THE THRILL BOOK
SEMIMONTHLY

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The Thrill Book
Our August First Number

IN "THE UNKNOWN REVOLUTION," DENBY BRIXTON has taken for his subject that tremendous problem which lives eternally upon our Western borders—Japan and Mexico. Will they realize their dream of conquest and expansion, Japan to gain new territory for her ever-growing millions, Mexico to win back the traditional possession of what was once hers, the vast, rich California? That secret intrigues are constantly developing between the two nations, with this end in view, is beyond the shadow of a doubt. Denby Brixton shows the agents of Japan and Mexico actually bringing about what to most of us seems inconceivable—the wrestling from us of part of our country and the planting there, as a dominating power, those two alien races. But then Uncle Sam, slowly but surely, takes a hand, in the persons of three of his ablest representatives of the secret service. Fitted against them are the master mind of Japan’s statesmen and the powerful allied factions of Mexico. What ensues forms one of the most thrilling narratives that it has yet been our good fortune to publish. We would tell you more now of this story, but we know that by doing so we would lessen your enjoyment when you read it. Don’t miss it—if you do, it will be a loss every real lover of exciting fiction should regret for many a day.

Don Mark Lemon, whose story, “The Whispering from the Ground,” you will find in the present number, appears again. He is an author widely noted for his mastery of the fantastic, closely plotted short story. In the piece of his work which we shall offer to you, “The Spider and the Fly,” we believe he has achieved as powerful, as tensely gripping a tale as any that has yet come from his prolific pen. If your hair does not have an unaccustomed crinkle at the extraordinary conclusion of this story, you had better read the ladylike magazines, among which we are glad to say THE THRILL BOOK does not include itself.

"THE CRYSTAL BALL,” by James Cary Hawes, is a mystery yarn with a denouement so unexpected that you are left breathless with surprise. We bank on this as a sure-pop winner, and are convinced that after you have read it, you will agree with us.

"THE KISS OF THE SILVER FLASK,” by Evangeline Weir, has in it all the elements which constitute a THRILL BOOK story. You will find it just such a piece of fiction as we are ever on the alert to grab out of the scores of humdrum hopefuls that come to us in the mails every day.

Don’t miss Part III of “THE OPIUM SHIP,” by H. Bedford-Jones. You remember that Part II ended with all hands wrecked on Paracel Island. See what happens when the big struggle starts for possession of the dead Arevalo’s treasure box.

The concluding chapters of “THE LOST EMPIRE,” by Frank Wall, disclose Godfrey Boone’s return to the continent of the Sargasso Sea. Almost too late they come. Boone and Colechurch are plunged into the very perils from which they try to save Margery. Their ultimate escape offers you some reading which we guarantee will hold your interest to the last word.

Other contributors to this number, with work in every essential up to the past, present and future standard of THE THRILL BOOK, are Carleton W. Kendall, whose story, “THE FEAR," depicts an entirely new and different form of that emotion; Greve la Spina’s story called "THE WAX DOLL;” Clyde Broadwell, with the second in his "TALES OF THE DOUBLE MAN" series; Anna Alice Chapin’s powerful mystery story, "WHEN DEAD LIPS SPEAK." There are also the concluding chapters of Trainor Lansing’s two-part story, "THE LOST DAYS," in which is told with scientific exactitude just how the days were lost and what the amazing man was who caused them to be lost to all the country except Manhattan Island.

It is the unusual that interests. THE THRILL BOOK is utterly unlike any other magazine.

When you finish reading THE THRILL BOOK pass it on to a friend.
A cold breeze beat down suddenly. It was not a cool sea breeze, but a current of air coming down from directly above the Coney Island steamer. It was actively, actually cold. A chorus of exclamations arose, full of the wit of the American a-holidaying.

"Br-r-r-r! I feel a draft!"

"Say, Min, are you givin' me the cold shoulder?"

"Sadie, d'you want to borrow all of my coat or only the sleeve?"

And one young man caused a ripple of laughter by remarking:
"Feels like my mother-in-law was around somewhere."

People hastened to put on such wraps as they had with them. On the lower decks there arose a sound of tired voices, saying with variations only in the names called:

"Johnnie, button up your coat. It’s getting cold."

The cold wave lasted only for a few moments, however. As the steamer forged ahead the strata of cold air seemed to be left behind, and the humming sound grew fainter. If the passengers on the boat had listened, they might have heard a faint splash in the water behind them, but as it was the sound went unnoticed. The humming died away. The boat went on and docked, and the passengers dispersed to their homes. Every one of them woke the next morning to find himself or herself locally celebrated.

Half an hour after the Coney Island boat had docked a tramp steamer was nosing her way out of the Narrows. She was traveling at half speed, the air was clear, the channel was well buoyed, and there seemed no possibility of any harm or danger befalling her. The lookout leaned over the bow negligently, watching and listening to the indignant interchange of whistle signals between two small tugs in a dispute over the right of way. He dropped his eyes and stiffened, then turned toward the pilot house and shouted frantically, but too late. The shout had hardly left his lips before there was a shock and grinding sound, mingled with the raucous shriek of rent and tormented iron plates. The tramp steamer shuddered and stopped, and began to sink a trifle by the head. At the first intimation of danger the man on the bridge had ordered the water-tight doors closed, and now he rang for full speed astern. The tramp swung free of the unknown obstruction, but the two bow compartments were flooded and the steamer’s stern was lifted until the propeller thrashed helplessly in a useless mixture of air and water. Her whistle bellowed an appeal for help. "Want immediate assistance!"

Half a dozen tugs, including the two that had been quarreling by whistle, responded to the stricken steamer’s call. Their small sirens sent cheery messages promising instant aid, and they began to tear across the water toward her. One tug reached the helpless vessel’s side. A second rushed up and began to pull the unwieldy tramp away from the unknown obstacle. The lights of a third could be seen very near, when there was a crash and a frantic bellow from the tug. It also had struck the obstruction against which the tramp had run. The tramp bellowed anew.

A destroyer shot down the river with a searchlight unshipped, her crew standing by to rescue any persons who could be reached by lifeboats. She swung up and saw the tramp being hauled and pulled at by busy, puffing tugs. The long pencil of light danced over the surface of the water to find the derelict or wreck that had caused the trouble. Back and forth it swept, and then stopped with a jerk as if the operator could not believe his eyes.

Floating soggily in the water of New York harbor, in late August—the hottest time of the year—a wide cake of ice lay glistening under the searchlight rays! The harbor waves ran up to the edge of the ice cake and stopped. Beyond their stopping point the surface was still and glassy. The cake floated heavily in the water and showed no sign of cracks or fissures. It was evidently of considerable thickness.

A second searchlight reinforced the first. The two white beams moved back and forth, incredulously examining the expanse of ice. It was hundreds of yards across. At last one of the beams passed something at the center of the cake and hastily returned to the
thing it had seen. Rising calmly and quietly from what seemed to be a small crater at the center of the ice cake, a plume of steam floated placidly into the air. It was a huge plume, precisely like the flowing of a white ostrich feather, rising from a small orifice in the center of the mass of frozen seawater.

A wail from the siren of the tug that had run against the ice cake caused the searchlights to turn in its direction. The engine had ceased to run and a cloud of escaping steam was pouring from the tug’s funnel. Men on the deck gesticulated frantically. The destroyer ran as close as the commander dared, and he shouted through a megaphone. It was impossible to distinguish words in the confused shouts that came back from half a dozen throats at once, but the searchlights soon showed the cause of the excitement. The men on the tug pointed over the side. The small harbor waves rolled unconcernedly up to a point some twenty feet from the stern of the tug, but there they stopped abruptly. The tug had become inclosed in the ice floe. As those on the destroyer watched, the twenty feet became thirty and the thirty forty. The ice cake was increasing in size with amazing rapidity.

A boat put off from the destroyer, and the commander shouted to the crew of the tug to take to the ice. There was moment’s hesitation, and then they jumped over the side and ran to the edge of the floe. The lifeboat touched the edge and was instantly frozen fast, but the sailors managed to break it free again by herculean efforts. It went back to the destroyer, whose wireless almost instantly began to crackle. Two other destroyers dashed down from the Brooklyn Navy Yard and turned their searchlights on the strange visitor in the harbor. The semaphore of the first destroyer on the scene began to flash, and the three lean naval craft began to circle around the huge ice cake, warning away all other craft and constantly measuring and re-measuring the size of the mass of ice. One of the destroyers at last slipped outside the Narrows and stayed there, patrolling back and forth to keep other vessels from running foul of the strange and as yet inexplicable phenomenon.

By daybreak the Battery was a black mass of people. They looked eagerly toward the Narrows, but could see nothing but a wall of mist, from which the gray shape of a destroyer now and then emerged. High in the air, however, the plume of steam was visible. It was now more than a thousand feet high and was dense and white. The first rays of the sun had gilded the top, while the ground below was still dim and dark, but now it rose in calm and quietness to an unprecedented height, mystifying the people who looked at it and causing a sudden silence to fall upon them all. A warm, moist sea breeze had blown in from the ocean during the night and had been changed to fog as it passed over the expanse of ice, so that the ice itself was hidden from view, but the tall plume of steam told of some mysterious menace to humanity that the crowd assembled at the Battery feared without understanding.

As the mass of people watched the supremely calm column of steam rising high in the air of that August morning, newsboys began to circulate among them, their strident cries sounding strangely among the silent multitude. The Narrows were frozen solidly from shore to shore, and all entrance to and egress from New York harbor was blocked. Small craft could go out behind Staten Island through the Kill van Kull, and some vessels could use the other channel which goes from the East River into the Sound, but the great Ambrose Channel—one-third the size
of the Panama Canal—and the broad
opening that made New York the great-
est port on the Atlantic coast was
closed. The growth of the ice cake
had greatly lessened, so that it could
be predicted that it would not expand
far beyond its present size, but its ori-
gin and the means by which it resisted
the disintegrating effect of the August
warmth were utterly unknown. The
cause of the plume of steam from the
center of the ice cake was an unfath-
omable mystery.

Suddenly, from the empty sky, there
came a deep, musical humming. In-
stinctively people looked up. The hum-
ing grew louder and more distinct,
while curious eyes swept the sky.

Then a black speck appeared below
one of the fleecy white clouds and
dropped toward the earth. A thousand
feet, two thousand feet it fell, then
checked and hung steadily in the air.
Those who looked with the naked eye
could only discern that it seemed like
a wingless black splinter suspended
above the earth, but those who had
glasses saw the whir of dark disks
above a black, stream-line body. A
small cabin was placed amidships, and
a misshapen globe hung from chains
below. It was still for several min-
utes. The passenger or passengers
seemed to be inspecting the earth be-
low, and particularly the ice cake, with
deliberation and care. Then it began
to rise with the same deliberation and
certainty, swung around, and sped off
with incredible speed toward the north-
east. The humming sound grew fainter
and died away, but the crowd standing
on the Battery began to murmur with
a nameless sense of fear.

CHAPTER II.

N EW YORK was frightened, and
the newspapers as they appeared
did not allay that fear. The conserv-
ative Tribune ran a scare head:

HAS THE GLACIAL AGE COME AGAIN?
and printed underneath a résumé of the
phenomena up to the time of going to
press—which did not include the ap-
pearance of the black flyer—with an
interview from a prominent scientist.
An enterprising reporter had routed
the worthy gentleman out of bed and
rushed him to the scene of the expand-
ing ice cake in a fast motor boat, taking
down in shorthand his comments on
the matter. The scientist had been
much puzzled, but spoke at length nev-
evertheless. He said in part:

Has the glacial age come again? I do
not know. I can only say that we have no
certain knowledge of the original cause of
the glacial period and we cannot say
definitely that it did not begin in precisely
this fashion. We have volcanos which radi-
ate incredible quantities of heat to the coun-
try surrounding them. No phenomenon like
this has occurred before, but it may be that
some unknown cause may bring to the sur-
face a condition the antithesis of a volcano,
which, instead of radiating heat, will bring
on local glacier-like conditions. One might go
farther and suggest that the earth may alter-
ate between periods of volcanic activity,
during which it is warm and conditions are
favorable for habitation and growth, and
periods of this new antivolcanic activity dur-
ing which frigidity is normal, and mankind
may be forced to take refuge in the tropic
zones. Still, I cannot say definitely.

The eminent scientist went on for
two full columns, during which he re-
fused to say anything definite, but sug-
gested so many alarming possibilities
that every one who read the Tribune
was thrown into a state of mind not
far from panic. He offered no expla-
nation of the plume of steam.

When the appearance of the black
flyer became known in the newspaper
offices, city editors threw up their
hands. The less conservative printed
the wildest explanations. They put
forth a virulent-organism theory,
which, it must be admitted, was no
farther from the truth than most of
the others. The story began with an
interview with the boatswain in charge of the boat crew from the destroyer:

We were ordered to take the men off the ice and to take especial care not to be nipped ourselves. We rowed carefully toward the edge of the ice cake, with the light of the searchlights to guide us. We would see where the ice began, when the waves dropped back from it. I’ve been in Northern seas, but I never saw anything like that. The edge of the ice wasn’t smooth and worn away by the waves. It was rough with frost crystals that reached out like fingers grabbing at the things near by. When we came close to the edge some of the men in my boat were scared, and I don’t blame them. I’d dipped my hand overboard and the water was warm—and twenty feet away there was that mass of ice! We backed up to the ice cake and took off the men. I was looking over the side of the life boat, and saw those long crystals forming and growing while I watched. They were huge, from two feet long for the largest to three or four inches for the smallest. They reached out and reached out terribly. The stern of the boat was touching the ice, and I saw them reaching for the hull like the tentacles of an octopus. They fastened on and began to grow thicker. We took oars and smashed them, feeling frightened as one is frightened in a nightmare. As fast as we broke them they formed again, and the men on the ice seemed to be rotten slow getting into the boat, though I don’t doubt but they were hurrying all they knew how. When they were all aboard we had to work like mad to get clear.

The paper went on to expound its own idea of what had happened:

Why could not this scientist experiment until the life germ of the ice crystal could be developed and enlarged? Why could not this development continue until the germ could not only create its crystals under the most favorable conditions of temperature, but at the normal temperature of water? At the Harvard laboratories water has been kept liquid far below its normal freezing point, and under tremendous pressure has been found to remain ice at a temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit! Can we doubt that this appearance of ice at this extraordinary season is due to the malicious activities of a foreign government, envious of our magnificent merchant marine and commerce?

The explanation was ingenious, but though the scientific facts quoted were quite correct the inference was hardly justifiable. Water can and does reach a temperature several degrees below 32° Fahrenheit without solidifying—as may be proved by putting a glass of water in a cold room in winter—but the slightest jar causes the instantaneous formation of ice crystals, and in a little while the whole mass is solid. The fact of “hot” ice must also be admitted, but it requires a pressure of rather more than fifty tons to the square inch, and is rarely attempted.

This paper also was forced to admit as inexplicable the plume of steam which rose from a thousand to fifteen hundred feet into the air. In any event, the claim that a certain unfriendly foreign government was trying to ruin the commerce of the United States was effectively squashed by cablegrams from Gibraltar, Folkestone, and Yokohama. Three great icebergs had formed in the Straits of Gibraltar and extended until they joined, when a solid mass of ice made a bridge that once more rejoined the continents of Africa and Europe, from Ceuta to the Rock. The plumes of steam were visible here, too. Three mighty columns of white mist rose at equal distances across the gap.

Folkestone harbor was a mass of ice. A great transatlantic liner had been
caught in the expanding berg, and the huge hull had been crushed like so much cardboard. The passengers and crew had escaped across the ice. The great steam plume made a wonderful sight for miles around. Yokohama was similarly visited. Three battleships of the Japanese fleet were frozen in and their hulls cracked and broken. The plume of steam—nearly two thousand feet high—had aroused the latent superstition of the Japanese and was being exorcised in every Shinto temple in the kingdom.

The panic which was engendered by the mysteries of the icebergs and the unknown motives of the men so obviously responsible for their appearance grew in intensity. New York was in a blue funk. The police felt the tremor that means that at any moment the crowds thronging the streets might break and from sheer panic become uncontrollable. Every policeman wore a worried frown and worked like mad to keep the crowds moving, moving always. The strain was becoming greater, however, and troops were being hastily moved into the city when an announcement was made by the British foreign office:

It has been decided to make public a communication received at the foreign office bearing on the blocking of Folkestone harbor, the Straits of Gibraltar, Yokohama, and New York. The communication is dated from "The Dictatorial Residence," and reads as follows:

"TO THE PREMIER OF GREAT BRITAIN: You are informed that the blocking of Folkestone harbor, as well as that of the Straits of Gibraltar, New York, and Yokohama, is evidence of my intention and power to assume control of the governments of the world as dictator. Present administrations and systems of government will continue in power under my direction and subject to my commands. The machinery of the League of Nations is to be used to enforce my decrees. You will readily understand that the same means I used to block the harbors and straits now frozen over can be extended indefinitely. Rivers can be made to cease to flow, lakes to irrigate, and all commerce and agriculture forced to suspend its activity. This will be done, if it is made necessary by the refusal of the governments of the world to accede to my demands. Given under my hand at the dictatorial residence,

"(Signed) Wladislaw Varhhus."

The foreign office offers this communication to allay the fears of the public that a new glacial period may be imminent, but at the same time it wishes to assure the British people that the demands of the writer are not taken seriously. It is evident that the maker of such absurd demands is insane, and though he may be able to cause perhaps serious inconvenience to commerce, a means of nullifying his invention will be forthcoming in a short while. British scientists are studying the Folkestone phenomena and are confident of a prompt solution of the problem.

Though it might have been expected that such an announcement as that of the intention of an unknown and probably insane man to make himself ruler of the world would have caused even greater panic, the reverse was actually the case. The motive behind the creation of the icebergs was made so clear that the world settled back with a sort of sporting interest to see what would happen. It had not long to wait.

A hint came by some underground channel that Professor Hawkins had offered a suggestion to the American government that had been accepted as a basis for experiment. A reporter went post-haste to the professor's home. He was admitted, but the professor would not see him at the moment. The reporter sat down patiently to wait. A motor car drove up to the house and a man in soldier's uniform stepped out. The reporter gave a whistle. A second car discharged a quietly dressed man in civilian clothes attended by two other army officers. The reporter stared. He recognized the men. Most people on two continents would have recognized them. They passed through the house to the professor's laboratory at the rear. A long time passed. The reporter fidgeted nervously... Some con-
ference of colossal importance was taking place back there in the laboratory.

It was an hour later that the visitors left. With them went a young man the reporter had not seen before. The professor came slowly into the room and smiled apologetically.

"I am very sorry to have kept you waiting, but it was necessary. I think that in about two hours I will have some news for you. In the meantime there is nothing more to say."

"Can you tell me what really happened? How did this Varrhus make the berg?"

"It's the simplest thing in the world," said the professor with a smile. "I've managed to duplicate it on a small scale back in my laboratory. Suppose you come back there and I'll show you."

A girl appeared in the doorway with a worried frown on her face.

"Father, has Teddy gone?"

"Yes. We'll hear in about two hours." The professor turned to the reporter with instinctive courtesy.

"This is my daughter, Evelyn."

The girl shook hands.

"You want to know about the iceberg, too? Teddy has gone to break it up now."

"To try to break it up," corrected the professor with a smile. "'Teddy' is my assistant."

"But how?" insisted the reporter. "You seem to be so confident, and every one else does nothing but guess."

"I'll show you quite clearly," the professor said gently, "if you'll come back to the laboratory."

They moved toward the rear of the house. A hullabaloo of whistles broke out in the harbor. The girl turned toward the professor.

"Teddy already?"

The professor frowned.

"He hasn't had time." He went to a window and looked out, inspecting the sky keenly. A slender black splinter hung suspended in the air. The professor flung open the window, and a musical humming filled the room. As they watched a smoking object detached itself from the black flyer and fell downward.

"That must be Varrhus," said the professor.

A winged flyer with the insignia of the American aviation corps painted on the under surface of its wings darted into their field of vision. Black smoke trailed behind it as it shot toward the sinister black craft. There was an instant's pause, and then little puffs of white mist appeared before the propeller of the aeroplane.

"He's firing his machine gun!" said the reporter excitedly.

As he spoke the black flyer dropped like a stone, and the American plane shot above it. Almost instantly the black flyer checked in mid-air and rose vertically with amazing speed. The American plane drove on for a second, and then wavered. It began to climb, stalled, and dropped toward the earth in a series of side slips and maple-leaf turns. It came down erratically, crazily.

"Killed!" said the professor with compressed lips.

His daughter uttered a cry:

"And Varrhus is getting away!"

The black flyer had become but the merest speck. It had attained an almost unbelievable height. Now it deliberately swung around and headed off toward the northeast with its same incredible speed.

CHAPTER III.

T
EDDY GERROD was stuffing his feet into heavy, fur-lined arctic boots. Ten or twelve soldiers were loading clumsy, awkward-looking engines on improvised sledges resting on the ice at the foot of the fort embankments. Others were putting equally ungainly iron globes with winged metal
rods attached to them on other sledges. A dozen befurred and swathed figures came down the slope of the embankment and examined the preparations. A naval launch ran smartly alongside the edge of the ice, and a messenger came over at the double to the commandant of the fort, who stood by Teddy Gerrod. The messenger saluted.

"Sir, the object dropped from the black flyer was a tin float having a message attached. The smoke was from a smoke fuse, lighted to attract attention."

He handed over the letter, saluted again, and retired. The commandant tore open the letter and read it through, then swore frankly.

"A threat to freeze the Croton reservoir and cut off New York City's water supply if an answer to his previous demands is not given within forty-eight hours! And he can do it! Mr. Gerrod, you've simply got to settle this business. New York would go crazy if the people knew this. There'd be no way to supply the water the city has to have. And seven million people without water—"

Teddy smiled grimly.

"I'm going to try. Professor Hawkins is usually right, and we ought to be able to do something about this berg."

A second messenger came up and saluted.

"Sir, Lieutenant Davis reports that the plane has been recovered and Lieutenant Curtiss' body examined. There are no bullet marks, and the body seemed to be frozen solidly. He cannot say, as yet, what caused Lieutenant Curtiss' death."

"Frozen," said Teddy laconically.

"In mid-air?" asked the commandant sharply. "And in a fraction of a second, wearing heavy aviator's clothing?"

Teddy nodded, and buttoned up the huge fur coat in which he was enveloped.

"I'm ready to start off now, if the sledges are."

The little party moved away from the shore. The heavy mist still hung over the expanse of ice, but near the shore the ice was thinner. The sledges were roped together, and Teddy walked at the head. The party tugged at the ropes on the sledges, puffing out clouds of frosty breath at every exhalation. Teddy had taken the compass bearings of the steam plume, and after he had gone a hundred yards from the shore the wisdom of his course became apparent. They were completely surrounded by a thick fog in which objects five yards off were lost to view. Teddy, leading the small column, could not be seen except as a dim and shadowy figure by the men hardly more than two paces in his rear. He referred constantly to his compass, and once or twice glanced at the thermometer he had strapped on the sleeve of his great coat.

"Forty degrees," he murmured to himself. "And in New York it's eighty-four in the shade. The ice must be colder still because it's dry and hard."

The party toiled on. Presently small snow crystals crunched underfoot.

"Frozen mist," said Teddy, and glanced at his thermometer. "H'm! Twenty-two degrees. Ten below freezing."

The party stopped for a breathing spell.

"I hope you men smoke," said Teddy, "because it's going to be cold a few hundred yards farther on. We'll come clear of this mist presently. If you smoke, and inhale, it'll probably warm up your lungs a little. You don't need it yet, though. Any of you who haven't pulled down the flaps of your helmets had better do so now."

A moment or so later they took up their march again. The sledges, with their heavy loads, were cumbersome
things to drag over the uneven surface of the ice. The men panted and gasped as they threw their weight on the ropes. Teddy felt the air growing colder still, and presently noticed that the mist no longer seemed to be as thick as before. He glanced down at the front of his heavy fur coat. It was covered with tiny white crystals. He held up his hand with the thick mitten on it to form a dark background, and saw numberless infinitesimal snowflakes drifting slowly toward the ice under his feet. His thermometer showed two degrees above zero—and New York, six miles away, was sweltering in August heat!

"Not much farther," he called cheerfully. "We're almost there."

They panted and tugged on, a hundred and fifty yards more. Then they stopped and stared.

Three hundred yards away the great column of steam was issuing from the ice. A hollow hillock of snow and ice rose to a height of twenty feet, like the miniature crater of a volcano. From it, in an unbroken stream, the mass of steam emerged with a roaring, rushing sound. It rose five hundred feet before it broke into the plumelike formation that was so characteristic. There was a space, perhaps six hundred paces across, in which there was no mist. The cold was too intense to allow of the formation of fog. Water vapor condensed instantly in that frigid atmosphere. But around the clearing the mist rose from the surface of the ice. It became noticeable when it was merely waist-high, then rose to the height of a man, and climbed to a height of fifty feet in a circular wall all about the strange white open space. Teddy, looking at the top of the wall of vapor, saw that it undulated gently, as if waves were flowing back and forth around the tall column of steam.

The men began to unload their sledges. The awkward little trench mortars were set in place and careful measurements made of the distance to the steam plume. While the men labored, Teddy moved forward toward the central cone. Five degrees below zero, fifteen degrees below zero, thirty degrees below zero—His breath cut sharply when it went into his lungs. Teddy put his mittened hand over his nose and face to partially warm the air before he breathed it in. Now, even through the heavy, arctic clothing he wore, he felt the bitter cold. He detached the thermometer from his sleeve and clumsily tied it to a cord. He had hoped to be able to lower it down the rim of the crater, but that was impossible. He flung it toward the hillock of snow and ice, let it remain there an instant, then hastily drew it back to read it. The ether in the thermometer had frozen into a solid mass in the bulb of the instrument.

Teddy went back to where the men had made ready. Four of the wicked little guns would fling their three-hundred-pound bombs into the center of the column of steam. If all went well, at least one charge of T. N. T. would explode far down the orifice.

The propelling charges had been inserted, and now the slender rods were put into the muzzles of the short, squat weapons. The winged bombs were balanced on the muzzles like top-heavy oranges on as many sticks. At half-second intervals, the four guns went off one after the other.

Before the last had exploded, or just as the flame leaped from its muzzle, the hillock of ice rose as in an eruption. Four cracking detonations blended into one colossal roar that half stunned the little fur-clad party. The rush of air threw them from their feet. When they rose again a huge hole showed in the center of the clearing, a gaping chasm that went down deep into the heart of the ice. A cloud of yellowish smoke floated above them. And the column of steam had ceased! Only a
few stray wisps of white vapor floated up from the opening.

"It's done!"

Teddy gave orders for a quick return to the fort. The mortars could be returned for. At the moment the important thing was to send the news to England and Japan.

The return trip was made quickly, and Teddy made hurried explanations to the commandant of the forts of what should be done. Men should bore deep holes twenty feet apart, the holes to be along the edges of clearly defined sections of the ice. Simultaneous blasts should be set off, and the sections would float free. The iceberg would not grow again. It was done for.

Cablegrams were prepared and rushed through to Folkestone, Yokohama, and Gibraltar. If men took trench mortars and fired shells that would fall down the holes from which the steam issued, the cause of the ice cakes would be destroyed and the ice itself could be blasted off and towed out to sea to melt.

Teddy rushed back to the professor's home to report to him the full verification of his theories, and it was there and then that the first authentic explanation of the ice floe was given to the world. Word of his effort and of the disappearance of the steam plume had preceded him, and as he sped uptown in the taxicab newsboys were already on the streets with their extras. Only the front pages—showing signs of having hastily been hacked to pieces to make room for the story—had anything about the latest development, and those extras are singularly perfect reflections of the public attitude at that time.

CHAPTER IV.

TEDDY threw himself out of the machine and rushed up the steps. Evelyn opened the door before he could ring, and his beaming face told her the news he had to give even without his enthusiastic, "It worked!"

"The steam plume has stopped?" asked the professor anxiously.

"Absolutely," said Teddy cheerfully. "Not a sign of steam except from two or three puddles of hot water that were cooling off when we left to get back to the fort. The commandant was setting his men to work with the navy-yard men when I started here."

"Tell me about this, won't you?" said the reporter briskly. "I'll catch the devil from the city editor for missing out on that part of it, but if you'll give me the full story——"

"What's your paper?"

The reporter told him.

"That's all right," said Teddy easily. "They were calling extras of that paper as I came uptown. The professor has told you the theory of the thing?"

"No," said Evelyn. "He was starting to, but the black flyer appeared and shot down the other aeroplane, and father was so much upset that he couldn't go into details. Was the pilot of the aeroplane killed?"

Teddy nodded.

"Frozen, poor chap. He never knew what struck him."

"What did happen?" asked the reporter again. "You people seem to take this so much as a matter of course, and no one else can do anything but guess."

"The professor knows more about low temperatures than any other man in the world," explained Teddy. "It's only natural that he should be fairly certain of his facts."

He smiled at the professor as the old man made a deprecating gesture.

"Father is much upset," said Evelyn. "I think it would be best if Teddy explained. Will that be all right?"

"Only, in your account of the matter," said Teddy decidedly, "the professor must be given credit for the
whole thing. It’s his work, and he’s entitled to it.”

“No, no,” protested the professor. “Teddy did a great deal.”

Evelyn pressed his arm, and he obediently was quiet. The two young people smiled at him.

“You see how I am ruled,” said the professor in mock tragedy. “My daughter——”

“I’m going to see that you rest a while,” said Evelyn, with a twinkle in her eyes. “Teddy, you go and explain the whole thing while I take father out and discipline him.”

With a laugh, she led the old man away. Teddy smiled.

“We aren’t accustomed to reporters,” he said, “or I suspect we’d act differently. Miss Hawkins is a most capable physicist, and helps her father immensely. The three of us work together so much that—— Well, come along to the laboratory.”

The two went to the rear of the house. On the way they passed through a long room full of glass cabinets in which odd bits of metal work glittered brightly.

“The professor’s hobby,” said Teddy, with a nod toward the cases. “Antique jewelry and ancient metal work. He’s probably better informed on low temperatures than any one else I know of, but I really believe he’s as much of an authority on that, too. This is Phœnician, and that’s early Greek. These are Egyptian in this case. This way.”

He opened a small door and they were in the laboratory.

“I’m afraid I’ll have to lecture a bit,” said Teddy. “Here’s how the professor used to work out what was taking place out in the harbor.”

He showed an intricate combination of silvered globes, tubes, and half a dozen thermometers.

“You see,” Teddy began, “the water in the harbor was at a certain tempera-
ture. At this time of the year it would be around 52° Fahrenheit. The professor knew that fact, and then the fact that a huge mass of it was turned into ice. When you turn water into ice you have to take a lot of heat out of it, and that heat has to go somewhere. When water freezes normally in winter that heat goes into the air, which is cold. In this case the air was considerably warmer than the ice, and was, as a matter of fact, undoubtedly radiating heat into the ice, instead of taking it away. The heat that would have to be taken from say ten pounds of water at 52° to make it freeze, if put into another smaller quantity of water would turn the smaller quantity of water into steam. You see?”

“The steam plume!” exclaimed the reporter.

“Of course,” said Teddy. “We measure heat by calories usually. That’s the amount of heat required to raise a pound of water one degree Fahrenheit. Suppose you have a mass of water. To make it freeze you have to take twenty thousand calories of heat out of it. Suppose you take that heat out. You’ve got to do something with it. Suppose you put it into another smaller mass of water. It will make that second mass of water hot, so hot that it will turn into steam at a high temperature.”

“Then Varrhus,” said the reporter thoughtfully, “was taking the heat from a big bunch of water and putting it into a small bunch, and the small bunch went up in steam. Is that right?”

“Precisely.” Teddy turned to a file on which hung a number of sheets of paper covered with figures. “Here are the professor’s calculations. We could only figure approximately, but we knew the size and depth of the ice cake, very nearly the temperature of the water that had been frozen, and naturally it was not hard to estimate the number of calories that had had to be taken
out of the harbor water to make the ice cake. To check up, we figured out how much water that number of calories would turn into steam. The professor appealed to the government scientists who had watched the cake from the first. He found that from the size of the plume and the other means of checking its volume, he had come within ten per cent of calculating the amount of water that had actually poured out in the shape of steam."

"But—but that’s amazing!" said the reporter.

"It was good work," Teddy said in some satisfaction. "Then we knew what Varrhus had done, and it remained to find out how he’d done it. Nothing like that had ever happened before. He couldn’t very well have an engine working there in the water. The professor took to his mathematics again. Assume that I have a stove here that will make it just so warm at a distance of five feet. I’m leaving warm air out of consideration now and only thinking of radiated heat. If I put my thermometer ten feet away how much heat will I get?"

"Half as much?" asked the reporter.

"One-quarter as much," said Teddy. "Or three times away I’ll get one-ninth as much, or four times away I’ll get one-sixteenth as much. You see? If I want to make the ends of an iron bar hot, and I can only heat the middle, the middle has to be red-hot or white-hot to make the ends even warm. If I have to make the middle of a bar red-hot to have the ends warm, you see in order to make the ends cold the middle would have to be very cold indeed."

"Y-yes, I understand."

"Well, the professor worked on that principle. He knew the temperature of the edges, and he knew the size of the ice cake. It was easy to figure what the temperature must be in the middle. It worked out to within two degrees of absolute zero!"

"What’s that?"

"There isn’t any limit to high temperatures. You can go up two thousand degrees, three thousand, four, or five. Some things almost certainly produce a temperature of as much as eight thousand degrees. But high temperatures are produced by putting more heat in—by stuffin’ the thing with calories. I make an iron bar red-hot by putting calories in. I make it cold by taking calories out."

"Well?"

"If you keep that up you reach the point where there aren’t any more calories left to take out. When you get to that point you have a temperature of 425° Centigrade, or one thousand and seventy-eight degrees Fahrenheit below zero. That’s absolute zero."

Teddy spoke quite casually, but the reporter blinked.

"Rather chilly, then."

"Rather," Teddy agreed. "But our calculations told us that Varrhus had reached and was using a temperature within two degrees of that in the center of his ice cake. And right next to that temperature he had a very high one, as evidenced by the plume of steam."

"I can’t see how you got anywhere," said the reporter hopelessly. "I’m all mixed up."

"It’s very simple," said Teddy cheerfully. "On one side of a wall the man had what amounted to a thousand and some odd degrees below zero. On the other he had probably as much above zero. Evelyn—Miss Hawkins, you know—made the suggestion that solved the problem. She showed us this."

Teddy picked up what seemed to be a square bit of opaque glass.

"Smoked glass?"

"Yes, and no," Teddy smiled. "You can’t see through it, can you?"

"No."

"Come around to this side and look."
The reporter made an exclamation of astonishment.

"It's clear glass!"

"It's a piece of glass on which a thin film of platinum has been deposited. It lets light through in one direction, but not in the other. Evelyn suggested that Varrhus had something which did the same thing with heat. It would let heat through in one direction, but not in the other. Of course if it would take all the heat from the air on one side and wouldn't let any come back from the other——"

"It would be cold?"

"On one side. The glass looks black because it lets the light go through and lets none come back. The surface, we have assumed, would be almost infinitely cold because it would let heat go through and would let none come back. We decided that Varrhus had made a hollow bomb of some shape or other, composed of this hypothetical material. Heat from the outside would be radiated into the interior because the surface absorbed heat like this glass absorbs light. It would act as a surface at more than a thousand below zero. Because something had to be done with the heat that would come in, Varrhus made the bomb hollow and left two openings in it. The inside of the bomb is intensely hot from the heat that has been taken out of the surrounding water. The hole at the bottom radiates a beam of heat straight downward which melts a very small quantity of ice and lets the water flow into the bomb, where it is turned into steam. Naturally, it flows out of the other hole at the top. There you have the whole thing."

"And you stopped it——"

"By dropping a T. N. T. bomb down the steam shaft. It went off and blew the cold bomb to bits. The iceberg will break up and melt now."

The reporter stood up.

"I'd like to thank you for this, but it's too big," he said feverishly. "Man, just wait till I wave this before the city editor's eyes!" He rushed out of the house.

The newspapers that afternoon had frantic headlines announcing the destruction of the steam plume and the fact that noticeable signs of melting had begun to show themselves on the ice cake. Smaller captions told of the dynamiting that had begun and of the destruction of the Yokohama and Folkestone bergs by soldiers acting on cabled instructions. The Straits of Gibraltar were cleared by salvos fired from the heavy guns on the Rock at the three great plumes of steam. The world congratulated itself on the speedy nullification of the menace to its democratic governments. It did not neglect, however, to rush detachments of men with trench mortars and hand bombs to its reservoirs, prepared to destroy any possible cold bombs on their first appearance. The aviation forces, too, made themselves ready to fight the black flyer on its next appearance, despite the mysterious means by which it had killed the American pilot.

This state of affairs lasted for possibly a week, when, within three hours of each other, the papers found two occasions to issue extras. The first extra announced the death by heart failure of Professor Hawkins, who had been found by his daughter, dead in his laboratory, holding in his hands an antique silver bracelet he had just opened at the clasp. The second, three hours later, announced the formation of an ice cake in the Narrows which grew in size even more rapidly than the original one, and was entirely unattended by the steam plume which gave Teddy Gerrod an opportunity to destroy the first. Within three hours the Narrows were closed, and the ice floe was creeping up toward New York.

In rapid succession came the news that Norfolk harbor was frozen over
and Hampton Roads closed, that Charleston was blocked, then Jacksonville. The next morning delayed telegrams declared that the Panama Canal was a mass of ice, and almost simultaneously the Straits of Gibraltar were again admitted to be firmly locked.

CHAPTER V.

 TEDDY put his hand comfortably on Evelyn's shoulder.

 "There isn't anything I can say, Evelyn," he said awkwardly, "except that I couldn't have loved him more if he'd been my own father, and it hurts me terribly to have him go like this."

 Evelyn looked up.

 "Teddy," she said bravely, trying to hold back her sobs, "I've been fearing this for a long time, but— I can't believe it wasn't caused by that fearful Varrhus."

 "The professor did work very hard over that problem," admitted Teddy.

 "I don't mean that the work he did caused his heart to fail. I mean I think Varrhus killed father." Evelyn's eyes were dark and troubled as she looked at Teddy Gerrod.

 "But, Evelyn, why do you think such a thing? You knew his heart was weak."

 Tears came again into Evelyn's eyes, but she forced them back determinedly.

 "Will you go upstairs and look at his fingers—inside? I was—crossing his hands—on his breast. Please look."

 Teddy went soberly up the stairs to where the professor lay quietly on the bed he was occupying for the last time. Teddy turned back the sheet that covered the figure and looked at the gentle old face. A lump came in his throat, and he hastily turned his eyes away. He lifted the sheet until the professor's thin hands came into view. He looked at the fingers, then lifted one of the white hands and examined the inside. Small but deep burns disfigured the finger tips. When Teddy went downstairs his face was white and set, and a great anger burned in him.

 "You are right, Evelyn," he said grimly. "Where is the bracelet he was holding when he was found?"

 "On the acid table. He was lying beside it when—when I saw him." Evelyn was grief-stricken, but she forced herself to be calm. "Do you think you know what happened?"

 "I'm not sure."

 Teddy went quietly into the laboratory and found the massive silver bracelet lying where Evelyn had said. He looked at it carefully before he touched it, and when he lifted it it was in a pair of wooden tongs.

 "That thermo-couple, Evelyn, please. And start the small generator, won't you?"

 The two worked on the bracelet for half an hour, then stopped and stared at each other, their suspicions confirmed.

 "Varrhus," said Teddy slowly. "Varrhus caused your father's death. This earth has gotten too small for both Varrhus and me to live on."

 "He knew father could wreck his plans," Evelyn said in a hard voice, "and he wished to rule the world. So he killed my father."

 Teddy's lips were compressed.

 "Before God," he burst out, "before God, I'm going to kill Varrhus!"

 The bell rang, and in a moment the commandant of the forts was ushered in.

 "Mr. Gerrod, Miss Hawkins," he nodded to them, and then said: "They tell me Professor Hawkins is dead. The Narrows are frozen over again. Hampton Roads is frozen over. Charleston is frozen over. The Panama Canal is frozen over! There's no steam plume to blow up. Washington is worried. They're calling me to clear cut the channel. The navy department is going crazy. If it were a case of
fighting men I'd know something, but I can't fight a chemical combination. What's to be done, since the professor is dead? Who on earth can fill his place?"

He looked from one to the other, already beginning to show the strain under which he was laboring.

"Professor Hawkins," said Teddy quietly, "was murdered by Varrhus some four hours ago."

"Murdered! Varrhus has been here!"

"No, Varrhus has not been here, but we may be able to trace him. I'll get the police. Then we'll talk about ice floes. We know Varrhus' method now. We'll soon be able to anticipate him."

"But in the meantime," the commandant snapped angrily, "he'll play the devil with the world."

"We'll play the devil with him when he is caught," said Teddy evenly. "I've no intention of letting Varrhus get away. Just now there's a possibility of catching him in the ordinary way. He mailed a present to the professor, an antique bracelet. Ancient jewelry was the professor's hobby. He examined the bracelet and died."

"I heard he was dead," said the commandant restlessly. "The paper said heart failure."

"So did the doctor." Teddy took down the receiver of the telephone. "Give me police emergency, please."

In a few moments he hung up again. The statement that Professor Hawkins had been murdered and that there was a chance of catching Varrhus was all he needed to say. Hardly five minutes had passed before the commissioner of police himself was in the room with two of his keenest men.

"You'll have to explain what happened," he said at once to Teddy. "When news of the professor's death came I phoned at once to the doctor mentioned in the paper and asked if there were any possibility of foul play.

To tell the truth, I'd been rather afraid something like this might happen. What was it?"

"Varrhus electrocuted the professor by an antique bracelet."

He handed over the ornament. The commissioner examined it gingerly.

"Nothing funny about this except the workmanship."

"And the surface," said Teddy. His set calm was surprising himself. "It looks as if it had been lacquered. That's Varrhus' secret."

"What is it? A powerful battery?"

Teddy turned to the materials with which he and Evelyn had been working.

"I'll show you. Here's an instrument that measures the resistance of a given coil. This is one of the professor's evaporation machines for producing low temperatures quickly. He evaporates ether in this sheath that surrounds this oven and objects in the oven are cooled far below freezing point. Look at this coil of silver wire. We measure the resistance at room temperature. One hundred and twenty ohms. It is very fine wire. We put it in the cooling oven and set the engines going—"

"And the wire got cold."

For some minutes there was silence while the small electric pump thumped and rattled. "Now we'll take the coil out. The thermometer inside the oven says twelve below zero," Teddy handled the small coil of silver wire with thick gloves. "We'll measure the resistance again. Fourteen and a half ohms resistance, approximately. Low temperatures decrease resistance and increase the conductivity of metals. You see?"

"Yes, but why—"

"The inside of that bracelet is nine hundred degrees below zero. The whole thing is coated with Varrhus' lacquer, which, in this case, radiates all the heat from the inside out, leaving it incredibly cold within. That cold
makes the silver conduct electricity better."

"Well?"

"At eight hundred degrees below zero Fahrenheit silver has no measurable resistance to the passage of an electric current. Now watch."

Teddy laid the bracelet on top of a frame wound with many turns of glistening copper wire. He threw on a switch, and a small generator at one side of the laboratory began to run with a humming pur.

"Eddy currents are whirling all around that bracelet. A strong current is running in an endless circle in that closed circuit of silver, nine hundred degrees below zero. Silver at that temperature offers no resistance to an electric current. Closed circuits have been left at that degree of cold for over four hours, and at the end of that time the electric current was still flowing round and round like a squirrel in a cage."

Teddy picked up the bracelet with a pair of wooden tongs. He took a second pair in his other hand. Rubber handles insulated the tongs from their handles.

"There's a current flowing around the inside of this bracelet. There was one flowing around it when the professor received it in the mail. He opened it with his bare hands, suspecting nothing. I open it with these insulated tongs. Watch."

He jerked on the two tongs. The bracelet parted at the catch, and a dazzling, blinding flash of light appeared with a sharp crackle at the parting.

"I made the current jump the gap. The professor took it through his body and it killed him. Are you satisfied?"

