in literature. We are pioneers in the occult and mystic story. We are the only magazine that devotes itself intelligently to pure fiction along untraveled lines. These things are not mere

mind vaporings. You have seen these early issues. You have had a chance to judge for yourself. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The fact that the demand for **THE THRILL BOOK** is the talk of periodical dealers over the country is one angle of the proof which goes far toward convincing us that we have succeeded. But remember that in the forthcoming issues the reader will find stories that undoubtedly will stay with him through his whole life. It is too early to say that we have already discovered one or two writers of startling promise—we will leave that to you. Write to us about this. What we are doing, however, is telling our contributors to put on all speed and not to fear the consequences. We have no narrow policy—merely the ironbound rule of publishing nothing but the best—and in these coming issues you will see how our early struggles are beginning to bear fruit.

We want more letters from our "Honorary Editors"—our readers. We have a club—the World-wide Fiction Readers Club—that is growing by hundreds every month. We want to hear from the members. It's so easy to join. All one has to do is step up to the news stand and purchase a copy of **THE THRILL BOOK**. But once a member it is your duty to write and tell us what you think about this venture. It is getting to be so big that unless our Honorary Editors keep in touch with us we will have a hard time giving them what they want to read. That is what we are here for—to give you what you have always desired to read and couldn't because it wasn't to be found in any of the static magazines. Well, we are here now, already an American institution—it's up to you to get in touch with us by writing so that we can obtain your ideas, thus assisting in the success of **THE THRILL BOOK**. We are here to move all the time. There isn't anything we hate more than lack of ambition. Watch us grow. Get on the band wagon before it's too late to say you were with us from the start. Call on your news dealer at once.