"God!" said the commissioner of police, aghast.

"The box and wrapper," said one of the men who had come with the commissioner. "Let us have the box and wrapper the bracelet came in and we'll get the man that mailed it. But we'll handle him with tongs, too, when we close in on him."

They took what they wanted and left. Teddy turned to the commandant.

"Now, sir, we'll see what can be done about the new berg. You say there's no plume of steam. Have you had an aeroplane fly above it to make sure?"

"Yes. The pilot says the whole ice cake is covered with mist, except for a round spot in the middle, but there's no sign of a steam plume."

Teddy nodded at Evelyn.

"No holes in this cold bomb. I wonder what happens to all the heat that comes in?"

"Father mentioned that he expected something of the sort, but didn't say what he thought could be done about it."

"The same as we did with the other, I suppose," said Teddy reflectively. "Only this time we'll have to blast down to the bomb and then break it up."

"I'll set men to work if you'll find the bomb," said the commandant.

"Almost any one could find it," Teddy remarked, "but there are going to be some queer difficulties when you get near the cold bomb. If you'll allow me, I'd like to be at hand when it is broken up. I may really be of use there."

He began to pick out instruments he thought he might need. Among other things he took what seemed to be two silvered globes with small necks. They were Dewey bulbs. Several low-temperature thermometers and a thermocouple connected with a delicate galvanometer completed his preparations.

The two men left the house and started for the launch that would take them to the forts. On the way Teddy was asking crisp questions about the explosives he could have placed at his disposal, quite ignorant of what was happening at that moment in Jackson-ville.

The river there was a mass of ice
from one shore to the other. All the little reedy islands and the swampy shores were frozen solidly. To see the slender palm trees rising from icy shores, their reflections visible on the narrow strip of mist-free ice that ran along the shores of the river was an anomaly. To see fur-clad tourists stepping out of the tropical foliage to step gingerly out on the ice “just to say they’d done it” was even more strange. At the moment, however, interest centered on a little group of soldiers out in the central clearing in the cloud of mist. They were bundled in furs and swathed in numberless garments until they looked like fat penguins or some strange arctic animals.

A major of engineers was waving them to the right and left, forward and back until they stood at equal distance around the clearing. Each man moved backward until the mist that rose gradually from the ice reached his waist. Then, at a whistle signal from the major, they began to move forward toward a common center. The major had reasoned that the cold bomb must be precisely underneath the exact center of the clearing, and this was a rough-and-ready means of finding that center. They advanced toward each other, and as they went nearer the center of the clearing the cold grew more intense. Infinitesimal ice crystals glittered in little clouds where the moisture of their breath froze instantly in the terrific cold. At a second whistle from the major they halted. They formed a fairly even circle about forty yards across. Each man began to stamp and fling his arms about to keep from freezing in that more than frigid atmosphere. No man could have stood that cold, no matter how hardy he might be, for more than a very few moments. The major trotted around the circle, marking the place where each man stood. Four small sledge loads of explosives stood out in the clearing. The major intended to blast down toward the cold bomb with them.

The major was marking the position of the last man, completing his circle under which the cold bomb must lie, when a peculiar tremor was felt by every man there. It was not like the shiver of an earthquake or the reverberation of an explosion. It was an infinitely shrill vibration that a moment later was followed by a creaking sound that seemed to come from the center of the ice cake. The men on the ice stopped their stamping and swinging of arms to listen in instinctive apprehension.

The center of the circle around which they stood seemed to rise in the air. The ice on which they stood was shivered into tiny fragments. A colossal and implacable roar filled the air, and a great sheet of flame of the unearthly tint of a vaporized metal rose to the heavens. The swathed and bundled soldiers were annihilated by the blast. A great hole five hundred feet across gaping in the center of the ice cake. Jacksonville shook from the concussion, and the plate-glass windows of its stores and office buildings splintered into a myriad tiny bits that sprinkled all its streets with sharp-edged, jagged pieces.

Teddy Gerrod, all unconscious of the fate of those who had attempted to meddle with the Jacksonville ice cake, went on out to bare and blast open the cold bomb that blocked New York harbor.

CHAPTER VI.

TEDDY GERROD straightened up and beat his hands together.

"Forty-seven below," he said to the soldier behind him. "Put a marker here."

He moved off to the right. Already a dozen little flags showed where the temperature reached that degree. Teddy was drawing what he would
have termed an isothermal line—a line where the temperature was the same. He was making a circle about a large part of the open clearing on the ice floe. Other flags led back into the mist, marking a path, and from time to time a party of four or five fur-clad soldiers arrived from the fort, dragging a loaded sledge behind them. They emptied the load from the sled, turned, and vanished into the mist again. A small pile of drills, explosives, and two of the squat trench mortars had already been made.

When the circle of little red flags had been completed, two signal-corps men set up their instruments and accurately located the center. Directly under that spot, if Teddy’s reasoning was correct, the new cold bomb was resting. The sledge from the fort arrived again, bearing a curious trench catapult for flinging bombs. Four long strips of black cloth were unrolled, under direction of the signal-corps men, pointing accurately to the center of the circle. No one had been able to approach nearer, thus far, than thirty yards from the center. At that distance Teddy’s thermo couple indicated a temperature of more than seventy-two degrees below zero, and flesh exposed to the air was frostbitten on the instant. What the temperature of the air might be directly above the cold bomb could only be conjectured.

One of the infantry men from the fort, the best grenade man in the garrison, now picked up a Mills grenade, and after carefully picking out the target with his eye, aided by the strips of black cloth, flung the small missile. A hole perhaps four feet deep and twice as much across was blasted in the brittle ice. A second, third, and fourth grenade followed. At the end of that time the size and depth of the hole had been doubled.

The trench catapult was set up. Half a dozen grenades were bundled together and flung into the now much enlarged opening in the surface of the ice. There was no explosion. One automatically braced oneself for the report, and the utter silence that succeeded the disappearance of the grenades came as a peculiar shock.

“Too cold,” remarked Teddy to the young lieutenant in charge.

The lieutenant nodded stiffly.

“We’ll try again.”

A second batch of grenades was flung into the hole, and the same quiet resulted.

“I would suggest——” Teddy began.

“We’ll fire a trench-mortar bomb,” said the young lieutenant.

The heavy winged projectile flew up into the air, and then descended squarely into the opening in the ice. Those standing fifty yards away could hear the crash as it struck, and then a sound as of musical splintering. The young lieutenant swore.

“The fuses are no good. Try once more.”

“You can shoot all day and they won’t go off,” said Teddy mildly. “It’s too cold down there.”

The officer said nothing, but supervised the firing of a second mortar bomb with precisely the same result. He swore again.

“It’s probably quite as cold as liquid air down there,” said Teddy. “In fact, there’s quite possibly a pool of liquified air at the bottom of the hole. Your bombs fall into that air and are frozen so solidly before they strike that the metal gets brittle and simply falls to powder from the shock. You can’t do anything going on this way.”

The young lieutenant hesitated, then turned to Teddy somewhat sulkily.

“What do you suggest, then?”

“We’d better enlarge the hole first. Blast down the walls of the present cavity, then use wrapped dynamite until we have a shallow crater. Then we’ll place our explosives by long poles,
keeping them warm by running resistance wires around them and heating them electrically."

The young lieutenant considered and agreed. Teddy went back to the fort to arrange for the heated bombs and the long poles. When he returned there was only a saucerlike depression in the ice clearing. It was quite fifty yards across, but no more than twenty deep. Standing near the edge, one could see the ice near the bottom glistening liquidly. Air, liquified by the intense cold at the bottom of the crater, wet the surface of the ice there.

"And that means the temperature down there is three hundred and twenty-five degrees or more below zero Fahrenheit," explained Teddy casually. "Here's where we use our heated explosives."

For an hour the party worked busily. Storage batteries brought out on sledges furnished the current that kept the explosives from becoming inert through cold. Charge after charge was fired, and the bottom of the crater grew steadily deeper. At the lowest point a little puddle of liquified air collected.

"We must be pretty nearly at the cold bomb now," said Teddy thoughtfully. "There's a mass of liquid air at the bottom of our crater, and something tells me there's solidified air at the bottom of that puddle. That means seven hundred-odd degrees below zero."

He was clad in the warmest garments that could be found, and every one of the others working in the clearing was quite as warmly clothed, but the cold was intense. One of the soldiers by the small pile of explosives was chewing a cud of tobacco. He spat. The brownish liquid froze in mid-air and bounced merrily away across the ice. The soldier looked at it with his mouth open, then shut it quickly. A thin film of ice had formed from the moisture on his teeth. The breast of every member of the party was covered with sparkling snow crystals from the congealed moisture of their breath.

"I begin to doubt if we can keep our stuff from freezing much deeper," Teddy commented. "We want to go down as deep as we can before we use our Dewey bulbs, though. I've only two of them."

The young lieutenant bustled away, and presently returned.

"The men say that the last bomb won't go off," he said aggrievedly. "Your heating plan doesn't work."

"I didn't expect it to work indefinitely," said Teddy mildly. "We want to clear out that liquid air and shoot our two Dewey globes before it's had time to reform. Will you please have a charge made ready to be fired just above the surface of that puddle? That should clear it away. Immediately after that charge has gone off we'll drop our two T. N. T. charges in the Dewey bulbs. They ought to show us the cold bomb."

The dynamite charge was suspended about a foot above the surface of the watery, bubbling pool. Air was in that pool, air turned to transparent liquid by the intense cold. At —325° Fahrenheit air becomes a liquid. Here, exposed to the sunlight and the blue sky, a pool of liquified gas had collected from the incredible cold of the cold bomb below. The charge of explosive burst with a shattering roar. The echoes of the explosion had not died away when the two Dewey bulbs filled with T. N. T. fell into the bared ice cavity. A Dewey bulb is a combination of six vacuum bottles placed one outside the other. They are used for the keeping of liquid gases at a low temperature, but are obviously just as effective in protecting their contents from exterior cold. They fell some five yards apart and rolled, then were still. Their fuses sputtered. They went off together. A huge mass of shattered ice was thrown aside, and a dark, globular
mass was exposed to view. Almost as soon as it was exposed to the air a crust of frozen air coated it, and liquified air began to trickle down its misshapen sides. There could be no doubt but that it was the cold bomb, invented by an insane genius to make him master of the world.

Those about the rim of the crater looked at it and turned away. Just as the intense heat of a blast furnace sears unprotected flesh even yards from its flame, so the incredible cold of the dark object pinched and wrung with its freezing rays. Not one man who looked upon the cold bomb but suffered from a deep frostbite.

“We can’t approach that thing,” said Teddy, with his hand over his eyes. “I’d just as soon, or sooner, try to tinker with burning thermite. We’ll have to shoot armor-piercing shells at it. They’ll freeze when they get near it, but the impact ought to crack the thing.”

He motioned to the fur-clad soldiers to move back from the crater, and after a hasty consultation with the lieutenant went off toward the fort to ask for a small-caliber field gun.

The lieutenant paced back and forth restlessly. He was an ambitious young man. He did not relish taking orders from a civilian like Teddy. His eye fell on the heap of equipment that had been brought out from the fort. Two trench mortars, a trench catapult, a liquid-flame apparatus—one of the American inventions that had far outdone the original German flamewerfers! There had been some thought of trying to reach a point just above the cold bomb and melting the ice down to it with liquid flame. That had been quickly proven impracticable, but the liquid-fire apparatus had not been sent back. The young lieutenant was not stupid. On the contrary, he was a singularly intelligent man. In a flash he saw how the liquid flame could have been used much more efficiently than Teddy’s resistance coils about his explosive charges. The idea simply had not occurred to Teddy, or the young lieutenant, either. Now, however, he became all eagerness. If he succeeded in breaking up the cold bomb during Teddy’s absence it would be a feather in his cap. If, in addition, he pointed out a method of dealing with the cold bombs superior to Teddy’s plodding system, it would certainly mean his promotion and a very desirable reputation for himself in his profession.

He gave his orders briskly. The liquid-flame tank was set up, and began to spray out its stream of fire. The young lieutenant had it trained so that it passed just above the top of the ungainly cold bomb and grazed the upper edge. Then the two trench mortars were made ready for firing. The young lieutenant set them at their proper elevation himself. He was tremendously excited. He pointed the two mortars with the most meticulous precision. To aim them properly he had to expose his face again and again to the direct rays from the cold bomb, but he paid no attention to the searing, freezing rays.

The stream of liquid fire shot upward in a perfect parabola, and fell evenly, exactly, where it was aimed. The young lieutenant knew that a mortar bomb would be frozen by the intense cold if it were fired at the cold bomb direct, but his plan got around that difficulty. With the liquid fire playing just above and grazing the cold bomb, when the shell from the mortar struck the incredibly cold surface, both the shell and the cold bomb would be bathed in flame.

All was ready. The lieutenant fixed his eyes on the cold bomb and gave the signal. The two small trench mortars spouted flame. Two ungainly bombs rose high in the air and fell hurtling down toward the strange, frosted ob-
ject at the bottom of the crater. One of the bombs would fall a little to the left. The other—squarely on top!

The cracking explosion of the bomb from the trench mortar was lost in the greater roar that followed it. Before the young lieutenant or any of his men could lift a finger they were enveloped by a colossal sheet of vaporized metal that seemed to fill the earth, the air, and all the sky. Of a weird and unearthly tint, the white-hot flame leaped into the air. It sprang up three thousand feet in hardly more than two seconds. The blast had the velocity of many rifle balls, and the withering heat of molten metal. The young lieutenant and his men were swept into nothingness in the fraction of a second. The crater they had worked for hours to blast out was as a puny ant hole beside the vast chasm that opened in the ice down to the red clay far beneath the bed of the Narrows. And New York shook and trembled from the shock of the terrific explosion.

CHAPTER VII.

TEDDY was thrown down by the concussion, and fell in a heap against the commandant. He leaped to his feet and rushed to the window, from which the glass had disappeared. He saw the remnants of the sheet of flame dying away and saw that the low-lying cloud of mist had been blown from the surface of the ice. A gaping orifice, five hundred feet across, showed itself where Teddy and the lieutenant had been working. Of the lieutenant and his men no trace could be seen. Two or three of the little red flags that had marked the path through the mist still remained, however, and a small sledge was lying, overturned, beside the sledge route. Four tiny black figures lay in twisted attitudes beside the sledge. As Teddy looked one of them began to struggle feebly.

Teddy stared, speechless. For a moment he was dazed by the suddenness and the overwhelming nature of the calamity that had befallen the young lieutenant and his detachment. Only accident had saved him from a similar fate. Then his professional instinct reasserted itself, and he began to piece together what he knew of the bomb. In a moment the solution came to him.

"Varrhus planned this," he said unsteadily. "He filled up his hollow cold bombs with solid iron. The heat that would come in would first melt and then vaporize the interior until the pressure inside was more than the still-solid crust could stand. And all that vaporized iron would burst out. What a fiend that man must be!"

An hour later, baffled and discouraged, he was sitting in the laboratory with his head in his hands, trying desperately to grapple with this new problem. The new cold bombs apparently could not be assailed without destruction of those who attacked them. It was impossible to imagine that volunteers could be found to sacrifice their lives to destroy each new bomb as it was placed. The horror of being annihilated by a blast of metallic vapor would deter men who would not hesitate to face death in a less terrible form. And Varrhus was evidently able to place them again nearly as fast as they were blown up. Telegrams announcing the explosion of the Jacksonville and Charleston ice floes lay before Teddy, supplemented by a cablegram from Panama saying that the Miraflores Locks had been destroyed by the blast when the Panama cold bomb had burst. Teddy was nearly certain that the next morning would find the exploded bombs replaced. Varrhus' black flyer was evidently capable of carrying a great weight at an immense speed. It also seemed able to reach an almost incredible height, from the fact that the second cold bomb had been dropped in the
Narrows in broad daylight without the flyer having been sighted.

Evelyn turned from the instruments with which she had been working. She had scraped off a small bit of the lacquerlike surface of the silver bracelet, and had been analyzing it in the hope of finding what element or combination had been used to produce the mystifying heat-inductive effect.

"Teddy," she said depressively, "I can’t find a thing. The lacquer effect seems to be simply the appearance of some way he has treated the metal. The surface gives just the same analysis as the filings from the inside of the metal. I took a spectro photo and it gives silver lines with a trace of lead. Analysis by arsenic reduction gives the same result."

"Perhaps those detectives will be able to trace Varrhus by the mailing box they took," said Teddy, without much hope. "It’s not very likely, though. We’ve got to think of something!"

Silence fell in the laboratory again, broken only by the faint whistling sound of the flame Evelyn had used in her analytical work.

"The trouble is," said Teddy grimly, "that we’ve been trailing Varrhus, instead of anticipating him. If we could know where he was going to be—"

"He’ll have to show up sooner or later," Evelyn commented. "We know, for instance, that he’ll have to replace that bomb in the Narrows or let the harbor stay open. The use of these new explosive bombs means that he has to expose himself more than he’d have to with the old ones."

"There ought to be an aerial patrol above the city—"

Teddy stood up sluggishly, discouragement in every line of his figure. A servant tapped on the door of the laboratory.

"Lieutenant Davis, of the military flying corps, sir."

"Show him in," said Teddy listlessly.

A slim young officer came in. His friendly, boyish face was full of a whimsical humor.

"This is rather an intrusion, I’m afraid," he said half apologetically, "but I thought you might be able to help me out."

"I’ve done nothing so far," said Teddy in a rather discouraged tone. "Miss Hawkins and I were just canvassing the situation. You’re talking about the iceberg and Varrhus, aren’t you?"

"Of course. No one talks about anything else nowadays. My taxi had a tough time getting through the crowds on the streets. They don’t understand about the explosion in the Narrows yet."

Teddy introduced him to Evelyn.

"Pleasure, I’m sure," said Davis with a smile. Then his face sobered. "That was rotten hard luck about your father, Miss Hawkins. I’m not good at making speeches, but I hope you realize that every one is sympathizing with you and in a measure sharing your sorrow."

Evelyn shook hands.

"I will allow myself to grieve when Varrhus has been disposed of," she said quietly. "Until then I dare not let myself think."

Davis released her hand and turned to Teddy.

"Varrhus—or the chap in the black flyer, anyway—killed my best friend, Curtiss. He was driving the little Nieuport that attacked Varrhus the day you blew up the first bomb. I was the first man to reach the spot where Curtiss had crashed, and I swore I’d get Varrhus for that."

"I remember," said Teddy. "Frozen."

Davis nodded, his face grave.

"I have what is probably the fastest little machine in the United States, at the fort. A two-seater, with twin Liberty Motors that shoot her up to a hundred and fifty miles an hour without
any trouble at all. I think I can get Varrhus with it. I came to you to learn what you think about Varrhus' weapons. It's only the part of wisdom to learn all you can about your opponent, you know."

Teddy found the young man impressing him very favorably.

"I haven't given the matter much thought," he confessed, "but you remember Varrhus' tactics?"

"He dropped like a tumbler pigeon," said Davis, "and Curtiss overshot him. There wasn't a sign of firing except from Curtiss. He simply overran the place where Varrhus had been three or four seconds before and then dropped. He was frozen stiff when I found him."

"I think," said Teddy carefully, "that Varrhus had shot up a jet of some liquified gas, probably hydrogen. It hung suspended in the air for a moment, and in that moment the biplane ran into it. A drop of liquid hydrogen placed in the palm of your hand would freeze your arm solidly up well past the elbow. It's something over five hundred degrees below zero. Your friend ran into what amounted to a shower of it."

Davis considered.

"Cheerful thing to fight against, isn't it?" he asked, with a smile. "Tactics, mustn't run above the black flyer and mustn't run below it. He can probably shoot it straight down, too."

"And almost certainly from the sides," said Teddy. "The man must have been working on this thing for years, and even if he's insane he'd be a fool not to make his weapon as efficient as possible."

Davis' expression became rueful.

"And so I'm supposed to keep my distance," he remarked, "and take pot shots at him while dancing merrily around in mid-air. Can't we do anything about that stuff to nullify it?"

"Burn it," suggested Evelyn. "Liquid hydrogen burns just as readily as the same gas at normal temperatures."

The three of them were silent for a moment.

"Would rockets set it afire?" asked Davis presently. "I could keep a stream of fire balls shooting out before my machine."

"They ought to," Teddy was losing his discouragement in this new prospect of coming to grips with Varrhus. "I say, will your machine burn readily?"

"Only the gas tank. The wings and struts are fireproof. New process."

Davis stood up suddenly.

"Would it bother you to come over and look at my machine? We could probably figure out the thing better then."

Teddy rose almost enthusiastically.

"We'll go over now if you say so."

The taxicab bearing Teddy and the young aviator down to the fort was forced to travel slowly amid the throngs of apprehensive people that overflowed the sidewalks and made the streets almost impassable. The launch took them swiftly to the fort, and in a few moments they had arrived at the small aviation field behind the fortifications on Staten Island. Davis led Teddy directly to the shed that contained the swift machine of which he was so proud. It was a splendid product of the air-craft maker's art. Twin Liberty Motors developed nearly eight hundred horse power between them, and two great shining propellers pulled the machine through the air with irresistible force.

"You see," said Davis, with some enthusiasm, "the motors aren't in the fuselage, so the gunner sits up here in the bow and can fire freely in any direction. The one-man planes with synchronized machine guns firing through the propeller aren't in it with these for real fighting. They're splendid little machines—I drove one in France—but I honestly believe this is
better than they are. This one responds to the controls every bit as readily, and with a good gunner——”

“Machine gunner in France myself,” said Teddy, touching his breast. “Would you take a chance on letting me sit up front to-night?”

“To-night?” asked Davis.

“I believe Varrhus will appear to drop another cold bomb to-night. It will probably be dropped inside the harbor so the ice cake will touch the Battery. That will set the people frantic, and make them beg the government to enter into a parley with Varrhus. It’s paid no official attention to him so far, you know.”

Davis’ expression became keen and rather stern.

“We’ve four hours before dark. We’ll have to set to work.”

Teddy went over and stepped up the ladder that leaned against the cockpit.

“I want to see your gasoline supply,” he remarked. In a moment he came down, looking a trifle dubious. “If I’m right about Varrhus using liquid hydrogen for a weapon, and we can set it afire, we’ll dive through half a dozen sheets of flame to-night. Something will have to be done to protect that gas tank from catching fire, and some protection for the carburetors, too.”

“We’ll fix that in a hurry,” said Davis briskly. “Oh, Simpson! Come here!”

In twenty minutes there were half a dozen mechanics at work, and Teddy was carefully inspecting the machine gun at the bow of the fuselage.

Teddy telephoned back to Evelyn what he anticipated would occur that night and his own share in it.

“If course there’s some risk in it,” he finished, “but I guess we’ll come out.”

Evelyn’s voice was more anxious than Teddy had expected.

“Do be careful, Teddy,” she said in a worried tone. “Please be very careful. Varrhus has so many fiendish weapons. I’m terribly afraid.”

Teddy’s voice was grim.

“With the kind assistance of the German government,” he remarked, “we have a few fiendish inventions, too. I’m using explosive bullets only to-night. Varrhus is outlawed.”

Evelyn spoke almost faintly.

“But take good care of yourself, please, Teddy,” she urged. “I think better that Varrhus got away this once than that you should be killed for nothing.”

Teddy smiled. “I’ve no intention of being killed, Evelyn, but I have some intention that Varrhus shall be.”

There was a curious sound from the other end of the wire.

“But—but——” Evelyn’s voice died away. “I’m—I’m going to be praying, Teddy. Good-by.”

The last was very faint. Teddy turned from the instrument and went out to where the aéroplane had been rolled from its shed. The sun was sinking and dusk was falling. Time passed and darkness settled down upon the earth. Stars twinkled into being. A long searchlight poked a tentative finger of light into the sky.

“We’d better be going,” said Davis thoughtfully. “We want to be well up before he appears.”

Teddy clambered up to his seat and adjusted the straps that would hold him in place. He pulled down the helmet and fitted the telephone receivers securely over his ears. A telephone was necessary for communication with Davis, four feet behind him, because of the tremendous roar of the engines. He took the machine-gun butt and found the trigger, then made sure the first of a belt of cartridges was in place. He settled back in his seat as the mechanics began to twirl the propellers. He was going out to fight the black flyer, but most incongruously he was not thinking of Varrhus at all. His thoughts dwelt with strange intensity upon Evelyn.
CHAPTER VIII.

NEW YORK lay below them. The long, straight lines of lights shining up through the semidarkness of the moonlit night made a strange appearance to the two in the swift machine. Davis had mounted to a great height, some ten thousand feet, and the pin points of light outlined more than a dozen cities and towns. The Hudson was a faintly silvery ribbon flowing down placidly from a far-distant source. Because of the ice cake in the Narrows its level had risen two or three feet, but now it flowed smoothly over that great obstacle, melting and carrying it away toward the sea.

The fighting plane roared around in huge circles, seeming strangely alone in the vast expanse of air. One searchlight from below moved restlessly about the sky. A second joined it, then a third. One by one a dozen or more of long, pencillike beams of light shot up into the sky and moved here and there in seeming confusion, but actually according to a carefully prearranged plan. A hooded red light showed below the biplane in which Teddy and Davis were awaiting some sign of the black flyer. That had been agreed upon, and none of the searchlight beams flashed upon the circling machine. From time to time Davis shut off the motors, and the two of them lifted the ear flaps of their helmets to listen eagerly for the musical humming that would herald Varrhus’ approach.

Far to the east they could see where the faintly luminous waters of the ocean came up to and stopped at the darker masses of the land. The harbor below them glittered in the moonlight. The only peculiarity in the scene was the absence of the little harbor craft that ply about busily by day and night upon their multifarious errands. They were all securely docked. The wharves, too, were dark and silent. All the maritime industry of New York was at a standstill.

A wide spiral to twelve thousand feet. The motors were hushed during a two-thousand-feet glide, while the two men in the machine listened intently. For two hours this maneuver had been repeated and re-repeated. No sound save the rush of the wind through the guy wires and past the struts had broken the chilly stillness of the heights. The sky was a blue dome of a myriad winking lights. A pale silver moon shone down.

The nose of the machine pointed down and the motors ceased to roar. Faintly but unmistakably above the whistling and rushing of the wind about the surfaces of the biplane a deep, musical humming could be heard. Abruptly the motors burst into life again. The exhausts began to bellow out their reassuring thunder. The machine began to climb again, circling to every point of the compass, while Teddy and Davis scanned the sky keenly for a sign of the black flyer with its cargo of menace to New York.

“I’m going to fifteen thousand.”

Davis’ voice sounded with metallic clearness in Teddy’s ear. The telephones between the two helmets were working perfectly.

“That was Varrhus, all right?” said Teddy quietly. “Did you signal to the people beneath?”

Davis pushed a button, and a green light glowed beside the red one in the hood below the machine. In a moment the receipt of this signal by those below was evidenced. The searchlights took up their task with renewed vigor, searching the sky frantically for a sign of the black flying machine. The hood below the biplane allowed the signal to be seen by those on the ground, but made the light invisible to any one in the air. The biplane swung in wide circles, Teddy and Davis with every nerve taut and every sense alert, afame
with eagerness to sight their quarry. They saw it, outlined for an instant by the white beam of one of the circling lights.

It was dropping like a stone from the clouds. The searchlight rays glistened from polished black sides and were reflected from shimmering propeller blades above it.

"Helicopter," said Davis crisply. "Now!"

The black flyer was a thousand feet below them and still falling. The nose of the biplane dipped sharply and it dived straight for the still falling machine. Teddy gripped the machine gun and sighted along the barrel. Down, down, the biplane darted, all the power of its eight hundred horse power aiding in the speed of its fall. The glistening black machine checked in its drop and hung motionless in mid-air. The pilot was evidently unconscious of the machine swooping down upon him.

Five hundred feet down, six hundred—Teddy pulled hard on the trigger, and his machine gun spurted fire. A stream of explosive projectiles sped toward the menacing black shape. Teddy saw them strike the shining sides of the machine and explode with little bursts of flame. The biplane was rushing with incredible speed toward the other flyer. Teddy played his machine gun upon it as he might have played a hose, and apparently with as little effect. The tiny explosive shells struck and flashed futilely. The black flyer seemed to be unharmed. After a second's hesitation, it dropped again abruptly. The biplane shot toward the spot the other machine had occupied. The distance was too short to turn or swerve, quickly as it responded to the controls.

"Flares," gasped Davis, but before he spoke Teddy was pressing the small button that would set them off.

A burst of tiny lights shot out before the biplane, many-colored balls of fire driven forward from a tube below the fuselage. They illuminated the air for a short distance, entering the space from which the black flyer had just dropped. Teddy and Davis saw a small cloud of what seemed to be mist or fog hanging in the air. The tiny fire balls darted into it the fraction of a second before the biplane itself had to traverse the same space. As the first of the lights struck the fringe of the whitish cloud it flared up. The fire ball had touched a droplet of liquified gas and set it flaming. It burned fiercely and with incredible rapidity, setting fire to the remainder of the cloud. Teddy ducked his head as the aeroplane shot madly through a huge globe of blazing gas in mid-air.

"Great God!" gasped Davis. "Now where's Varrhus?"

The heavy masks the two aviators had worn had protected them from the flaming hydrogen, and their goggles had saved their eyes. Now Davis was only eager to make a second attempt upon the black machine. He swerved and circled. The searchlights below were waving frantically through the air. The flare aloft had been seen, and they concentrated upon the space below the spot. In a second the black flyer was once more outlined by half a dozen beams. Davis banked sharply and darted toward it again.

The pilot of the strange machine seemed to be quite confident that he had disposed of his antagonist, and was apparently busy with something inside the cabin. He was probably preparing to release his cold bomb, but was again interrupted. The biplane approached. Teddy saw his explosive bullets strike and flash. He knew they struck, but they seemed incapable of doing harm. The black flyer was clearly defined by the searchlights, and Teddy could see it distinctly. It was a long, needlelike body with a glass-inclosed cabin near the center. Above it four whirring disks
of comparatively huge size showed the position of the vertical propellers that enabled it to rise and fall and to hang suspended motionless in the air. A fifth propeller spun slowly at the bow. That was evidently not running at full speed. Below the needlelike body hung a misshapen globe, like the bulging ovipositor of some strange insect.

Flash! Flash! The impact of the explosive bullets was marked by spiteful cracks as they burst. Teddy was aiming for the cabin of the machine.

"Got him!" he exclaimed.

The glass of the cabin windows had splintered into fragments. The aëroplane shot toward the motionless black flyer.

"Shall I ram?" asked Davis in a perfectly even voice. He was quite prepared to sacrifice both his and Teddy’s lives to make absolutely certain of the destruction of the menacing helicopter with its more than dangerous occupant.

Teddy, with lips compressed, nodded. He had forgotten that in the darkness Davis could not see his movement. As the biplane sped forward the black machine dropped again. Again the whitish cloud was left behind it, clearly defined in the searchlight rays. Teddy had barely time to press the flare button before they reached the cloud. The mist of atomized liquid hydrogen seemed to burst into flame all about them. The aëroplane roared through hell-fire for a moment. Flame was before Teddy’s aviator’s goggles. He was in a veritable inferno. Then the aëroplane shot free again.

"Ram him!" panted Teddy. "Smash him! Do anything, only we’ve got to get him!"

They circled swiftly, searching for the black flyer. The searchlights were following him now, and they saw that he was rising straight up. He had not yet dropped his cold bomb. Davis put his machine at the ascent at as steep an angle as he dared. They climbed almost as rapidly as the helicopter. The black machine made its first aggressive move now. Davis was climbing in a jerky spiral, rising at an amazing speed. Teddy was busily fitting a new belt of cartridges into his machine gun. The pilot of the other machine darted to one side and a huge cloud of mist sprang into being just below him, darting downward like some pale-gray snake unfolding itself in the sky. Davis zoomed sharply. Another second and he would have run into the whitish cloud. The biplane recovered and swerved to one side. Twelve thousand feet. Thirteen thousand feet. Fourteen thousand feet. Three miles in the air! Then the black flyer began to drop. The biplane dived after him, Teddy’s machine gun spitting fire and explosive bullets in a furious, well-directed blast. Once, twice, bursts of the little flashes that showed his bullets were striking served to reassure Teddy, but the biplane could not gain on the falling helicopter.

Down, down—— There were half a dozen quick bursts of flame in the air. Antiaircraft guns were firing. The black flyer dropped unharmed. Barely a thousand feet above the waters of the bay, the propeller at the bow seemed to be put into motion, for the straight descent changed into a graceful curve. The curve flattened out, and the black machine ceased to fall. It sped madly for the Narrows, with a bedlam of bursting shells all about it and the vengeful, spitting two-seater darting after it like an avenging Nemesis. Again and again spurts of flame against the body of the glistening helicopter showed that Teddy’s fire was well directed, but the machine shot onward in a furious rush for the Narrows. Above the Narrows, without pausing, a black object that turned to white in the searchlight rays fell from the misshapen globe below the center of the black flyer’s body. The thing that fell seemed to leave a mist of fog behind it.
as it dropped. Then, its mission accomplished, the dark machine fled toward the west.

Teddy and Davis, in the biplane, sped after it at the topmost speed of which their aeroplane was capable. Teddy was nearly insane with baffled rage and disappointment. He knew that he had failed. Another cold bomb had been dropped in the Narrows, and any attempt to destroy it would only result in the death of those who made the attempt.

"Faster, faster!" he pleaded to Davis. "If it gets far ahead of us we'll lose it in the darkness."

Davis pressed his lips together and used every artifice he knew of to increase the speed of his machine, but the glistening black body ahead of them drew steadily farther away. At last it could barely be seen. Then, as if in derision, a light appeared in the cabin of the black flyer. It winked oddly.

Dot-dash, dot-dash—

"He's signaling," said Davis.

Dot-dash, dot-dash—

"W-a-t-c-h," spelled Davis, "t-h-e M-i-s-s-i-s-s-i-p-p-i—V-a-r-r-h-u-s."

"Watch the Mississippi, Varrhus," repeated Teddy. "He's getting away! He's getting away!"

The light ahead of them winked and disappeared. The sky was empty except for the biplane roaring after a vanished enemy.

"He's gotten away," half sobbed Davis. "Damn him! He killed Curtiss, and he's gotten away!"

Teddy stared into the empty night with something of Davis' disappointment and despair.

CHAPTER IX.

NEXT morning the world read at its breakfast table that the Mississippi River had frozen over just below St. Louis, and that the water was rising rapidly. The river had frozen solidly up to the surface. The level rose, and the water started to flow over the top of the ice cake, only to be turned into ice as it did so. Hour by hour the level rose, and hour by hour the solid ice barrier rose with the water level. Men had tried to blast a way through for the rushing waters, but without effect. As fast as the water tried to flow through the opening made by a charge of dynamite it froze again and plugged the hole through which it was attempting to escape.

Hastily improvised levees were thrown up, but the water outstripped the efforts of the builders. The lower part of St. Louis was flooded, and a great part of the population made homeless. Then low-lying lands beside the river were gradually submerged. In twenty-four hours there were calls for help along the upper part of the Mississippi Valley. The rising water had flooded immense areas of cultivated land, and even larger areas were threatened. In another day a thousand square miles of crops were under water, and the loss in live stock was assuming formidable proportions. The new cold bomb in New York harbor had crept up to the Battery, as Teddy had foreseen. The Norfolk cold bomb had exploded, fortunately without loss of life. Gibraltar had witnessed three almost simultaneous blasts, and was again free of ice, but the whole world knew that it was at the mercy of Varrhus.

Davis, Evelyn, and Teddy were discussing the matter dolefully. Davis had been coming to the laboratory daily in the hopes of hearing that Teddy had devised some plan for the frustration of Varrhus' ambitious schemes. Teddy found himself liking Davis immensely, but with a peculiarly illogical annoyance that Evelyn seemed to like him quite as well. When he had phoned her of his safety after the fight with Varrhus he could hear a flood
of thankfulness in her voice, but when he saw her the next day she was almost distant. He saw traces of real anxiety on her face, but she had not been really natural until they had worked nearly all day on the silver bracelet, trying to find what had been done to the surface to give it its peculiar property of allowing heat to pass in one direction, but not in the other. They were as far as ever from the solution. Davis was quite ignorant of abstract chemistry or physics and could not join in their discussions, but Teddy fancied that he was much more interested in Evelyn than was necessary. He was annoyed to find that he resisted it. He had always looked on Evelyn as a comrade, and he could not understand this feeling that took possession of him. It did not occur to him to speculate upon the fact that he found ideas coming to him much more readily when working by Evelyn's side, or that he rarely attempted anything without asking her opinion. Teddy had never thought much of romance, and he did not suspect how much Evelyn's companionship meant to him.

Davis was reiterating for the fortieth time his disappointment at Varrhus' getting away.

"We almost had him," he said disgustedly. "Our explosive bullets were playing all over his infernal flying machine. We'd have landed one in that little glass cabin of his and smashed him nicely in another minute, when he skipped off like that. And I'll swear to it we were doing a hundred and eighty miles an hour."

"He ran away from us pretty easily," said Teddy dismally. "Isn't there a faster machine than yours we could get hold of?"

"Nothing but a single-seater, and not so much faster at that," said Davis. "A hundred and ninety-five is the best even the latest single-seater combat planes will do at a low altitude."

"Even for a short burst of speed?" asked Evelyn.

"Diving, you'll run up faster than that," Davis explained. "When we went straight down after Varrhus, we must have gone over two hundred, but for straightaway work we've nothing that will catch Varrhus."

"What's the official speed record?" asked Evelyn, toying with a test tube. She looked singularly pretty in the long white apron she wore in the laboratory.

"Two hundred and fifteen, I think," said Davis. "Some Spanish aviator made it. He'd doped his gas with picric acid, though."

"What does that do?" asked Teddy quickly.

"It's explosive, and about doubles the force of your explosions. It eats your engines right up, though. They used to use it in motor-boat races until a rule was made against it. You see, an engine is ruined after twenty minutes or so, and it made the racing unfair for people who couldn't buy a new engine for every race."

Teddy's face grew thoughtful.

"Picric acid," he said meditatively. "Suppose we used it in the gas of your plane. Would we have a chance of catching Varrhus?"

"I don't know," Davis said thoughtfully. "I hardly think so. It would make our speed better, but if it were anything of a chase our motors would be ruined before we'd gone far."

"The acid attacks the steel of the cylinders and makes the bore too large?" Teddy seemed to be thinking rapidly.

"Yes. You lose all your compression."

Teddy looked at Evelyn.

"Suppose the pistons and the interiors of your cylinders were plated with platinum? Platinum is one of the hardest metals, and should stand up under a great deal of wear."
"Would platinum resist the attack of the acid?" Davis grew excited.
"Surely."
Davis jumped to his feet.
"Then we've got him! New piston rings will let you plate the cylinders without reboring them unless you're going to plate them heavily. Can you do the plating?"
"Try," said Teddy.
"We make a hundred and eighty with straight gasoline," said Davis excitedly. "With doped gas—How long will it take to fix my motors?"
"Four or five hours. We'll borrow the acid vats of some electro-plating concern. Evelyn will mix the solution of platinum salts. I'll go arrange to borrow the vats while you get your motors disassembled and brought here on a motor truck."

Teddy hastily began to put on his coat.
"You're going to try to fight Varrhus again?" asked Evelyn anxiously.
"Are we?" asked Davis cheerfully.
"Just ask me! We are."
"You hit him several times in the last fight," said Evelyn faintly, "and it didn't do any good."
"We'll use armor-piercing bullets this time," said Davis exuberantly. "Or we may be able to mount a one-pounder automatic. I think the plane will stand it. And at worst we can ram him."

Evelyn turned a trifle pale. "That means you'll both be killed."

Davis smiled. "Maybe not. We'll take a chance anyway, won't we, Gerrod?"

Teddy nodded shortly. "I'm going to get Varrhus or he's going to get me," he said succinctly.

They started for the front door. The commissioner of police was just getting out of his car.
"News, most likely," said Teddy, and they waited.

The commissioner of police looked worried when he shook hands with Teddy.

"My men have been trying to trace that package that contained the bracelet," he told him, "and have found that it was put in a country rural-delivery mail box after dark. The mail carrier took it when he made his morning route. There's absolutely no way of tracing it any farther. Any one might have passed by in an automobile and have put it in. The farmer in whose box it was is above suspicion. Now another set of letters has been sent in the same way from another rural-delivery box a hundred miles from the first. One is addressed to Miss Hawkins. I have it here. The postal authorities called me in when they saw the envelope."

He showed a huge yellow envelope addressed to Evelyn. In one corner was a large return card. "The Dictatorial Residence."
"It might be almost anything," said Davis. "Better not let Miss Hawkins open it. I'll do it, Gerrod."

Teddy shook his head. "We'll tell her about it, and I'll open it in the laboratory."

Evelyn and Davis waited apprehensively until Teddy emerged from that room.

"No cold bombs, no electric shocks, and no poison gas," he said, smiling. "Just a billet doux to Evelyn. It fits in beautifully with our plans, Davis."

Evelyn took the sheet he extended to her, and read:

**The Dictatorial Residence, August 29th.**

His Excellency Wladislaw Varrhus, dictator of the earth, has been much annoyed by the efforts of one Theodore Gerrod to obstruct his plans and desires. He has been informed through the press of the fact that Miss Evelyn Hawkins has collaborated with and encouraged Theodore Gerrod in his rash attempt. His excellency the dictator is pleased to require that Miss Evelyn Hawkins repair to a spot some five miles due east from Noman's Reef, off the coast of Maine. Miss Hawkins may bring with her a maid and
such baggage as she may require. She is to be held as security for the cessation of Theodore Gerrod’s efforts to impede the secure establishment of the dictatorship. The Mississippi River has been closed to traffic, and will remain closed until this order has been obeyed by Miss Hawkins. The time set for Miss Hawkins’ appearance at that spot is dawn-break of Tuesday, September the third. Given at the dictatorial residence.

Wladislaw Varrhus.

Evelyn looked at the three men with a white face. The commissioner of police looked grave. Davis was smiling, and Teddy was smiling, too, but with a blaze of anger in his eyes.

"Gerrrod," said Davis whimsically, "I am much depressed that Varrhus didn’t include me with you as making efforts to obstruct his plans and desires."

"The government will have to be notified," said the commissioner of police solemnly.

"Do—you think I had better go?" asked Evelyn hesitatingly.

"No!" exploded Teddy and Davis together. Teddy went on: "Why, Evelyn, the man is insane! And besides we’ve just thought of something that’s sure to get him. We’ll lay in wait for him, and then he’ll walk into our parlor nicely. When he does—"

"Finis," said Davis cheerfully, "if I may borrow a phrase from the French."

"And if it’s a long chase," said Teddy even more cheerfully, "the dear person set the time for dawn, and we’ll have light to fight by. Let’s go and set to work on that plane of yours."

They left together in high spirits. Evelyn stood quite still after they had gone, absent-mindedly crushing the letter from Varrhus in her hand. Presently, with a sob, she went to her room and allowed herself to cry. They would not let her face danger, but Teddy was going out to fight, perhaps to die—and for her.

Over at the hangar, mechanics swarmed upon the fighting plane, dismounting the motors and disassembling them. The cylinders and pistons were being carefully packed. A big motor truck had already backed up at the wide door of the aeroplane shed, and as fast as the parts were packed they were loaded on it. Davis was here, there, and everywhere. He had asked permission for the experiment, and it has been granted. The government was prepared to risk almost anything rather than allow Varrhus to succeed in his huge blackmailing of the entire human race. There was no hesitation in allowing anything that might afford a fighting chance of downing the black flyer. The Mississippi floods were growing in size and destructiveness. The New York cold bomb, dropped the night Teddy and Davis had fought the black machine over the harbor, was expected to explode at any moment. Every window still intact in the city had been pasted with strips of paper to keep the fragments from becoming a menace to those on the streets when the bomb should burst them.

Davis had conferred with the commandant of the forts, and volunteers had been asked for among the garrison. A boat was being heavily armed with concealed guns. It would go to the point where Varrhus would expect Evelyn to be taken. He would see the small boat, drop down to take Evelyn on board his evil craft, and the masked batteries of antiaircraft guns would open on him in a blast of fire. Teddy’s discovery that flares fired into the cloud of liquified gas would cause it to burn harmlessly in mid-air had been adapted to protect the crew. As the guns opened on the hovering black flyer a stream of fire balls would be made to float overhead to set flaming the stream of liquid hydrogen Varrhus might be expected to shoot downward. At that, though, the mission of the boat crew was hazardous in the extreme.
The telephone rang in the hangar. Teddy was on the wire. He had commandeered the big wooden acid vats of an electro-plating plant, and the platinum-plating solution was being mixed even then. If Davis brought the motors over in parts, the plating might begin immediately.

The big truck rumbled off, Davis smiling confidently on the seat beside the chauffeur. Half a dozen mechanics perched on various parts of the load. When the truck stopped before the electro-plating plant they leaped off and rushed the glistening cylinders inside. In twenty minutes they were in the plating solution and an almost infinitely thin film of platinum was slowly forming within them.

The workmen of the electro-plating plant labored far into the night on their task. Teddy had insisted that a film of platinum ten times the thickness of the usual precious-metal plating be used, and the process was slow. When the cylinders had been prepared, the pistons remained, and the exhaust ports and valves. These, too, were coated with the hard, acid-resistant metal, and Davis’ mechanics began their task of fitting piston rings to the altered motor parts. The rings themselves had then to be plated, and all the plating burnished and polished. Teddy and Davis snatched a few hours’ sleep while the motor in its disassembled state was being carried back to the hangar and reinstalled in the aeroplane. They woke, and during all the following day Davis sat in the pilot’s seat, listening with a practiced ear and aiding in the final tuning up of the changed motors, adjusting the carburetors to their new fuel. Thirty per cent of picric acid added to the finest, highest grade gasoline was to be used. No one had dared use such a percentage before, even for motors that were expected to be ruined.

Teddy, in the meantime, was familiarizing himself with the small one-pounder automatic gun—similar to the German antitank weapons—that was to be installed in the bow of the aeroplane. By nightfall all was finished. Teddy ran over to New York and saw Evelyn for the last time before making his attempt, and the next morning he and Davis flew to Noman’s Reef, where a camouflaged hangar had been erected on telegraphed instructions from New York. Tuesday dawn found them alert and anxiously scanning the sky for a sign of the black flyer.

CHAPTER X.

The stars winked palely from the graying sky. In the east a pallid whiteness showed which slowly yellowed and then turned to pink. The dawn was breaking.

On the little reef men watched keenly. Far out at sea, its single funnel tipped with red paint from the crimson sunlight, a little boat tossed and rolled. That boat contained the men who had offered their lives for a chance to kill this Varrhus, who threatened the liberty of the world. Beside the camouflaged hangar two great horns, seeming to be enlarged megaphones, pointed toward the sky. Little wires ran from their points to telephone receivers strapped on the ears of intently listening men. They were microphones to detect the first sound of the musical humming of the black flyer. Teddy and Davis were befurred and goggled, but had pushed up their goggles to take powerful glasses and scan the sky eagerly for a sight of their enemy. Mechanics stood ready at the propellers of the hidden fighting plane, prepared to spin the motors into roaring life the instant the two aviators had settled in their seats. From before the wide doors of the concealed hangar a broad expanse of beach ran smoothly down to the ocean. The little boat tossed and rolled. The men at the micro-
phones listened intently. The others searched the sky.

Straight down from a wisp of golden cloud a slim black speck fell toward the earth. At first, so high was it, even those with field glasses could make out only the thin shape of the glistening black body. It fell a thousand, two thousand feet—The whirring disks above the slender body became visible, then the inclosed cabin near the center. The musical humming filled the air. Lower and lower the strange machine dropped. Davis and Teddy were in their seats.

"Now!" said Davis sharply, and the propellers whirled. The motors caught, sputtered, and began to run with a steady, droning roar. Davis watched keenly as the black shape slowed in its fall and came to a standstill above the little, tossing boat. Half a dozen men were holding the aéroplane back, and the small shed was full of clouds of choking dust and still more choking fumes from the motor.

The black flyer hung motionless, barely three hundred yards above the small boat. There was a long moment of waiting. Then the decks of the boat seemed to fall in. A dozen threatening muzzles were exposed. A dozen flashes of flame shot up from the tiny vessel. Simultaneously Davis cried out, the men released his machine, and it darted forward. He took off from the beach skinned the waves, and shot out toward the strange combat that was taking place.

The black flyer had been hit. That much was certain. It lurched and staggered in the air, losing altitude all the while. Then the pilot seemed to regain control. He swung swiftly to one side and began to rise. All the time the anti-aircraft guns were firing viciously. The tossing boat made a poor platform for the gunners, however, and their aim was inevitably poor. The guns kept up a ceaseless roaring. Puff after puff of white smoke showed where their shells burst near Varrhus. He began to swerve, to zigzag, using tactics strangely like those of a dragon fly. Suddenly he darted to a point exactly above the small boat, and a smoky cloud began to dart down from below his machine. Varrhus passed on, but the cloud fell swiftly, precisely like the cloud of liquified gas he had poured down on Teddy and Davis above New York harbor.

"Flares!" cried Davis in an agony of apprehension, though his voice was only audible to Teddy by means of the telephone connection between the two helmets.

As he spoke the men on the boat shot up the little fire balls that had protected the aéroplane in its former flight. A dozen balls of light sped up to meet the menacing cloud of liquified gas. They reached it, sped into it, glowing feebly! The white cloud did not ignite, but fell on toward the boat. It reached and enveloped the little vessel, and suddenly the guns were still.

"Damn him!" said Teddy in a voice that shook with rage. "He's not using hydrogen. We can't close in on him now. Our flares are no good."

Davis tilted the nose of his machine upward, and Teddy stared down his sights. He pulled the trigger. The gun kicked backward, but the recoil cylinders did their work. The tracer shell left a little line of smoke behind it. It passed below the black body.

"Too low," said Teddy grimly, and fired again.

Varrhus began to climb. Straight up his machine went, but with the picric acid giving added impetus to the explosions in the cylinders the two-seater climbed as rapidly. Varrhus' ascent swerved. He was directly over the aéroplane. A whitish cloud appeared below his machine and blotted it out for an instant.

"We zoom," said Davis almost gayly,
and the fighting plane seemed to be dancing on its tail for an instant. The cloud of gas unfolded itself down to the surface of the water, barely twenty yards before the space in which Davis had checked his course.

Around and around a huge circle. The biplane had caught up with the black flyer, and Davis turned toward it for an instant to give Teddy an opportunity to fire. There was a flash at the stern of the slender black body, and the symmetry of the glistening form was marred by a ragged edge where the tip of the tail had been blown off.

"Almost," said Teddy grimly.
"He'll dive now."

Davis was prepared for the maneuver, and almost as soon as the helicopter began to drop the biplane darted down after it, Teddy firing viciously. The streaks of smoke that his shells left behind them told him where he missed. Varrhus shifted the course of his fall, and again a cloud drifted in the air just before the pursuing plane. Davis flung the "joy-stick" forward, and the fighter fell into an absolutely vertical dive. A second more and it had turned upon its back and was flying upside down, away from the threatening mist.

Davis twisted in mid-air and righted his machine. Varrhus was darting away, barely two hundred feet above the surface of the water. Again the two-seater dived upon him. Teddy's shells were zipping dangerously near the black machine. It began to zigzag, to twist and turn like a snake. It doubled back and shot directly under the biplane, but too far below for the deadly mist to be used. Davis banked at a suicidal angle and went after it again. They passed directly above the silent small boat, drifting aimlessly on the waves. Little icicles were forming on the bulwarks, showing that the cold of the liquefied gas was still intense.

For one instant Teddy had a perfect sight, and pulled the trigger with the peculiar confidence of a marksman who knows he is making a perfect shot. There was a flash upon the upper portion of the black hull. A dark object shot off at a tangent from one of the whirring disks. The helicopter sank rapidly. Teddy gave a shout.

"Landed!"

The black machine recovered again. One of the disks was badly injured and now slowed and stopped, showing that the blade of one of the four sustaining propellers had been broken, but the remaining three increased their speed. Varrhus seemed to abandon the idea of fighting. He began to shoot away toward the northeast. He was more than a mile away, and Teddy had stopped firing. Varrhus had had no difficulty in distancing the same machine a week before, and anticipated no trouble in losing it, even with his own flyer partially crippled. He had not reckoned on the picric compound now being used for fuel. The biplane sped madly after the fleeing black aircraft. The motors roared hugely, and the wind was like a solid mass, pushing fiercely against Teddy's exposed head. A small half-moon of glass protected Davis from the wind, but for the gunner no such protection was practicable. The rushing of the wind through the wires and along the sides of the stream-line body amounted to a shriek. Never had such speed been known before.

Davis' voice came quietly to Teddy above the sounds outside, muted by the heavy, padded helmet. The telephone receivers were fast against Teddy's ears.

"We're making two hundred and twenty-six."

"We're not gaining," said Teddy grimly.

"Wait until he rises. The motor's adjusted to be most efficient at about seven thousand feet."
The black speck ahead of them was drawing no nearer, it is true, but it was not dwindling. The silvery wings of the biplane cut through the air with fierce impatience. It flew in the straightest of straight lines after the other craft. Dark-brownish smoke blew backward from the bellowing exhausts, tinged almost to saffron by the presence of the explosive acid. The sunlight kissed the upper surfaces of the wings of the pursuing plane. Below them the ocean rolled and tossed.

Whistling wind and roaring engines. Speed, speed, speed! The biplane rushed with incredible swiftness through the air. The black flyer skidded lightly on, barely in advance of its white-winged enemy. Twice Teddy essayed a shot, but the biplane trembled so that accuracy was impossible, and he could see by the smoke of his tracer shell that he had gone far wide of the black machine. The space between the black speck and the waves below it seemed to increase.

"Rising," said Davis. "Now we'll get him."

Teddy kept his eyes fixed on Varrhus' slender, needlelike craft. He was barely conscious of the upward tilt of the machine in which he was riding, but he saw that they were keeping pace with Varrhus as he rose in the air.

"Four thousand feet," said Davis crisply. "And two hundred and twenty-nine miles an hour. There's land ahead."

Teddy saw a mountainous coast line becoming visible far away. The black flyer continued to rise.

"Six thousand feet," said Davis again, "and two hundred and thirty-two miles——"

The pilot of the other machine saw that they were gaining. He dropped abruptly.

"Now!" exclaimed Davis fiercely.

He dived downward. The descent, coupled with the immense power of the engines—now delivering vastly more than the eight hundred horse power for which they were designed—made them shoot toward the black flyer with increasing speed. The other machine was barely more than half a mile away and every detail of its construction was visible. Teddy noticed for the first time a slender tube rising between the two center sustaining propellers. He instantly leaped to the conclusion that it was the means by which the jets of liquified gas had been shot out. He fired.

"A hit!" cried Davis.

There had been a flash from the top of the cabin. A jagged rent appeared in the polished roofing, and the slender tube vanished. The black flyer seemed to abandon all hopes of escape. It sped madly for a gap between two of the tall mountains that rose along the coast line. At the unprecedented speed with which both machines had been traveling the coast seemed fairly to rush at them. No villages were visible, but it seemed to be a habitable, if not an inhabited, land. The black flyer swept on across country, Varrhus evidently making every effort to gain even a few yards on his adversaries, and Davis just as fiercely determined that he should not. Once, twice, three times Teddy fired.

A smoothed and inclosed field, almost surrounded with small buildings, appeared. Varrhus dashed toward it desperately, the white-winged biplane vengefully after him. The black flyer dropped like a stone and the biplane dived straight for it. In that last dive Teddy worked his one-pounder as coolly as if at target practice. Flash! Flash! The black flyer crumpled and fell the last fifty feet as an inert mass.

Teddy jumped from the biplane as it flattened out and settled to the ground. With his automatic pistol drawn and ready, he darted toward the partly wrecked black machine. As he drew near a sallow face came weakly
to a window of the cabin. An automatic flashed from beside the face and Teddy heard a queer sound and a fall behind him. He did not stop, but rushed on, shooting viciously at the face in the opening. He reached the wreck, wrenched open the door, and swung into the cabin with utter disregard for danger.

A tall, lean, sallow man was sitting exhausted in the pilot’s seat of the black flyer. His right arm was crimsoned from a wound in his shoulder, and blood spurted in little frothy jets from a second wound in his neck. Teddy’s fire had been better directed than he knew. As he entered with pistol ready, the sallow man raised his head erect by a tremendous effort. A hooked nose, a merciless mouth, and blazing eyes filled Teddy with repulsion. The sallow man stared at him superciliously.

“I am Wladislaw Varrhus, dictator of all the earth,” he said in a metallic voice. “I command—I—command.”

Speech failed him. His head dropped and he fell limply from the cushioned seat.

CHAPTER XI.

TEDDY felt the fallen man’s breast, but he was not breathing. In any event there was nothing that could have been done for him. An artery had been cut by a splinter of the one-pounder shell that had smashed the roof, and he had bled quietly to death, only trying desperately to land and get assistance before he died. The sight of Teddy and Davis sprinting toward him with drawn pistols had been too much for his hatred, however, and he had fired his automatic at them even as he was dying. Teddy found Davis lying on the ground with a bullet in his hip.

“I’m all right, Gerrod,” said Davis cheerfully when Teddy went to him. “Just see if there are any more chaps in these houses before you bother with me.”

Teddy explored the place thoroughly. There were many signs of human occupancy, but no one save Varrhus himself had been there when they landed. He returned to Davis to find him weakly trying to improvise a pad to stop the bleeding. Teddy lifted him and carried him to the house that seemed to be most used. In a little while Davis was quite comfortable and contented. He lit a cigarette and calmly began to read one of the newspapers that littered the place, while Teddy continued his explorations.

The landing field was a small one, no more than a hundred and fifty yards long by seventy-five wide. At one end was an unpretentious but comfortable dwelling, in one of whose rooms Davis was at that moment resting. At the other end a shed evidently formed the hangar for the black flyer. Along the sides of the inclosure were long sheds, some of them empty, some containing supplies of various sorts. Half a dozen cold bombs, complete except for the mysterious treatment of their surface that gave them their strange property, lay on the floor of one of the sheds along the sides. Another shed, long disused, had provided quarters for workmen. Teddy found the single exit that led from the inclosure. It opened on the wide hillside and afforded a view of miles without a sign of human habitation. The remnant of a wheel track that had obviously not been traveled for months led away from the door. Along that primitive road the materials for building the inclosure and the black flyer had evidently been brought. Teddy went back to Davis.

“Gerrod,” said Davis amiably, “I’m a fake. I’d lost quite some blood, you know, and I was pretty weak, but while you were gone I saw a small black bottle on a shelf over there, and I managed to crawl over to it. Wherever we are, prohibition hasn’t struck in, and I took just enough to feel all right
again. I believe I can drive back. It wasn't more than a two-hour drive anyway, was it?"

"Between two and three," said Teddy, smiling. "We were making terrific speed, though. We're probably in Newfoundland somewhere."

"Or Iceland. To tell the truth, I'm quite indifferent. Suppose you help me out to the machine again."

"I want to see what I can find in the laboratory first," said Teddy.

The laboratory was of the smallest. Whatever experiments had been necessary to perfect the cold bombs and the black flyer had been made elsewhere. Teddy found a number of notebooks, which he took. He found many chemicals, some in considerable quantities, in receptacles about the laboratory, but no clue to the mysterious process that had enabled Varrhus to threaten the world's security. He left Varrhus where he lay. Both he and Davis confidently expected to return and investigate thoroughly both the cold bombs and the black flyer. Davis, especially, was anxious to examine that strange machine in detail, but his wound was painful and he wished to have it properly dressed. Besides this, the whole world was waiting anxiously to learn its fate, whether Varrhus' ambitious plans were to be frustrated or whether it would have to put its neck beneath the heel of the mad dictator.

Teddy lifted Davis in the machine, and after some difficulty they started off. Davis circled above the small clearing until it was tiny beneath them.

"Course is southwest," he remarked to Teddy. "We'll notice where we land and then a northeast course will bring us back here again or nearly."

"Right," said Teddy abstractedly. His mind leaped ahead to the moment when he would see Evelyn again. He had seen her just before starting for Norman's Reef and she had seemed pale and anxious. He was not sure, but he hoped he was right in believing that she was more anxious than she would have been had she looked on him merely as a friend or comrade.

The biplane sped over the sea across which it had flown in such desperate haste that morning. Davis was weak, but for straightaway flying modern machines need but little attention. The new inherently stable aëroplanes are so safe that an amateur could pilot one in midflight. And Davis had taken a small quantity of stimulant to supplement his strength. At that, however, his endurance was severely taxed before he flattened out and taxied across the landing field on Staten Island. Mechanics rushed out to greet him and help him from the machine.

"Varrhus is dead and the black flyer is smashed," said Davis cheerfully, and incontinently fainted.

Teddy made a hasty report to the commandant of the forts and rushed to New York. The second cold bomb had exploded that morning and the city was panic-stricken, but as his taxicab sped uptown the extras began to appear announcing the removal of the menace to the world. The frightened crowds changed to happy, cheering ones. If Teddy's identity had been suspected as he passed swiftly through the streets, he would never have gotten through. He would have been dragged from the motor car to be cheered and recheered. As it was, he made his way quickly to Evelyn's home.

He sprang up the steps and burst open the door, not waiting for the servant to open it. As he rushed into the hall, Evelyn came into it through an open door. She saw him, and her face was suffused with joy.

"You're safe!" she cried joyfully, and burst into happy tears.

Teddy took her quite naturally into his arms and held her there a moment. She sobbed quietly on his shoulder for a second, clinging to him, then pushed
him away and stared at him while a hot flush overspread her face.

"Oh!" she exclaimed in a rush of shame. "I—I——" She turned and ran away. Teddy caught her.

"What's the matter?" he demanded. Her cheeks were still crimson.

"I—I kissed you," she said desperately, "and you—you hadn't said——"

Teddy laughed happily. "I hadn't said I loved you? Well, if that's all that's bothering you, just listen." And Teddy said it several times.

Davis was up and about in less than a week. His wound had been of little importance, and with a crutch which he took pride in using with dexterity he was able to move around almost as well as ever. He came over to tea with Evelyn one afternoon. Teddy was there, too, of course. Davis was boyishly showing off how well he could move about. Teddy watched him critically.

"That's all right, Davis," he said in a paternal tone, "but you want to get rid of that instrument as soon as you can."

"What for?" demanded Davis, deftly swinging himself into a chair.

"We're waiting for you to get well," explained Teddy, with a smile at Evelyn. "It isn't considered good form to have a groomsman who's a cripple."

"Groomsman? Who? What? You two?" Davis stared from one to the other.

Teddy nodded, and Evelyn turned slightly pink. Davis turned to Teddy.

"They tell me you and I are to be impressively decorated for smashing Varrhus," he complained, "and there'll be moving pictures taken of it and shown everywhere. I want to be a touching picture, all wounded up, you know, when that happens. A girl threw me over about six months ago and she likes the movies. When she sees me beautifully mangled and being kissed by bearded people who pin medals on me she'll be sorry. Mayn't I wear a crutch until then?"

Teddy laughed, and Evelyn smiled affectionately at Davis.

"If it's like that, of course," said Evelyn, "we'll wait. But Teddy's in an awful hurry."

"I would be, too, in his place," said Davis promptly. He assumed an expression of extreme reluctance. "Well, I suppose I'll have to get well."

Teddy shamelessly squeezed Evelyn's hand, and she as shamelessly squeezed back.

"There are compensations for having to wait," said Teddy generously, "provided, of course, it isn't too long."

Davis looked at them and his eyes twinkled.

"Well, then, in that case——" He started for the rear of the house.

"Where are you going?"

Davis looked over his shoulder with a grin.

"You people compensate each other for waiting," he said amiably. "I'm going to go out in the laboratory and kiss the galvanometer."

WHY IS IT?

Isn't it a funny thing that if a woman is clever enough to be able to dye her hair a beautiful color that almost defies detection people are quite ill-natured and unkind about it; whereas, if Nature has saved her the trouble and given her lovely locks, everybody praises them as though the credit belonged to the owner personally?
CHAPTER I.

THE STORY BEGUN BY JOHN COLECHURCH IN ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND.

I am not to meet Mr. Boone first?"

"Not until you reach his house in Newfoundland," said my friend Gervase slowly. "He is probably the greatest traveler in the world, but he never comes here to Montreal."

"I may consider myself as engaged?"

"Entirely so. He left the matter to my discretion." My friend spoke absent-mindedly, his eyes fixed on the midday bustle of St. James Street below us. He turned suddenly and leaned forward across his desk. "You are going to him as private secretary, but you may become very much more. When you have his confidence he will perhaps tell you an almost incredible story. I want to assure you in advance that he is the most level-headed man of all my friends and the least given to exaggeration."

I thought of that warning many times during my journey from Montreal to Newfoundland, and when I arrived at the little capital of the ancient colony
I had stirred up quite a curiosity about it. Indeed, I built up an elaborate romance concerning my new employer, although it fell far short of the reality. The first stage began about five minutes after I arrived in Newfoundland. The station agent at the Reid Depot in St. John's asked me if I were Mr. Colechurch, and then told me Mr. Boone had sent a car for me.

“He hasn’t come himself,” he said.
“I didn’t expect him.”

“Same thing if you did. He hasn’t been inside a railway station for years.”

“Travels by road?”

“If he does, no one ever sees him. Pr’aps he flies out of the window on a broomstick.”

I shrugged my shoulders and passed out to the car. Boone Park was situated on the coast, about halfway between St. John’s and Placentia Bay, but we made excellent time. I don’t know whether it was the warning of my friend Gervase or the strange remark of the station agent, but I spent the whole journey in speculations as to the nature of the mystery I was to find at my destination.

I was still thinking about it when I was ushered into the library at Boone Park. Mr. Boone had left word that he would be engaged for a little time, but he wished me to make myself at home until he arrived. The English butler—what an export trade in butlers the English have!—supplied me with an excellent cigar and waved his hand majestically toward an easy-chair.

“I think I’ll have a look at the books,” I said, and I made my way to the nearest shelves.

He condescended to smile affably.

“You’re right among ’em,” he chuckled.

“They seem to be all books of exploration,” I said doubtfully.

“Unders of ’em. He buys every book that comes out dealing with outlandish parts of the world, and he has half a dozen fellers searchin’ the big libraries at Montreal and New York and London. Somethin’ about a lost continent. It’s nearly as big as Canada, I guess, and the trees are all covered with seaweed and there’s no wind ever blows there—”

He stiffened suddenly into the rigidity of the well-trained servant as footsteps came hurriedly along the hall. Mr. Boone entered with a kind of quiet haste which I afterward found was his habitual manner. Behind his courtesy I felt an extraordinary anxiety in his greeting of me. His eyes were large and luminous, and I had a curious fancy that somewhere at the back of them was a thought that was with him day and night, but to which he dared not give expression. He struck me as a man who was starving for sympathy.

That was the dominant impression I had, and events proved my surmise was about right. I only know that as soon as I looked at him I felt an overpowering sympathy and liking for him. Mystery or no mystery, I was Godfrey Boone’s man from that moment, and I loved him as rare Ben Jonson said he loved Shakespeare.

“You’ve been having a look at the books?” he said. “What do you think of this lot?”

I crossed the room to the shelf he indicated, expecting to find more books on exploration, to which, as a matter of fact, I am not particularly partial. Instead of that, he led me to the most wonderful collection of Shakespeareana I ever saw in my life. That is not perhaps the right term. They were not so much books dealing with Shakespeare as with the times in which he lived.

I may say at once that Shakespearean England—aye, and Jacobean America, if you will—is the literary passion of my life. My hand trembled as I reached out to a quaint little volume entitled, “Essays on Ye Newe Religion, by John Powell, Gentleman,”
published in 1608 at the Sign of the Green Dragon in Fleete Street, London.

"This book is registered as having completely disappeared," I cried excitedly. "I was reading in Montreal only last week that there was not a known copy in any library in the world."

I turned round as I spoke. Mr. Boone's face was as white as a sheet; he pointed unsteadily to the book. "There is one copy left, at any rate. I had it from a direct descendant of the author. Tell me this," he added, "is it possible for a man to dream so vividly that he believes his dreams to have been actual happenings?"

I could not see what his question had to do with the little volume I held. "I don't know," I said vaguely. "He might be confused when he first wakened, but later I don't see how there could be any uncertainty."

"Supposing I visited a continent half as big as the United States or Canada, with physical peculiarities that differentiated it from any country known to geography—but they can't find it—"

"I should put it down as a dream," I said gently.

"But if I returned from my dream with something tangible?" he cried, with a sudden wildness in his voice, and he thrust a trembling forefinger at the book. "You tell me that is quite unknown to collectors," he said solemnly. "And I tell you, on my word of honor, that I came back to consciousness with that book in my pocket."

There flashed across my mind a most extraordinary circumstance. The "Essaies on Ye Newe Religion" had been ordered to destruction by King James in 1609, and every copy had been accounted for with one exception. That was the copy belonging to the author, John Powell, and it disappeared with him and about half of the inhabitants of the village where he lived in a manner that had never been explained.

I said nothing of this to Mr. Boone just then. It did not throw any light on the problem of the lost continent. Personally, I felt convinced his visit there had been part of an unusually vivid dream. And then I came up against the question of the book, which I could not explain at all. And there was another point. To assume that he was on the borderland of consciousness when he visited the lost continent was to suggest, in view of his extraordinary attitude ever since, that he was now on the borderland of insanity. Bear in mind that I loved this man from the first moment I saw him, and you will appreciate how much it hurt me to doubt his story.

"You can't believe it?" he said sadly. It was then that a happy inspiration came to me. "I want to remember the last words Gervase said to me at Montreal," I said. "He told me that sooner or later you would probably tell me an almost incredible story, and he begged me to accept his opinion that you were one of the most level-headed men he knew and the least given to exaggeration."

He nodded with a pleasant cheerfulness. "Yes, I will tell you some day, but not just yet."

"And I, for my part, Mr. Boone, will wait until you choose to tell me the whole story. Until then, sir, I pledge all my energies to the search."

"That's a bargain. And now we'll forget that part of the subject. By the bye, I'll just show you what I want you to do."

The men who were conducting the search at the world's big libraries reported every week, and it was to be part of my duties to keep an exhaustive cross-index of the points they reported. "The continent is probably two million square miles in extent," he said. "That includes a vast outer belt of
what they call the Swamp Lands. They extend for hundreds of miles all around the continent."

"Go ahead," he added with a faint smile. "I can see you are up against a difficulty already. If we are to do any good we must face any question. In fact you might ask a question that could put me on the track of the whole mystery."

"I was only thinking how extraordinary it is that such an immense area could have been overlooked by the geographical writers and explorers."

"That will be cleared up some time. Have you never worked out an apparently insoluble problem and then found the end of it was something known to every schoolboy—something you missed because every time you approached it you ignored it, thinking it had nothing to do with your problem?"

That indeed was what we were all doing, although we could not realize it at the time.

"Neglect no clue however insignificant it may seem."

"I'll do my very best, Mr. Boone."

"I know you will. Now just let me give you some more details about the peculiarities of this lost continent of mine."

I nodded eagerly.

"Well, it has been occupied for several centuries and it contains about half a million people to-day that is only a guess—so it may be considered fairly secure. And yet every inch of that vast area—two million square miles—quivers underfoot like a stupendous raft. Even the houses rise and fall as though the earth beneath them were breathing. That is the best comparison I can think of. You follow me?"

I nodded again—perhaps a little less eagerly this time.

"I want you to approach the problem independently, because, personally, I am obsessed with an idea that the continent is somewhere near to or in America—somewhere between here and Cape Horn."

"There are vast tracts of Brazil unexplored, but the whole area of that country is only three million miles."

"It isn't there," he said positively. "It's north of Brazil. I am convinced it's somewhere near the coast of the United States, which, on the face of it, is frankly impossible. I can't give you my reasons until I tell you the whole story."

"I suppose the people who live there are savages, Mr. Boone?"

"Scarcely. Why do you think that?"

"Well, if they were civilized they would surely have some notion of their own whereabouts. Didn't they say anything?"

"I don't think they knew where they were. Their forefathers were wrecked there three hundred years ago, and they have been out of touch with the rest of the world ever since. Anything else?"

"You say they are not savages. What race do they belong to? I wondered if they are the survivals of a racial type otherwise extinct."

"They are English speaking," he said quietly, "and, in a way, they are Americans, but they neither speak nor dress like either of those races. The nearest comparison I can think of is the Pilgrim Fathers, who settled Massachusetts three centuries ago. They speak and dress exactly like those early Americans."

"That left me absolutely speechless. I could only stare at him. The idea of a vast continent, half as large as the United States or Canada or Europe, occupied by half a million people descended from some contemporaries of the Pilgrim Fathers and still retaining the seventeenth-century dress and manner of speech! It was incredible that such a land and such a people could have been in existence for three hundred years unknown to the rest of
the world. As for the everlasting trembling of this vast area and the fact mentioned by the butler that its trees were covered to the very summits with seaweed—well, I was already stupefied with amazement, and a few marvels more or less made little difference.

But there was still one more shock to come to me. I had been staring toward the door, and I am certain my eyes had not wandered from that point before the butler recently entered.

"All alone, Mr. Colechurch?" he said.

I turned, expecting to find Mr. Boone by my side, but he had absolutely disappeared. I am positively certain he had not gone through the doorway, and the window was at least thirty feet from the ground.

"Yes," I said lamely, "Mr. Boone has just gone out."

"And you don't know how he went," said Johnson knowingly. "You'll get used to that. Now you won't see anything of him for two or three weeks. You'll have time to root round Newfoundland a bit, and a mighty pretty country you'll find it."

CHAPTER II.

THE STORY CONTINUED BY JOHN COLECHURCH IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

JOHNSON took Mr. Boone's disappearance so coolly that he infected me with his own matter-of-fact spirit. They surely knew him better than I did, even though I might possibly know more than they did of the tragedy that was wrecking his life.

During the next three weeks I did a great deal of hard thinking about the lost continent. Either he went away to follow up some clue personally—although that did not explain the manner of his disappearance—or else his going was caused by a feeling that he must retire for a time to recover his self control. The latter explanation raised another point. He was in the habit of making these mysterious disappearances regularly. How long would it be before the constant strain would master him and the relief of solitude would fail to act? And what then?

That was the point to which my thoughts always brought me, arguing in a circle from which I found no escape. I sat for hours brooding over the problem. I read the reports of the agents who were searching the libraries at New York and Montreal and London—aye, and at Paris and Buenos Aires and Cape Town and a score of other cities—but I found no solution.

One man wrote of the vast unexplored areas in northwestern Canada, another of the hiatus between civilized Quebec and Labrador, a third of great areas in the United States, a fourth of the untrodden lands in South America, a fifth wrote of the silent wastes of Siberia, and so on all over the world, I had no idea there was such a large part of the earth's surface still unmapped.

But all their discoveries came to nothing. They could find no place in the world that corresponded with the description given by Mr. Boone. The vast extent of the lost continent, the strange undulations of its surface, the monstrous growths of seaweed—bearing bright-red berries—the thing was incredible.

There was only one conclusion to be drawn, and the logic of it drove me to despair. For I loved this Godfrey Boone, and the wreckage of his life and his hopes would affect me deeply. His eyes haunted me by day and night. Their wistful appeal was with me wherever I went. I tramped through the great spruce forests of this beautiful Newfoundland, where the scent of the spruce clings to your lips and the turf springs so lightly beneath your feet where the hills climb up into the sky and the valleys are lakes of sunshine and all the beauty that was around me
was as nothing. I could think only of Godfrey Boone and his trouble.

I took to wandering about the grounds of Boone Park at night, and it was then that I made another discovery, although it was not of much value just then. I have said that Shakespearean England was the passion of my life. Ever since I was a boy I had spent my happiest moments with Hakluyt and Drake and Raleigh and rare Ben Jonson and all the rest of that joyous crowd. And one night, as I lifted up my eyes to stare at the turreted towers of Boone, it came to me that here was the picture of all my dreams standing before me in the moonlight. It was the very ideal of a sixteenth or early seventeenth-century mansion, just such a house as some of the leaders among the Pilgrim Fathers might have left. I felt suddenly as though a great light flashed all about me. Surely it was from such a place as this that the first people of Mr. Boone's lost continent must have gone, or, at any rate, their leaders.

There was something in the argument that eluded me. Perhaps I was too tired to follow it up properly. I only know that I remained staring vacantly at the great pile of granite with its battlemented towers and the smooth green lawns all around, and that I gradually became aware of a furious whirring noise far overhead. It seemed to be coming nearer and nearer until it seemed like the droning of a million bees at once.

I was standing near a little clump of spruce when I first heard it and I thought it came from the other side. I ran swiftly round, with the humming and the droning beating into my ears all the time. I turned the corner, and instantly there was silence; nothing but the vague rustlings of the night and the wind creeping among the trees. I did not go to bed at all that night, but went to the library and sat there, intending to wait for daylight. I am afraid I was very tired, and I must have fallen asleep and dropped my pipe on the floor.

The sudden closing of a door wakened me with a start, and I sat upright. There was only one door to the library that I knew of, and I naturally looked toward that. At the same moment I heard footsteps at the other side of the room, and Mr. Boone passed me without seeing me and stood by the window, staring with wide eyes at the brightness of the morning.

My first consciousness was that I must have slept for several hours, and almost immediately after that I felt a great upwelling of sympathy and affection for the lonely watcher by the window. He turned presently and saw me, and I suppose he saw also the pleasure on my face.

"You're glad to see me?" he said wistfully, and then he pointed to my unlucky pipe that lay all spilled on the beautiful Persian rug, burning a hole into the costly fabric.

I was really distressed because I have a keen appreciation of beautiful things and the rug was certainly an exquisite example of its kind. "I'm afraid I fell asleep," I stammered.

"You've been wandering about the grounds instead of going to bed?"

"I was worried about something, Mr. Boone."

"And even when you were dead tired you didn't go to your bed, but turned in here to finish your gloomy reverie? Oh, John Colechurch," he said suddenly, with intense feeling vibrating in his voice, "I ought to have that hole outlined in thread of gold. Do you think I don't know why you couldn't sleep? The day is coming when you will ask me for my story."

"I wish you would take me with you when you go on these journeys, Mr. Boone. Even without understanding I might be able to help you."
But he shook his head. "It must be all or nothing," he said, his eyes shining. "Some day you will be ready; very soon now, I think, but not yet."

"Can't I do anything in the meantime?"

"Try to believe in me," he said passionately. "Try to believe that I am a perfectly normal man who has had an experience which no other man in the world has had. At any rate, no other man has lived to tell it. I left my life and happiness behind me on that lost continent, and I have lost the clue that would take me back. Do you wonder I can't be like other people?"

His very soul was staring out of those deep-set eyes as he spoke. He was moved to the depths of his being, and I was scarcely less so. Suddenly he broke into an unsteady laugh.

"Go along to your tub and waken yourself up for the day," he said. "Don't forget that a chap who hasn't been to sleep needs a lot more waking than one who has."

He maintained the same lively humor throughout breakfast, alternating, however, with fits of the most intense thoughtfulness. He roused himself from one of the latter to ask me to write during the day to a theatrical costumer in Montreal, instructing him to send to St. John's two suits, to be made in the early seventeenth-century style, with doublets and hose and copotaain hats, and a rapier with each suit. I was also to tell him where he could get our measurements in Montreal.

"Do you know how to use a sword?" he asked, as we were crossing the hall after breakfast.

"Not very much, Mr. Boone."

"We'll take up fencing and quarterstaff. Will you write to Monsieur d'Ecrime, of New York—somewhere in Fifth Avenue—and ask him to come here for a month or two—long enough to make us skillful in the rapier.

"I have a reason for these plans," he added slowly, "but I don't want to mention it yet. If events shape as I hope and expect they will, you will thank me for the preparations I am making now."

He never spoke a truer word than that, for the swordsmanship I learned from Monsieur d'Ecrime saved my life a little later when we were on the lost continent. In the meantime I was more puzzled than ever. My problem was now something like this:

A lost continent half as large as Canada or the United States; not part of the solid earth, but a kind of vast floating island where the ground rocked and trembled continually, where the trees were covered with seaweed creeper, and where the wind never blew. The periodical disappearances of Mr. Boone from some concealed door in the library and his return in an aeroplane to a secret hangar. His provision of early seventeenth-century suits for both of us with lessons in the use of the rapier. Last, but not least, the alleged fact that the lost continent was occupied by half a million people directly descended from contemporaries of the Pilgrim Fathers, and still speaking and dressing like those founders of Massachusetts.

That was one side of the account. On the other, all we had was the little volume of "Essais" originally belonging, or apparently belonging, to a seventeenth-century Englishman who disappeared about the time the Pilgrim Fathers left the old country. Surely it was the most extraordinary problem ever placed before a human being!

We sat together in the library that morning. I had been recapitulating these arguments pro and con for the thousandth time, while he sat drumming his fingers on the table.

"We are nearly at the end of our search," he said suddenly. "My agents say they have exhausted every possibility. I can't hold out much longer. The suspense is killing me."

Gervase arrived on a visit a few days later and cheered up the flagging hopes
of my employer wonderfully. Mr. Boone looked at me a little doubtfully when the visitor was announced, and then he broke into a bright smile.

"I see the Machiavellian hand of John Colechurch in your coming," he said. "This pestilent fellow you sent me is secretary and doctor and nurse and night watchman, and I don't know what else. If you had searched from Labrador to Cape Horn you could not have found a better man."

Gervase gave a grunt of satisfaction. "How's the great affair going on?" he said cheerfully. "I suppose one of these days when you have the solution to your problem you'll be wondering how you managed to miss it so long."

"We may find it too late."

Johnson came in at that moment for some instructions, and Mr. Boone left the room with him.

"How is he going on?" said Gervase swiftly. "He's thinner. I don't like that strained look in his eyes."

"He's got to find this lost continent soon or die of a broken heart. The suspense is mastering him. He can't stand it much longer."

"He must. He's got to, and you've got to hold him up. There are only two ends to this business, success or disaster. If his story is correct, and honestly I'd sooner believe him than any other man I know, two million square miles of land cannot remain permanently hidden from all mankind."

I shook my head gloomily. "The men who are making the search for him are limited to the known facts of geography."

"Well?"

"What about the vast areas of the earth's surface that have never been explored at all?"

"Have you noticed that large wall map in his dressing room? The one with certain areas shaded in red."

I had studied it many a time, and wondered about it also.

"The portions shaded in red are the explored areas, covered by his agents at the big libraries."

"And the others?" I said eagerly.

"Boone has explored them all. Tell me," he said suddenly, "how are you getting on here?"

"I like him immensely."

"But you don't believe in his lost continent?"

"I believe in him."

"So do I," he said earnestly. "Not only that; I believe his story. I believe he had some extraordinary experience and then lost all clue to it."

"Why is he so anxious to get back?"

Gervase shrugged his shoulders. "Cherchez la femme," he said enigmatically. "I think he left his heart with one of the little Pilgrim Fathers. Mind, I've never heard the full story."

Nor had I. It came to me suddenly that I was striving heart and soul to help Godfrey Boone, and I did not even know his story. I went to him that night, and I asked him to tell me all.

"Are you ready?" he said wistfully. We stood there looking at each other for a moment, and then, without another word, he crossed the room to his desk and took out a roll of paper. Then he turned away, speaking to me with averted face.

"That is the story," he said, with a kind of passion in his voice. "I admit it is almost incredible, judged by ordinary standards, but I swear most solemnly that it does not contain a single false or exaggerated word."

CHAPTER III.

The story continued by Godfrey Boone.

My ancestors came from England to America nearly three centuries ago, and later they went to Canada. My father came to Newfoundland thirty or forty years ago, when he inherited a considerable fortune. When
he came here he gratified a lifelong desire by building this exact model of a Jacobean manor house. So exactly did he reproduce the old home of our people that he even constructed a secret door in the library, leading by an underground staircase to a clearing and so out to the road.

This clearing was several acres in extent, and it was surrounded by a dense forest, practically impassable to those who did not know of the hidden path to the Placentia Road. He told me of this only a few years ago, and it appealed to me at once as an admirable site for a hangar, unattended by any of the publicity which I loathed. It is, in fact, nearly five years since I installed my plane there, and to this day I doubt if any one knows of its existence, because I have always left and returned in the dead of the night.

My enthusiasm enabled me to add several important improvements to the machine. I equipped it with a stabilizer of my own invention and also with a storage tank, which made it possible for me to undertake the most extended journeys and to bid defiance to all kinds of weather. While everybody was shrugging their shoulders at the suggested flight across the Atlantic I had already driven my plane over that ocean a score of times. I have flown from Boone Park to Asia without a stop and have even traversed the terrible ice fields of the frozen North. Sooner or later I will give my inventions to the world, but I have not had the heart to do so yet.

I became so careless of time and distance that I often rose from my hidden hangar and swept right ahead without troubling to consider my direction. On the night that the great adventure came to me I have a more or less confused impression that I was heading across the Atlantic, but that is merely an impression. I was extraordinarily sleepy that night, and I think I must have dozed with my hands on the controls.

How long I slept I do not know to this day. When I wakened it was broad daylight and there was land right beneath me, stretching in every direction. Here again my impression is that I was somewhere over the American continent. I looked round for a good place to land, and this soon presented itself in the midst of a vast forest. I took a chance, as they say, and volleyed right into the clearing I sighted.

It did not take me long to release myself from my plane and spring to the ground, but I was back immediately, for the heavy turf stirred beneath my feet. I climbed across the plane and alighted at the other side, and here again the turf quivered, for all the world as though I were on a floating island.

The sight of the massive trees all around reassured me to some extent, and I struck out boldly, while the earth rocked under my feet as though it was subject to the groundswell of some distant storm at sea. During the next few months I traversed many miles of this strange country, and everywhere I went there was the same stealthy quivering.

I forgot all this for a time when I noticed the intense stillness. All the time I was there I never knew the wind to blow, and the silence was so intense that when a bird presently flew over my head the beating of its wings was like the whirring of my propeller.

For some reason I do not yet understand the wind blows all round this continent, but never across it. It may be that the gigantic belt of swamp lands that encircle it acts in some way as a barrier to hold out the wind. That is only a suggestion, because I cannot offer any real explanation.

But even that was not all. Something in the appearance of the trees attracted my attention, and I saw to my amaze-
ment that they were almost covered with some kind of monstrous seaweed with innumerable little scarlet berries and long yellow leaves. It was a veritable forest of seaweed, if you can imagine such a place.

My next realization was a more practical one. It must have rained heavily during the night as I slept, for my clothes were wet through, and it was important that I should have a change quickly. I rarely wore my leather flying suit in the summer, and I had had no protection from the storm.

I struck into the forest, hoping to find a cottage of some kind. The path was broad, but very gloomy, and I suppose I must have tramped several miles before I began to see great shafts of sunlight beating through the overhanging seaweed, and presently I came to a little cottage. It stood on the outskirts of the forest and appeared to be unoccupied.

The morning air was chilly, and I did not feel in the mood to wait long. After a few vain attempts to attract attention, I put my shoulder against the door and burst its flimsy fastening. There were but two rooms, both of them practically empty. I was just about to turn away when my eye was caught by a glint of color from some bundles of clothing lying in the corner.

I learned afterward that the cottage was the haunt of a gang of thieves, but I did not stay to think that out just then. The contents of the bundles absorbed all my possibilities of astonishment. There were suits of every size and shape and color, but they were all of antique cut, something like the clothes worn by our forefathers of the early seventeenth century. There were doublets and hose, "side-slops," hats with huge brims and others with high crowns; there were boots and shoes of every color; and stacked up in a corner there was a goodly collection of swords and daggers.

Anything was better than the clothes I was wearing. I thought I had gotten to the headquarters of some society of cranks with a predilection for the days of the Pilgrim Fathers, but I was too eager for dry clothes to bother much about theories. In about ten minutes I had changed into a handsome blue suit with a copatian hat, a pair of Spanish shoes, and a serviceable rapier. I hid my own clothes, and then I left a note saying I would call and return the borrowed finery, which, by the bye, I never did.

As soon as I was outside the cottage door I heard the sound of music, beating through the extraordinary silence like the sound of ten orchestras in one. It grew louder every moment as I advanced, until at last I came to a village green, where a crowd of lads and lassies were dancing about a huge maypole in a fashion which I thought had long been extinct.

I need not have been conscious of my Jacobean finery, for everybody there was dressed as I was, although in poorer quality. I declare I shut my eyes a score of times, but every time I reopened them the result was the same. It was the England of James I. or the America of the Pilgrim Fathers, and even the voices I heard spoke in what I imagine to have been the quaint seventeenth-century manner and were charged with an extraordinary nasal drawl.

I remained in hiding behind the trees. These people were English-speaking all right, but there was something else I did not understand, and it was this something else that held me back. Finally I worked my way round to the other side of the green, still taking cover behind the trees, until at last I reached a point where a lane crossed the line I was making. It was overhung by huge branches from the trees on either side, with the green of the trees all intermingled with the red and
yellow of the climbing seaweed and lighted by the sun as by a lamp hung overhead, and away in the distance it ended in a pair of beautifully carved gates, which I guessed to inclose some kind of a private residence.

I had a fancy that some unseen force of destiny pulled me along that quiet lane, away from the villagers and their dancing. I had no thought of whither I was going, and yet I strode along like a man with a purpose until presently I reached the carved gates, and there I found the little maid, as I came afterward to call her, staring curiously at me through their patterned traceries.

In the elemental moments of life the sham conventions which civilization has built up so laboriously are thrust aside as of no account. I stood in the cloistered light of that path and I looked at Margery Powell. I forgot all the sinister enchantments of this land; I was alone in the world with my dear little maid. And presently she opened the carved gates as though an unseen destiny were guiding her hand, even as I had been guided across the world to come to her, and she came forward to meet me. There is not a day passes that I do not recall the exquisite memory of that meeting. It lies like rose leaves in my mind; it is the one hope that sustains me.

How am I to tell you of my little maid? I might write forever and a day of the willful straightness of her nose or the dimpled temptations of her rounded chin or the great gray eyes that looked out fearlessly at a world in which they saw no evil; but what would be the use? Some day I will find her again and bring her here, and then you will know why I stayed so faithful to her memory.

We met a score of times by the gates of her father's house. She thought I was from some other part of the continent, and I dared not undeceive her. Indeed it was rarely I troubled myself about either her past or my own. The sale of a few pieces of jewelry I had supported me, and beyond that I swear I had not a thought apart from Margery. We drifted idly through a world of daydreams, content to take our happiness as it came and caring naught of past or future. Sometimes I tried to persuade the little maid to trust herself to me and I would take her to my own home, but she would never leave her father, although it was the weakness of old Roger Powell that threatened to ruin all of us.

I had cultivated a friendship with him by this time, and spent most of my days at the manor house, as they called it. He had another guest there, a hard-faced fellow who went by the name of Giles de Lorimer. If ever a man had rogue written across his face it was this same De Lorimer. I have seen him look at my little maid so lightly it has made my blood boil. I soon learned that Roger Powell liked these looks no more than I did. He came up to me once as I sat in a broad window ledge in the great hall.

"You love my little wench?" he whispered.

I could only sigh heavily, whereat he clapped me on the back.

"Never blow hot 'n' cold, mun," he roared. "Get to 't yarely. I'se warrant the little baggage will gie thee Yea from now to Lammas Day. Here a comes!" he added hastily.

But it was De Lorimer who entered, and Roger shrugged his shoulders and walked away. I wondered if he had some reason to fear this fellow, but I never connected it with his desire to see Margery wedded to me, and when I realized this it was too late.

About this time I had other troubles. My father was growing old and I had left him in poor health. I had merely come away for a short cruise, but had already been in this land of enchantment for nearly a month. I had no
alternative but to return home. I followed Squire Powell and explained this to him, without telling him where my home was or mentioning the aeroplane. I told him I would be back in a week or two and then I would ask Margery.

"As thou wilt," he said gloomily.

The manner in which he looked at De Lorimer as he spoke stirred a quick jealousy in me that sent me hot-foot after the little maid. To and fro about the great house I went, but she was nowhere to be seen. But I presently met De Lorimer, who rose from a settle as I came back to the great hall.

"It seems that you and I have a reckoning to make," he said sourly, to which I made him no reply. I can never speak when I am angered.

"Harkee, Master Popinjay," quoth he, "tis time to put a period to your mooning round Powell's wench. Is that plain enow?"

I thought it was, and I smote him so furiously with my clenched fist that he measured his length on the floor. He stumbled wildly to his feet, clapping his hand to his sword and swearing he would have my heart's blood; but the sight of my own naked steel at his throat fetched him up on that count. I do not think I have ever seen so evil a look on a man's face.

"You'll pay scot and lot for that," he snarled. "You'll find ere long I am not what I seem."

"I hope you are not," I said, and I bowed to him over my sword point. The taunt passed him unheeded. He stood biting his nails and staring at me, and then he forced a sour smile. "A lad that—can strike so shrewdly should not be tied to a wench's apron strings," he said. "If you are willing to take service with a mort o' brave soldados I might say a good word for you."

"What service?" I asked curtly.

"Why, there is a prejudice against it, and yet 'tis honest enow. You have heard of the Swamp Lands that are all about this country of America?"

"I have heard of them and of you in the same sentence."

He looked cautiously to either side before speaking. "'Tis an El Dorado," he whispered hoarsely. "I captain two-score of good blades there myself. All day long they play with their cardes at ruffe or slam or noddy or whish or whatsoever they will, or they throw the dice or drain a tankard or lay a crab in the fire for lamb's wool. The life is purely pleasure."

"What of the night?"

"Why, there are noble ships that have drifted into the Swamp Lands and are held by the golden seaweed. There is a mort of plunder in them, and as for their crews, 'tis like slitting the throats of dumb cattle they are so forspent with hunger."

I made him no reply, and he plucked at the sleeve of my doublet.

"What do you make of it?" he whispered evilly. "I will give ye the truth as I live. I am past my youth and would settle here. And the maid is comely. We would sit i' the ingle nook — Nay, I meant naught," he cried blankly.

"Keep her name out of thy reckoning."

"Why, then, you shall go to my lads with a goodly letter bidding them obey you as myself. You shall be their leader and have the softest bed and the biggest share of the plunder. 'Tis a parlous good life."

But I could stand no more, and I bade him draw ere I thrust him through where he stood. He had no choice but to defend himself, and the quiet room rang with the clatter of our blows, steel upon steel. It seemed we had both met our match. I was younger and stronger and, I think, of better courage, but he kept his feet more firmly on the tiled floor. Every time I struck at him I slipped and came
nigh to perishing, and as last I flew right off my feet and stumbled heavily. Ere I could rise he was out of the room and flying for his life.

He turned when he had gotten to a safe distance and shouted some ribaldry along the passageway, but I only laughed and went to meet the little maid, whom I had espied through the window. She stood at the edge of the seaweed forest, and there I went forth to meet her.

"I have a present for Master Godfrey Boone," she said, and gave me a little letter.

"And I have a present for Mistress Margery Powell," I told her, and I gave her half a dozen, good measure.

"You have not read your letter," she whispered. "Indeed, it may hold something of moment."

"Indeed it may."

"I wonder——"

"It bids me question you straitly on a certain matter. What answer would you give me."

"Tis foregone," she pouted. "My father hath bidden me give you naught but Yeas. Indeed, I know not what you might think to ask——"

"Wilt thou marry me, Margery?"

"I must obey my father," she whispered rosily.

"You make me think of mine own father," I said. "He is sick and needeth comfort. I must needs make a long journey to see him and then I will return and claim thy promise."

She threw away all her pretty pretense at that and bade me hasten back for that she feared De Lorimer was plotting some evil against her father. I told her the fellow would not dare to show his face again at Powell Manor, whereat she smiled through her tears.

"Indeed you may lay that ghost to rest," I said, as I began to make my farewells. I was minded to get away quickly and leave for home that night, that I might return the sooner.

That indeed was what I did, but had I known what was to happen I would have taken an ax and beaten the aëroplane into a thousand pieces. If I had but stayed to read the letter from Roger Powell or if I had gone back to bid him farewell ere I started all might have been well. But the hand of destiny was on me again, and I was naught but a puppet pulled this way and that.

It was dark when I swept up into the air and began my long journey home. After the strange silence of the Lost Continent, as I have since learned to call it, the harsh whirring of my propeller, and later the booming of the waves and all the noises of the night, were inexpressibly pleasant.

I reached the Swamp Lands just as the moon was flooding the heavens, and the sight of the vast meadowland of yellow seaweed, with here and there a black patch where some unlucky ship had been driven in by the gales, set me thinking of De Lorimer and his gang of cutthroats. My hand took a firmer clutch of the levers, and I drove the great plane toward the open sea with but the one thought—that I must go quickly that I might return and marry my little maid.

Away in front of me I could see a vast gulf with a thin backing of land that seemed to join two continents, each of immeasurably greater size than the one I had left. I thought I was heading for the Gulf of Mexico, and swung along what should have been the coast of Florida and then beat up north to compass my way to Newfoundland.

But the same mishance overtook me as on my outward journey. I fell fast asleep and knew no more until I wakened over a crimson sea all ablaze with the glory of the morning. Whether I had changed my course I know not, but now I could see the long white-capped ranges of the Rocky Mountains to my right, and far away to the left the breakers of the Pacific were thun-
dering. Once more I turned and headed across the vast grain fields of the Middle West, and so at last I came to the Straits of Canso and crossed Newfoundland to St. John's.

My mistake had cost me dearly, for my father died a few hours before I reached Boone Park. It was a terrible blow, and even the little maid was forgotten for a time. Not until after the funeral did my thoughts drift back to the Lost Continent again, and I went to the hangar, intending to prepare for the return journey. I found the overcoat in which I had flown from the Lost Continent, and in one of the pockets was the "Essayes on Ye Newe Religion" by Squire Powell's ancestor, and in another pocket was a crumpled piece of paper. I took it and read at last the note which Roger Powell had written me. I think I read it half a score of times ere the full import of its quaint sentences beat their meaning into my brain.

My Deare Ladd: I would have you know that the matter whereof we spoke hath more haste than I cared to tell you. Persuade the little maid as you will, but wed her swifly. That rogue De Lorimer hath cossed me out of heart and home with his dice that are surely cogged. Now he will cry quits if I will give him the wenche to wife, but this I am not minded to do, though I scarce dare say so to the foul pirate. 'Tis you can best answer the rogue. Thine in all kindness,

Roger Powell.

Within half an hour I swept into the sky and headed for the south, where I judged the Lost Continent to be. I flew over land and ocean, north, south, east, and west, now staring below me until my eyes ached, now falling asleep in very weariness. And as last I came to earth in Honduras and knew that my search had failed.

If I had taken proper note of where the Lost Continent lay, if I had driven my sword through the heart of De Lorimer ere I left, if I had wedded the little maid—oh, there were so many things I might have done and had not! Now it is nearly three months since I returned and long ere this he may have beaten down the weak old squire and wedded my little maid by force. I think and think and think in a circle, but there is no way out. I have lost my little maid. Even the letter from her father that might have shown you how real my story is I burned in a fit of despair, and now there is no link with my lost happiness save only the little volume of "Essayes."

TO BE CONCLUDED.

TENSE MOMENTS

The figure of the man stooped over the lock. The tense, bent position of his shoulders almost hid his face, but from what one could discern in the dim light his features did not appear to be those of an habitual criminal. Beads of perspiration gathered thickly on his forehead, and his breath came in irregular gasps, which told of the strain he was undergoing.

"Good heavens!" he muttered to himself. "I must have the right combination; the paper distinctly said ten turns to the right, twelve to the left, once to the right again, and all the way round. Will it never open?"

Far away in the distance clanged a bell, at the sound of which he drew forth a watch to see how long remained. Summoning up all his will power to keep his nerves in check, he essayed the task once more. "Ah!" A cry of joy burst from his lips. This time the lock gave way under the manipulation of his fingers. The door swung back upon its hinges; he put his arm inside and dragged out his gymnasium costume.
THEY say that if you kill a cobra the mate will find the body, and so you can kill it as well. However that may be, I had this yarn from a man who hasn't the reputation of being too big a liar.

Saunderson Sahib was a hard man and a harsh master. He was of the red-headed, dour, whisky-drinking, money-saving Scotch type, much given to beating his servants. When the rumor circulated that he was going home to bring a wife back with him the whole station wondered what kind of a husband he would make and speculated if it was possible for him to make any woman happy. People felt rather sorry for the new prospective memsahib, for Kharnapur was a very dull little station, Saunderson's bungalow a miserable thatched affair miles out in the jungle, and if she should happen to be young and pretty—well—

When she did finally come—just at the start of the monsoon, too—she turned out to be both young and pretty, a little, soft, flutttery bit of a blond woman given to squeaking at the sight of a bug and shriveling up at the thought of a mouse. How such a fluffy, tender creature had come to marry a man like Saunderson was a mystery.

He must have been twenty years older than she, and in the way of money and prospects had not much to offer a girl like her. He was in the forestry department, and of course there was his pension later on. Still—

The day he drove her out to her future home in his ramshackle tumb tum she seemed a tragic little figure. You could see that she was the kind with the terror of the jungle branded on her soul; that's the sort who should never leave the security and safety of their home town. What would she not have to go through in that lonely, tumble-down bungalow of Saunderson's?
Bats clustered about it; the jungle thereabouts was known for its tiger and leopard, and rumor had it that for years two cobras had lived in the roof, faithfully protected and fed by the Hindu servants, by whom they were regarded as sacred.

When, a few days after she was settled, the other mem-sahibs of the station called, they found the poor little soul shivering at the great gray spiders that swung in the corners, trembling at the toads that hopped all about the floor and the lizards that ran along the bare, whitewashed walls. She repeated all the stories that she had heard of poisonous centipedes and scorpions, and begged to know if it was true about the two snakes in the ceiling.

Of course people in India must get used to being surrounded by all manner of unpleasant live stock; if they don't their nerves get shattered. The bugs have all sorts of accomplishments, one small black specie being possessed of a smell so highly disagreeable that you have no doubt when one is on you or when one has fallen into your soup. Cockroaches as big as mice that fly, spiders that hop, frogs that fly—but to get on with the story.

Poor little Mrs. Saunderson's dread of snakes became a positive obsession. At a rustle in the ceiling cloth above her head she would scream; she never walked out in the compound after sunset without having a chokiadar carry a lantern before her. Saunderson should have sent her up to the hills at this stage of the game, but he didn't, and she grew thin and lost all her pretty color too rapidly. Her eyes seemed haunted by a perpetual terror.

Instead of her husband being sympathetic and trying to reason the little woman out of her exaggerated fears, he grew impatient with her, denounced it all as nonsense and hysteria, and declared he'd cure her of her foolishness or know the reason why. And yet in his way, I suppose, he was fond of her.

Things went from bad to worse, until Jeanie Saunderson positively disgraced her husband by shrieking and fainting at the deputy commissioner's garden party, when she imagined a snake had crawled over her foot. As soon as she came to, Saunderson proceeded to explain that all snakes were harmless unless provoked, but the lecture did not seem to comfort the little woman. She was white as a sheet and trembling all over, and begged to go home, as she was feeling ill. Saunderson complied irritably, and, I suppose, scolded her mercilessly the whole way home.

After this she tried bravely to overcome her fears. She never talked bugs or bats; she never referred to the snakes reputed to be in the roof. She said Thomas—that was his name—forbade her to dwell on such things. But though her lips were silent, you could feel the dread of creeping and crawling things that was gnawing at her and see the growing horror in her frightened gray eyes. People suggested that Saunderson send the mem-sahib home, but he chewed the ragged edge of his mustache and said that before long he'd make a pucca old Anglo Indian of her.

But he never did. Perhaps he did what he thought was for the best. He's dead now, out on the burning sands of Mesopotamia, so it's not for us to judge.

One stifling July night when the damp earth seemed to steam foully, Saunderson and his wife sat in their living room under the slow swinging punkah. He was smoking a Burma cheroot and reading the Glasgow Herald; she was sewing furtively on a bit of white muslin, which she held under the table as if to hide it from her husband. Little beads of perspiration stood out on her forehead. Every once in a while she peered fearfully about her, drawing her feet up under her onto the rungs of her chair.
The lamp burned flickeringly as a host of winged ants whirled about it; a huge moth flew in, nearly brushing the girl's face. She shrank back, but made no sound.

Saunderson read on steadily for an hour, sipping slowly at his peg and occasionally reading aloud an item of war news. But she did not seem to be listening; the needle flashed in her thin little hand, and she seemed to be trying to make up her mind to tell her husband something. She bent lower over her sewing; she was working on a tiny sleeve. Once or twice she looked over at him, a wistful smile twisting her lips, but she did not dare disturb him.

Suddenly it was as if every nerve in her body became agonizingly taut. Something in the ceiling cloth above her head was moving; then it sagged heavily in the corner, and, almost before Jeanie's piercing scream, a large cobra dropped heavily onto the floor.

Saunderson sprang to his feet. The snake paused, reared its head, spreading its hood; its hiss and the gleam of its evil eyes were the last things the girl remembered. Saunderson snatched up an old golf club standing in the corner; he had put up with the nonsense of his servants long enough. With half a dozen well-directed blows he mashed in the cobra's head. A sickening smear of blood showed where it writhed out its last agony.

Saunderson bent over his kill with satisfaction. What an ugly brute it was—over six feet long and a splendid hood! He turned to call his wife to look at it.

She was lying back in her chair, her wrenched face drawn and haggard; her hands clutched convulsively at the bit of sewing. Saunderson's voice roused her.

"Jeanie, come here!" he commanded. "Look at this beauty. Just take a good long look and it will overcome all your absurd nervousness."

"No, Thomas," she said faintly, "I canna come."

"Don't be ridiculous," he said in annoyance. "Come when I call you."

She shuddered, moving her lips in mute appeal, but Saunderson did not see her agony. To him it was but stubbornness and stupidity. Was it not a well-known fact that being face to face with such terrors made people realize how harmless they were? Had not he, as a small boy, been shut up in a black closet to cure him of his dread of the dark? So he would handle Jeanie.

"Come here," he repeated, but when she did not move he caught up the dead snake across the golf club and carried it carefully toward her.

With a moan of terror she fled from him into her room.

Something of the cruel and tyrannical awoke in Saunderson. He followed her quickly, and flung the body of the snake after her through the open door. Then, with a curse, he slammed it shut, shoving the bolt and locking her in.

"See if that won't cure her of her damned foolishness," he muttered, and mopping his forehead, went back to his newspaper and tried to read.

But he could not concentrate his mind on the print. From the next room came heartrending cries and sobs, an occasional hysterical shriek, and the pounding of little, futile fists against the bolted door.

Her voice came in broken prayers, she begged him to let her out. He could not make out what she was saying, but sat staring grimly at the newspaper before him. He heard her move to the small windows, shaking at the iron bars, and then she came back again to the door.

Suddenly Saunderson heard a piercing scream. The blood chilled in his
veins; it was the terrible cry of a soul in ghastly peril. He laid down the paper, rising irresolutely. It was dark in the next room; perhaps he was frightening her too badly. Still it would cure her for all time of her insane nervousness about bugs and snakes. Had he not shrieked and beaten himself in vain fury against the closet walls, when, as a small boy, he had been locked in, and it had done the trick; he had never dared fear the dark again. It would have the same effect on Jeanie. Even now she had stopped crying; there was a strange silence.

Saunderson tiptoed across the room. He fancied he heard a low, moaning wail. Yes, she was cured. He might let her out now; she had been locked in with that dead cobra long enough. Now she would realize how childish she had been.

"Jeanie," he called in a gentler voice than he had ever used to her before, "you can come out now."

He let slip the bolt and waited for the answer that did not come.

"She's angry," Saunderson thought sullenly. "Just like a woman to get the sulks. Well, she'll have to get over

He flung open the door. A flood of yellow lamplight fell across the matting of the floor. In the middle of the room stood the two iron beds with their square canopies of mosquito netting, and, lying half across them, a crumpled little figure face downward.

"Jeanie," said Saunderson from the doorway. There was no reply. He took an impatient step into the room. Something rustled, stirred, hissed. He started back, nearly grinding under his heel the dead body of the cobra he had killed.

A cold sweat broke out on his forehead; his imagination must be playing tricks with him. His wife had fainted. That was it; she had simply fainted. Perhaps he should not have locked her in. He crossed to her side, bending over her, and picked her up in his arms. How limp she was, how cold! He laid her down on the bed. In the half light he could see the tears still wet on her thin little cheeks and clinging to the lashes of her glassy, wide-open eyes.

"Jeanie," cried Saunderson for the last time. Then suddenly he fell on his knees beside the bed. "Oh, my God! My God!" he sobbed, trying to chafe her icy hands.

A rustle sounded above his head; the corner of the ceiling cloth bulged under a gliding black weight. But the man did not look up or see the cobra that had come down and avenged the death of its mate.

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A MEAN WOMAN
By Charlotte Mish

MERRIHEW leaned back in his chair and almost wept with rage. He had just read his wife's hastily penned note informing him that she was running away with his chauffeur.

It was unthinkable, beastly!

Selfish little cat! She knew what a time he'd had to get a good, dependable driver for his car!
SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Sir Gerald Desmond, late officer in his majesty's Royal Flying Corps, broke and drunk in Manila, picks up a consumptive Irish fiddler, Michael O'Sullivan, and the two become involved in a free fight with the native constabulary. From this brawl they are rescued by an unknown, and when Desmond comes to his senses, it is to find himself and O'Sullivan shanghaied on the schooner San Gregorio, bound for Mindoro Island. Aboard the schooner are the wealthy owner, Don Gregorio Salcedo Y Montes, his daughter, the beautiful Doña Juliana, bound for his plantation, and Señor Arevalo, a rich Filipino, who is a smuggler of opium. Desmond attempts to defend the fiddler from the brutal half-caste mate, and O'Sullivan kills the mate with a revolver. Then the two Irishmen, in the midst of a raging typhoon, start taking over the control of the ship. They set Arevalo to work with the crew, subject Canaughan, the skipper, with firearms and threats, and commandeer his cabin. But Arevalo, aided by the crew, whom he has bribed to serve him, imprisons the captain below decks and kills Don Gregorio with poison fumes. The Irishmen find Doña Juliana, whom they take under their protection against Arevalo, who wishes to force her into marrying him. Desmond rescues the skipper, and the three men, barricaded with Doña Juliana and the ship's stores in the stern cabins, determine to await developments of the morrow, meanwhile having heard their enemies speak of a mysterious ship called the Chang Yan, which Arevaldo hopes will soon meet the San Gregorio.

CHAPTER V.

THE "CHANG YAN."

When Rosemonde Burley, becoming impatient with the lack of shipping, took passage from Saigon on the unspeakably vile Chinese junk, Chang Yan, officialdom was scandalized. But the imperturbable Rosemonde, with her widow's weeds and her Croix de Guerre, was not a person to be interfered with. Rather, they decided mournfully, she was a person to be married—alas!

"If I am to have charge of a nursing station at Ben-Ho, up the coast," she declared, "I am not going to rot in Saigon, mes amis! This junk is going
there. Voilà! You will not send me, therefore I go. Unsafe? Bah! After my brave American was killed at Château-Thierry did I not drive an ambulance at the front? Did not Monsieur le President himself decorate me with the Cross? Bah! I'll snap my fingers at those yellow men if they say two words to me! And I can use an automatic pistol, eh? Assuredly!"

She simply refused to be interfered with. Everyone at Saigon knew her sad and glorious story—how she had married an American, an officer among the first in France; how he had fallen but a few weeks later; how Rosemonde had gone to avenge him with an ambulance; and how, the war ended, she had come out to the colonies to take up nursing duty. Not for money, either, since it was said that she was wealthy enough to enjoy life had she so desired.

"Eh, bien!" said the governor general the night the Chang Yan sailed, as over the dinner table he told his guests about Rosemonde Burley. "There is the spirit of France for you, there! Nom d'un nom, but she will meet adventure, that woman! She is of a great spirit; a flame is in her. As for the junk, I think it is safe enough."

Rosemonde thought the Chang Yan safe enough also. Except for sixteen Chinamen, she was the only person aboard; but she had a decent cabin, was waited on with great respect, and the captain was a humorous soul named Hi Lung, who spoke a little French and grinned often.

True, the junk was a junk, with a big eye painted on either bow, a bamboo sail or two, and a sublime faith in heaven. She stank abominably. Her cargo was supposed to be rotten copra from Siam, and was consigned to Nanking, so no one asked what it really was; but the first day out, when Rosemonde saw the yellow mate break out, a five-tael tin of opium from a sack of rotten copra, she guessed that this would prove a lively voyage. It did.

In the Far East, as in the Far West, the World War has appreciably affected the general conditions of life, and particularly of woman's life. Rosemonde Burley, although by reason of her marriage an American citizen and proud of it, had found no difficulty in obtaining a colonial post from France. Behind the lines, and ahead of the lines, Rosemonde had seen many things, and had done many things; she had pulled a loaded ambulance out of hell and had shot three treacherous boches while doing it.

She was perfectly able to use an automatic without wincing; but this did not imply that she was an unwomanly virago. Far from it! Every line of her trim, petite body expressed a vigorous womanhood, a sweetly feminine allure. She was not beautiful, perhaps, but she had the great gift that is beyond beauty—a spirit gently great, tenderly strong. And she had learned, in the bitter crucible, to take care of herself with an aggressive swiftness. Like many another who had passed through the Great War, she now laughed at the worst which the world might proffer.

"One who has been through hell," she would say, laughing, "does not fear purgatory, eh?" And this was true. Rosemonde feared nothing.

On the morning after leaving Saigon, the junk was out of sight of land—which was not as it should be. Captain Hi Lung grinned and winked humorously about it, saying that the eyes on the bow of the Chang Yan had become crossed and were seeing crooked; but at noon he fussed with his queer instruments and pored over his queer charts with absorbed interest, and an hour later the junk caught the tip of the hurricane that had swept the San Gregorio away from Manila. By night all was serene again and the sails
hoisted, and Hi Lung stated that in the morning they would be within sight of land.

But when morning came there was no land.

Rosemonde was not aware of the fact until nearly noon, for she was looking forward to hard work and believed in sleeping while the sleeping was good. When she did come on deck she found that not only was land out of sight, but the junk seemed to be heading east rather than north—a strange thing, since Cape Padaran must have long ago been rounded. Rosemonde verified her facts by her watch compass, then looked for the skipper. He was again working with his charts and instruments on the after deck.

It was at this moment that Rosemonde first realized that she was not the only passenger aboard. Sitting beside the captain and inspecting the charts was a stranger—a yellow man also, but dressed in European clothes, and very well dressed to boot. He had the same odd cast of features as most of the other men aboard; that is, instead of owning the oblique eyes of the usual son of Han, he had very straight brows and eyes.

Having comprehended these facts in about ten seconds, Rosemonde turned and went below again to her stateroom. It was a rough, bare little chamber, formed by knocking two former cabins into one. For a few moments she sat quietly, her brown eyes reflectively studying the little gilt Buddha set against the wall near the entrance. She had set her door ajar, and left it so.

If there were anything queer about this cruise, she deduced, the strange passenger had something to do with it. To deal with Hi Lung would lead to nothing, in such case; Rosemonde believed in going to headquarters, and it looked as though the stranger were headquarters in this instance. She knew also that there was a cabin ad-

joining hers, because she had seen the China boy who served as steward going in there with dishes the evening previous.

Knowing better than to attempt any explanation out on deck, where trouble was too apt to be precipitated with the crew shuffling around, Rosemonde took her automatic and went out into the deserted passage. At the door of the adjoining cabin she knocked; there was no reply. She tried the door, found it unlocked, and entered, closing the door behind her.

This cabin was as bare as her own, two suit cases standing against one wall and a Burberry raincoat flung over the bunk. This proved that the strange passenger was the owner, since he alone seemed to wear European clothes, and that Burberry had not been obtained outside a British colony. Rosemonde sat down and waited composedly.

Twenty minutes later the door opened and the strange passenger entered his cabin. He did not see Rosemonde until he had closed the door and started toward his bunk; then he looked into the mouth of her automatic, and obeyed her instantly.

“Sit down and be quiet,” she said in a calm voice. “What is your name, please?”

The yellow man was obviously astonished and disconcerted. Any yellow man would be, upon finding a white girl in his cabin and an automatic under his nose.

“I am Chan Mow Su,” he said, slightly agitated. “Ah—you are Madame Burley!”

To her surprise, he spoke very good French. “Certainly,” she responded coolly. “I do not intend to hurt you, but I desire information. You seem to know all about me. Who are you and where is this ship going?”

“If you will allow me,” he said politely, “I will hand you my card.”

She nodded, but watched him nar-
rowly as he produced a handsome card-case and selected a card, which he extended. Upon the card were the words, in English: "Prince Chan Mow Su, Sat On Road, Bangkok. Wholesale Imports and Exports."

"May I ask what has disturbed you?" he inquired smoothly. "I gave strict orders—"

"I am here to ask questions before answering them," said Rosemonde. "What have you to do with this ship, and where is she going?"

The prince had by this time quite recovered his bland composure.

"She is chartered to me, and is going to land you at Ben-Ho—ultimately," he replied. He was a bulky man, square-jawed, and obviously no one's fool.

"When I heard at Saigon that you were seeking to take passage I ordered Captain Hi Lung to accommodate you. I trust there was no harm in that? I had not intended to intrude myself upon you."

Rosemonde met his smiling gaze, frowning a little.

"If you are going to land me at Ben-Ho, why are you heading to the east?" she asked.

"Unfortunately, madame, we have urgent business which must be attended to. You shall reach your destination without harm and with very slight delay—"

"I think you had better go directly up the coast to Ben-Ho and land me, then attend to your private business," said the girl with disconcerting directness. "I paid for a passage upon such an assumption. Captain Hi Lung has lied to me consistently. I think you had better do this."

"Unfortunately we cannot," returned the other. "We are supposed to meet another ship at a certain definite time, in a certain definite spot. A great deal of money depends upon it. After the meeting you shall be landed—"

"I'm tired of evasions, monsieur," cut in Rosemonde coldly. "I am not to be trifled with. To be frank, I don't believe a word of your story, and I have no intentions of being calmly abducted. You are not a prince, for there are no princes in China; therefore you—"

"For the love of Heaven!" interrupted the yellow man desperately. "You are unreasonable! No one is abducting you. I can give you proof of my identity; these men aboard have known me for years. And I am not a Chinaman; I am a Manchu, as my features testify, and a prince of the Manchus."

"No matter," said Rosemonde, unmoved. "You have opium in the cargo, and I think your entire story is a lie. You are evidently engaged upon some illegal business, into which you have no right to drag me. Besides, ships do not meet each other in mid-ocean, as you are doing, unless there is something very wrong. I do not choose to be a party to such things, you comprehend?"

Prince Chan said something in Mandarin which sounded like curses.

"You are taking a wrong view of everything!" he broke out. "But, madame, how can you help yourself?"

Rosemonde eyed him calculatingly.

"I can shoot you through the right foot," she observed, "and thus render you incapable of further action. I can do a great deal of damage, in fact, and I propose to do it, unless this ship is headed for the coast immediately."

The Manchu met her gaze for a moment. In her eyes he read an unflinching purpose, and for a moment his own black eyes flickered with admiration. When he spoke it was smoothly and in bland accents that told he was setting himself not to cope with a woman, but to conquer an adversary.

"Madame Burley, will you listen to me a moment? I shall be frank with you. These men in this ship are Man-
chus like myself; members of the same trading guild, associates with me and with other Manchu princes in a large organization. This guild of ours collected over a million dollars’ worth of opium in Bangkok, Siam; we leased from the Chinese republic the privilege of retailing this opium in certain provinces of China. At the last moment we learned that President Hsu Shih-ch’ang had not only revoked the license of our syndicate, but had also destroyed the twelve hundred chests of opium already in Shanghai—worth fourteen millions in dollars—ninety million francs!”

“Yes,” broke in the girl scornfully, “China has a better president than a Manchu would ever make—an opium dealer who calls himself a prince, to the disgrace of his ancestors!”

The yellow features of Prince Chan darkened slightly at this thrust.

“Accordingly,” he pursued, “we resolved to save the wreck of our fortunes by turning over this opium at Bangkok to another party, who would dispose of it elsewhere. We are now on our way to meet this other party. The meeting, you understand, has long been arranged. Now that I have been absolutely frank with you, holding back nothing, I trust that you will give your assent to our plans? They will not inconvenience you, madame; you will have nothing whatever to do with the opium transaction; you will in no way be connected with it. Can you not, Madame Burley, adjust yourself to the situation? Believe me,” he added softly, “you will lose nothing by it.”

This final subtle suggestion, which might have been a veiled hint either of threat or of bribery, was a mistake, and a costly mistake.

Up until that instant Rosemonde had been watching the prince with calmly reflective interest, held by his air of earnestness, by his fluent French, by his obvious appeal to her sympathies, by the very confidence reposed in her. But that veiled suggestion at the end chilled and penetrated through her hesitation. Unreasonably, perhaps, it angered her.

“Are you going to head for the coast and land me at Ben-Ho?” she demanded quietly.

“Grand Dieu!” cried the Manchu, staring at her. “Have you no reason in you?”

“That is not the question,” she returned acidly. “Do I understand, then, that you refuse to fulfill your contract with me?”

“I? I refuse nothing. I shall go this instant and give the orders—”

Prince Chan started to his feet as he spoke, an air of resignation masking his face, and took a step forward. Then, without warning, he lurched against the girl. She fired, but he had struck her hand aside, and the bullet went into the ceiling. He struck again, and she staggered under the blow that smote her cheek.

She had not expected this actual physical encounter, although she had invited it, and she was taken unawares. The Manchu swept the door open before she could fire again, and was gone. She could hear his voice shrilling commands, and then caught the thin, clear note of a whistle.

With that, she left the cabin and turned into her own doorway. She had failed, and did not know what to expect of her failure; she locked her door and waited, weapon in hand. The anger that seethed within her was furious, and against her pale cheek the mark of the blow stood out redly. The very fact that she had failed so utterly, that her impulsive actions had ended in such a fiasco, made her the more furious. She might have expected a blow from the Manchu, but it had not occurred to her that he would behave to her as to a man. She failed to realize that his blows had provided the
gentlest method of escape from her weapon.

It is quite idle to assert that the mind of a woman runs in the same grooves as the mind of a man—particularly as regards cause and effect. It does not. It has grooves all its own. Rosemonde Burley considered that she had reason to fight; she had begun to fight, and she intended to go on fighting. She entirely ignored the fact that Prince Chan had displayed an amazing trust in giving her the details of his enterprise—an absolutely illegal enterprise. She ignored his attempt to reason with her. She remembered only his concluding words, which constituted either a bribe or a threat, and his blow.

Presently she heard a gentle knock at her door, and she lifted her weapon. "Madame!" sounded the voice of the Manchu. There was a new note in the voice, a note of purring menace. "Tomorrow morning at ten o'clock we reach our destination. If you will yield to reason and—"

Rosemonde had been calculating from which side of the door that voice had come; she knew that the speaker was not standing squarely before the door. Now she aimed carefully and pulled the trigger. The deafening roar of the explosion filled the cabin, and a round hole appeared in the door panel.

For a moment there was no indication of the result of her shot. The door, being in a Chinese junk, opened outward. Watching the door, Rosemonde saw it shiver and thud suddenly, as though something had fallen against it. Then she heard the voice of Prince Chan again.

"Very well, madame," said the Manchu. "We accept your verdict—and you shall be tamed. When you have had enough of thirst and hunger you may surrender; until then you stay where you are. I need another wife, madame; a white wife this time. That honor shall be yours. Au revoir!"

Rosemonde fired once again, but only a laugh mocked her aim. Once more the door gave a shivering thud, and again. Stepping toward it, she unlocked and tested it; the door was solidly blocked shut, probably by coils of line. She locked it again.

Turning, the girl opened her suitcase, which lay upon the bunk. She took out rolls of chocolate, tins of French biscuit, a package of tinned delicacies which had been given her by a Saigon official, and a folding stove with hard alcohol burners.

"Hunger? Bah!" She shrugged her shoulders. Her gaze went to the water pitcher in the corner, which had been filled that morning. "Thirst? Nonsense!" She looked at the large square port, which was open, and smiled at the sunlit sea. "Marriage? There is the escape. He is a fool, this yellow prince!"

And, sitting down, she composedly began to clean her automatic pistol.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEA TRYST.

CAPTAIN CANAUGHAM, Desmond, and O'Sullivan sat smoking in their cabin the afternoon after Canaughan's rescue. All three had slept long and lustily, but the skipper was chafing under enforced inaction. He had adopted a growling acquiescence in the situation, but reserved his right to the utmost freedom of speech. Juliana was in her own apartment.

"What I want to know," said the skipper, glaring at Desmond, "is why ye don't get to work. Take the ship by to-morrow night, ye said. Well, it's to-morrow night to-night, ye lazy hound, and you sitting there grinning!"

"I mind reading a pome," said O'Sullivan softly and reminiscently, ruffling up his long black hair, "in a magazine. 'Twas wrote about Ireland, which was called Erin, and it was wrote by a guy.
named Kennedy, only he spelled his name Cineidehe to show he had the Gaelic, in which he was a liar because he spelled mhuirinn like Tom Moore spelled it, and Heaven knows there's no Gaelic in it that way—"

"What are ye interrupting me for, blast your impudence?" exclaimed Captain Canaughan. "What's this fool pome of yours got to do with what I'm sayin'?"

"I'm comin' to that," retorted the fiddler. "D'ye mind there was only one true word in that pome, sir? For a fact there was! And that was where he spoke about an Ulsterman always improving—"

"True for ye there," interjected the skipper. "An Ulsterman always does improve—"

"—like bad fish in July," added O'Sullivan slyly, throwing Desmond a wink.

"Hell's bells!" roared the skipper furiously. "If ye were not a little runt of a man not worth me attention I'd break your back over me knee, ye little herring! Oh, laugh, blast the two of ye! Wait till we set foot ashore, you, Desmond, and I'll wipe the laugh off that mug of yours! When are ye going to put a bullet into that slimy Arevalo, will ye tell me?"

"Give him until to-morrow noon," chuckled Desmond, puffing contentedly at a cheroot. "What's ailing you, anyhow? We're comfortable here; it's Arevalo that's doing the work and the worrying! If we haven't discovered what his game is by noon, or why he's heading into the China Sea, we'll take back the ship and go home. Does that suit ye?"

Canaughan frowned over his pipe. "I'll tell ye what," he said. "I don't like it! Before we left port Arevalo came to me and wanted to run a bit of dope—opium, mind. I'll not say but what I'd obliged him before in a small way—"

"And you a righteous man?" queried Desmond whimsically. "But never mind. Go on."

"But he had somethin' big on his mind," proceeded the skipper. "And, having the owner aboard, I told him no. So he gave it up, and wanted a passage down to Mindoro, which I was glad enough to grant. Now, then, I'm thinking that maybe he's trying to put over the opium game somehow. What it is I don't know, for he would not go into details."

"Likely enough," said Desmond indifferently. "Well, let him go to it!"

"But don't ye see the authorities would raise hell with us?" Canaughan glared at him. "Heaven knows it's a fishy enough story we'll have to tell, and it the honest truth from start to finish! But if there's a smell of dope to it, then—"

"Don't fret," and Desmond yawned. "Instead of killing him, we'll take him in alive—"

"Blast your bloody bored teeth!" roared the skipper, exasperated. "Have ye no atom of sense? Cannot ye see that—"

At this point O'Sullivan produced his fiddle, and, the bridge muted, drew his bow across the strings in a wailing air that filled the cabin with a croon of melody. The burly skipper was hushed instantly, and did not speak until O'Sullivan paused. Then:

"Ye have the gift," he exclaimed grudgingly. "I suppose ye never heard a tune that went by the name of 'Mayo County' or some such thing? I remember me old grandmother, who had a bent for them Papistical airs, used to hum it—"

The fiddler tightened a peg, and struck into the slow-swinging minors requested, and grizzled old Canaughan sat with pipe gripped hard in his teeth until the last note had died. Then he sighed, and rose to make ready for bed.

Despite his apparent carelessness.
Desmond thought long and hard that night as he stared into the darkness while the San Gregorio lurched westward. He felt that trouble was brewing; Arevalo had not molested them, which boded ill, and Desmond wondered if it were wise to postpone retaking the ship.

Still, on the morrow both he and Canaughan would be fully recovered, fully themselves. The schooner would not be regained without a fight, that was certain, and thus far Desmond had formed no scheme for managing the fight without bloodshed. His chief worry was Doña Juliana, whose nature demanded protection and shielding rather than a share in the fray.

"Poor little girl!" he thought pityingly. "She's bearing up bravely under it all, and we'll get her safe home again somehow. It's a sweet heart she has, and no mistake! Now that she knows we're all gentlemen she's warming up to us elegantly. All the fine lady of her and the high-born airs will be gone in another day or two, and she'll be a fine jewel of a girl for any man alive to be dreaming about—— Oh, well! You're a poor divil of a broken Irishman, Gerald Desmond, with nothing ahead of ye except maybe to go to America like your ancestors and see what the land o' freedom has to offer ye. There's no thinking of marriage for the likes of you, me lad."

He smiled into the darkness.

"Maybe, now," he reflected, "there'll be a bit of luck waiting around the corner to hit me over the head. Maybe I'll strike a fortune like the lads in books, or find a bag of pearls somewhere in these seas or strike a guano island. What the devil is guano, I wonder? If it smells anything like what Arevalo burned when he shuffled Don Gregorio into paradise, then an island of it would want no finding, I'm thinking——" He slid into sleep, unworrying about the morrow.

As for Juliana, she had to some extent laid aside her grief for her father, and was applying her energies to the present moment. She was entirely aware of her own beauty, and within the past twenty-four hours had become aware of something else; namely, that Gerald Desmond was the only man she had ever met who seemed oblivious to her beauty!

To be sure, he was as gallant as any one in Manila had been; he uttered warm phrases and the most adroit flatteries, and he had established himself upon an intimate and familiar footing such as Juliana had never dreamed she would grant to any man—even her future husband! Yet, somehow, she was disagreeably aware that Desmond would have acted precisely in the same fashion with any one else whom he had happened to like, and that his familiarity and intimacy were entirely as aloof and respectful as were the dumbly admiring stares of O'Sullivan. She was getting to understand Desmond, or, rather, to appreciate him.

She could not forget, too, that he was an extremely handsome man; his eyes were handsome and warm, and while his finely chiseled features had nothing of the Adonis in them they were alive with a tremendously virile strength and sureness. And he was a gentleman in the truest sense of the word, filled with a high courtesy and chivalry which the girl divined and which struck fire from her Gothic blood. She congratulated herself that such a man had been at hand to checkmate Arevalo, for whom she felt only repulsion and hatred.

With the following morning, Juliana, moved by obscure impulses, descended into the rat-ridden darkness of the run, got up cabin stores, worked for an hour, and aroused the three men in the adjoining cabin with a beaming summons to breakfast. She was delighted by their astonishment, although none of
them perhaps realized that it was about the first useful thing she had ever done in her life. But Juliana was awakening.

"Stand by until noon," commanded Desmond, when Captain Canaughan renewed his importunities. "If nothing's turned up by then we'll turn up ourselves. The only way we can get out, since they've barricaded the door, is to use the window and climb over the rail. And who's going first, eh?"

"I've a pack o' cards in me fiddle case," suggested O'Sullivan. "We might have a bit game, unless it would offend the righteousness of the skipper—"

"It would not," said Canaughan gloomily. "Although there'll be no blessin' on such ungodly doin's, to my way of thinking. And as to going first, I'm willing enough."

"Settle it with the cards," approved Desmond, more to keep the skipper occupied than anything else.

"But," queried Juliana, looking from one to the other, "where shall I be?"

"Right here, jewel of the world!" and Desmond laughed. "And when it's all over—"

At that minute the schooner gave a shuddering lurch which nearly threw them out of their seats.

"Aground!" cried the fiddler, running to the stern windows, which were kept shuttered and bolted against any possible attempt from Arevalo to gain entrance that way.

"Aground where?" cried Canaughan scornfully. "There's no reef the way we've been driving. Not a speck o' coral even. We've run alongside another ship, that's what. Feel her lift an' heave? Some one's had sense enough to put out fenders; Balderson most like. He's the one good seaman in all that scum, blast him!"

O'Sullivan got the iron shutters torn open by the time they joined him; his pinched, eager face was framed against the blue sky. The silence of incredulity fell upon them as they crowded beside him, until presently Canaughan spoke.

"Plain enough now," he said bitterly. "Arevalo and that blasted mate o' mine were in together on the deal. The mate laid a course for here, smashed my tell-tale and smashed the engines likewise, so that I'd be able to make no trouble in case I was locked below. Well, the mate's got his deserts, praise be! Would ye look at that now? Oh, the blasted lubbers! Look at 'em handle the lines!"

Beside the schooner lay a Chinese junk; rather, she had lain beside a moment before, but was now drifting slightly astern, and thus within the range of vision of those at the San Gregorio's stern window.

There was a long, swinging swell to the ocean, because of which it had obviously been found impracticable that the two craft could lie side by side. As Canaughan explained it to the other three, the schooner was slowly forging ahead under reduced canvas, thus holding the junk slightly astern; a cable had already been made fast, and a second cable was now being made fast in the rigging of the junk, upon whose deck great activity was manifest.

"Talk about your bold simplicity!" growled the skipper, watching through his glasses. "That junk has come out into the China Sea with a cargo of opium, and she's goin' to transfer the dope to us, and Arevalo runs it back into the islands. He can land the whole blasted lot at Mindoro and never a question asked."

"Would he land it at our plantation?" asked Juliana.

"Most like. They're rigging up a conveyor on that second cable aloft, and in ten minutes they'll be shooting the stuff over, blast 'em!"

"Give me those binoculars, Canaughan," said Desmond suddenly. "I've seen something."
The skipper grunted and complied. Desmond raised the glasses and focused upon a square window amidships of the junk, at which his eyes had caught a flutter of white.

As he gazed he saw the window swing open, and the binoculars brought to him every detail of the woman’s face which was framed in the opening. The others were absorbed in watching the preparations to transship cargo, and Desmond said nothing of his discovery. He saw the woman standing staring at the schooner, and she was a white woman. For an instant he shifted his gaze and scanned the decks of the junk, but could see no white man aboard. Returning to the woman, searching her features with puzzled eyes, he could not resist the impression that she was white, frightened, tragic. Desmond slowly moved his hand across his breast as in signal, and she answered with a like gesture.

“Miss Juliana!” Desmond turned and beckoned the girl beside him to the window. “Look yonder! See if that woman answers your gestures, and motion her to be careful.”

A scant fifty feet of water separated the two vessels. Doña Juliana made signals, as Desmond had requested, then laid her finger to her lips and turned around.

“What does it mean?” she asked. “Who is that woman?”

“I don’t know,” said Desmond, “but I’ll find out. Mr. Cavanaugh, who’s bawling out in Chinese from up above? Is that cook of yours an old hand?”

“A new one—just shipped him in Manila,” said the skipper, who with O’Sullivan was now scrutinizing the woman aboard the junk. “Ah, she’s gone! Why, that’s the cook talkin’, I expect. Think he was an agent in this blasted dope running?”

“Sure of it,” assented Desmond. “They look like Manchus aboard the junk there, and he was a Manchu, too; straight eyes, you know, and a different air.”

A Celestial with a megaphone was standing in the bows of the junk, talking with some one on the schooner’s deck. For the present, however, Desmond was confident that every one concerned had been too absorbed in the work on hand to notice either the woman at her window or the figures at the stern window of the schooner.

Leaving the other three to discuss the junk, Desmond went into the forward cabin. He felt himself once more, and he was ready for action. Gerald Desmond was essentially unable to depend upon any one but himself; he was made that way. When he wanted a thing done he did it in his own fashion. He had learned to be aggressively self-dependent, and it was at times a bad habit, but when it came to action Desmond was all alone in his special field. In action he was transformed. The lounging drawl, the slow-moving indolence was gone from him in a flash. One realized suddenly what tremendous possibilities lay in the man. He became a living flame of audacity.

Feeling one of the mattresses which he and the fiddler had brought in from the other cabin, Desmond found what he sought—a filling of straw. He carried it back into the other cabin, ripping at it with his knife.

“Now, then,” he said, and at the ring in his voice the others turned from the window, “stay away from there a few minutes, if ye please; we don’t want to attract attention. That’s right; leave the window open, but keep out o’ sight from the junk.”

“Talk about piracy!” exclaimed Captain Cavanaugh, watching the destruction of the mattress. “What’s goin’ on, anyhow? You aiming to burn my own ship under me?”

Desmond did not reply for a mo-
ment. He finished ripping the ticking, and from the mattress produced a huge double armful of straw, which he placed in a heap beneath the window.

“What’s that woman doing on that junk?” he said, straightening up. “She’s a white woman, and she’s in trouble, eh?”

“We’re in a sight more trouble,” said the skipper. “If you’re so much worried about her, why don’t you go ask her?”

“That’s what I’m going to do,” said Desmond calmly. “Michael Terence, will you be finding that bucket o’ lard and grease this automatic o’ mine good and heavy?”

“What!” cried Juliana, her gray eyes widening at him. “You’re not going to swim?”

“If you give me a chance to slip overboard in decency, I am,” and Desmond grinned.

There was a moment’s silence, while they stared at him amazedly. Then Desmond turned, and lifting the straw, dropped it out of the window in a mass.

“Oh, you can’t mean to swim over there!” exclaimed Doña Juliana. “Think what it will mean—either the Chinese will see you, or our own crew; they may even shoot at you!”

“I don’t doubt they would if they saw me,” commented Desmond lightly, “but they’ll not see me. Now, Miss Juliana, will you have the kindness to step into the other cabin for a minute? I’m wearin’ the skipper’s clothes, you understand, and I’m sure it’ll warm his blood to know that I’m not going to take ’em all with me, eh, skipper? Get that gun ready, Michael Terence, for I’ll be needing it.”

“They’ll see you drop over,” said the skipper sourly.

“That’s the chance,” was Desmond’s cheerful response. “Here’s the rope we brought in the other night; pass it out and I’ll slide down to avoid a splash. The odds are even that Arevalo’s bunch is working by one of the main hatchways, and those chinks may not notice me.”

“You’re running your head into a net, ye big fool,” said Cavanaugh, picking up the line. “Ye see a pretty face—and bang goes all sense!”

Desmond looked at him a moment, his eyes cold.

“I’ll put some sense into you when we step ashore, my bucko,” he said quietly.

“You’ll be welcome to try,” returned the skipper. “My only fear is that ye’ll not live to see the day, you and your wild ways! So take care of yourself for the sake of the trimming I’ll give ye.”

Desmond, stripped to his underwear, buckled around his waist his belt with the automatic which the fiddler had larded.

“I’m off,” he said. “If they’ve seen the straw floating they’ll have grown used to it by this time. Be good to yourself, Michael Terence!”

The fiddler, his pinched features flushed with excitement, hung to Desmond’s hand.

“Wait a minute now! When are ye coming back, sir? The cap’n here was sayin’ we’d catch that storm back on us again, and divil knows what we’d do if you didn’t show up—”

“I’ll go aboard that junk if I get a chance,” said Desmond. “If I do, and you hear any shooting, then climb out and kick Arevalo into the sea. We might as well take the junk home with us and make a clean sweep of it, eh? Thunder o’ Finn, that’s an idea, skipper! I’ll do it anyhow. Remember, now—when ye hear the shooting boot Arevalo and boot him hard! Good-by and good luck to ye.”

“Heaven help ye!” returned the skipper dourly. “Ye have need of the help.”
CHAPTER VII.
DESMOND ADVENTURES.

ROSEMONDE BURLEY was totally unable to understand the queer spectacle at the stern of the schooner. She saw the faces in the window, just over the painted words, "San Gregorio," and she comprehended that those faces were staring at the bank in obvious amazement. Then, just as she had decided to send a call for help, Desmond had brought Doña Juliana to the opening, and there had come that signal for caution.

On the schooner's deck above Rosemonde could see a yellow man shouting through a megaphone, and could hear Prince Chan replying; but the schooner seemed to be manned by whites or half-castes. Arevalo, in command with Balderson, seemed some sort of native, but Balderson was manifestly white, as were the others. And then Desmond, at the cabin window, had flung out a great heap of straw, which clung against the ship's stern.

Rosemonde was not starved, but most of her provisions were used up, and all her water was gone. Her door was effectually blocked from the outside. As she watched the schooner's stern window she saw a rope flung out, and shortly afterward appeared Desmond. He slid down swiftly into the water—and did not come up.

The girl watched, wide-eyed, perplexed, and alarmed. No one seemed to have observed Desmond; yet where had he gone? Then she saw the straw jerk slightly as it floated, and she understood. Presently the straw began to move toward the junk, the whole heap of it, until, as it drew closer, it was lost to her range of vision. She sat breathless, waiting for a voice from below, but no voice came.

Rosemonde had not deluded herself with hopes of succor from the schooner, which could carry only accomplices of the Manchu prince, until she had glimpsed the face of Doña Juliana. Then, after seeing Desmond descend into the sea, she realized that something similar to her own position must obtain aboard the other craft. But where had the man gone? In agonized suspense she sat listening, waiting, not knowing what to expect or hope or fear.

She knew very well that, despite the arguments of law and order, queer things did happen at sea even in these prosaic days. She knew that, despite scoffers, actual piracy of the old school still turned up from time to time. She knew that in such a combination of circumstances as now obtained anything was possible. So she waited, listening.

Nothing happened. At the stern window of the schooner she saw anxious faces appear and vanish quickly, as though fearful of being noted. The rope had been drawn up. From the swashing waves below came no hail, no voice. The minutes dragged fearfully. Up above there was some hitch in the work; the Manchus were breaking out some of their cargo, preparing to transship the opium. Some had already gone to the schooner. Rosemonde waited, her nerves pricking; then suddenly came a sound at her door. Her pistol wavered up, only to halt.

"Who's there?" she called softly. "Speak quickly!"

She had spoken in French, and now the answer came back to her—a cautious flood of abominable soldier brogue, mixed with English ejaculations and asides.

"Une moment, s'iou plait—mille polochons! What the devil is this rope doin' on the door now? A moment, madame; have no fear, and I shall be with you—damnation light on the yellow divils, for if they catch me here I'm gone—rien à craindre, bel ange—who in hell did be layin' the stuff here—ne vous effrayez donc—"

Rosemonde unlocked the door. A
moment afterward it burst open as Desmond concluded his removal of the barricade. The two stood there, gazing at each other.

"Oh!" murmured Desmond, thinking that she spoke only French. "And to think o' me in me underwear, poor devil!"

A ripple of laughter crossed the features of Rosemonde; to his dismay Desmond realized that she spoke not French alone, but English.

"There's a Burberry in the cabin to the right," she said demurely.

Desmond turned and vanished. For the moment he had forgotten the dangerous features of the situation. Meeting this amazing woman whom he had never before seen was like a flash of lightning in the night. He was back in a moment with the long rainproof coaking him. As he entered her cabin and closed the door he bowed to her with his fine courtesy.

"My name is Desmond, madame; Gerald Desmond, late of the Royal Air Corps. I came over thinking I might be of service to you. If so, pray consider me at your command."

"How did you get aboard here?" she demanded, remembering that agonized wait.

"Faith, I floated around to the stern, came up the misbegotten rudder post and in an open window, and started to find you," Desmond smiled. "It was takin' a bit for granted maybe, but that's a habit I have—"

"Oh, miséricorde!" gasped the girl suddenly, as remembrance flooded upon her. "I—I—monsieur, I am very silly to—"

Desmond caught her as she swayed; he thought she would faint, but she recovered herself with a word of protest. The reaction had seized her violently.

Leaving her for the moment, Desmond cautiously placed himself at the port. Overhead, the work was on full swing, and he saw a huge bale being hauled aboard the San Gregorio. At the stern window of the schooner he had a glimpse of O'Sullivan's face, and waved his hand. Then he withdrew, fearful lest he be seen, and turned again to Rosemonde.

"I don't know what's troubling you, madame," he said gravely, "but from the bullet holes in the door yonder, and various indications of activity, there seems to have been a ruction. If ye have no objections to outlining the general action, it might be a good thing to speak up, for there's the storm comin' back on us and work to be done."

Rosemonde looked at him, smiling bravely, yet with misty eyes.

"Oh!" she said. "I am so glad to meet a man like you!"

"I hope ye'll never be sorry for it," said Desmond gallantly. "You're French, I take it?"

"I am an American!" she said. "At least—"

Thus she told him her story, and the story of the Chang Yan.

Desmond listened without comment, his eyes hardening a little as she came to the final threat of Prince Chan, and when she had finished, after sketching very briefly her own part in the adventure, Desmond gave her a rapid survey of the situation aboard the ship.

"And now," he added with a wry smile, "I've put me foot in it. When I left yonder I told 'em to be out on deck and start fighting if they heard any shooting over here, and it was a fool order. Sixteen of those Chinamen, eh? To say nothin' of Arevalo and his gang. Poor O'Sullivan and the skipper would be wiped out o' sight without me there to guide 'em!"

"But if you were there?" queried Rosemonde, breathless.

"Ah, now it's talkin' you are, sweet jewel!" Desmond started up. "Can you swim?"
"A little, yes; but I cannot swim back to your ship!"

"Ye don't have to!" Desmond's eyes were blazing now, alight with inspiration. "I'll be gone a few minutes. Get ready any little things ye may want to take along, and I'll see to the rest. Thunder o' Finn! Why didn't I think of it before? All this time wasted, and opium pourin' into the schooner like water! Keep away from the window, like a good girl, and trust me to do the rest."

Thus speaking, Desmond paused not for questions, but vanished into the passage outside.

Rosemonde, still gasping over his suddenness, got together a few personal effects. She realized that Desmond had come aboard unseen by any, that his presence here was quite unsuspected by the Manchus; he therefore possessed an advantage in whatever scheme he might attempt. But she could see no hope for them both to get aboard the schooner.

She was ready, and now waited at the doorway, listening for some alarm. She had determined not to let this man do battle by himself. At the first shot she would sally forth to aid him, and yet he had said that there must be no shooting! What could he be doing? She could hear nothing except a trampling of feet on the deck above and the chattering voices of the men at work. By this time she realized there must have gone aboard the San Gregorio a huge amount of opium—huge in value, that is. Its bulk would not be great.

A step in the passage, and she looked out, her automatic lifting. But it was Desmond, whistling under his breath and seeming quite unimpressed by his situation. He laughed gayly as he stepped aside to let him enter, and picked up one of the coils of rope that had barricaded the door from the outside.

"We'll have need of this, likely," he observed, flinging it into the cabin with an effort. "Now there's nothing to do except to lock the door and await events. Luckily we're on the starboard side; it'll bring us close under the stern o' the schooner."

"What will?" demanded Rosemonde, staring at him. "What have you done? How can we get to the schooner?"

Desmond, of a sudden, was aware of a great beauty in her brown eyes—not what other men might call beauty perhaps, but the true symmetry of all relation between physical and spiritual and mental. He felt abashed and put to confusion before her grave gaze, as though he were less than the dust below her feet. It came upon him that she held within her something very far and high, something untouched and unhurt by the world—"A Mhuire!" he muttered, confused by his own dazed sensation. "What did ye say your name was—Rosemonde? Ah, it's a leanhaunshee ye are, a fairy mistress? It's the inspiration of a poet that looks out of your eyes, Rosemonde! But what was it you were askin' me?"

She gazed at him curiously, half smiling at his words, yet wondering at him. "How can we get aboard the schooner, Dream Man?" she said. "For you are a man out of a dream, if there ever was one!"

Desmond laughed aloud at her mood. "Throw the rope out of the window and slide down. We'll be alongside the schooner presently. My friends yonder will pick us up."

"Oh! And how shall we be alongside the schooner?"

"When these Chinese divils wake up to what's below they'll get aboard to save their lives, won't they?"

She frowned, puzzled by his words. "Please tell me what you've done. How—"

"Oh, I forgot I hadn't explained to
ye,” said Desmond hastily. “Well, it’s very simple. I noticed there was only one small boat aboard this elegant ship, and that boat was stowed plumb in the stern. So I found me way aft, everybody bein’ up on deck, and built an excellent little fire where the wind will fan it up——”

She started. “A fire? You set fire to the ship?”

“Of course. Haven’t I been trying to tell you about it all this while?”

“This ship is afire—now?”

Desmond waved his hand gayly. “The sweetest fire you ever saw, Rosemonde! They’ll not discover it for another five minutes, and then it’ll be over the stern and sweepin’ the lee side—which is not this side—and the yellow boys will shout for help. The schooner will drop back to take ’em aboard, and we’ll go aboard likewise, only the other way. There, now! It’s put me out o’ breath talkin’ so much——”

Rosemonde sank on her berth, facing him, an excited laughers shaking her.

“Mon Dieu, what a man!” she murmured. “But what if we do not get alongside the schooner?”

“Then,” retorted Desmond coolly, “we’re out of luck, that’s all. But I’ve never been out o’ luck in me life; no, not even in Manila! I can see plainly now that my getting shanghaied was the biggest stroke of luck ever happened to me.”

“Why?” she ventured incautiously.

“Because I’ve met you, fairy mistress!”

“Bah! Do you talk this way to all women?”

“I’m afraid I do, Rosemonde,” said Desmond, but now unsmiling. “Yet this time it’s from me heart.”

She met his gaze steadily. There was a moment of silence.

An absurd situation—this man, clad in underwear and a raincoat, talking thus to such a woman at their first meeting! Yet something in Desmond’s personality lifted his words into earnest conviction, dispelled all thought of the situation. Rosemonde read strange deep things in those blue eyes of his, and a slow tide of color rose into her face. When she spoke it was in abrupt reversion to the prior subject.

“What if they put out the fire?”

“They can’t put out two at once; they’ve not men enough.”

“Two? You have——”

“Yes. I started another one as far for’ard as I could get. It’s blazin’ merrily by this time, let’s pray. They’ll discover it soon enough——”

A sudden yelping of voices answered him, held him tense.

Feet pounded the deck above. Through the open window came the sound of shrill cries, a babel of shouts and orders. Aboard the steamer Desmond could see the crew rushing from their work into the stern. He lifted his automatic toward Arevalo, then slowly lowered it, shaking his head regretfully. One shot might spoil all his scheme.

“They are coming—for me,” said Rosemonde quietly.

Desmond swung about to the door, which was now locked. A trampling of feet was in the passage outside; the door shivered and banged to the urge of hands, and the voice of Prince Chan shrilled excitedly:

“Madame! The ship is on fire—come quickly!”

To the inquiring eyes of Rosemonde, Desmond shook his head, and she kept silent. The Manchu flung himself against the door, and again, but he could not prevail. A burst of wild chatterings summoned him away, and at the same instant a curl of smoke came in beneath the door.

“He’s gone,” said Desmond. “They need him up above, and the smoke is thick outside. Now for the schooner; fairy mistress——”
An exclamation of delight broke from him as he gained the window. At the stern of the schooner were clustered her crew, hauling in on the cables; her lines had been slacked off, and with flapping canvas she was falling back while the junk surged ahead. At the stern windows appeared Cavanaugh and O'Sullivan, staring at the junk. Desmond made them a sign and tossed out the end of the line which he had prepared. They would understand soon enough.

Already the roar of flames had drowned everything from hearing. Desmond swept an eye at the sky, and was not reassured; sea and heavens were dead and dull to the sight, and the waves were heaving with an ominous, glassy smoothness.

"Be careful!" cried Rosemonde, catching Desmond's arm. "The ships are coming together!"

He nodded. As he had figured, Arevalo, or, rather, Balderson, who was in practical command of the schooner, was about to take off Prince Chan and the Manchus. Hope of saving the Chang Yan had been abandoned, but the San Gregorio could be laid athwart her bows long enough for the Chinese to get aboard the schooner.

"Into the water with you, Rosemonde," said Desmond at the right instant. "They'll never notice us now; Arevalo and his crowd are too concerned about getting the yellow men safely off. I'll be right after you."

Rosemonde asked no questions, but came to the window. Smoke was drifting past now, a cloud of yellowish-gray fumes, choking and obscuring everything. Almost blindly the girl forced herself outward and plunged.

Desmond followed her to the window, seeing as he did so that Cavanaugh was lowering the line from the stern window of the schooner. But at that instant the scream of a man came from outside the cabin. Desmond remembered the man whom he had wounded, the man who must burn to death.

Without hesitation he turned about, unlocked the door, and staggered into the smoke reek. He found his man, still wildly screaming, and dragged him back to safety. The Manchu had been shot through the shoulder; Desmond heaved him through the window bodily, then followed him as quickly as might be. When he plunged into the water and came up to the surface the yellow man was frenziedly shouting and flurrying a dozen feet distant.

Desmond struck out for the schooner's stern, where he saw Rosemonde at the rope. Before he reached her side, Cavanaugh and O'Sullivan were hauling her up. He had a glimpse, too, of Juliana aiding them. Then he was under the stern, and the line dropped down over his hand.

Twenty minutes later a foaming line of hissing water struck the schooner, and the blazing pyre that had been the Chang Yan was swallowed up in the vague horizon of the hurricane which had circled back upon its prey. The schooner drove, staggering into the west.

CHAPTER VIII.

ASHORE.

PARACEL ISLAND is one of many forgotten shoals that dot the China Sea between the Philippines and the mainland. Uninhabited, far from the steamer lanes, Paracel Island lies in the azure sea neglected of men, visited only by the occasional beche-de-mer fishers who probe the long reefs and shoals for the sea slugs.

There was no azure sea around Paracel, however, when the San Gregorio struck. There was but a wild swelter of foam in the night, and the huge seas lifted the schooner over the outer reef, dropped her in the lagoon, and drove
her on the inner reef before the men aboard her realized their danger.

This came in the night following the meeting with the junk. Desmond and his friends, securely battened below, had been unable either to reach the deck or to attempt the recovery of the ship. This latter, indeed, Desmond admitted to be impossible for the present, for Arevalo had been reinforced by the Manchus and the chance had been lost.

Juliana and Rosemonde had retired to the former's cabin, and Captain Canaughan was growling at Desmond when the crash came. The two were flung on top of O'Sullivan, in the corner. The ship struck again, and this time remained steady, although with a sharp list to port.

What followed was tragically brief and sudden. The second shock had hurled Desmond headlong against a stanchion, dazing and stunning him; the lamp, slung in gimbals, had been shattered, fortunately without the oil catching fire. In the darkness there came a rending smash at the door, and at the same time Juliana and Rosemonde had come hasting from their cabin.

Desmond, roused to a scream from Juliana, followed by the bursting crash of a shot, the trampling of feet, a roar of voices. He recognized that, instantly the ship had struck, Arevalo must have led his forces below to find Juliana. There came another shot, a bellow in the voice of Canaughan, and a rushing whirl of bodies. The cabin was in blind confusion. An uproar of oaths and screams filled the place.

Finding a match, Desmond scratched it. Before the flame flared up a mass of bodies swirled into him, extinguished the light. Fingers groped at his throat; then, to his great satisfaction. Desmond found himself at grips with a tangible antagonist. From somewhere rang out a third shot. By the quick explosion Desmond recognized the snarling features of Arevalo pressed close upon him.

"Thunder o' Finn!" he cried out, his voice lost amid the din. "Now, me bucko——"

Merciless, he drew the murderer to him, heard Arevalo shriek in his ear, sank his hands in the man's neck cords. Over the uproar pierced the great voice of Balderson, but Desmond heeded nothing of what was passing around him. A groaning man fell against the two, knocked them against the wall.

Arevalo screamed again, the scream ending suddenly as Desmond lifted and dashed him into the wall of the ship. The half-breed's grip tightened convulsively; again Desmond sent him crashing against a stanchion. This time the clutching hands were loosened in death. Arevalo relaxed, shuddering, and was dead before Desmond could drop him.

The schooner seemed suddenly quiet. No seas were beating against her broken hull—the lagoon protected her. The tumult in the cabin had hushed, but from the deck above was sounding a rush of feet and storm of voices. Desmond, fishing in his pocket for a match, realized that the men had departed.

"Mr. Desmond!" came a voice.

"That you, Rosemonde?" he returned. "Ah, here's a match——"

The light flared up. He saw Rosemonde standing in the doorway of the inner cabin, a pistol in her hand. O'Sullivan was staggering to his feet. The match died suddenly.

"Divil take it! Rosemonde, will you get me the lamp from your cabin? Thanks."

He found another match and lighted it. Rosemonde joined him a moment later with the lamp. Lighting this, Desmond gave it to her to hold, then turned.

"Come here!" cried out the fiddler,
bending over a dark shape. Besides Arevalo there were two other bodies twisted in death. Rosemonde had shot well. But it was not above these that O’Sullivan knelt.

“Canaughan!” exclaimed Desmond sharply, lifting the head of the skipper. The latter opened his eyes and smiled grimly.

“Desmond—I take back what I said about—Papists—aie, man! ’Twas but said to—plague ye a bit—look out for—Miss Juliana—”

The skipper sighed and relaxed. Mute, O’Sullivan pointed to a ragged knife wound below the throat, through which the sturdy Ulsterman’s life had fled. Desmond leaped up.

“Juliana! Where is she, Rosemonde?”

The hazel eyes, black in the lamp-light, dilated. “Ah! They must have taken—”

Whirling, Desmond ran for the deck, curses on his lips. As he ran he gripped out his automatic, which all this while had lain under his arm. The hatchway was open.

He realized now that Arevalo, seeing the ship lost, had left the Chinese to get out the boats while he flung his men below in an effort to take Juliana from her haven in the cabins. Arevalo had paid for this work—but Juliana was gone.

Desmond darted up the ladder and threw himself out into the gusty blackness of the night. The deck slanted sharply to port, but the ship seemed secure enough. Unable to see any details of what was around him, Desmond ran forward. He met no one, but an instant later he saw a dark shape whirlied away from the bows, vanishing in the night. The last boat had gone.

Putting his weapon away, Desmond went the rounds of the deck, marveling that despite the ferocity of the wind there was little spray flying. From the absence of seas, however, he deduced that the ship must lie within some reef circle. The surrounding darkness was quite impenetrable, and he knew that he must wait until morning to define the position. The foremost had gone when the ship struck, and had smashed one of the boats to flinders. The remaining boats were gone.

Desmond, whistling between his teeth, returned to the after hatchway. There O’Sullivan encountered him.

“Gone? Well, praise be ye got Arevalo, sir! Are we sinkin’?”

“No, we seem safe enough, Michael Terence. Hurt?”

“We’re all right, sir. Poor Canaughan! It’s gone he is—”

“None o’ that, me lad,” said Desmond. “We’ll have more grieving to do before we’re out o’ this, I’m thinking. In the lee o’ the deck I could hear breakers, so we’re ashore somewhere. You and I must stand watch an’ watch this night, and spend the time gettin’ Canaughan sewed up for decent burial in the morning. Let the lady sleep.”

He passed below and rejoined Rosemonde, shaking his head in response to her glance of inquiry.

“She’s gone, Rosemonde, but she’s in no danger. When they find that Arevalo hasn’t come ashore they’ll have no object in keeping Juliana a prisoner. Where we are I don’t know, but we’ve run smack ashore and are safe for the present. Since we’re apt to be busy in the mornin’, you’d better take my advice and get some sleep.”

“Sleep!” repeated Rosemonde, staring at him. “After what has just happened—”

Desmond shrugged his shoulders. “What’s done is done, Rosemonde. You must make yourself sleep, me lady; things are goin’ to happen to-morrow, and we’ll need the benefit o’ your brain when Prince Chan and Balderson come back.”

“You think they’ll come back?”
“Yes. Isn’t there a million dollars’ worth of opium, more or less, aboard here? You wait and see. To-morrow we’ll need our heads!”

Rosemonde indicated the bodies on the cabin floor. “And—these?”

“We’ll take care of them.”

She said no more, but turned about and closed the door. Desmond looked at O’Sullivan and grimaced.

“There’s a woman for ye, Michael Terence! Now turn in an’ get a bit o’ sleep.”

The fiddler, his long black hair flying about his pinched features, directed a long look at the body of the skipper, then without a word flung himself into a bunk.

Desmond was saddened more than he cared to admit by the death of the skipper. In the short time he had known Captain Caunaughan he had found deep store of sturdy character in the Ulsterman and much to admire. The man’s death was untimely. It formed one of those strangely uncompleted things which go to make up life—a race half run, a skein left all at loose ends.

There must be a new alignment now that Arevalo was gone, reflected Desmond. Of the schooner’s original complement three men were left with Balderson; the yellow cook would have joined the Manchus, placing about fifteen men under Prince Chan—fifteen yellow, four white. And the prince would command them, of course. Balderson would defer to him.

“The two of us and Rosemonde against ’em,” thought Desmond. “That is, if they elect to fight. We’ll have to wait and see what’ll turn up, eh? There are chances for anything with that gang.”

Morning broke; a gray, storm-filled morning, with shreds of misty scud carrying across the wreck from the outer reef. Desmond had relieved O’Sullivan an hour previously. He now stood in the bows, regarding the situation with no great delight.

The schooner had been lifted across the outer barrier reef, after striking first, and had been driven across the lagoon upon a second shoal but a hundred yards from the shore. There, upon the white sand beach, Desmond saw the two boats of the schooner. No men were in sight, but the island was thickly grown with brush and trees almost to the shore. From his position Desmond could form little idea of its size.

He went below, wakened O’Sullivan, and between them they got the body of Caunaughan on deck. The other bodies had been thrown overboard during the night. Finding that Rosemonde was awake and dressing, Desmond waited until she joined them above, and then proceeded with the funeral.

The entire ship now being in their possession, Desmond took charge of the galley and soon had a steaming breakfast ready. They ate the meal in the lee of the deck house. To his secret admiration, Desmond found that Rosemonde faced their unpleasant position almost with unconcern, seeming anxious about Juliana rather than herself.

“You think Doña Juliana is in no danger, then?” she inquired.

“Not a bit,” said Desmond cheerfully. “Arevalo was her chief peril. Prince Chan made threats against you, yes; but he’s the type to realize at this juncture that if he stops to amuse himself with the ladies he loses everything. He’ll want to get clear with the opium, that’s all. You and Juliana have little to fear from him—as things stand now.”

“Ahh! Then there is something to fear?” queried Rosemonde calmly.

“There may be. Thunder o’ Finn! If I was a Mohammedan, now, I’d carry off the both o’ you ladies!” and Desmond laughed gayly. “Upon me
soul, Rosemonde, where would ever a man again find two such women?"

She looked at him, no warmth in her eyes. "Juliana spoke a good deal of you last night."

"I'm glad o' that," returned Desmond complacently. "Did she increase your good opinion of me, fairy mistress?"

"Naturally she did. You are to be congratulated on your conquest. She is a fine girl."

"Ah!" Desmond looked quickly at her. "What's that again? Conquest, did you say?"

Rosemonde met his gaze very steadily. "My dear Mr. Desmond——"

"Thunder o' Finn, don't be using that tone o' voice to me!" exclaimed Desmond. "Look here, now! It's true as I'm a living man that I've never said a word of love to any woman but yourself, Rosemonde, and never will!"

A flush, as it were of anger, flooded into her cheeks, but her hazel eyes did not waver from his. In their depths Desmond read strange things, and sudden fear came upon him. What the devil had he said to Juliana, after all? Nothing extremely personal, he was sure of that much; nothing very serious or meant to be taken seriously. None the less, he suddenly perceived shoals and dangers ahead.

"Boat comin' out!" cried O'Sullivan at this juncture.

Desmond leaped up, glad of the intervention.

One of the boats was being shoved out by half a dozen men; Desmond recognized them for Manchus. The second boat was likewise being rolled down the sand, but this one by four only—Balderson and his three mates.

"That is Prince Chan jumping into the stern," said Rosemonde.

Desmond nodded, and turned to the fiddler.

"Michael Terence, me lad, will you be getting up into the stern with your gun now? Don't fire until ye get the word from me, however."

"Fight them off?" asked Rosemonde without alarm.

"I hope not." Desmond squinted at the two boats, now leaving the shore, with a perplexed twinkle in his eye. "There'll be no fighting, I hope. Still, ye can never tell. And it looks queer how they're coming separate that way. Ahoy, there! What d'ye want?"

Balderson, rowing an oar with his mates, turned and glanced over his shoulder. Even his great voice could not be distinguished against the wind, however, and Desmond made a gesture beckoning on the boats. They drew closer, converging to within fifty feet of the schooner, when Prince Chan stood up and lifted his hands to his mouth.

"We are unarmed. May I come aboard?"

"Come ahead," responded Desmond. Then Balderson likewise shouted:

"Me, too, Desmond! Huh? Don't trust the chink!"

"Come ahead," and Desmond smiled. Rosemonde touched his arm, frowning a little.

"What does it mean, then?"

"It means there's trouble in their camp," and Desmond laughed into her eyes. "Praise be, we'll manage things yet! Keep your gun on the Manchus; I'll watch the white men."

"If you're willing to trust them, all right."

Weapon in hand, Desmond watched the two boats as they drew in toward the lowered port rail of the schooner. By the glances exchanged between the two craft he was convinced that trouble had arisen; what that trouble could be he was not aware.

"Balderson and Prince Chan come aboard," he said, when the two boats were below. "If another man moves in either boat, we shoot."

There was plenty of water over the
reef to float the boats, and as they swung in the prince and Balderson stood up and clambered over the rail. Beyond making fast with hooks, the other men obeyed Desmond's mandate.

"Good morning, Madame Burley," said the prince in French, with a bow to Rosemonde. "This is Mr. Desmond? I am glad to meet you, sir."

Balderson flung him a suspicious glance. The giant, his tangle of hair and beard floating over his shoulders in the wind, bit from a plug of tobacco and expectorated over the side.

"None o' that chatter now," he remarked. "Cards on the table, all hands!"

Desmond glanced from one to the other, his eyes twinkling.

"Come, gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "May I ask the reason for this friendly visit? You first, Prince Chan. I would suggest that we speak in English also."

The Manchu smiled blandly, scornfully.

"Very well. As you are aware, there is a lady ashore with us. I propose to return her to you unharmed. She has informed us of your activities yesterday. You see, Mr. Desmond, I do not underrate your ability, but you shall be at liberty to depart wherever you desire."

"Oh!" said Desmond. "You want us to vacate the schooner, no doubt?"

The prince bowed in silent assent. Desmond turned to Balderson.

"Well? What's your proposition, Mr. Mutineer?"

Balderson's eyes were like blue ice.

"Is Arevalo dead?"

"Dead and buried," returned Desmond cheerfully.

"Then the chest belongs to us, 'cause we were partners with Arevalo in buyin' the dope."

"What chest?" queried Desmond. "The chest o' money that these yellow boys took ashore. Arevalo fetched it along to buy the dope, savvy? Let the chinks have the dope—we want the coin, huh?"

"Oh!" said Desmond. He leaned back and fumbled for his pipe. "A chest of money, eh?"

TO BE CONTINUED.

OUR DAILY WORK

The study of our daily work is one of the most entrancing things I know about, especially as the majority of people take it as a matter of course.

Do not neglect the most important part of the day. Study carefully the conditions of your means of living. Does your job or position profit you mentally as well as physically or financially? All these points must be weighed in the scales, and if one is found wanting you should make a change.

Did you ever realize that a mental house-cleaning is an excellent thing now and then? You go on living month after month with the same emotions and identical thoughts. Did it ever occur to you to clear them out and begin anew?

Some of these mental houses I meet are so dirty, so careworn, so old-fashioned that I know nothing modern or worth while could gain an entrance. A grouchy host would close the door in a new Idea's face.

Think of that!

About once a year it will pay you to open all the windows of your mental house, scrub the floors, throw away the old junk, and buy afresh and paint the decaying woodwork. The sunlight will do you good.
I THOUGHT that when I struck him down,
Why, that would be the end
Of one who stole my Love away,
That false, betraying friend.

I gave him no time for a prayer,
And no space for a priest.
I flung him over in the moat
To make the fishes' feast.

Yet, even as I turned away
And thought "Now all is well"
A night thing sent one doleful cry
Like a man's voice from hell!

They searched for many torch-lit nights,
For many a windy day,
Till a peasant said he'd seen him go
As he had ridden away
Full loud I laughed . . . but when I saw
The stable open wide,
I feared the Dead who would not die;
His horse was not inside.

Then came my woman he had won,
Saying, "His ring of worth,
He took last night . . . behold, no more
It holds my finger's girth."

Oh, worse than death the look he gave,
And none the words he said
When the slain man returned, one night
And stood beside my bed.

I sent for the sad, gray, silent priest,
And, as he harked to me,
Horror rose in his face like dawn
Over a still, gray sea.

Alas, alas, I've learned too late
Now that my days are sped
That strike with daggers all you may,
The Dead will not lie dead. . . .

And I hear them building all day long
And far into the night
A tall Thing with a dangling rope
Upon a sky-black height!
IT is night. In the library the lights are extinguished; everyone has gone to bed. I am sitting before my desk, writing. It is perfectly safe. If the scratch of the pen is heard, if the inmates of the house should suddenly open the door and turn on the lights, they would see nothing—only the pen lying beside the inkwell. The window is open, and, when I have finished, I will float out into the street.

I have been dead a week, and now my body lies underground in a plain, black coffin. When I saw this coffin lowered into the earth it reminded me of a black boat sinking beneath the surface of the water. Suddenly I wept to see all those hard, avaricious faces about the grave. I was my only mourner.

All my life I have been toiling like a bee, so that others might plunder my hive. These others have it now, and they are happy. They no longer wish I were dead; that is a satisfaction. They think that I am safe underground, and yet they profess to be Christians.

I have a nephew who is a fat, greedy fellow. He goes about with a stupid expression; that is because he is cunning. I dislike him, so I've always kept him near me. It is better to have a bee in front than behind.

Often this nephew has said to me: "Uncle, you are immensely wealthy, are you not?" And I would always answer modestly: "That all depends; a few millions, perhaps."

At these times his round, wet mouth would open slightly, and his small, sleepy eyes would become covered with a kind of film. He is a very greedy fellow. But I was not as wealthy as he imagined; in fact, I was not wealthy at all.

Of late I have been thinking deeply. An idea has come which pleases me. My nephew is a very fat and lazy man. When he sits down on a chair he gives little animal grunts of satisfaction; when he comes upstairs with his candle the light flickers as he breathes upon it. He is so lazy that I would like to see him work—work very hard. This
is what I would like to see him do: I would like to see him go out into the garden back of the house, the garden which is progressing so nicely, and dig and dig with his spade into the soft ground. How the perspiration would roll into his eyes, how the veins on his forehead would bulge out, and how his pale, plump hands would tremble!

My nephew is a spiritualist. Once a month he goes to a séance in the neighborhood. Last night I heard him mutter: "That old devil had more money than we found." I stood right beside him, and I smiled.

Perhaps the next time that he goes to the séance I shall have a talk with him. Perhaps I shall say: "Nephew, under the tree in the garden, where you have planted your vegetables, is an old trunk filled with money—money which I hid there years ago. On a full moon dig where the shadow of the topmost branch falls."

And then my nephew will steal out of the house at the dead of night, and will dig in this garden where the tiny plants are sprouting up. And he will sweat and swear and throw the earth about; but I will float calmly in the air above him and watch and laugh—laugh very silently so as not to disturb the singing of the breeze. And there will be nothing at the bottom of that hole—nothing. Then he will try again in a different spot, and still there will be nothing. And he will go on sweating, swearing, and digging till this little garden will be no garden.

And all this time I will be laughing silently, for this fat nephew of mine is a very lazy man.

AN Irishman was careless enough to let his priest see him coming out of a hotel with a demijohn under his arm. The priest waited for him to come by, and said:

"Mike, what is it you have in that demijohn?"
"Whisky, sir."
"To whom does it belong?"
"To me and me brother Pat, sir."
"Well, pour yours out, Mike, and be a good man."
"I can't, father," said Mike; "mine's on the bottom."

A SMALL boy went to stay with a small girl cousin, and very soon slated her for looking in the mirror so often. The young man would have done away with all mirrors, and argued that mirrors were superfluous things which no sensible soul ever used.

"But you must look in the glass to see if your face is clean after you wash," said Miss Seven-year-old triumphantly. She was speedily squashed, for the man of the future replied sturdily: "I don't! I look at the towel."

I'm very much afraid that Jimmie isn't trying enough," wrote an anxious mother to the teacher of her young hopeful.

"You are quite wrong," wrote back the tired teacher; "for I assure you that Jimmie is the most trying boy in the class."
Tales of the Double Man
By Clyde Broadwell

"The Double Man" begins a series of stories surpassing in weirdness and occult mystery anything ever before offered in literature. They are clean tales, these, without featuring murder or theft or crime of any kind, yet gripping in their virility, intensity, and power. The profoundest depths of the human soul are sounded by the mental probe of that eminent psychic expert and Fellow of the International Academy of Scientific and Supernatural Research, Doctor Mordaunt P. Dale, of New York City, renowned throughout the world for his success in solving riddles of the universe. Clyde Broadwell, who was given exclusive right to make public the facts in the most absorbing case ever studied by Doctor Dale, has chosen The Thrill Book as the most proper medium for publicity.

The Editor.

I am two men!
Don't smile and say: "More Jekyll-Hyde stuff!" Nothing of the kind. I am serious and with all solemnity repeat: I am two men!
My inexplicable double-ego did not manifest itself until a few months ago. Were another to tell me what I now am asserting as a fact, I, like you, might disbelieve. But I actually can substantiate all my statements with documents, as you shall see.
I live, wide awake, twenty-four hours each day, half the time in one place and half the time some eight thousand miles away. The difference in time here in New York and at the antipodes makes each existence a daylight experience. I see little of night, except under rare circumstances of late retiring, which correspondingly affects either of my entities and causes late awakening.
Please do not misunderstand me. I am not mad, nor am I silly. I am baffled; so are my advisers.
Mine positively is a plural existence—not a dual existence in the Jekyll-Hyde sense: one body and two minds.
I have two bodies and two minds.
Having stated this fact, you can see that I shall not Jekyll-Hyde you in this memoir.
I do not disappear at intervals. Neither is one of my natures murderous and the other kindly. My dispositions—I must pluralize—are analogous I positively am aware of each personality. My nature in each is the same. My facial and bodily characteristics are
exactly duplicate in both bodies—eight thousand miles apart! My environments and experiences, however, necessarily are different.

It is difficult to explain exactly what I mean to convey. You must step lively to keep pace with my suddenly varied occult-physical or physical-occult manifestations, else you shall not comprehend. I know this concentration is necessary, because I already have endeavored, in vain, to convince my two physicians—one in each environment—of my plural existence. Each ascribes my experiences to my nerves. I know they are at fault in their diagnoses.

When—as William Gray—I tell my physician, Doctor Marvin Porter, in New York City, that as I fall asleep there, I wake eight thousand miles away, in Cape Town, British South Africa, and become Arthur Wadleigh, managerial representative there of the London Ivory Company, he tells me I dream.

When—as Arthur Wadleigh—I tell my physician, Doctor Philip Spaulding, in Cape Town, British South Africa, that as I fall asleep there, I wake in New York City, eight thousand miles away, and become William Gray, stock broker in Wall Street, he also tells me I dream.

But I know I do not dream! Documentary evidence in my possession both as Gray and as Wadleigh proves that this is no mental chimera, conscious or subconscious.

I am two men! It is a fact. Read on—and be convinced!

As William Gray, in an effort to clarify this unaccountable conjunction of two souls and two bodies, I wrote to the London Ivory Company in London, England, asking them the name of their representative in Cape Town, British South Africa. I received the following reply and offer it for your reading:

William Gray, Esq., No. 4 ½ Wall Street,
New York City, U. S. A.

Dear Sir: Replying to your esteemed favor of the 20th ult., we beg to advise you that Arthur Wadleigh, Esq., is our representative in Cape Town, British South Africa, and that he will cheerfully serve you in any commission which you may entrust to his attention. Please command him, there, and us, here, should your business requirements demand London representation. We have the honor, sir, to be, your humble servants,

The London Ivory Company.
(By Pelham Granger, President.)

This doesn’t prove me mentally crepit, does it? How can you explain the matter? I never had heard of the name of Arthur Wadleigh except in my inter-transmigratory experiences. I had not known the name of the president of the London Ivory Company. But I have the letter and attach it to this document, together with other letters and proofs of my plurality. This, in case any harm should befall me and I be considered insane.

Again, as Arthur Wadleigh, in Cape Town, on January 28, 1919, I received from William Gray in New York, this interesting communication:

No. 4 ½ Wall Street,
New York, December 24, 1918.
Arthur Wadleigh, Esq., Manager The London Ivory Company, Cape Town, British South Africa.

My dear Mr. Wadleigh: I am extremely anxious to clarify a mystery which I hesitate to explain for fear I shall open myself to your doubting my sanity. In brief, I find myself become yourself the moment I fall asleep. Vice versa, as yourself I become myself when I fall asleep in Cape Town. In fact, in writing to you I believe I am writing to myself! I shall not go into further details until I learn whether I shall have earned your sympathy in my trouble sufficiently to have you adhere to a request I now shall make. I enclose my photograph and ask you, in return, to send me yours. This may be a means of ending what my physician terms a hallucination. He may be correct, but my experiences are so real that I believe he errs. Needless to say, I hope I am wrong. Your
generous courtesy will be deeply appreciated by yours most respectfully,

WILLIAM GRAY.

As I read this letter and scrutinized Gray's photograph, I saw the exact presentiment of myself, Arthur Wadleigh! I compared my own photo with that of Gray. No twins ever were such duplicitates!

In New York, as William Gray, on February 26th, 1919, I opened this letter from Wadleigh:

OFFICES OF THE LONDON IVORY COMPANY.
Cape Town, B. S. A., January 29, 1919.
WILLIAM GRAY, Esq., No. 4½ Wall Street,
New York City, U. S. A.

MY DEAR MR. GRAY: Your communication has astounded me, inasmuch as I also have experienced somewhat the same inexplicable plural life as you. My physician also says I am subject to hallucinations and need a rest. I agree with him concerning the rest, but not concerning the hallucinations. I inoculate my photo, but might just as well have returned your own, instead, inasmuch as both faces are exactly alike! Even the mole on the right cheek near the ear is duplicated! It is very strange. Both photos show the mole clearly. You can compare them and see for yourself. I also shall add, for your further information, because the photo cannot convey these facts, that I am five feet nine inches tall and stocky in build. I have dark-brown hair, slightly wavy; my eyes are blue and I have a wart on my left thumb near the nail. I have been profoundly disturbed, and, like yourself, was about to communicate with you in similar vein when I received your letter.

Like you, I feel that in writing to you I am writing to myself! I dare write no more, lest, should this letter be seen by eyes other than yours or mine, I be adjudged a lunatic. The remarkable coincidence in our photographs has increased my perplexity, rather than diminished it. In a business way, I shall be happy to serve you and meet your commands in every way possible. Yours most respectfully,

ARTHUR WADLEY.

Scrutinizing Wadleigh's portrait, I was amazed at the exact resemblance to that of myself, William Gray. The mole on the right cheek near the ear completed the verisimilitude. I also have dark hair and blue eyes. I also have a wart on my left thumb near the nail. I also am five feet nine inches tall. I also am stockily built. It seems so unbelievable that I almost doubt my senses. How much more unbelievable must these facts seem to others! Yet they are true!

Needless to say, I could not continue in this maze. So, as William Gray, I decided to leave New York for Cape Town, British South Africa, to have a talk with Wadleigh.

As Wadleigh, I simultaneously left Cape Town, British South Africa, for New York, to have a talk with Gray. Whenever, as Gray, I fell asleep on the steamship for Cape Town, I immediately awakened as Wadleigh on the steamship bound for New York. Conversely, as Wadleigh, on the steamship for New York, I would fall asleep to awaken immediately as Gray on the steamship bound for Cape Town! It was most strange!

Such a harrowing experience will shatter any man's nerves! It prostrated me as Gray, in my trip to Cape Town. It prostrated me, as Wadleigh, in my trip to New York.

In both instances, complete unconsciousness—God-given, as it were—gave me opportunity to rest—both as Gray and as Wadleigh. But immediately upon my plural convalescence, the same dread double existence recommenced. How can you explain it?

When I, as Gray, landed in Cape Town and sought the offices of Arthur Wadleigh, I was greeted as Mr. Wadleigh. All my expostulations, explanations and documents could not convince Mr. Wadleigh's associates that I was Gray.

When I, as Wadleigh, landed in New York, and sought the offices of William Gray in Wall Street, I was greeted as Mr. Gray. Here, also, expostulations and evidence could not convince Mr.
TALES OF THE DOUBLE MAN

Gray's associates that I was Mr. Wadleigh.

In each instance, however, by pressing my claims and assertions, I was able to learn of the other's departure for a long trip. But in each instance, my associates in the antipodal cities believed I had returned sooner than expected.

In each instance, distracted by this dread contratempo, I returned home— as Gray to New York—as Wadleigh to Cape Town.

Human endurance must succumb eventually to such fatal, unresting existences. Because of this fear, I have written my peculiar double history. No astral body projection theory can explain the enigma, neither is telepathy involved in my experience. But I know that the sleep I obtain in each existence lacks the invigorating rest bestowed by normal slumbers.

When, not long since, I gazed at my reflection—that of William Gray—in my office mirror in New York, I was pale and haggard. My eyes were bloodshot and my hair was slightly streaked with white strands.

When, falling asleep, I awakened as Wadleigh in Cape Town and gazed at my reflection in the glass, I was pale and haggard. My eyes were bloodshot and my hair was slightly streaked with white strands.

After to-day, I shall write no more.

For I, William Gray, prosaic stockbroker in Wall Street, unable longer to bear this dread visitation of plurality of soul and body, have begun, to-day, the use of morphine to bring some relief. Likewise, as Arthur Wadleigh, in Cape Town, I have sought morphine as a means to forgetfulness. I can get no rest, otherwise.

Where shall it end? Why have I been cursed in this manner? I have been a clean-living, honorable man—both as Gray and Wadleigh:

I welcome the Lethe morphine brings me.

But—what shall be the climax? I dread to think of it!

Editor's Note: Mr. William Gray, the New York stockbroker, was this day taken to the Bellevue Hospital for the Insane. He is not expected to live more than a few days, unless some sudden occult relief is provided. Medicines are valueless.

Addendum, Editor's Note: The newspapers two days after the above bulletin published an Associated Press cable dispatch from Cape Town that Arthur Wadleigh, representative of the London Ivory Company, had been taken to an insane asylum, a victim of morphine. Has science a new riddle to solve? Are Gray and Wadleigh, eight thousand miles apart, actually one entity in two bodies?
WINTER came and covered it with a white, all-concealing blanket of snow; spring came, the snow melted, and innumerable tiny shoots of green lifted up their heads and sparkled, each with its drops of living dew; then came summer and a rank brier, sown by the hand of the wind, broke from the unholy sod and flaunted its blood-red corolla unabashed.

He came at night and rooted up the stalk, trampling upon it as if it were a conscious thing, for to his guilty soul the brier seemed to shout to Heaven, telling of what was hidden at its roots. The blood-red juice of the crushed weed stained his hands and his clothing, as that night seven months before his hands and clothing had been stained with the blood of a murdered man.

Three weeks later a second brier, like a red tongue protruding from the earth, flaunted its head where the first had stood. Again he came at night and uprooted the weed.

"Curse it!" he cried. "They will see it here and come and dig it up, and find the thing at its roots. Fool, that I didn't bury him deeper!" With a heel of iron he ground the offending weed into the earth, then hurried away.

No third brier lifted up its blood-red corolla, and, as if blighted by the step of the murderer, the grass about the spot withered and died, and the guilty man hugged himself with joy. No one would now search there; no child would visit the place for flowers; no old woman would dig the soil for healing herbs.

But suddenly the grassless and flowerless earth began to babble things.

A lad passed that way one evening, and while delaying a moment to latch his shoestring he heard a whispering which seemed to come from the solid ground beneath his feet. Greatly startled, he looked about, and when the whispering was repeated he did not pause to snatch up his pail of berries, but fled headlong.
Reaching the lights of the village and the security of his home, the lad was ashamed of his hurried flight and said nothing of his adventure. But the following afternoon he persuaded a companion to visit the locality where the two blood-red briers had been up-rooted and bend down a moment and listen.

Again came that uncanny whispering from the solid ground, and the second boy fled headlong.

“What did you hear?” questioned the first lad.

“A kind of whispering! The place is haunted!”

“What did the whispering say?”

“I couldn’t make out, but it was something awful. Let’s run!”

The boys turned and fled; but the following day they brought a third companion to authenticate the mysterious sounds which they had heard, and when this lad returned to the village he told everywhere how he had heard a human voice whispering from the ground over in a far corner of Peter Bates’ pasture.

He was called a frightened booby and told to go home to his mother, but he persisted in his tale until a couple of hangers-on at the village saloon went out to learn what foundation it had. A half hour later this pair rushed into the bar and called for liquor.

When they had swallowed a glass each of spirits, they told their story. Directed by the lad, they had gone to the far southeast corner of Peter Bates’ pasture, and, bending down, had listened. Suddenly there had come a whispering from the solid ground.

“A whispering!” gasped the assembled idlers.

“Yes, a sort of whispering sound.”

“What did it say?”

“We couldn’t make out just what it said, word for word, but it said something about it being murdered, and wanted us to let it out of there.”

As the two men, who were rather white about the lips, turned and called for more drink a form burst upon the assembly. It was that of a man about fifty years of age, who, in spite of his rounded shoulders and slouching carriage, was a giant in stature. He was hatless, his gray hair was in great disorder, while his face was black with passion. The man was Peter Bates.

“What is this I hear about there being a whispering in my pasture?” he cried. “Speak, you pack of meddling fools, or I’ll choke the truth out of you!”

Encouraged by numbers and warmed by the liquor he had drunk, the bolder of the two talebearers answered:

“Go listen for yourself, Peter Bates, if you can’t believe what an honest man is saying. Go listen for yourself where the boys showed us, back of your pasture by that piece of soapstone rock.”

At these words the face of Peter Bates went ashen and he fell back as before a well-directed physical blow. In a moment, however, he had recovered his courage, if not his temper.

“You’re a pack of fools!” he cried. “A pack of meddling fools! It’s a scheme you have on foot to run down the value of my pasture, so that you can get it cheap. If I catch another one of you crossing my land, I’ll turn my bulls on you and let them gore you to death! So have a care, have a care!”

Shaking his clenched hands at the assembled idlers, he hurried out, hatless, into the twilight.

A voice in the assembly spoke up: “There’s something gone wrong with Peter Bates. Ever since Wilson disappeared last autumn and Bates got the mill he hasn’t been the same man.”

“Not the same man!” echoed a dozen voices. “He’s changed entirely.”

It was midnight when a form stole from the house that stood on the northwest corner of Bates’ pasture and cautiously made its way toward the spot
where the two rank briers had lately flaunted their blood-red blossoms. It was the form of a powerful, round-shouldered man about fifty years of age, his face distorted with hate and fear and horror. Peter Bates had not slept that night; he had not gone to bed at all. What if there should be a whispering in his pasture just by the piece of soapstone! Merciful heavens, what if there should be!

From the house to the locality where the whispering had been heard was about a quarter of a mile, and soon the murderer had covered that distance. Like one who sees on a lonely road by night some dreadful shape, and is drawn on and on to touch that shape and know the worst, so Peter Bates was drawn to the spot where he had buried the body of his murdered partner.

A whispering from the ground! Could it be? Bah! Those who had rumored it were fools, and he a greater fool for accrediting them.

He came to the grave, where he paused and bent down and listened for the murdered blood to cry from the ground. Then something snapped in his head, as out of the solid ground came the whisper:

_I am the murdered Henry Wilson. In God’s name let me out of here!_

As a man led forth to be hanged sinks at the foot of the scaffold, so Peter Bates sank upon the earth, and the clammy fingers of horror began to mold his features as if they were plastic, yellow clay. He whispered back to the voice; then, shrieking, beat the grave sod with his vein-knotted hands, or babbled in the utter weakness of conscience-stricken horror.

Suddenly from the concealment of the trees and rock a score of silent forms gathered and closed around him, so that when again he looked up he was encircled by a wall of stern-faced men. He leaped to his feet, and would have cried out in his amazement and dread had not one member of that ghostly circle lifted his hand and commanded. “Hush!”

For a moment a deep stillness prevailed; then again was heard that whispering from the ground: I am the murdered Henry Wilson. In God’s name let me out of here!

Peter Bates sank to his knees. “Don’t you hear it?” he cried. “It is blood, crying from the ground! Blood! Blood! Blood! Oh, God, are you all spirits, too! Am I gone mad? He said I would. He cursed me as he lay dying there with my knife in his heart, and swore that I should go mad.”

The wretched man lifted his clasped hands in appeal; there was a swift motion upon the part of one member of the circle, and a pair of handcuffs linked the murderer’s wrists.

“Now bring the spades and set to work,” said an authoritative voice.

Five minutes later, from the spot where the two blood-red briers had been uprooted, there was lifted the skeleton of a man. When Peter Bates saw the grisly thing he turned away his face, and when they came to him and asked if he chose to confess that he had murdered his former partner they found the living man less than the dead. His reason was gone.

“I am a detective,” said the authoritative voice, “and some weeks since, coming unseen upon the prisoner while he was rooting a flower from this particular spot, it flashed over me that he had killed his missing partner and buried the body here. The following night I revisited the scene, and—— Hand me a spade.”

In a few minutes the detective had unearthed a small, oblong box and some electric paraphernalia from beside the soapstone. This he held up for inspection.

“Gentlemen, here is the ghost—a phonograph!”
It was a strange series of events that brought us together in that Godforsaken hole. Men drift around through the tropics like lost souls in hell. It isn’t considered good ethics to question them closely, either. A lot of them went out there to escape justice; some joined the army, and when their enlistments were out decided to remain; others had been disappointed in love and professed to be woman-haters. But, as a general rule, they were good fellows. Now and then we would run across a scoundrel. It did not take us long to find it out. A few nights at the club, a stretch of work, some tense moment; then, if the poor dog failed, it ended the affair. A few days later a tramp schooner would melt into the distance carrying a dejected being to another port. It was not always so easy to rid the place of their presences. There was Braxton, for instance; but that’s another story.

Kennedy has always possessed a flair for the mysterious, the unseen. In addition, he was a good talker. When you dwell on the fact that we had been marooned in Mindanao over six months, with no possible hope of returning, and had been hard put to find something which might amuse us, you will realize what Kennedy stood for. Not that he was such a jovial fellow; no one was less so. The charm of his personality lay rather in his comfortableness, his manner of repose. We watched each other closely, we four, and I am sure if one of us had proven a coward it would have been instantly discovered.

It wasn’t an easy matter to try and sleep when a thousand Moros or so beat their fiendish drums in religious ecstasy through the long, hot hours of darkness. Nor was it a simple matter to greet a column from the interior bearing the remains of some American slashed and shot to pieces. When these and a few other trifling matters are taken into consideration it will be seen how comparatively easy it might have been for us to drift into a laxity of spirit and will.
Kennedy kept us interested from the very first day. As it happened, he was the head of an engineering party that had built some sort of a plant the year before. He was waiting for orders from Manila. He expected to have another proposition on his hands by the end of that summer. We didn’t know much about his past life. From his conversation I gathered that he had been educated decently, no more, and was a reader of wide range, with a tremendous store of experiences. He had delved into Eastern thought and European philosophy, holding to his original opinions in spite of argument and despising dogmatic conceptions of any kind. It is a bit dangerous to be an original thinker when you are banished to a distant part of the world. I have seen them crumple like burned paper in the silence, those thinkers. But Kennedy had a level head.

“You’ve got to watch yourself,” he would say. “Out here it’s blamed easy to concentrate on what you’ve lost. I tried it for a while. The chief looked me over, and said that if I didn’t let the booze alone and stop getting off into a corner by myself he’d send me home as a failure. That set my thoughts in motion. I didn’t repeat. A man’s philosophy out here has got to be objective, not subjective. What he needs is plenty to do and little to think about. Don’t you remember Carson? He came here when I did. There wasn’t a finer fellow in the world. He once told me that he expected to make a fortune and return to the States. He didn’t say anything more, but we learned later that he was engaged. I found her picture in his room afterward. Then we had to wait for some machinery. That came all O. K., but it proved the usual dead stuff. We had to order again. By that time Carson began to worry. We didn’t like to say anything. We kept a close watch. Months passed. We realized that unless something happened the game was up. It did. Fred Birney found him sitting in front of his mirror with a kind of silly smile on his face, dead! The poor fellow had shot himself. We buried him quietly, but it made us all do too much thinking.

“There are three things you have to do in the Islands: forget that women ever lived, leave drink alone, and never worry.”

Kennedy lit a comfortable cigar and tipped his chair back against the railing, putting one leg over the arm and the other on a chair. He loved to sprawl. It was a particularly hot night. We could hear the continuous racket of the drums far off along the bay and now and then the odd yell of a native engaged in some peculiar work. There wasn’t another white man in the district. We were too busy listening to Kennedy to think much of this, however.

“I often wonder,” he continued, “why fear doesn’t get the best of us in the end. I haven’t met many fellows out here who experienced the emotion and got away alive. That was what was the matter with Carson. He was afraid. You couldn’t have put your hand on the exact cause of it all, yet he killed himself because of fear. The fact is, a white man never was intended for such a beastly life. It isn’t human. The slightest thing will set your nerves on edge if you are not careful. Now take the case of Carson, for instance. I’ll bet that none of you ever imagined that he shot himself because of something that happened in Manila months before he came here. You remember how we used to wonder at his dread of the tarantula. I poked fun at him until I learned the reason; then I kept still. But in a civilized community I am sure he would never have allowed the thing to prey upon him. It was in the night that he suffered most. He had his bed surrounded by three thick-
nesses of netting, and when he retired he would tuck the whole business carefully under a mattress so that there wasn’t a chance for a mosquito, as he claimed, to enter. I knew better. He lived in terror of the tarantula. He had heard of how they crawled into houses sometimes and walked over one in the darkness. I’ll admit it is enough to make one’s flesh creep. Well, it made him tremble. Near the end he hardly dared to sleep at all. I could have killed Birney when he put that dead one in his bed as a practical joke. Birney was sorry enough later on, but it didn’t do Carson any good.

“It was funny how I happened to be the one who learned the truth from Carson’s own lips before he died. One night—it must have been around twelve or one—I heard some one rap on my door. I was reading, and when I answered it there stood Carson, in the yellow light streaming over my shoulders, looking for all the world like a ghost. He was wearing a peculiar sort of kimono that he affected, and I was struck by the fact that he had only one slipper on. I begged him to come in. He took a cigarette, but it was some time before he spoke. ‘I suppose you think I’m a fool,’ he remarked after a while. I hastened to disagree with him. ‘Oh, don’t do that; my nerves are on edge and I can’t sleep.’ And before he left me I had listened to one of the strangest stories I have ever heard. I didn’t say anything to you fellows. He didn’t ask to have the thing kept secret, but I thought it best. Fellows like Birney never understand.

“It seems that when he first came to the Islands he was stationed for a time in Manila. He had taken rather a fancy to the old city and loved to ramble around the Luneta and through the Tondo. The sight of the natives in their ridiculous costumes amused him. It wasn’t long, however, before he began to grow a little tired of the life. It was this that led him into strange portions of the city and on long walks through the country when he ought to have been at work. He was a curiously imaginative chap, building dreams out of a mere desire. I guess that was why he thought he could get rich by coming down here. He did manage to keep away from the women, and he didn’t carouse much. Finally he got keenly interested in an old monastery that faced on the Calle Palacio in the Intramuros. You know where it is. The place is about three hundred years old and the walls look as though they were built to withstand a ten-month siege. Carson said that he heard of a book they kept there, an old hand-painted Bible which had been brought over by Magellan. It was kept chained to a table. It was already centuries old when it first came over, so the story went. The room where they kept the thing was locked all the time. Carson said that a strange tale had grown up around it. Any one who dared to spend a night studying it never came out alive. Many students had died in this way, and it was deemed best by the prior to lock the doors and make it impossible for any one else to run the risk.

“Carson, once his interest was fully aroused, refused to listen to any objections. In the end he convinced the authorities that they could let him examine the book without danger. The prior decided not to let him go alone, and when Carson called as per agreement he gave the keys to a trusty monk and ordered him to stay in the room during the time Carson was there. On the way down through the musty corridors they ran over the history of the book. The peculiar part about it all was that when some one read the faded print for a few hours alone they were found dead, their eyes popped out as though in abject fear, the mouth open
and the hands gripping the table like vises. About fifty years previous to Carson's visit some stranger had obtained permission to spend a night in the room, and had astounded the monks by walking out of the place the next morning as quiet and contained as when he entered it. He showed them the book lying wide open on the stand with a soft, furred thing that he had crushed. He said that while he was reading a thin thread, alive, had curled around over the cover clasps, followed by two eyes that peeped over the great back of the book. At first he could not stir, but watched it, fascinated. His very heart seemed to stop beating. When the blurred eyes neared his own he had sprung to his feet from a sudden overflowing of courage and had closed the heavy volume with a slam. A colorless liquid had forced its way out through the leaves, and for a few moments his excited senses realized that a single tendon waved tremulously forward and backward and then stopped. An odor as of almonds hung upon the suffocating atmosphere, and he rushed for the little door in order to let in some fresh air. When the morning dawned he smilingly told the monks that there was no more danger. After eating a hearty breakfast he left them. He had not been seen again.

"The monk who accompanied Carson told the story for perhaps the thousandth time as they opened doors and tramped through seemingly endless corridors on their way to the cell where the book was kept. Carson distinctly remembered the monk telling him that he didn't believe there was the least bit of danger. In fact, he confessed that he based his conclusions on the death of the animal or specter that had haunted those ominous pages. He smiled in a superior sort of way when Carson warned him not to place any faith in that ancient tale. 'If people died then,' he said, as they neared the top of a narrow staircase that led into the very bowels of the earth, 'they can die now.' Carson laughed as he drove this warning home. Somehow the echo of his laugh seemed to collect more echoes as it sung back of him down an empty, dark corridor. He turned his head over his shoulder after hesitating, then cursed himself for giving in to his vivid imagination. It was at this moment that the monk pulled a large key from his pocket and inserted it within a small doorway that faced directly upon the base of the spiral staircase down which they had come. After some trouble it yielded to his efforts, and he entered, followed by Carson. One match spluttered and went out in the darkness. It had been years since the place was opened, and for some time it was difficult to coax a candle into lighting. The shadows formed weird arabesques on the wall, and, as the monk moved across the floor, his shape loomed high above them and seemed to bend strangely at the juncture of the wall and ceiling. Huge cobwebs dangled in their eyes. Carson felt a thin piece of gossamer float before him, and jumped as a tiny spider ran hurriedly over his lips. He brushed it off.

"It was deathly still. For the first time he saw through the half light an oaken table and on it the heavy book chained, as was the custom in older days. The links had rusted, and he snapped one of them between his nimble fingers. He looked closely at the yellow pages, marveling at the wondrous art work of the master who had illuminated them. Great capital letters stretched down the margins in faded greens, yellows, and reds. It was well nigh impossible to read the sentences. He had brought a huge magnifying glass with him. He applied it, and was surprised to see how the words leaped at him as though greedy to be deciphered after a half century of re-
tirement. In spite of the age Carson saw that the strong lines plainly held their shape. With the aid of his glass he might easily read what he desired. Raising his head, he spoke to the monk. His eye happened to catch sight of an ancient cupboard in one end of the cell. Leaving the monk to examine the Bible, he stepped over the musty floor and turned the knob. He found nothing within except a very strange odor. It might have been that of almonds. He wasn’t sure. Just then he heard a cry which he admitted to me had clung to him ever since. It wasn’t so much a cry as a sort of long-drawn-out sob that filled every crook and cranny of the tiny room. He swung about on his heels, and saw the monk falling to the floor, dragging the table over on his head. The candle went out as it followed the book in the downward crash. Carson was left in absolute, impenetrable darkness.

“As he said, it took him about a minute to collect his senses. That, as you know, is a mighty long time under such circumstances. He didn’t hear another sound, but his nostrils began to fill with that nasty odor. It seemed to madden him. He wasted twenty matches trying to light one of them. When he had found the candle and raised it above his head so as to obtain a better view of the cell he saw that the monk lay perfectly still. A corner of the table had crashed through his skull. A moving thread curled back into the leaves of the book lying at his feet. Carson saw this with startled eyes. Letting out a silly shriek, he rushed out of the door and up the winding stairs, down the long corridors, and out into the sunlight. There is something about the sun which is friendly and warm, and in a little while he was feeling better. The prior came running out into the garden, followed by the other monks. They heard the story with absolute silence. Carson spoke, as he described it to me, through chattering lips. His voice sounded far off. He waved his hands foolishly, and then collapsed.

“That was all there was to the adventure. He kept still about it because the good old prior begged him to. It would have been disbeliefed anyhow. The story was given out that a heavy table killed the monk. Indeed, Carson was sure that this was what really had killed him. He was taken into a quiet room and nursed back to reason in a very short while. He really possessed a fairly level head. It isn’t surprising that he attributed the whole thing later on to some queer delusion. His fear of the tarantula, however, grew out of this. He couldn’t have sworn that that was the thing which had haunted the book. It was too large, anyhow. It was very much like one. This much he knew absolutely.”

Kennedy lit another cigar and made himself a bit more comfortable. I was conscious of not having moved during the whole recital of the story. My cramped muscles ached, and I moved a sleeping leg with some difficulty. The noise of the ceaseless drums beat on my ears more aggravatingly than ever. We waited silently. He went on:

“Well, there isn’t much more to tell. Birney came to me the following morning with white lips and begged me to go to Carson’s room. I had parted from him the night before feeling that I had effectually quieted his aroused nerves. Birney’s frightened countenance left me cold. I opened Carson’s door, and found him sitting before the mirror, clasping in one hand a large revolver. I saw what happened in a moment. While Birney ran for the servants I looked down at the smile which had frozen itself into the tight lips of the dead man. I have always been a close observer. At this time I was especially so. I couldn’t for
the life of me figure out why Carson had killed himself so suddenly. Then, as I heard the steps of the servants down the hallway, my eye caught the end of a red tie protruding from a book lying on the table. I glanced back at Carson's body, and then in the mirror for some unknown reason. I saw the book clearly. The glass was cheap and the red tie seemed to waver and fade in the distance. After they took him away I sat down in the chair myself. Turning my head slightly to the left, I could catch just a glimpse of the tie. I was startled by it. To my muddled mind it seemed to be a monstrous spider. In a flash the whole thing came over my mind. Poor Carson had returned to his room thinking that he would get a good night's sleep. He lit the light; this was still burning, by the way, and sat down before his dresser for a second. Perhaps he was looking for something in one of the drawers. He found it, I have no doubt. When the cold steel touched his sensitive fingers he must have started back and gained his first glimpse of the tie resting in the book. I tried the same trick. I knew which drawer the revolver was kept in, as I had often seen him take it out before we went beyond the compound on a business trip. That was when the order first went into effect that no white man could go out without a revolver or rifle.

"Still sitting in the chair, I lifted my hand, as though I were holding the weapon, and pointed it over my shoulder. The reflection in the glass was so indistinct and blurred that it was difficult to aim at the book. It was clear enough to me then. He had meant to shoot what he thought was a tarantula and had by mistake killed himself. In fact the bullet had passed through the back part of his head. I have never said anything about this before because of Birney. He was sorry enough afterward, as it was, without my adding the true story of how Carson died. I have never felt that I had a right to until I learned of Birney's death the other day."

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**STRAY THOUGHTS**

DOCTOR JOHNSON says: "The beginning and end of ghost stories is this—all argument is against them, all belief for them."

Alluding to this remark of Doctor Johnson's, Byron writes:

I merely mean to say what Johnson said.

That in the course of some six thousand years,

All nations have believed that from the dead

A visitant at intervals appears.

And, what is stranger yet on this strange head

Is that, whatever bars the reason rears

'Gainst such belief, there's something stronger yet

In its behalf, let those deny who will.

Schopenhauer says: "Belief in ghosts is born with man; it is found in all ages and in all countries, and no one is quite free from it."

Voltaire says: "It is not at all an uncommon thing for a person, under a strong emotion, to see that which is not."

Lafcadio Hearn says: "Probably the fear of ghosts, as well as the belief in, had its beginning in dreams."

Andrew Lang says: "Apparently there is some material groundwork for a belief which savages share with Fellows of the Royal Society."
SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Doctor Merrill, a brilliant American physician, is held in Germany at the outbreak of hostilities, but finally secures permission to return to America through Belgium. He is well liked by the Germans, but secretly hates them for ravishing little nations. In Brussels he meets a mysterious and beautiful girl who is pursued by the German secret service. She is a spy. He saves her at great risk to his own safety by calling her his wife. He is summoned away to operate upon the Kaiser, and takes her with him to protect her. After the operation they learn that the authorities are still looking for her, and, in order to escape, he drugs a German general and his chauffeur. Disguising her as the chauffeur and himself as the general, they take the automobile and start their perilous journey. Hairbreadth escapes follow. They leave the machine by the roadway, go across fields under fire, swim the Yser Canal, and finally reach the French lines. After numerous delays they are taken before the Belgian king. He questions them and takes them to Joffre. A bomb is mysteriously exploded, nearly killing the great French general. Merrill hears that the girl, Rose d'Almeyrac, is accused of being the cause of the explosion as well as being a famous German spy, Strasbourg Rose. She disappears. Merrill is taken to Paris, there interrogated, and finally set free. He still believes in her innocence, however. He meets her in a restaurant mysteriously, but she does not speak to him. He is sent to England. On the way the ship is torpedoed. He takes the clothing of an American who is killed and disguised in this fashion he returns to France to find Rose and prove her innocence. Many adventures follow. Among them all he locates her, and after observing many curious things secures an interview with her. There he learns that she is a real French patriot, and is merely doing all this to keep in touch with certain German spies in Paris. They declare their love for each other, and she introduces him to the head of the French secret service. He is selected to accompany her on a perilous trip into the German lines as her chauffeur. They reach a castle in a forest, learn that a trusted ally has been mortally
wounded. At this moment they are surrounded by German soldiers. They almost escape, but are finally captured. In the skirmish, Rose is shot through the lungs, and Merrill is led away, believing that she is dead.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN Merrill recovered consciousness he found himself lying on the floor of the big dining hall. The room was lighted by the candle that he had lit on first coming there. His head ached from the blow he had received, but otherwise he seemed to be all right.

He heard the voices of German soldiers, and as he slightly opened his eyes he could see them within a few feet of him. There were four of them, and as his wits fully returned he heard what they said:

"The Herr von Sturm is in a fine rage."

"He wanted to get them alive. Before the war he was going to marry her. She was his cousin."

"What did he take them out for?"

asked one of the men.

"To bury them."

"That’s a waste of time. Why not let them rot up there?"

"This is his place."

"Oh, that’s different. Why didn’t he make one job of it and throw this fellow into the same hole?"

"He isn’t dead yet."

"Ach! What’s the difference? He will be soon enough. A traitor!"

A terrible fury took possession of Merrill. He might have saved her. Now she was dead. These brutes! These horrible brutes!

Suddenly a passionate longing to avenge her seized him. It was of no consequence if he were killed in trying. He opened his eyes and took more particular note of the situation. He was lying somewhat in the shadow, and the men were paying no attention to him. He moved his arms and legs slightly; just enough to give him the assurance that he was sound. His left shoulder was a little sore, but evidently the wound was very slight. Cautiously he felt on the outside of his coat pocket; the automatic was there. No doubt the other automatic was in the other pocket.

Very slowly he put his hand into the pocket and took out the automatic and transferred it to his right hand. Being the one that was in the left pocket, it had not been used. He softly pulled the slide, and his weapon was ready.

With the greatest care and with his eyes fixed on the men to see when they should look around at him, he rose to a kneeling position, and then to a position with one foot on the floor. He took careful aim and fired.

His man uttered a cry and sank slowly down; the others, in stupid wonder, turned toward Merrill. Two more of his bullets had accomplished their deadly mission before the fourth man turned to run. Apparently the surprise was so complete that none of them had thought of their own weapons. The fleeing man, shot in the back, stumbled and fell.

Merrill listened at the door near which they had been standing, and, hearing no sound, gathered up the rifles and retired with them to the other end of the dining hall, and, opening the door by which he and Rose had entered, stood back in the dark hallway and waited.

He felt of the lock of one of the soldiers’ rifles, and knew in a moment that the mechanism was one he understood. The other three he disposed against the wall. He meant to use the rifles first and afterward the pistols, if the need came. He was not as expert with the rifle, but told himself grimly that it was deadlier; and at that distance he had little doubt of hitting his mark.
He knew now that he could shoot a man with a steady hand.

He set himself to wait. One of the men uttered a groan. Merrill, who never swore, now ground out a savage curse and promised to find a way of keeping them still if one of them made another sound. At that moment he fully understood what a murderous rage was.

The candle was beginning to sink and flare up in its death struggles, filling the great room with mysterious shadows, and he was wondering if, after all, the light would go out and rob him of his chance, when the door opened and Friedrich strode in.

"Bring that fellow out!" he commanded, and then uttered a loud cry of pain and terror as a bullet from Merrill's rifle struck him.

He reeled back through the open door. The candle flared up and went out. Merrill heard the door slam. There was a hurried scurrying from the other side, and then silence.

Merrill, reckless of any danger, ran the length of the room and opened the door and listened. He heard the sound of moving men, as if carrying a burden, and guessed that there had been soldiers behind the captain and that they were taking him out of the house.

He had left the rifle behind him, but snatched one of the pistols from his pocket and felt of the mechanism. It was new to him, and he couldn't make it work. He lost time in tossing aside the German pistols and finding one of his own, but he made that ready, and started in pursuit. In the darkness he lost his way, so that by the time he came to the open great door of the château the men supporting their officer had reached a big automobile that stood in the courtyard.

He fired into the group. He heard a man cry out and drop. The others clambered hastily into the car, and as he fired again the car started and flew through the big gates. He ran after the car, firing again in his passion. He tried to shoot again, although he knew it was useless, since the car was out of reach. However, he had emptied the magazine, and while he still ran, feeling for the other automatic, his reason asserted itself. He stopped and turned back.

He walked slowly, his fury spent. He was not even sure that he had mortally wounded Friedrich. He felt utterly alone in the world; he had nothing to live for. He moved along mechanically and entered the house. Grief, paralyzing grief, was all he could feel. He sat down on the wide stone steps before the door and buried his face in his hands. Rose was dead. He could think of nothing else at the moment. He sat there as if neither time nor place mattered.

After a long time he rose and went into the house and groped his way back to the dining hall. The groans of the men lying there he scarcely heard and left entirely unheeded. He found his way to the smaller stairway and mounted it. If he had tried to recall exactly how to go he might have failed; as it was, he reached the open space where the stairway led down from the corridor, and then had no difficulty in reaching the door of Rose's room. He remembered that it was bolted on the inside and that the door was a solid one, but he turned his back and kicked at one of the panels until he had broken it. Then he reached in and pushed aside the bolt.

He remembered just where she had pressed to start the wardrobe, and after a little while he had found the spot and had pushed the heavy piece of furniture aside. When he reached the little room he stood on the threshold. It was so black he could see nothing, but the picture of what he had last seen there was clear and distinct.

"Oh, my darling!" he moaned.
He remembered he had matches in his pocket and lighted one. Perhaps he had had a secret, uniformed hope in his heart in going there. If he had had it perished, for the room was empty. She was gone and Pierre was gone, and both now probably occupied the same grave.

He went over and knelt where she had lain on the floor. The match burned his fingers, and he let it fall and lighted another. There was a red spot on the floor, still damp with her blood. He took his handkerchief from his pocket and mopped up the dampness. It was the only memento he had of her.

He let the second match burn out and drop from his fingers as he still knelt there. Then, as if this much of contact with her pure spirit had recalled him to the realities of life, he thought of what she would have had him do. He had the important information in his pocket; he must get it to Paris. It might be that by this time they would have been warned and would stop him at the German lines. Well, that was a chance he must take. At least he would make the attempt.

He retraced his steps down to the dining hall, and after many failures made his way out of the château as he had come in. He remembered she had said to go due south. Which way was due south? He looked up at the sky, in which the stars had now appeared, and found Ursa Major and from that the North Star. He had his course, but he had yet to find the path by which they had come out of the forest. He always marveled how he accomplished it, but he did, and was presently picking his way along the path. He strayed from the path once or twice, but always found it again, and in the end came out upon the road where he had left the car.

Perhaps if he had thought more carefully he would never have been able to find his way, but he drove mechanically, seeming subconsciously to remember the twists and turns, and at last he reached the inner German lines.

He had some difficulty in getting through, for they were curious about his companion, but he explained that she had been left behind on important business, and as it was known that she was in the intelligence department he was allowed to pass.

When he reached the French lines he said frankly that his companion had been suspected and killed by the boches. He asked for some one to go with him and guide him to Paris, as he had important information. He was doubtless looked upon with suspicion, so he was taken to headquarters, and finally sent on to Paris with two soldiers and a lieutenant in the tonneau.

It was daylight when they entered Paris. They went at once to the Cité, though it seemed unlikely that Colonel le Brun would be in his office at that hour. He was, however, and Merrill was taken to him at once. He had been there all night, it seemed, working. And now he was waiting for the return of Rose and Merrill.

A flicker of trouble showed in his keen eyes as Merrill entered without Rose, but he waited for Merrill to speak. Merrill, however, only drew out the paper he had brought and laid it on the colonel's desk. His face was grim and hard, and showed such lines of suffering that the colonel held the paper in his hand while he studied him.

"And Mademoiselle d'Almeayrac?" he asked hesitatingly.

"Dead and buried, Monsieur le Colonel. Shot in the back by her cousin, who refused to let me save her."

There was something so unutterably tragic in this brief response and in the set face of the speaker that Colonel le Brun covered his face with his hand for a moment before he could speak. When he did it was in a tone infinitely tender.
“Monsieur,” he said, “can you bring yourself to tell me?”
“I do not know how I ever shall,” Merrill answered.

The colonel, moved out of all composure, sprang up and brought forward a chair, into which he forced Merrill to sit. And then, without preface, Merrill recounted the whole story, even going into detail.

“God rest her soul!” the colonel said reverently, standing up, tears in his eyes. “As for you, monsieur, I can say nothing to you that will express my sympathy and my sorrow. She gave her all for France.”

“Not all, Monsieur le Colonel,” Merrill said, dry-eyed and stern. “I am still here, and I am hers to give. She would have me give my all to France also, and I am ready.”

“But, monsieur—”

“Pardon me if I interrupt, but while there is one German brute alive I am dedicated to kill. You will enable me to join the Foreign Legion. That is all I ask of you.”

“But, monsieur,” he said after a short pause, “you can serve us so much better if you will use your gifts in the hospitals.”

“That may be, but I think I am entitled to choose, and I choose to carry a rifle and go where there are Germans to kill. I speak plainly, monsieur, but I tell you I have forgotten all I know of surgery. I want to forget it. I could never use an instrument without remembering that I was not permitted to save Rose d’Almevraac, and then my heart would cease to beat and my eyes to see and my hand to hold. You will help me?”

“At least you will go home and rest. Then come back to me. You shall be admitted whenever you come.”

Merrill rose. “I will go home and rest—perhaps. I will return again, as you say; but, Monsieur le Colonel, I shall come only to ask of you what you cannot refuse—to get me into the Foreign Legion. I have no need to think it over; my mind is set on that one thing, unless you can point out to me how in any other way I can be more deadly to the boches. Pardon me if I say you owe me this.”

The colonel sighed. He could understand the soul of the man who stood before him so cold and implacable.

“Very well, monsieur; it shall be as you wish. I will attend to everything.”

Merrill bowed, and left without another word.

CHAPTER XVIII.

For the first few months after joining the Foreign Legion, Merrill was moody and silent, but as he had learned his duties as a soldier quickly and well he had no trouble. Moreover, he had one characteristic that soon raised him high in the estimation of his officers and fellows—he was always ready for any dangerous duty, was always in the forefront of any battle. They were all a dare-devil lot in the Legion, but they all agreed that for cold ferocity in fighting they had never seen Merrill’s equal, and as his strength and swiftness of movement were in proportion to his ferocity he soon became a notable person.

He had enlisted under his own name, for since there was no longer any reason why he should masquerade he had, with the assistance of Colonel le Brun, established his identity and settled the affairs of poor Richard Lowell.

As the months went by his moodiness fell from him, for it was not in human nature that he should remain always in a state of savage fury; but his grief was unassuaged, and if he became gentle and kindly in his manner there was always a certain aloofness in his life with his fellows, and this they respected because they respected him.
One decoration after another came to him, until it seemed as if he had won all that could be given him. Occasionally he was wounded, but never so severely that he was out of the ranks for a long time.

When the United States finally declared war, and began to send her soldiers over, he was transferred to that army with many other Americans in the Legion.

It was soon discovered that he was an exceedingly competent soldier, and was quickly raised in rank until, in the summer of 1918, he was a captain, fighting at the head of his company when the Germans were driven back from the Marne. He was indifferent to promotion or decorations, but it was found that he was absolutely to be relied on to carry out any order given him, and that he had the initiative and the soldierly knowledge necessary for any occasion. And his men adored him. A colonelcy came to him, and with his regiment he was transferred south to the region of the Heights of the Meuse.

He had never asked for leave, and had never accepted it when it was offered; but a little while after he was transferred south he was sent on a mission to Paris because of his knowledge of French.

"I beg your pardon, general," said he when he had received his instructions, "but may I ask you a question?"

"Certainly, colonel."

"It is rumored that an advance is in preparation. Can you tell me if it is correct?"

"Yes."

"I hope I shall be back in time to participate, sir."

The general smiled. "You'd rather fight than eat, wouldn't you?"

"I would rather kill a German than do anything else; that is why I am in the army," Merrill answered in a cold, even tone.

"Well," said the general, "you have the reputation of being more than fairly successful at it, Colonel Merrill. You will be back in time for the advance."

"That man," said the general to one of his staff as Merrill went out, "has a devil in him. Did you see those cold blue eyes of his when he spoke of killing Germans? Just the same, he's as good an officer as if he'd been raised at West Point."

Merrill was not long in doing what he had to do, but it was necessary for him to wait for two or maybe three days.

One night he was sitting at a table in a café on the Boulevard des Italiens when a small, nondescript sort of man came and sat at the same table. He looked at him casually, and was struck by something familiar in his face, but looked away instantly with his usual indifference.

"You do not remember me, Colonel Merrill," the man said softly in French. Merrill looked at him steadily for a moment. "Yes, you are Monsieur Laroque. I hope everything is well with the chief."

"Excellently well, monsieur," was the answer, still in an almost inaudible tone. "He asked me to come to you and ask you to go to him."

"You knew I was here, then?"

"As soon as you came. And indeed, Monsieur le Colonel, we have watched you with pride and interest, if you will permit me to say so."

Merrill shrugged his shoulders. "What does the chief want of me?"

Laroque ventured on the most deprecating smile Merrill thought he had ever seen. "You ask me that, monsieur?" he queried.

Merrill answered with a smile that was exceedingly rare on his face in these days. "Yes, I should have known better. If you knew, and of course you do, you would not tell me. When
does he wish to see me? My time is my own."

"He would see you now if you would go to him."

Merrill paid his score at once, and left the café. He was too sane a man to bear any ill will toward Le Brun because of the part he had played in sending Rose to her death, but their paths had not crossed during the years he had been in the army, so that he had not met him since he had joined the Legion.

He was taken to him without delay, proving to Merrill that the colonel had expected him. The two men shook hands like tried friends before they sat down.

"You would not have come near me if I had not asked you," Le Brun said almost reproachfully.

"This is the first time I have been in Paris, excepting to pass through it. Besides, I know how busy you are."

"I sometimes have wondered if you had forgiven me."

"I didn't feel that I had anything to forgive. I felt so at the time, and, now that I understand what this struggle means, I realize fully that you were doing only your duty. It is fate that some one should suffer when duty is done."

"Are you sure, monsieur," asked Le Brun in an incidental sort of way, "that mademoiselle died that time?"

Merrill knew Le Brun too well to be deceived by the question; he knew it covered more than it seemed. "Why do you ask?" he demanded with a quickness that had something of fierceness in it.

"My friend, be calm."

"You have more than reason, monsieur; you know something. In the name of God, tell me!"

"She is alive and well, monsieur."

Merrill stared at him, his face going white. "You would not say that unless you were sure," he said huskily.

"I have it from one of my most reliable sources. Word came to me yesterday. She did not die. The wound was a bad one, but, thanks to her splendid constitution, she recovered completely, and is now as well as ever."

He went on, seeing that Merrill was like one stunned. He wished to give him time to recover himself. "She was carried off in the same car with Captain von Sturm. He risked her life, it is true, but it came out right in the end."

"Where is she?" Merrill asked.

"In Strasbourg. She has been hidden there, but kept a captive by her cousin."

"My God!" murmured Merrill, covering his face with his hands. "She is alive! She is alive!" The world was suddenly altered for him.

"My friend," said Colonel le Brun, "I cannot tell you what happiness it gives me to be able to give you this assurance."

"There is no doubt?"

"I believe there is no doubt whatever. Would you like to talk with the man who brought me the word?"

Merrill leaped to his feet. "Where is he? Let me talk with him. I do not doubt you, monsieur; you must understand that. But to talk with one—"

"Oh, where is he?"

Already Le Brun had touched a button, and, almost as Merrill ceased to speak, one of the silent, expressionless attendants, of whom there seemed so many in this center of secret intelligence, entered.

"Bring Saulnier here," Le Brun ordered.

A few minutes later a man who might have been a German, from his appearance, stood before Le Brun. "Saulnier," he said, "this is the gentleman of whom Mademoiselle d'Almeyrac spoke to you."

"She spoke of me? You saw her?"

"Yes, monsieur. If you are Monsieur Merrill."
"Yes, yes; I am he."

"She bade me find you, or, if I could not, to beg Monsieur le Colonel to do so, and to tell you that she waited for you; that she is quite well, if not quite happy."

"You know her?" demanded Merrill eagerly. "You could not be mistaken? You are sure?"

"I know her very well, monsieur. There is no mistake."

"Saulnier is an Alsatian and knew mademoiselle before the war," Le Brun assured Merrill.

Merrill laughed softly and caught Le Brun by the hand and wrung it. He hardly knew what he was doing. The cold, icy calm that had seemed part of his nature for so long had melted away. Le Brun, himself a man of iron, yet seemed to understand what was taking place within Merrill. He knew he was choked with joy, incapable for the moment of any thought but the miracle of Rose’s resurrection.

"Saulnier," he said, "tell Monsieur le Colonel the whole story. He is of us in a sense, so you need not fear being indiscreet."

Merrill sat down again and fixed his eager, hungry eyes on the man. "Yes, yes," he said, "tell me everything. Did she send me any other message?"

Saulnier smiled deprecatingly. "Alas, monsieur, the time was too short! I have told you all that passed between us. She spoke of nothing but you, monsieur."

"You must understand, monsieur," interposed Le Brun, "that Saulnier has been in Strasbourg on a dangerous mission."

"I might have learned long before that mademoiselle was there," Saulnier went on, "only she has been hidden very carefully. We have many sympathizers in Strasbourg, of course, and all of them know mademoiselle, but it was believed that she was dead until suspicion of something peculiar was aroused by the actions of Captain von Sturm, her cousin. He was watched then, and it was discovered that he had a prisoner in his country house, which is on the other side of the Rhine. He could go there easily because he is stationed in Strasbourg."

"Captain von Sturm," interjected Le Brun, "is favored for some reason and is not in active service."

"He was severely wounded," said Saulnier, "and is not strong; also it is known that many Alsatians are disaffected, and it is thought he has influence with them or that he can spy upon them. The Germans are very nervous just now."

Le Brun laughed. "They have discovered that the Americans are here, and that they know how to fight. You have taught them that, anyhow, my friend."

Merrill smiled in response, but his eyes were on Saulnier and his thoughts with Rose. "She is in this country house, you say?"

"Not now. Recently she has been brought to a house he has in the city, where his mother is. There she was seen and her identity discovered. In fact, one of the maids is a friend of ours. It was through her that I had the chance to speak to mademoiselle."

"You say she is quite well?" asked Merrill.

"Well in body, Monsieur le Colonel, but she is troubled in spirit because her cousin demands that she marry him. The maid told me that he persecutes her constantly."

"Well," growled Merrill, instantly alert, "even in Germany one cannot compel a woman to marry against her will, I suppose."

"That is true, monsieur, but it seems he threatens to hand her over to the military court if she refuses."

Merrill clenched his hands and started up. "The dog!" he cried.

"Oh," said Le Brun with a shrug,
“that is only what you call bluff. He is trying to frighten her, and Made-moiselle d’Almeuyrac is not so easily frightened. Do not disturb yourself, my friend.”

“You do not know him,” answered Merrill. “He is a true boche; he would stop at nothing.”

“But mademoiselle would not marry him for anything,” cried Saulnier. “She has refused over and over, and dares him to do his worst.”

“Yes, yes,” groaned Merrill. “She would die first; but I do not wish her to die. And I am helpless, helpless.” He began to pace the floor distractedly. Suddenly he stopped. “Perhaps I could get word to her?” he queried of Le Brun.

“I do not know. Saulnier cannot return. Perhaps I can get word through by way of Metz. What word would you send?”

“I would have her cajole him with hope. You see, monsieur, I may not go to her now; I am needed. But later I shall find a way. Tell her that if she can put him off she can count on me.”

“But, my dear friend,” protested Le Brun, who, seeing the firm jaw grimly set, and knowing the indomitable daring of the man, feared he would do something rash, “you must not think of trying to rescue her. You may depend on her to hold him off till the war is ended.”

“A year, perhaps,” cried Merrill. “Who knows how long they will hold out? I cannot wait so long, knowing the danger she is in.”

“But what can you do? No, no! Trust me to get word to her, and do not despair. Believe me, this war will not last as long as many think. As for getting into Strasbourg, Saulnier will tell you how difficult that is now. They are more strict than ever.”

“Where is the house she is in?” Mer-
but the time will come when I can see clearly. It may be that we shall take Strasbourg. Then I would wish to know how to reach mademoiselle without delay. It may be that I shall get there in some other way. Surely you will help me so far."

Le Brun shook his head and smiled. "If everybody had a will like yours, monsieur, the world would be a hard place to live in. Well, you shall know, since I can refuse you nothing. In the Grosse Metzig there is a beer hall or a brasserie, called the Golden Fleece. Tell him what to do, Saulnier."

"You turn to your left when you enter and take the table in the corner by the window. If you go in the afternoon, any day but Sunday, you will always find the same waiter, and two o'clock is the best time. When the waiter comes for your order pick up the tray and turn it over and rap lightly on the table three times. When he asks for your order say you want dark beer. Does monsieur speak German?"
"Better than French."
"He will ask you if you want the old or the new. You will say the old. When he brings you the beer you will say the old is always better than the new. If it is safe for him to speak to you he will say that it is not only in beer that the old is better. Then you may ask your question. Only you must be very, very careful."
"You see," cried Le Brun, "Saulnier speaks as if he expected you to go there."
"But, yes," said Saulnier, looking at Merrill, "I know that monsieur will go there. I hope he will come away also."

CHAPTER XIX.

MERRILL was far from being free from anxiety, but the great cloud of gloom and misery that had weighed upon him for so long had lifted, so that when he rejoined his regiment the difference in his manner was remarked by men and officers alike. He smiled often and jested. It was impossible for him to conceal the lightness of his spirits. He didn't see his way yet to going to Rose, but he counted on the word Le Brun would send her, and he felt once more as if there was a link between them, intangible as it was.

The advance that he had suspected of being in preparation took place soon after his return. St. Mihiel was assaulted and taken, and, although little was made of it in comparison with its importance, Merrill knew that it was only the first of those offensive steps that were to carry the American army on.

One day of frightful carnage Merrill was holding his men ready for action when word was brought to him to clear up a certain patch of woods which seemed fairly alive with machine guns that were harassing the main body of troops. They cleared the woods and held them, but Merrill and a small body advanced too far and were surrounded by a greatly superior force on the farther side. It was the tradition of the regiment to neither ask for nor give quarter; so, regardless of the awful odds against them, they fought to the last man.

All went down, but all were not dead. Merrill and half a dozen of his men lay stunned, and they were taken prisoners. They were carried back of the lines and added to other prisoners, some of them Frenchmen, and perhaps a dozen more Americans.

Merrill had received several trifling wounds besides the blow on the head that had rendered him unconscious. The wounds were negligible, and nothing but an ache remained to remind him of the blow on the head. Some of the men were sorely wounded, but of the others, not of his regiment besides a few of his own, there were ten Americans able to walk. These were put with
a body of French prisoners and started toward Metz, insulted, spat upon, beaten with rifle butts, and pricked with bayonets till their blood boiled with rage.

The officers received better treatment than the men, but even they were grossly insulted. Later the men and officers were separated, the former to be put at labor in the interior of Germany. Merrill was first taken to Metz, but afterward was removed to a small detention camp near Freudenstadt. He knew nothing of this part of Germany, and at first was depressed by a sense of hopelessness. His one thought now was of Rose, and when he realized that as a prisoner he was more than ever helpless to go to her assistance he became savagely rebellious.

Then one day, because he understood German, though he never betrayed that fact, he learned that he was in the Black Forest region. His heart leaped at this, and he set himself to discover how far Strasbourg was from there. The day he discovered that Strasbourg lay not more than thirty miles to the west he could have cried out for joy. It was almost as if they breathed the same air. From that moment he began patiently to plan for escape.

It was near the latter end of October before the chance he had waited for came. He had been unable to bring himself to make the attempt alone, although he knew he decreased his chances by taking others into his confidence, so he had told the little group to which he belonged of his intention, and bade them all be ready to make the break for freedom when they saw him act.

No fuel was furnished them, but they were permitted, under guard, to go to the edge of the forest, which lay near the camp, to gather such branches as fell from the trees. There was not much to be had, but, such as it was, it was better than nothing.

This was the opportunity that Merrill had fixed upon. Always when they went out he watched for the chance to fall upon the guard. Day after day passed by without giving him the possibility he sought. It was his plan to get within leaping distance of the guard and overpower him and then get away into the forest before assistance could come.

To disarm suspicion he had from the first conducted himself in the meekest possible manner, greatly to the amazement of two American officers in the group who had known his reputation as a dare-devil. This finally served him in good stead, for one evening when they were gathering wood he drew nearer to the guard, a big, brutal Prussian armed to the teeth. Usually the guard cursed any man who came near him, but he looked upon the apparently dispirited American as the most harmless of the lot, and perhaps dreamed of no danger from these unarmed men anyhow. Certainly he yawned and idly swore at his charges on this occasion until Merrill stood within six feet of him. Then he ordered him farther away.

"Yankee dog," he growled, "keep away or I'll be tempted to stick my bayonet in you to see if you have any blood in you."

Merrill straightened up like a man worn and enfeebled. "But there is wood here," he answered in stammering German.

The Prussian laughed brutally. "And you are cold, eh?"

"Cold and hungry and weak," answered Merrill, measuring the distance between them as he pretended to shiver.

"Good! That is the way I want all the damned Yankees to be. Get out with you!"

The words were hardly out of his mouth before Merrill had leaped on him and thrust his knife into his breast. The man, taken by surprise, made prac-
tically no defense, but with a loud cry drooped and sank to the earth.

Merrill tore the rifle from his hands and a pistol from his belt and darted into the woods. His companions followed his example. What became of them he didn’t know until after the war was over; then he learned that three of them at least had made good their escape.

It had been a part of his calculation that night would soon come on and make search difficult. Also he had figured that the Germans would naturally take it for granted that the course of the escaped prisoners would be to the south, toward Switzerland; therefore he soon swerved toward the north, and, falling into a long, easy stride, he went steadily on.

He rested occasionally, but kept on during the night, turning after a while toward the west lest he should get too far from Strasbourg. When dawn began to break he found a hiding place among some rocks and lay down to sleep, too tired to eat of the food he had carried with him and which he had concealed about him for many days when they went out to gather wood.

He was muscle sore when he woke late in the afternoon, but he was in good spirits. He scouted about for a little while until he was sure he was alone, when he bathed in a brook that ran down the hill and then ate sparingly.

Soon after this he was obliged to live off what he could steal from the outlying farmhouses. He ran many risks and had some narrow escapes. He could make but little progress, and at some time was compelled to lie hidden for three days, eating nothing but a few eggs, which he sucked raw. The rifle, which he had carried until now, he dropped into a crevice in some rocks, deeming it useless and fearing also that if he were seen it would at once draw suspicion on him.

He realized that he had undertaken a wild adventure, and there were times when he wondered if it were humanly possible to accomplish it. Still he never dreamed of turning back from it. Rose was there, and he was sure that she was waiting for him.

He knew now that he was headed in the right direction and that the city could not be more than ten or fifteen miles away. The country was more and more thickly settled as he progressed, the little farms, all highly cultivated, standing close together. The whole country made a strange contrast with the devastated lands of France to which he had become accustomed.

One day he spent lying in a little copse not far from one of the prettiest and trimmest little farmhouses that he had yet seen. The place bore every evidence of a prosperity far in advance of most of the farms he had seen.

During all the latter part of the afternoon two women bustled about from house to barn, carrying crocks and baskets and bundles of vegetables, which they left in the barn. It had puzzled him at first, but after a while he understood; they were loading up their cart to take their produce to market. No doubt the morrow would be Saturday, and they would sell their goods in town. What town? Would it be one of the smaller towns or would it be Strasbourg? Everything would depend on the answer to that question.

When night came and the occupants of the house had retired, Merrill crept over to the barn and made his way into it. He had no light, all the few matches he had had having been used up, but he easily found the little covered cart, which stood in the middle of the floor, and by feeling in the interior satisfied himself that it had been loaded.

He was very hungry—almost starved, in fact—so he didn’t hesitate to appropriate four eggs, some turnips, and a
small cheese. The cheese was singularly odorous, but it tasted to him like manna from heaven. He climbed into the hay mow, ate his fill for the first time in many days, and lay down and slept. It was still dark when he was awakened by the sound of voices. The two women were there with a lantern, getting ready to put the horse into the shafts.

He was so near the edge of the mow that he could easily raise himself and look over. It was plain that it was the girl who was going to drive to market, and also it was made certain by words they let fall as they talked in sleepy tones that Strasbourg was the objective.

Merrill hesitated for a few moments. He knew he was taking a desperate chance, but also he was sure that there was nothing for him but that if ever he expected to make his way into Strasbourg. He put his hesitation aside and smothered any natural qualms he had about frightening two lone women.

He chose a moment when they were together on the farther side of the cart, and of a sudden leaped out of the mow between them and the door, his pistol in his hand.

"Don't cry out!" he said sharply. "I won't hurt you if you keep quiet, but I am desperate."

The old woman almost dropped her lantern and began to whimper in a quavering way, but the girl, although evidently in terror, exclaimed in a voice she tried to keep steady: "Who are you? You'd better behave yourself. I'll report you if you don't go about your business."

"I am going about my business," he said quietly, "and if you will only be calm and listen I will tell you what it is."

"If you want something to eat," the old woman said, "you have only to say so."

"Hush, grandma, dear," the girl whispered; then in a firmer tone to Merrill: "Tell us what you want. If you think we are helpless you are mistaken."

"I am a deserter," he answered, "and I don't know how to get back into Strasbourg. I tried to get home, but I lost my way and have wandered about the mountains and forest for many days."

"What can we do for you?" the girl demanded, her manner becoming more assured. "You shouldn't have deserted."

"Why do so many desert?" the old woman asked querulously.

"Deserting!" cried Merrill. "Are many deserting then?"

"Every day," the girl said promptly. "Why do you go back again? If you want food we will give it to you, and we could spare a little money, couldn't we, grandma?"

"You would really help a deserter?" Merrill asked, wondering.

"Why not? We don't want to get into any trouble, but we hate the war. We could feed you and you could get away before daylight."

Merrill had heard stories for some time before he was captured of desertions from the German army, but had not credited them, believing them prisoners' lies intended to create a false impression.

"I suppose," he said doubtfully, "you couldn't let me have any clothes? I'm all in rags."

The girl took the lantern from her grandmother and held it up so that she could see her visitor. When she saw how tall and stalwart he was a hard ring came into her voice as she demanded: "Are you a Prussian?"

"No, fräulein; I am really from Vienna. I thank God I am not a Prussian."

"Good!" she ejaculated. "You don't have the speech of a Prussian. Put
your pistol away and come to the house. Come, grandma!"

CHAPTER XX.

MERRILL was seated at a table in the kitchen and supplied with food and hot coffee. The girl eyed him sharply, studying him with a puzzled air. Suddenly she said: "If you are an Austrian what are you doing here? There are no longer Austrians fighting. You know that."

"A few were left behind," he said uncomfortably, and then, to change the trend of her thought, he added: "I must apologize to you for taking some food out of your cart last night."

"What did you take?" demanded the old woman sharply.

"Four eggs, a cheese, and some turnips."

"They can be replaced," the girl said quietly. "You are not an Austrian; you are not a Prussian either, I can see that. But you are a gentleman; I can tell that by your language. You have a slight accent, too, and you are polite. Yes, you are a gentleman, although you don't look it. Why don't you tell me the truth?"

Merrill ceased to eat, and looked into her eyes. A more honest pair of blue eyes, he told himself, he had never looked into. She was clever, too, and better educated than girls of her class usually are in Germany. He drew a long breath.

"I would like to tell you the truth," he said. "I have been lying to you because my life is in danger."

"I wonder," she said, her face very serious, "if you are not an escaped prisoner?"

He stared at her, and then at her grandmother, who had stopped her bustling about to watch him. "Yes," he said impulsively, "I am."

"I thought so," murmured the girl. "Not French; English, perhaps?"

He rose from the table and straightened himself. "No, American. "Ach!" ejaculated the old woman. "An American! So?"

There was a peculiar something in her tone that made him turn and stare at her. He was sure she was beaming at him with pleasure written all over her wrinkled face. He turned in wonder to the girl; she was regarding him very soberly.

"Sit down and eat," she said gravely. "You are safe here."

"Yes, yes," cried the old woman, "I have a son in America, Heinrich Bohler. You know him, perhaps?"

"No, I have never met him."

"I have a cousin in your army," the girl said, "also Heinrich Bohler. Where did you escape from?"

"Freudenstadt."

"You are not a spy?"

"On my honor I am not."

"What are you doing here? Why didn't you escape to Switzerland? That would have been easy enough."

He hesitated. He didn't doubt them now, but it was too amazing to accept readily. Then he spoke frankly: "I will tell you everything. Do you know a Captain von Sturm in Strasbourg?"

"I do not know him, but I have seen him often."

"He has a fine house over there," the old woman interjected, pointing to the north.

"Well," went on Merrill, "he has a cousin, Rose d'Almeyrac."

"She is dead," the girl said. "No, she is alive and in his hands in Strasbourg. I love her, and I am going to Strasbourg to save her from him."

The girl shook her head slowly. "It is impossible. Don't you know that Strasbourg is full of soldiers? You would be arrested at once. It is true that it is a large city, but a young man, big and strong, who was not in the army—-"
Merrill smiled obstinately. "I have thought of that, but I shall try it. Many things can be done that seem impossible. The thing just now is to get into the city."

The girl waved to him to sit down again, and herself took a chair at the opposite side of the table. "It might be possible to get you into the city," she said. "Tell me your plan. I have time."

"My plan was to threaten you and make you let me conceal myself in your cart. It would not be difficult."

"No," she replied slowly, "it would be quite possible. My cart is never searched. Many try to get out of the city, but no one wants to get in who cannot get out. My cart is always searched when I come out. If you went in you would have to remain."

"I wish to remain. If you will help me to get in I shall trouble you no more, although as long as I live I shall bless you."

The girl sat silent for a while, reflecting, and Merrill, watching her anxiously, thought he had never seen a German girl so self-reliant, so completely mistress of herself. She turned to her grandmother, who also had been watching her, as if the decision lay with her. "We will help him, grandma," the girl said at last.

"Naturally," assented the old woman with emphasis.

Merrill started to express his gratitude, but the girl stopped him. "You must understand first; then we will make plans. My Uncle Heinrich bought this place for his mother. He wanted her always to go to him in America, where he is rich. He has a grocery store. Before the war she could not bring herself to leave here; now she is eager to go. When the war is over we shall go to America. That is one reason why we are willing to help you."

"And," broke in the old woman, smiling broadly, "Anna and young Heinrich are sweethearts. She will be an American girl."

The girl blushed, and then smiled. "Yes," she said, "that is the real reason. I like all Americans because Heinrich is American. It was your very good fortune that you came to us."

"The good God guided him," said the old woman in a tone of conviction. "Any other place they would have betrayed you. Tell me, young man, does Fräulein d'Almeyrac love you?"

"Oh, yes," he answered, his face lighting up.

"That is good," cried the old woman, clapping her hands together. "Anna, you must think up some fine way to help them. Anna," she said to Merrill, "is a very clever girl. She was educated in London."

"Then you speak English?" exclaimed Merrill in that language.

"Yes, but grandma doesn't. Now," and she reverted to German, "this is what I have thought: Of course I don't need to say again that you may never come away alive; you understand that, so we won't speak of it again. You must not go with me to-day. No, listen! I will go in as usual, and while I am there I will make my arrangements for taking you in next Wednesday afternoon. I often go in on Wednesday. Meanwhile you will hide here—that will be easy—and you will trim your beard German fashion. Grandma will give you some clothes which belong to her son, who is in the army. They will not fit, but that will not matter. Then we must think of some reason why you are not in the army. That will come before Wednesday. Also you will be well fed and will feel like yourself."

"It will help matters if you know that once I am in Strasbourg I can find friends."

"Tell me nothing about that."
"I would like to go to-day," he pleaded.

"No," was the positive response. "I know better than you. How are you to get out of the cart in broad daylight? You must do as I say. Do you know where the fräulein is?"

"In the Illestrasse, number ninety-five."

"Perhaps I can bring you news of her. I don't know, but I will try. Now I must get ready. I think, grandma, he will be safe in Paul's room. You must keep very quiet, you understand. I do not know your name."

"My name is Merrill. If you should see her, tell her—"

"It is not likely, but if I see her I will try to whisper a word. Now I must hurry or I shall lose the good market."

Merrill trusted Anna, not only because he had no choice than to do so, but also because behind her direct, matter-of-fact manner he was conscious of a good heart and a good will.

When she returned late that night she reported that she had passed the house and had even made discreet inquiries, but that she could get no intelligence that seemed to indicate that Rose was in the house he had designated. She had learned, however, that Friedrich von Sturm lived in the house with his mother.

It was decided that he should play the part of a soldier who had contracted consumption in the trenches. He showed them how well he could imitate the cough and how he could droop his shoulders so that no one would suspect that he was not what he pretended to be. And Paul's clothes, being too small for him, helped the effect. At first he had had qualms of conscience over permitting them to take the risk of smuggling him into the city, but Anna had satisfied him on that score.

"There is no risk," she had said frankly. "I wouldn't do it if there were any. I am glad to help you. I only hope you will escape with your life. The soldiers hate the Americans more than they have hated the English."

She had arranged to spend the night in Strasbourg, putting up her horse and cart at a little inn from which it would be easy for him to get away during the night.

When Wednesday evening came he disposed himself in the bottom of the cart, not very comfortably indeed, and was covered over with the produce that had been chosen for the purpose. He bade the old woman a hearty good-by, and promised her that if he ever reached the American lines again he would hunt up Heinrich Bohler and tell him of his grandmother and his sweetheart.

The cramped ride was one Merrill was never likely to forget, but he realized before the cart went bumping over the streets of Strasbourg that he would never have been able in any other way to enter the city. He quivered with apprehension when the cart was stopped at the outlying forts, and at each end of the bridge over the Rhine.

The soldiers always attempted some rough pleasantry with Anna, and he marveled at the calm, easy way in which she answered them, never losing her serene dignity.

Following Anna's instructions, he waited until the cart had been locked in the yard for the night before he crept out and stretched his cramped and weary body. Fortunately it had been dark before they reached the inn, so that he had not had long to wait. He rearranged the produce in the cart and went into the stable, where he slept for the greater part of the night. Then, before any one was stirring, he stole out into the yard, unlocked the gate, and slipped out.

So far all had gone well. Near by was a square not much frequented even
in the daytime, as Anna had informed him, and there he went to remain until daylight came.

She had given him instructions how to find Illestrasse, and also how to find the Grosse Metzig, so that after he had procured himself some breakfast with money given him by the warm-hearted old woman he set out to explore the city, always ready with his hacking cough and drooping shoulders to impress any one who came along.

The day passed wearily, but he got through it somehow and without meeting with any misadventure. One most peculiar thing struck him, knowing as well as he did German army discipline — the officers were less arrogant than he had ever seen them, and the men were more independent; indeed the latter were at times actually impudent from the German point of view.

He had found the Grosse Metzig without difficulty early in the day and had located the Golden Fleece. The latter was a decent but lower-class beer hall, not unlike a French café in its character.

At two o’clock promptly he entered the place and went to the table described by Saulnier. There were few persons in there, and they paid no attention to him. He coughed a few times and hung wearily over the table in order to remain in character, and when the waiter came to him went through the prescribed formula.

The waiter, without a change of countenance and as if having no comprehension of what had taken place, brought a glass of beer and set it down in front of him, saying carelessly: “It is not only in beer that the old is better than the new.”

Merrill sighed with relief. “I want to get into communication with Fräulein d’Almevrac,” he said in a low tone.

“Wait here,” the waiter answered, “until a man comes and hails you as if he knew you, and says you evidently prefer old beer to new. Ask him if he will have a glass of beer with you and rap for me. If I nod my head to you, you will know it is the right man.”

Half an hour later an old, wizened man came into the place, and on sight of Merrill hailed him like an old acquaintance and sat opposite him. The waiter, after bringing the beer ordered, nodded his head and left them.

“You understand what I want?” Merrill asked.

“Yes. We won’t talk here. I’ll take you to my home.”

When they were safely in the shabby rooms occupied by the man and his aged wife, the man spoke freely: “You wish to see Fräulein d’Almevrac. It will be difficult, perhaps impossible, but I will see what I can do. Can you give me any word that will help her to know your mission? She has to be very careful.”

“If you tell her that Hayden wishes to see her, I think it will let her know all that is necessary. Can you tell me anything about her? Is she well?”

“She is very well, but Von Sturm is making it hard for her. He has sent his mother away and is threatening the fräulein.”

“Threatening to give her to the authorities?”

A fierce expression hardened the old man’s face. “He is threatening that if she does not marry him he will do to her as the Germans did to the girls of France and Belgium.”

Merrill leaped to his feet in an access of sudden fury. “I will kill him!” he breathed. “He isn’t fit to live. Thank God, I am here! He shall find he has not only a weak girl to deal with.”

“Sit down, my friend,” the old man said kindly. “She is armed and can protect herself. Besides, there are some of us here who would give our lives for her if that would help. But
it is not so easy as that. He has her in his power because she doesn’t dare appeal to any one in authority; besides, she is watched all the time.”

“There must be some way,” Merrill said.

“We are trying to find that way. One of the maids is with us, and she keeps us posted. Now if you will remain here I will go see what can be done. I will bring you word of some kind. You will be very careful, if you please. Where are you living?”

“Nowhere; I came into the city only this morning.”

“Are you French, monsieur?” the old man asked in that language.

“No; American. I am a colonel in the American army. Mademoiselle is my betrothed.”

“Aha!” cried the old man eagerly. “Then it was you who rescued her in the—”

“Belgium,” interposed Merrill. “Yes. You know of that adventure?”

“Yes. Pierre—Did you know Pierre Rabeau?”

“I was with mademoiselle when he died in the château.”

“Then it was you who shot Von Sturm?”

“Yes; I am sorry I did not kill him.”

“Aha, monsieur, I am happy to meet you! Yes, mademoiselle will be happy when she hears you are here. You will stay with me, perhaps? I cannot offer you much, but you will be safe here. Yes, you will stay with me; it is best. And I will go now.”

CHAPTER XXI.

It has been arranged, monsieur; it has been arranged,” the old man cried eagerly, when he returned two hours later. “You shall see her. Ah, she is very happy!”

Merrill caught the old man’s hand and shook it energetically. The thought that he was actually to see Rose again unmanned him. He patted the old man on the back and laughed almost hysterically.

“I have found you a sister,” the old man said humorously. “Elsa Mahler is your sister and you are August Mahler. You will go now to the house. You know it?”

“Yes, I passed it this morning.”

“You will go there and ask for Elsa, your sister. You will have to kiss her, since you have not seen her for a long time. But she is very pretty; you will not mind.”

“I must not kiss her, because I have consumption,” and Merrill gave a hollow cough.

The old man laughed as if the jest were one of the best. “Well, it does not matter; only she will be glad to see you and you must be affectionate—at any rate, when there is any one to see. She is one of the maids, the one who is of us, and she will arrange for a few minutes with mademoiselle.”

It was with great difficulty that Merrill maintained anything like a calm exterior when he presented himself at the door of the house in Illestrasse. He was hardly able yet to believe that Rose was alive, so long had he been convinced of her death.

“Elsa Mahler lives here,” he said, apparently stifling a cough. “Will you tell her her brother August wishes to see her?”

He was taken into the kitchen, where he was curiously studied by the cook and a maid, while the maid who had admitted him went upstairs to notify Elsa. He coughed very effectively a few times and sat in a listless attitude.

Elsa, a pretty, lively girl of about twenty, came running in presently and threw herself into his arms, crying out: “My poor August! I see you once again.” She kissed his cheek two or three times. “Ach! How ill you are! Come upstairs to my room, you poor boy!” She turned to the others. “And
once he was as strong and splendid as you could wish. Come, August!” turning to him again. “Lean on me; I am strong, please God! It is not far to go.”

“Elsa, dear sister!” He coughed painfully and leaned on her shoulder. “I am not so bad; I shall be well soon again.”

She glanced piteously at the others and raised her eyes to show how well she realized his self-deception. “Yes, yes! Of course you will soon be well. You have a bad cold; any one can see that. You can see that, Frau Keppel?” she appealed to the cook.

“Yes, to be sure; that is easy to see.”

“Come upstairs then, August, and we will have a good talk about old times. And when we come down Frau Keppel will make you some coffee. Is it not so?”

“Naturally, naturally,” responded the cook.

The two went out into the hall and up the stairs. Elsa whispered to him: “Not a word to me; just cough a little.”

He was so excited that he trembled, but he contrived to cough at intervals on the way up. Elsa talked to him in coaxing tones, as a woman does to a sick person, assuring him over and over that soon he would be quite well again.

She ushered him into a small but neat bedroom. “Wait a few moments for me,” she said softly, and went out of the room by another door, which led into a larger room. He trembled so that he was obliged to hold himself steady by the footboard of the bedstead. It seemed incredible that he was to see her.

Elsa returned in a very short time and beckoned him to come into the other room. It also was a bedroom, but much larger and luxuriously furnished. She left him there and went into a connecting room. The next moment he heard a rustle of skirts, and Rose stood in the doorway, staring eagerly. Then they were in each other’s arms.

“My darling! My darling!” she murmured.

For a little while they did nothing but clung to each other, making demonstrations of love and murmuring incoherently words of joy and happiness. It was Rose who first roused herself.

“We have such a short time, dearest,” she said, “and it won’t be wise to try this again. Friedrich might suspect. Elsa is the only one I dare trust here. There is much to talk of now.”

“Oh, yes, very much. You are quite well?”

“I never was better. The wound looked more serious than it was. And you, mon ami?”

“Perfectly well, and so happy that I feel as if I could fly.”

She smiled sadly. “I wish you could fly, dearest; then you could take me under your arm and we could get out of this city and back to France. That is our trouble now—how to escape. We are planning, and we think we may be able to accomplish it, but it will be dangerous. I cannot remain here, for Friedrich becomes more a brute every day.”

Merrill grew rigid as he remembered what it was she had to fear from her cousin. “I would strangle him if I could get my hands on him,” he said hoarsely.

“I can kill him,” she said quietly, but with a terrible menace in her tones, “or at worst I can kill myself; but those are things to avoid, for I wish to live to be happy with you. Think of the years we have been separated, dearest.”

“Yes, fate owes us much happiness for the sorrow we have had. But tell me, my darling, why cannot I hide myself in the house and have it out with this scoundrel?”

“It may come to that, but it is the last resort. Everything would have to
be ready for our flight before that could be done. It seems almost an impossibility, anyhow, the city is so well guarded. If it had not been for you, dear, I don't think I could have endured what I have all these years; but always it was in my heart that some way I could let you know that I was alive and that then you would come to me. And you are here."

"I could not come sooner. Until I was taken prisoner I could do nothing, but when that happened I knew the time had come."

"Always wonderful," she sighed admiringly.

"If I were wonderful I would find some way of liberating you. I am here, but I can do nothing."

"Do not be impatient, mon ami. Our friends are active. A way will be found. Affairs are going badly with the army, and the people all over the country are ready for rebellion. Here we are at work among the soldiers, who are very tired of the war. When the time comes we will know what to do."

"And in the meantime this beast of a Friedrich——"

"Yes, dearest, that is the one serious danger; but in some way that can be avoided. There is but one thing for you to do—be patient and wait. And you must remain indoors by daylight. Do you know who is commandant here?"

"No, I know nothing."

"General von Schilling."

"Oh!" murmured Merrill, understanding at once what that meant.

"Yes, and you know the eyes of hate are sharp. If he were to see you he would recognize you, and that would be the end. You will keep in hiding, will you not? You shall hear from me every day. It may be only a word, but you shall hear from me."

At this moment Elsa rushed into the room in evident terror. "Quick! He is coming." She dragged Rose into the other room, pushing Merrill toward the little room.

A few minutes later Elsa came to him in her room and bade him follow her quietly. "I cannot take you down through the kitchen," she said, "because there are two soldiers there, creatures of Von Sturm's. I will let you out by the main door and you must hurry away quickly. I am afraid he suspected something, for he is in a furious temper and is questioning her."

"Listen, Elsa!" he said. "I do not like to leave her if there is any danger for her. Can you not hide me in the house?"

"My God, no!" was her swift response. "You will spoil everything. You must go. She is in no danger now. Come!"

He followed her reluctantly, his fingers itching to take the wretch by the throat, and he felt as if somehow he was deserting Rose in her time of need. On the other hand his reason told him that he would better accept the guidance of her friends.

He got out of the house, and, at Elsa's direction, made his way as quickly as possible to the first corner, where he turned. There he was unexpectedly met by the old man who was his host.

"I wasn't sure you could find your way to my place," he said. "I was upset, I can tell you, when I saw Von Sturm with his two dogs of soldiers go into the house. He was not due for an hour yet. Do you know what he wanted?"

"Elsa said he seemed suspicious; that is all I learned."

"Yes, yes, of course. So he is suspicious. I must find out about that. I wonder what he is suspicious about?"

He seemed troubled, and sent Merrill up to his rooms alone while he went to make inquiries among his comrades. Later he returned and said there was no reason to believe Von Sturm had
any specific suspicions, but that there was manifest nervousness among all the officers of the garrison.

For several days Merrill remained in hiding, each day receiving some message from Rose, sometimes written, but more often transmitted by word of mouth.

Word from Rose was always hopeful, however, and she never failed to assure him that Friedrich remained respectful, even if more and more insistent. From old Karl, his host, he learned that Von Sturm certainly had suspicion of her having communication with some one.

One day Karl came home excited and jubilant. They had had news from a sure source that rank mutiny had broken out at Kiel, that the workmen at Essen and at other munition factories were on strike and that the people all over Germany were grumbling. Moreover, the soldiers of the garrison were openly grumbling and that discipline had almost broken down.

He went out immediately after dinner, saying that Merrill was to be ready for action at a moment’s notice, since this was the time they had been waiting for.

Merrill could do nothing but pace the floor, and he was doing this when he heard a trampling of many feet on the stairs. It was not a disorderly sound; however, and his quick ear noted its military quality.

The sounds stopped at the door of their rooms, and the next moment the door was burst open and half a dozen armed soldiers filed in, followed by an officer, in whom Merrill recognized Von Sturm. Not the sturdy, handsome officer he had seen before, but a sallow, sickly man.

Merrill sank into a chair as quickly as possible and began to simulate tuberculosis. Something was wrong, but he hoped nothing more than a visit of suspicion was involved, and he knew Karl kept nothing questionable in his rooms.

“Where is Karl Welton?” Von Sturm demanded sharply.

“He is not at home,” the old woman quavered.

“Who is this man? Look at me, pig dog!”

Merrill coughed, but realized that his best move was to act as if he had nothing to fear. He hoped that Von Sturm had not seen him well enough at the château to recognize him now, especially with his beard. He looked up, and Von Sturm studied him. He turned away to give an order, and then, prompted by some memory, turned back and stared at Merrill with growing recognition.

“Shoot that man if he makes a move!” he cried. “Seize him at once!”

Resistance under the circumstances was worse than useless, so Merrill made no movement, but sat waiting.

“So,” cried Von Sturm with an expression of joy, “it is you. I had not hoped for this. Now I understand. Bring him along. Never mind anything else. This is enough for me. A spy!” he cried, his voice trembling with hatred. “Ah, we have a certain treatment for spies! Tie his hands, and if he tries to escape put a bayonet through him. Aha!” and he snapped his fingers in his delight. “I shall have news to take home now.”

A sickening sense of defeat overwhelmed Merrill, but since an attempt at escape could only mean his immediate death he made no struggle when his hands were tied behind him, nor did he answer a word to the malignant taunting words of Von Sturm.

With a man on each side of him and four behind he was marched through the streets, at this time crowded with people. All the way he was taunted by Von Sturm, who never openly mentioned Rose, but who suggested her in every sentence.
He was taken to the citadel, and there thrown into a cell in the military prison. “Say your prayers,” Von Sturm cried through the bars. “The bullet you will receive will not let you live even as I have lived since you treacherously shot me. And remember that now I have a means to bring our little Rose to her knees. Oh, I know what you are to each other! I have not been as blind as I have seemed, though I never expected to see you here. Wish me luck, won’t you? I am now going to hurry home to Rose.”

CHAPTER XXII.

IT needed no one to tell Merrill that he was at a serious pass, a most desperate pass, indeed. There would be little difficulty in convicting him as a spy. He had been caught within the enemy lines in civilian clothes. That in itself would have been enough, but in addition he had the venomous enmity of Von Sturm; and, worse than all, he had to reckon with the wounded vanity of Von Schilling.

He might or might not be tried according to the laws of war; the Germans paid little respect for any such laws. If he were tried he could plead that he was an escaped prisoner, and therefore not a spy, since his uniform had been taken from him; but even if under ordinary circumstances such a plea might have value he knew that if Von Schilling recognized him his doom was as good as pronounced.

He was too brave a man not to face the facts, and he was not long in deciding that his end was near. It was not that that troubled him most; his thoughts were mainly on Rose and how she would be affected. He thought of her in the power of Von Sturm, who would now be goaded on to the worst by his discovery of Merrill.

He wondered miserably if he would have done better to make a struggle at the time of his capture. Perhaps he could have taken Von Sturm to death with him, and so have freed Rose from his persecution. A little reflection, however, told him that he would have been shot before he could reach him.

He sat on the side of the little iron bedstead, and went over and over the possibilities, until at last, in utter weariness, after having traversed the ground many times over, he gave it up and began to pace up and down the tiny cell, trying to compose himself so that at least he could face the future with the calmness and courage he wished to preserve to the last.

His supper and his breakfast the next morning consisted of not too large a piece of black bread and water. He had hardly finished his breakfast when a guard came to take him away. He was conducted into a large room in the citadel, where he found a court of military officers sitting, which meant that he was to have at least the form of a trial.

The first person he saw was Von Sturm, whose eyes glared at him ferociously, while his lips parted in a snarl. Von Schilling was not there, at which Merrill sighed with relief. At least it was one vindictive enemy the less to contend with.

The presiding officer, after studying him curiously for a few moments, said in a strikingly informal manner: “So you are a spy, eh?”

“No, I am not; I am an escaped prisoner. I am an American officer. I was imprisoned at Freudenstadt and escaped.”

“An American officer!” They all stared at him in surprise. “What name and rank?”

“Colonel Hayden Merrill. I was captured in the Argonne.”

“He is a liar,” broke in Von Sturm. A low laugh went around the court. “He is a spy. What is he doing here
if he is an escaped prisoner? How did he get into the city?"

"This is somewhat irregular," said the presiding officer lazily, "but you might reply to the allegation and questions."

Merrill had a sense of unreality in the way the trial was being conducted. This was not at all as German officers acted as a rule. But whether there was hope for him in their manner, or if it only meant that his case was already judged and they were amusing themselves with him, he could not tell.

"I am not a spy. I came to the city because after wandering about the hills until I was ragged and starving, I knew that there are so many people I could find some one kind enough to give me food and clothe me after a fashion. I have not been near the fortifications, nor have I even been much about the city."

"How did you get into the city? We always thought it difficult to pass the guards unless one had a good excuse."

"I cannot answer your without getting some one else in trouble. I was helped out of pure kindness."

"He is one of a nest of spies," Von Sturm cried. "The city is full of them. They helped him get in. They have been plotting."

Merrill, seeing that he was carefully keeping Rose out of his talk, only smiled as he answered: "These are but a crazy man's statements. If he knows these things why not prove them? I give you my word of honor as a soldier and a gentleman that I am not a spy."

"And never have been?" demanded Von Sturm.

"And never have been."

"You are a damned liar!"

"And you are a coward, or you would not insult a man who is powerless to punish you."

"Proofs, Captain von Sturm," said the presiding officer, who seemed to find Von Sturm ridiculous. "If you have nothing more than mere assertions we will communicate with Freudenstadt to confirm his statements, and if they are true to return him there."

Merrill's heart leaped. It seemed he was to escape once more from before the very face of death. He looked at Von Sturm, and saw him hesitating, as if debating in his mind whether or not to use Rose in some way to accomplish his end.

"You know how and where I found him," he said finally, after a sullen silence. "If you think he has made out a good case for himself it is for you to judge."

"Yes," sharply, "it is for us to judge." He looked about at the other officers, and went on: "If his story is shown to be true he is not a spy. Colonel Merrill, you will be taken back and held until—"

He stopped, and rose to salute, as did all the other officers, for at that moment General von Schilling opened the door and came strolling into the room. He graciously waved them to sit down, and smilingly glanced about the room.

"Ah!" he said with that half-contemptuous smile that seemed to go with speech of or to Von Sturm. "Is this Captain von Sturm's spy?"

Merrill's heart sank as the cold blue eyes settled on him. They gave no sign of recognition, however, and it only remained for him to be taken away before his name was mentioned. But that was not to be.

"Yes, excellency, but Captain von Sturm has produced no evidence, and the man claims to be an escaped prisoner from Freudenstadt. I was about to return him to prison to await word from Freudenstadt."

The general shrugged his shoulders and turned away, saying: "I suppose so, under the circumstances."

"Your story will be looked into Colonel Merrill," the presiding officer said.
"What?" snapped Von Schilling, wheeling about and staring at Merrill, who stood erect, facing him.

A sudden silence fell on the room, everybody startled by the utter change in the general. He walked over to Merrill, his eyes narrowed, his head thrust slightly forward. He stared him in the face for a few moments, his first expression of rage changing to one of malignant hate. "So!" he said slowly. "Colonel Merrill. You are sure it is not Doctor Merrill?"

"I am Colonel Merrill of the American army. I am not acting as a surgeon."

The general smiled evilly, and turned to the officers of the court. "This man is a spy. I know him to be a spy. You will sentence him to be shot. And he will be shot at once. My orders."

"But, general!" murmured the presiding officer, going toward his superior in a deprecating manner and starting to speak in a low tone. "You will do as I say," curtly interrupted Von Schilling. "If you do not I will take the responsibility on myself."

The officer—he was only a major—paled before the angry eye of the general, but he looked at his watch and said: "It is after eleven, excellency. I cannot do it."

Merrill was dumfounded. He had never seen anything like this before in the German army. And what had the time of day to do with it?

Von Schilling made a furious movement of his arm as if to push the major aside; then he turned to the corporal in charge of the men.

"Take this man into the yard and have him shot at once!"

"Zu befehl!" murmured the corporal, and at a curt order from him his men took their places beside Merrill.

"And," said Merrill, his eyes fixed on the face of the general, "all because I one day tied up General von Schilling and hid him under a bed."

The officers had evidently heard the story, for they glanced at each other with a startled look. Von Schilling caught the exchange of glances. He looked at them as if he would annihilate them, and then strode furiously toward Merrill and slapped him in the face.

"Pig dog!" he raged. "Take him away!" he ordered. "I shall be there. At once, you understand!"

Merrill, with manacles on his wrists, was helpless to resent the insult, but his lips quivered as he turned his head and addressed the officers, who were all standing in a group, close together: "I acquit you of this murder, gentlemen."

Von Sturm, who had been a silent and gloating spectator of the scene, broke into a laugh. Merrill did not even glance in his direction, but walked away with his guard.

He was taken to the yard and placed against the wall. He refused to let them bandage his eyes, but stood calm and erect, his thoughts with Rose. He had no hope of escape now, if he had had the faintest before.

Von Schilling stood apart, his eyes gleaming, his face like chalk. A squad marched out, and with the dull, aesthetic faces of their kind drew up to execute their orders.

They had raised their rifles when there was a violent disturbance outside the gate, and above the noise was raised the voice of a woman. "Let me in! Let me in! They are going to shoot him. I know it!"

Merrill knew the voice at the first word. He forgot the threatening rifles and looked eagerly toward the gate. It flew open, and Rose ran wildly in, looking about until her eyes fell on Merrill where he stood with his back against the wall.

In another moment her arms were about his neck. The firing squad grounded their arms mechanically. Von Schilling glared furiously at the gate
and then at the two lovers. Then a thought flashed into his brain, and he leaped to where the lovers stood and with a violent pull tore Rose's arms from Merrill's neck and looked into her face.

An expression of gloating triumph distorted his face. "You, too," he cried. "Another spy." He turned to the firing squad. "Shoot both of them. Shut that gate!"

Rose turned and clasped Merrill about the neck again. "I was afraid of this, dearest," she said. "At least we now will go together."

"Shoot them as they stand!" vociferated Von Schilling. "Shoot!"

The rifles again came to firing position, but as Merrill put his lips to hers another command was heard.

"Stop! Don't shoot!"

Every eye was turned in amazement to see from whom the new order had come. It had come from a man in the garb of a common sailor. He was standing coolly in the gateway, surveying the scene, his air one of perfect assurance, mingled with manifest pleasure at the sensation he had created.

The phenomenon of a common sailor appearing in that far inland city calmly countermanding the order of a general of the army struck Von Schilling into a speechless fury. He opened his lips after a pause to roar out an order, but the sailor stepped into the yard and pointed to a red band on his sleeve.

"The war is over," he cried. "The German army has surrendered; the kaiser has abdicated and fled; the revolution is accomplished. Comrades, the people are the masters now. You, general, are a general no longer." And before the stupefied officer could comprehend or make a movement the sailor approached him without haste and tore the insignia of his rank from his coat, shouting: "Long live the republic!"

The scene that ensued was pandemonium. It was as if the soldiers had been prepared for the astounding news. They threw their guns on the pavement and began to shout with joy. They ran about, seeking the officers, whose most terrible orders they would have executed a few minutes before, and tore from them their insignia of rank, shouting: "We are the masters now."

"Come!" said a voice to Rose, who still clung to Merrill like one dazed and unbelieving. It was old Karl who spoke to her. "Come quickly," he urged. "No one will notice you now; later they may remember and no one knows what they will do."

Rose recovered herself at once. "Come, dearest," she said.

"My hands are manacled behind me."

"What does it matter?" laughed old Karl. "We can free you later."

They hurried out of the yard, and had no difficulty in getting out of the citadel, for all discipline was gone. When they were in the streets Karl led them away from the crowds that now thronged the vicinity of the citadel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It is like a dream, or, more yet, like magic," Rose said. "The war is over; the Germans are beaten; Alsace is French again."

Merrill sighed with content. "And we are together. When shall we be married? There is nothing to hinder now?"

"Oh, la, la, mon ami!" she laughed happily. "What a hurry you are in! I have hardly caught my breath yet."

They were sitting comfortably in the home of one of Rose's friends in Strasbourg, watching from the window the throngs in the streets; throngs of quiet and still subdued Alsatians, who were hiding their happiness until the departure of the Germans would make it safe for them to express their real sentiments.
“Yes,” he said, “I am in a hurry. Even now I am afraid of losing you again. For nearly four years we have been playing hide and seek with each other, and now that I have found you I am tired of the game and wish to stop. I want to put my mother’s ring on your finger and know that I have you.”

“You have thought of that ring, too, dearest. I have carried it here,” laying her hand on her breast, “hoping always that some time you would put it on my hand again. Well, I won’t pretend; I have been thinking of what you would wish ever since yesterday, when we fled from the citadel. You remember that the first time we met I gave you no choice, but made myself your wife. Now I shall leave everything to you, though I have something in my mind to submit to you.” She put her hand in his and smiled up at him.

“What is the something? You know I must rejoin my regiment now as quickly as possible. I may not be needed there, but it is my duty.”

“I had thought of that. What is in my mind is that we should be married in Paris. I would like Colonel le Brun to be there. I can get a good automobile here. We can take Elsa with us, and by starting very early in the morning we can be in Paris by night unless the roads are crowded. And as I know the roads south of Nancy I am sure I can take a route that will not have much traffic on it. Does it please you, dearest?”

It pleased him so well that two days later they were ushered into the presence of Colonel le Brun, who, discarding all official dignity, ran to them with outstretched arms.

“Aha!” he cried, after the first salutations were over. “This terrible American found you, then. He said he would, and I was sure it would happen. And now what?”

“We need you to make our happiness complete,” Merrill said.

“Here I am,” cried the colonel, beaming on them.

“I have no parents, my colonel,” Rose said, blushing very prettily.

“And I am to have that honor? Ah, my dear young lady, how proud I shall be! And when?”

“Well,” answered Rose, “monsieur says he must rejoin his regiment, and he refuses to leave Mademoiselle d’Almeyrac behind.”

“Aha!” ejaculated the quick-witted Frenchman. “But he would not so much object to leaving Madame Merrill. He has my entire sympathy.”

“To-night,” said Merrill.

“But these Americans are swift!” cried Le Brun. “Ask the boches if you don’t believe me. To-night! That will need arranging. Leave it to me. You need some clothes, my friend. Leave that to me also. It is as good as done. You shall see that a Frenchman is not slow when he really wishes a thing done, and with heart and soul I wish this done.”

It was done, done so completely that when the next day Merrill left Paris for Sedan, where his regiment was, he kissed his wife good-by.

He was hailed by his regiment with a joy that stirred him deeply. He reported to headquarters, and as his regiment had been supplied with a colonel he was permitted a furlough of indefinite duration.

He returned to Paris in his uniform, very happy to be in it once more. “I have a long leave of absence,” he said after Rose had admired him to her heart’s content. “Is there anything you would like to do or any place you would like to go to?”

Her eyes lighted up eagerly. “You have something in your mind. I wonder if it is the same that is in mine?”

“A little journey?” he suggested.

“To Brussels and to Bruges?”
“Yes; I shall never be quite happy until I know that we brought no harm to those good people there. And do you remember the girl, Anna Bohler, who helped me into Strasbourg? I must find her cousin and sweetheart, Henry Bohler and see that they meet.”

“And after these things have been done?” she asked gayly.

“By that time you will, perhaps, be tired of me and will not mind if I put myself under orders again and leave you alone.”

“Perhaps,” she said.

THE END.

THE PARTING

By Charlotte Mish

The woman threw herself into a chair with a harsh cry:

“Charles! You will not leave me!”

“I am leaving to-night,” the man replied coldly. “Now.”

He started for the door, but the woman barred his passage.

“No! No!” she cried with passion. “You do not know what you are doing! You cannot leave me! I could not go on without you!”

“You must. My mind is made up. I do not like to leave you; you have meant much in my life. But—I must go.”

The woman’s voice broke. “Oh, Charles!” she cried. “You have been mine for five years; I cannot bear the thought that some other might have you—will have you! Have you forgotten the first year you were mine?” she added softly, persuasively.

“I have not forgotten,” he said, flushing.

“You were crude and young then,” she continued. “You were not the man you are now. Do not forget that I have made you what you are—I! Now that you have become famous you leave me for another!” she cried bitterly. “Remember it was I who watched the first work of your hands, I who helped you, sympathized with your failures!”

She searched his face with wild eyes for signs of relenting.

“I have given you all I could—all I had! Say you will not leave me like this!”

The man spoke gruffly: “You think only of yourself! True, you have helped me. But now you only hold me down, down, down!”

“You will ruin me!” she cried. “When it becomes known that you have left me for another—”

“I am sorry for you, but I must go,” he said firmly. “The call of higher things beats in my ears; Dalmontigo’s offer me twice the salary you could ever pay!”

And the best chef Madame Burneto’s quick-lunch shop had ever known, and whom madame had trained herself, walked out of the place forever.
YOU can earn two thousand dollars by drowning yourself. Will you have a cigar?"

The proposition was advanced in a matter-of-fact tone such as used by an employer in stipulating a salary. The voice was harsh, but Benson would have been disappointed if a pleasant sound had emanated from between those dry, parchment-like lips.

The squat, hunchy figure leaned forward in the armchair and an abnormally long arm stretched out and shoved a box of cigars to Benson's side of the table. The wrinkled face of the gnomish, white-haired old man showed yellow in the light of the desk lamp, and the eyes, surmounted by one grayish-brown eyebrow and magnified by heavy-lensed spectacles, held Benson's gaze with a revolting but irresistible fascination.

Benson's decision was not long in coming. "I accept your offer, Professor Amesfield," he said. "No, thank you, I don't care to smoke."

Death was the most alluring future held out to the young man. His emaciated form, hollow, anemic cheeks and blue-veined hands foreshadowed all too clearly that Benson was destined, at a time not far remote, to take that long and mysterious journey unless something were done quickly, perhaps in the way of a change of climate. Benson knew this well enough, but, having less than five dollars to his name, he could see no chance of a trip in quest of health. For five months he had been without steady work, and during that time frequently he had lacked the necessities of life. Discouraged, with nothing beckoning except death, he had decided to hasten the inevitable, and was planning some inexpensive method of suicide when he came across Professor Amesfield's newspaper advertisement:
“Wanted—Young man who doesn’t care what happens to him.”

The professor rummaged in a drawer of the table and produced a check book.

“It is hardly probable,” he said in his rasping voice, “that you would comprehend, without considerable explanation, just what is expected of you. However, the mere fact that you answered my advertisement is evidence that you are the person for whom I am seeking.

“I am writing a book on ‘The Sensations of Death,’ and I want you to help me with ‘The Sensations of Drowning’ chapter. To do this, of course, it will be necessary for you to drown. As soon as you have taken leave of the terrestrial sphere, you must come back to this room—your spirit, I mean—and relate to me the story of your death.”

The professor paused to help himself to a cigar.

“Clear out of his head,” thought Benson, as he watched the dwarf emit a cloud of smoke. “Either that or he’s making a poor attempt at a joke. Only he seems to take it perfectly serious.”

The other divined his thoughts.

“This no doubt sounds beyond the bounds of reason to you,” said Amesfield, “unless you have some knowledge of theosophy, spiritualism or others of the beliefs concerning the immortality of the soul. However, I assure you that you will experience no difficulty in performing your part of the contract when once you find yourself on the astral plane, which is the world you enter—sometimes called the fourth dimension—when you pass through the stage that is commonly known as death.

“Your task will be alleviated—it would otherwise be well-nigh impossible—by the fact that I possess psychical powers, being able to place myself in a trance and communicate with disembodied spirits. However, I have not been able to get in the vibration of any drowning victims, so I am obliged to make one. You are to be that victim.”

Benson’s theories concerning life and death were vague. His had been a very material existence and he had not worried about immortality. There was no question in his mind but that Amesfield was mentally unbalanced, perhaps as a result of overstudy. However, there was no reason why he should not see the thing through, since, paradoxically, death was now his only object in life.

“Make the check out to Delia Remington,” he directed. “I have no relatives except an uncle whose whereabouts are unknown, and Delia’s the girl I expected to marry some day. I might as well leave her something to remember me by, something besides unpleasant memories.”

Benson scribbled a brief farewell note and inclosed it with the check in an envelope, which he addressed and placed in a pocket.

“Are you ready?” inquired Amesfield, consulting his watch. “It is eight o’clock, and there is little danger of interruption at this hour of the evening at the West Side bridge. Let us hurry, as I am anxious to finish my manuscript.”

He left the room and returned with a long rope, which he coiled and thrust partly into a pocket. “I’m going with you,” he explained, “to see that the job is done right.”

Half an hour later the two—Age who had lived and intended to continue living, and Youth who had not yet lived and was preparing to die—stood on the bridge which spanned a narrow and swift stream in the outskirts of town.

A silver curtain cast by the moon danced on the current, and everything was still except for the swishing of the water as it played about the piers with tireless energy. There was no traffic at this hour, as the bridge was frequented only during the day, by farmers making their way to and from market.

The professor insisted on binding
one end of the rope around Benson’s arms and body, and when this was done he still retained a liberal length coiled in his hand.

The young man remembered the check for Delia.

“Will you mail the letter?” he asked. “I forgot it; and there isn’t any stamp on it, either. I’ll trust you to do that for me. It’s in this pocket.”

Amesfield took the envelope and dropped it in a pocket of his own overcoat.

“I’ll leave it at the post office on the way home,” he promised. “It will go out early in the morning. Now, let’s get this job over.” He took a turn about the railing of the bridge with the free end of the rope.

Benson looked at the moon. The man in it appeared to be smiling. The stars twinkled mischievously out of a clear blue vault. He wondered if, after all, it would be good to live. Perhaps, if he could get some kind of a job, he could go to Colorado, and there in the high altitude—

“Hurry up,” admonished the professor in that rasping, inexorable voice. “I haven’t all night to spend here.”

Benson took a deep breath and leaped into the river. His lungs filled with water as he sank into the cold depths, but the rope jerked him back to the surface. He would have called out, the pressure on his lungs was so overpowering, but he was choking and could not utter a sound. His legs thrashed about wildly, and he longed for the assistance of his arms. No use, the professor had tied them securely.

“If I could only swim!” groaned the man who had wanted to die, but whose primordial instinct now made it impossible for him to give up trying to live.

The current tossed him about mercilessly under the bridge. The water swirled around the piers in wild glee, and he thought he could hear the professor joining in with a fiendish accompaniment.

“Why doesn’t he let me go!” thought Benson. “Why does he persist in holding me here under the bridge?”

Dimly, when his head bobbed above the surface of the stream, he could see the shadows of the bridge, which were dancing on the ripples and apparently beckoning him into the unknown.

He thought of the farm in Michigan where he had been born. The picture of his kindly faced, hard-working mother rose from the depths. Then appeared his father, dust-covered and perspiring from a day of toil in the fields. He wondered if he would meet them soon.

What was that ringing? It must be the bell of the Greenwood church, which he used to attend every Sunday morning with his father and mother. It was there he had met Delia. The church was crowded with stalwart sons of toil, and ruddy-cheeked women and girls. They rose, holding hymn books before them, and began to sing. Their voices, dim at first, increased in volume until they blended in a mighty roar that fairly crashed in Benson’s ears. Then the chorus grew more indistinct. He had left the church and was walking homeward through the forest—with Delia. The singing continued from afar.

Benson realized that the current was carrying him away from the bridge. The professor must have released the rope, he thought, but he had ceased to be interested in the professor or himself. He was drowsy; oh, so drowsy. He was going to sleep.

The moon must have hidden behind a cloud, for everything had turned black. He was sinking into a vast abyss, where silence reigned. There were no bells, no singing; nothing but blackness everywhere. Of a sudden the realization came to Benson that he was no longer sinking. He was rising. He
had come to the surface. There was the moon again bathing the river in a silver sheen. He experienced no physical sensation save that of floating; but he appeared to be floating in the air. The river was beneath him.

A dark shape tossed about by the current attracted his attention. It was a human body, wrapped with rope. It was his own body, or the one that had been his a short time ago. Well, let it go, he thought; he had no further use for it. He had felt too closely confined in it, and, besides, the germs of the white plague would have taken possession soon.

Thoughts of Professor Amesfield intruded on Benson's feeling of contentment. There was the contract as yet unfulfilled, and Benson never had broken a pledge.

No sooner had thoughts of the professor come to Benson than he found himself in the former's library. Yes, there was the dwarf, smoking a cigar and waiting patiently. He was seated at the same table as when the drowning contract had been made.

"Well, I have come, professor," said Benson, and Amesfield nodded as he expelled a cloud of smoke from his lungs.

"I knew you would come," he responded. "Are you ready to report?"

"Yes," Benson answered, and wondered that he could not hear his own voice, while the professor's had been perfectly audible.

Amesfield picked up a fountain pen and moved several sheets of paper toward him. "Proceed," he directed, and seemed to sink into a doze.

"It was like this," Benson began. "At first, when I sank beneath the waves, I struggled furiously, due to the law of self-preservation. Then, as more and more water entered my lungs——"

So Benson dictated the story of his experience in the river, and the professor transcribed it as he talked. Amesfield emerged from his trance and looked over the manuscript with a kind of gloating satisfaction.

"It is entirely satisfactory," he observed. "The book is now completed. That is all. You may go."

But Benson lingered. He was not yet ready to leave and he did not relish being dismissed so imperiously. He retreated to a corner of the room which the glow from the desk lamp failed to reach, for the light had made him feel uncomfortable. It seemed to project an unpleasant vibration. In the dark corner he was more at ease.

The professor put the manuscript in a drawer of the table. Then he took an envelope from his overcoat, which had been draped over the back of a chair. Benson started. That was his letter with the check for Delia. The professor had forgotten to mail it, evidently. Amesfield deliberately ripped open the envelope and extracted the contents. He seemed undecided for a moment; then he tore the check and note to shreds and tossed them into the fireplace. The envelope he thrust into the drawer.

Benson was enraged. He tried to call out to the professor, but found it impossible to attract the dwarf's attention. Evidently Amesfield had reestablished the barrier between the spiritual and physical worlds. His rage growing, Benson reached for a chair with the intention of hurling it at the psychologist; but he was unable to budge it. The professor had broken the bargain and Benson was helpless in his present state.

"If I was only back on earth again for a few moments, I would show him whether he could deliberately break faith with me," thought Benson. This thought grew on him and he found himself back at the river looking for his abandoned body.

But the body was no longer in the
grip of the current. It was in the possession of a group of rough-looking men on shore about a mile from the bridge. They were rolling it over a barrel. Benson laughed. Why should they bother about that body of his when he himself had discarded it as worthless? Curiosity prompted him to examine the body and he found the rope had been removed. The face was purple and the arms and legs dangled grotesquely.

Benson moved among the men and even touched some of them on the shoulder, but they paid no attention. They had now placed the corpse on its back and were pumping the arms, causing water to spurt from the mouth. A man carrying a medicine case appeared, gave the corpse a cursory examination and remarked:

"I'm afraid he's done for. We'll have to hurry if we bring him through. He was in the water a long time."

"All right, doctor," he was told.

Still infuriated by the professor's treachery, Benson hovered close to the body, and,mustering all his mental force, willed that he should reenter that apparently lifeless form. The effort weakened him, but he continued to concentrate his will on that one object. Again he experienced a sensation of drowsiness and appeared to be sinking into a pit with darkness reaching out to engulf him. He began to feel pain, indistinct at first, but gradually growing more acute. Then came oblivion.

Benson regained consciousness on a hospital bed. A nurse was standing near by.

"How do you feel?" she asked, smiling.

"Rather queer," was his reply in a weak voice. "I certainly had some dream."

The white death was fought and vanquished in the mountains of Colorado, where fresh air abounded. Benson's uncle died and unexpectedly left him five hundred dollars, which he used in his search for a new lease of life. After a long battle, during which Benson lived in a rude shack which he threw together himself, he visited the nearest large city, where a physician conducted a thorough examination and pronounced him physically sound.

Into this crude shelter on the slope of a mountain Benson brought his bride for their honeymoon. She told him she wanted to spend it on the spot where he regained his health, and she had her way.

As he watched her pack her trunks he noticed a small, cloth-bound book among her belongings.

"What's that, Delia?" he inquired, feeling an interest he could not explain. "Has some one been presenting you with a volume of love lyrics?"

"Hardly," she laughed, reaching for the book. "Some one sent it to me, that is true, but I don't know who the giver is. It's far from being poetry, I can tell you. In fact, it wouldn't surprise me to learn it was written by a lunatic. I have kept the thing more as a curiosity than anything else."

He took it and began to examine it curiously. When he saw the title he nearly dropped the volume to the floor. The inscription on the cover was:

**THE SENSATIONS OF DEATH.**

By Prof. A. E. Amesfield.

Benson had received a shock which put him in a daze for a moment. When he recovered his composure sufficiently he opened the book and the first thing that his eyes rested on was the heading of the last chapter. His hands shook as he read:

"The Sensations of Drowning."

"At first, when I sank beneath the waves, I struggled furiously, due to the law of self-preservation. Then, as more and more water entered my lungs—"
CHAPTER I.

My name is Richard Judd. I am a traveling man in the dry-goods and notions line, with opinions and a temper of my own, and when I landed in Hillsdale Junction, Pennsylvania, at four p.m. one rainy Friday afternoon—the date was the thirteenth of September, 1907, as I see by my diary—after a tedious journey by a way train, and found the business places mostly closed on account of a rival attraction—a cheap juggler show at the town hall—well, I quit wholesale dry-goods drumming for the time being and devoted a few minutes to a wholesale job of cursing.

It was an utterly futile task, and in wretched taste besides, but the temptation was great, and I yielded. I anathematized the weather, consigned the juggler troupe to a climate considerably warmer than that of their native land, swore at the mud, which was ankle-deep in the streets, and cursed the luck, which would probably keep me in that out-of-the-way place over Sunday, instead of allowing me to get away on an early train in the morning as I had planned to do.

And then, when I reached the Eagle House—the only hotel in the place—and found every room except No. 13 taken by the troupe of jugglers, I began afresh and aired my entire vocabulary of swear words once more, not forgetting to include the hotel, with its miserable accommodations, in my maldictions this time. This also was sheer foolishness, since it was not the fault of the hotel proprietor that I happened to strike the town at the same time with a troupe of traveling showmen. But this only shows how unreasonable I had become.

In truth, my frame of mind at that moment was far from an enviable one. I am not any more superstitious than lots of other traveling men, but I made up my mind right away that I would
not occupy room No. 13 if I could possibly help it. I had encountered enough bad luck on that trip without further tempting Fate by occupying room 13 on a Friday night—and the thirteenth of the month at that! The landlord kept protesting that room 13 was the only vacant sleeping apartment he had left, but I soon found a way of getting over the difficulty. Slipping a five-dollar bill into his hand, I said:

"Room 14 is the room I want. Just move Mr. Juggler's things into No. 13, send my sample case and grip up to No. 14, give me the key to the room, and I'll stand between you and all damages. What does a Hindu juggler"—I had been told that the troupe were Hindus—"know about numbers? One room or one number is the same as another to him. If he does happen to complain, you can send him to me. I'll buy him off with a nickel."

"I'll do it," said the landlord, tucking the bill into his vest pocket; "but I think I had better tell the Hindus that you engaged room 14 in advance and I had forgotten about it. That probably will satisfy them. They are a bad-looking lot, and I don't want to get into any trouble with them or have you get into any."

"Don't worry yourself a particle about me; I'm able to take care of myself all right," said I jauntily. "Go ahead and tell the black-and-tan heathen any story you've a mind to, and if they don't like it let them do the other thing."

I am quite aware of the fact that this was not the proper spirit to display toward a lot of fellow human beings who clearly had as much right in the hotel and more right to room 14 than I; but the weather and everything had conspired to upset my plans and spoil my temper, and besides I was younger than I am now. We traveling men who circulate around and see the world, I find, grow in wisdom and toleration for others as we grow older.

It stopped raining along toward dark, and after supper—dinner in that section of the country is served at noon—with the key of room 14 safely deposited in my pocket I went out for a stroll around the town, thinking perhaps I might drop in and get acquainted with one or two of the merchants with whom I proposed to do business in the morning.

But luck was still against me. The show at the town hall was still running—sort of continuous performance for the afternoon and evening, I was informed—and everybody I wanted to see was attending it.

As I idly drifted about I heard many comments on the show. The people who had been at the hall during the afternoon seemed to be unanimous in the opinion that the feats of the jugglers were something really remarkable. The proprietor of the little cigar store which I visited for the purpose of replenishing my stock of Havanas was quite enthusiastic, as well as communicative, over what he had witnessed.

"Why, say, stranger!" he exclaimed, "them fellers can do anything except killing a man and bringing him to life ag'in, and I ain't so plaguey sure they can't do that! And old Rham Chunder, as they call him, is the boss juggler of 'em all. I could set and watch him for a week and not get tired. I'd been at the show yet if I hadn't promised a friend of mine I'd meet him here tonight. Why don't you go down to the hall, stranger, and take it in? You'll find it well worth seeing."

"That may be," said I, "but I don't think I care for any juggler performance to-night. I'd rather sit here and smoke and play euchre for the cigars. What's a juggler show compared to juggling with the pasteboards?"

"Now you're talking!" exclaimed the cigar dealer. "You're the very chap
I'm looking for. My friend will be here in a minute, and we'll have a three-handed game, and the one who comes out last each time will have to buy the cigars for the other two."

The friend showed up on time, and the evening passed off very pleasantly. Soon after ten I got up, paid my score, and set out for the hotel with my pockets filled with cigars, the most of which, by the way, I had paid for myself.

"Well, you got me in a nice scrape," was the salute I received from the landlord upon entering the hotel office. "Room 14 belonged to the head divil of the Hindus, and he wouldn't listen to any explanation. He is upstairs now, standing by the door of the room and waiting to see you about it. He looks ugly, too, and I'm afraid he will be up to some mischief unless he gets his room back. You'd better let me have the key, and I'll go up and apologize and have his things moved back into No. 14 and yours into 13."

"Nary a move," said I with a forced laugh. "I'll interview old Waxworks myself."

I was not particularly anxious to see him, but I was in for it, and I thought I might as well put on a bold front. So, striding out into the hall, I ascended the stairway and approached the door of room 14; but when I reached it I found my further progress blocked by an ebony statue.

Motionless in front of the door, with folded arms and head held defiantly erect, stood the burly form of the Hindu, dressed in the typical costume of his race.

"Ees zis Meester Judd?" he inquired as I halted before him.

"It is, and I would like to enter my room if you will be so kind as to stand aside," said I.

"Ah, but zis ees not your r-room," said he. "Zis ees my r-room and No. 13 ees yours, ees it not?"

"Here," said I, "take these cigars and don't bother me any more, old chap. I want to go to bed."

He stretched forth his hand in silence and took the half a dozen cigars I offered him, held them extended at arm's length a moment while he repeated some meaningless incantation, and then with an angry gesture he flung them to the floor.

"Look!" he exclaimed, pointing. "Zare ees Meester Judd's see-gars. Zey 'fraid an' run away."

I glanced down. The cigars had disappeared, and in their stead six snakes, with heads erect, were rapidly gliding away down the hall.

"Very good," commented I sneeringly, "but I can't stay up the rest of the night to see you go through all your tricks of jugglery. I have already had my money's worth. Here is the regular admission fee, and now if you will allow me to pass into my room I shall be greatly obliged to you."

I held a quarter toward him, and he gravely took it, twisted it up in his fingers as if it had been made of lead, then sent it spinning to the darkest corner of the hall. The next instant a big bat sprang up from the corner where the coin had landed and came blundering down the hallway, almost brushing against my face as it passed me. I heard its wings flapping until it reached the farther end of the hall, and then there was a sound as of a coin jingling on the floor and the flapping suddenly ceased.

"Pity you haven't a larger audience," said I still sneeringly. "It is too bad to waste your talent on me, especially as I am not at all impressed by it. I've seen pretty fair magicians before I met you. Herrmann or Kellar could either of them beat anything you've done yet."

"Alrite, meester, I waste no more tal-ent. Ze nex' treeeck I do Meester
Judd remember, I t'ink," and his white teeth showed in a grin that sent the cold shivers racing up and down my spinal column.

I didn't more than half like his looks at that moment, and it struck me that it would be prudent to give in and end the dispute without further arousing his resentment.

"Ah!" said he. "I see Meester Judd is afraid. He vill now gif up ze room what belongs not to him, eh?"

I flushed hotly at the imputation of cowardice, and decided now to stand my ground at all hazards. As I remarked before, I was several years younger then and less prudent perhaps than I am now.

"I shall not give up my room on account of your hocus-pocus or veiled threats, my deaf-fingered friend," said I angrily, "and you might as well understand it first as last. I have the key to room 14, and I propose to sleep there if the devil flies away with me before morning! I almost wish he would. Anything to get out of this hole!"

"Alrite; meester shall haf his vish! Pass on; ze room is yours!" and with folded arms and face as impassive as that of the Sphinx the swarthy figure stepped aside and allowed me to pass.

"Thank you," said I with mock politeness, and then unlocking the door I entered the room, carefully closing and locking the door behind me. Ten minutes later I was in bed and—not asleep! Somehow I found it much harder than usual to compose my mind to slumber that night. As a rule I drop to sleep as soon as my head touches the pillow, but instead of doing so upon this occasion I fell to thinking of the tall Hindu and wondering if he had gone to bed in room 13, or whether he was still standing on guard outside my door. I imagined I could hear him breathing, and once or twice I was almost sure I heard the sound of whispering in the hall.

CHAPTER II.

It must have been an hour before my faculties quieted down and I finally fell asleep, and even then my rest was broken by strange dreams in which my friend, the Hindu juggler, played a prominent part.

Twice I awoke with a sudden start and sprang up in bed, listening intently, but the only sound I heard was the furious thumping of my own heart. Each time before I awoke I seemed to feel that there was some one in the room, but as soon as I was fully awake this feeling would gradually pass off, leaving me in a cold sweat and weak as an infant.

The second time I was awakened in this way I waited until the feeling of alarm had subsided, then I got up, and, striking a match, looked under the bed and in every corner of the room, but discovered nothing. I also examined the fastenings of the door, and found them just as I had left them.

"Hang the infernal juggler!" said I to myself. "He's got me as nervous and scary as an old woman. But I'm going to do some sleeping the rest of the night in spite of him." And I plunged into bed once more and rolled over on the pillow and slept like a saw log until daybreak the next morning.

The first thing I noticed when I awoke was that the ceiling of the room looked strangely low. Apparently it had dropped down about two feet during the night.

"That's queer," said I, stretching my hands up toward it, and then I noticed another strange thing: the shirt sleeves in which my arms were incased were of faded blue flannel, and not overclean at that, instead of the dainty linen I had worn upon retiring.
“Great Scott!” I ejaculated, springing out of bed and staring wonderingly around a room in which everything was strange to my vision. The bed, the location of the window and door, the furnishings, all were different from that of the room in which I had gone to sleep the night before.

Upon retiring I had hung some of my garments up and piled the rest in an orderly manner on a chair near the bed. Now, in place of them, in a tumbled heap on the floor beside the bed, lay a ragged and dirty suit of clothes, a slouch hat, and a pair of coarse shoes.

I looked for my sample case and grip. They were gone!

I glanced into the small mirror over the mantel, but I hardly recognized the face that I saw there as my own. I had omitted to shave the day before, and the red stubble on my chin and cheeks, combined with the dingy flannel shirt and unbrushed hair, made me look more like a tramp in hard luck than a respectable and prosperous traveling man.

“Well,” soliloquized I, “that confounded juggler has shunted me off into room 13 all right, but he might at least have left my things alone.”

I looked around for a call bell connecting with the office, but, finding none, I began thumping on the door with my fist, thinking to attract attention in that way, and after a long time, as it seemed to me, I succeeded in doing so.

Some one came grumbling along the hallway, halted at the door upon which I was pounding, and sung out:

“Well, what’s wanted inside there? And who the dickens are you, anyhow?”

“I am Mr. Judd, and I want to see the landlord of this establishment at once,” I replied somewhat testily.

“Well, here I am. Open the door if you want to see me,” said the voice outside.

I unbolted and flung open the door, and there before me stood, not the man I expected to see, but a perfect stranger with a look of astonishment and inquiry on his face.

“You are not the person I asked for,” said I with as much dignity as I could command under the circumstances, clad as I was only in my native modesty and a blue flannel shirt which had evidently been made for a much shorter man than myself. “I wish to see the proprietor of this hotel, of whom I hired room 14 last night.”

“I am the proprietor of the hotel,” replied the stranger brusquely, “and I never let a room to you or saw you before in my life. Besides, this is not room 14, but 13; and now I would like to know who you are and how you got here. If you are a tramp you are not a very shrewd one to attempt a game of this sort, unless you are looking for free board and lodgings in his majesty’s prison.”


“So it does, I believe,” was the reply, “but you are a good ways from Pennsylvania, my friend. This is Queensville Crossing, Canada, and the room you are occupying is No. 13 in the Royal Lion Inn; and now I’d like to be paid for your night’s lodging and receive an explanation as to how you came here.”

“As to that, I am as much in the dark as you are,” said I earnestly; “I went to sleep last night in room 14 in the Eagle House, at Hillsdale Junction, Pennsylvania, and I supposed I was in the same hotel yet, though some one has played a smart trick on me by exchanging clothing with me and shoving me into another room while I was asleep.”
The man frowned ominously.

"Come, come," he said, "that yarn of yours won't wash! You might as well get on the rest of your clothes and I'll call in an officer and have you taken before a magistrate and let you tell your story to him; that is, unless you can pay for your lodging and give a better account of yourself. Come, make up your mind quick what you're going to do!"

I was too dazed to make any reply. The more I tried to grasp the situation the more hopelessly confused I became. My mind seemed to stagger and reel like a drunken man. A blank, black wall had suddenly closed in around me and I was left groping in darkness. "Am I going mad?" I asked myself. "Or is this only a horrible dream?"

"Come, look alive in there!" shouted the man at the door. "Get your clothes on and come along."

Mechanically I began dressing myself in the tattered garments piled by the bedside. When I had finished I opened the door and stepped into the hall, where the landlord was awaiting my appearance.

He led the way to the office, adjoining the barroom on the first floor, and in silence I followed him. The location of the stairway, the plan of the ground floor, the size of the rooms; in short, everything about the place was entirely different from that of the hotel in which I had retired to rest the night before. Stunned as I was, I noticed all this, though, strange to say, it excited no wonder in my mind. My intellect had fallen into such a state of hopeless bewilderment and helplessness that it was no longer capable of anything except blind submission.

An officer was called in and my pockets were searched, but I made no protest. I accepted the indignity as a matter of course; as a penalty which had been imposed upon me by circum-
stances and which I was powerless to avert.

Questions were showered upon me, but I was too dazed to answer intelligibly or even fully comprehend their import. As in a dream I saw faces surrounding me and heard voices addressing me, but that was all. I did not realize what was said nor attempt to reply.

It was only when the officer placed his hand upon my shoulder and in harsh tones ordered me to come with him that the spell was broken. Then, with a sudden thrill of terror, I awoke to a realization of the fact that I was under arrest. But for what crime? What had I done? So far as I knew I had committed no overt act, yet here I was in the grasp of the law like a common criminal. The shock brought me to myself. My dream was over. The time for action had come.

"Unhand me!" I cried. "I will not submit to arrest without a warrant. What is the charge against me?" I demanded, turning to the landlord. "I have committed no crime. Last night I retired to rest in a certain room in a hotel in the State of Pennsylvania; this morning I find myself, stripped of my rightful clothing and baggage, in an entirely different room in this hotel, which you tell me is located in the Dominion of Canada. I have no idea how I got here, but I wish to warn you that I am a citizen of the United States, and——"

"Never mind that," interrupted the officer. "I can't waste time listening to such a mess of nonsense; you can tell the rest of it when you get into court."

"I can obtain confirmation of my story if you will allow me to send a message to the landlord of the Eagle House, at Hillsdale Junction, Pennsylvania, and I would also like to wire for funds to my employer in Philadelphia."
"The magistrate will settle all that. Come on!" He again placed his hand on my shoulder, but I shook it off, and, springing aside, seized a heavy chair and raised it threateningly over my head.

"Stand back and allow me to leave this room or I will brain you!" I shouted, advancing toward him. I was desperate and meant just what I said.

The officer hastily stepped back to avoid my fierce onslaught, and as he did so his heel caught on a projecting nail or splinter in the flooring and he toppled backward and went down with a crash, measuring his length on the floor, and the next instant I had dropped the chair, bolted through the nearest door, and was off down the street.

I had covered an entire block before the discomfited officer reached the street and started after me, but he raised such a hue and cry that he soon had half a dozen pursuers at my heels. To give them the slip, if possible, I turned down a steep side street and ran swiftly toward a railroad track, which I saw before me only a few rods distant. I could hear a train approaching, and I remember thinking that if I could get across the track ahead of the train it would cut off my pursuers for a time and give me an opportunity to hide from them or perhaps escape altogether.

It was a desperate chance, as the train was not more than two hundred feet from the crossing when I first caught sight of it; but I determined to try it.

With an almost superhuman burst of speed I fairly flew over the ground until I reached the track, then I stumbled and fell in front of the oncoming engine. An unearthly shriek sounded in my ears, I felt myself flying through space—and then everything grew blank!

CHAPTER III.

When I again recovered consciousness I found myself in bed in a partially darkened room, with aching bones and muscles and a stiffness throughout my body and limbs as if I had been thoroughly pounded by a professional pugilist.

"Hello, old man; I guess you're all right yet!" exclaimed a familiar voice as I opened my eyes, and, looking up, I recognized the landlord of the Eagle House at Hillsdale Junction, Pennsylvania, and realized that I was back in my old room once more.

"Yes, he's all right," said a voice on the opposite side of the bed. "All he needs now is plenty of rest and good care for a few days. But you will have to keep a little watch for the present to see that he doesn't wander off in another fit of somnambulism."

"All right, doctor; I'll attend to that," replied the landlord, and a few moments later the physician packed up his drugs and instruments, and, with a cheery "Good-by," took his departure.

After he had gone I turned to the landlord and asked what day of the week it was.

"Sunday," he replied.

"And I've been here since Friday night, have I?"

"Part of the time—yes."

"I know; and the rest of the time I was in Canada. But now the question is, how did I get there and how did I get back here again?"

"I'm sure I don't know what you are talking about," said the landlord. "You haven't been out of this township, let alone in Canada. Your mind appears to be somewhat muddled yet, but I don't wonder at it after what you've been through. Perhaps I'd better call the doctor back to give you a soothing draft."

"No, don't do that; but please tell me all that has happened since Friday,"
night. What has become of the Hindus? Have they gone?"

“Yes, they left with their baggage on the first train Saturday morning right after breakfast. As their train passed the crossing by Smith's brickyard the workmen in the yard saw a man spring in front of the train, where he was struck by the engine and rolled down the bank into the ditch. He was picked up at once and carried into Mr. Smith's office, and a doctor was summoned. In the meantime my chambermaid had reported that you were missing from your room, and as soon as I heard of the accident at the brickyard I went down there and at once recognized you in spite of your being dressed in a coarse, dirty suit of clothing such as a tramp might wear.

“The garments you had on were soaked, as if you had been out wandering about in the rain the most of the night, though for that matter they might have got wet from your tumble into the ditch, as I understand it was partly filled with water at the time of the accident.

“Upon recognizing you I had you brought back to your room, of course, and before opening your eyes a few minutes ago you had been lying here unconscious just twenty-four hours. It was a sort of cataleptic spell brought on by great exhaustion, followed by sudden shock, the doctor says, but you are all right now, and will be on the road again as lively as ever inside of a week. And now, while I think of it, why did you speak a few minutes ago of being in Canada? Had you been dreaming of being there?”

“Yes, it was either a dream, or, what is more probable, a case of bedevilment on the part of that boss Hindu you had here. You know I beat him out of his room Friday night, but he evidently evened up matters by hypnotizing me and putting me through a mighty thrilling and disagreeable series of adventures—all imaginary, of course, but which seemed as real to me from first to last as anything I ever experienced in my life.”

I then went on and gave the landlord a full account of the scene between the juggler and myself before I had retired on Friday night; of how I had wakened—as it seemed to me—the next morning in a strange room in a strange hotel; of my interview with the proprietor and final arrest; of my desperate attempt to escape, ending in being struck by the train and losing consciousness.

“And now,” said I, in conclusion, “how do you account for it all? Did my Hindu friend to punish me send my astral body on a trip to Canada, or did he simply hypnotize me and cause me to imagine I had been there? And, finally, how do you account for the old clothes in which I was dressed when picked up, and how did I get out of this room and down to the railroad track, a half mile away, without being seen by any one until just as the train struck me?”

“It’s all a mystery. Give it up,” remarked the landlord sententiously, and after considerable hard thinking I was reluctantly compelled to do the same.

But a few days later, when I was on the road once more, some sudden impulse moved me to write—and send the following message:

LANDLORD, Royal Lion Inn, Queensville Crossing, Canada.

Did strange man in blue flannel shirt and coarse suit occupy room 13 at your hotel night of 13th inst.? Answer by mail, care Syndicate Drygoods and Notions Company, Philadelphia. RICHARD JUDD.

I had no expectation of receiving any reply, unless, perchance, the telegraph company might take the trouble to notify me that my message was undelivered on account of there being no such hotel in Queensville Crossing.
But, strange to relate, when I reached Philadelphia a week later, I found a letter from the landlord of the Royal Lion Inn awaiting my arrival. This is what he wrote me:

ROYAL LION INN,
QUEENSVILLE CROSSING, CANADA.
September 25, 1907.

DEAR SIR: Party described by you occupied room 13 on the night you mention. Not registered. Found him in room next morning. No idea how he got there. Had him arrested as suspicious character. Escaped from officer later and mysteriously disappeared—without settling hotel bill. Last seen running across railway track in front of train. If you are a friend of his please remit one dollar for night's lodging and oblige, yr obedient servant,

J. BRADDOX.

P. S.—The police officer and several other reliable witnesses all say they saw the engine strike the party in question fairly and squarely, as he ran in front of the train after breaking away from the officer; but not a sign of him, either dead or alive, could be found after train had passed, and the railway officials report no one having been killed or injured on the line that day. I am curious to learn how your friend (if friend he is) managed his get-away so cleverly. Any explanation you can furnish, along with the dollar, will be gratefully received.

J. B.

I sent on the dollar—minus the explanation.

Indeed, what reasonable explanation could I offer? No one outside of the booby hatch would believe me if I related the unvarnished truth regarding my interview, or rather dispute, with the Hindu juggler and what happened to me afterward.

The facts, as I recall them, are seemingly incredible, even to myself, yet I am fully convinced that they occurred just the same, exactly and precisely as I have here set them down. But when I try to figure out just how that confounded juggler managed his little hocus-pocus, presto-change act, of which I was the unwilling victim, I find myself up against a blank wall, with no scaling ladder handy and the solution of the mystery as far away as ever.

SUCCESS

SUCCESS is the beacon of every young man who possesses enough energy to have the right to call himself a man. But no real man ever succeeds. There is always a greater goal beyond.

To those who will there is always the consciousness within that tells them how much better they might have done. This is a sign of growth.

No matter to what height you climb look ever beyond and above. You will be a miserable scapegoat if you reach a place where you can be thoroughly content.

I know a man who became signally successful in business. He wished to retire. In fact, did so. What happened? He found himself stagnating. His mind was going to sleep. His body was withering away.

What did he do?

He went back into his old business at the age of sixty, and to-day is the possessor of a second fortune. He is now seventy-two.
The Poniard of Charlotte Corday

By

Francois de Valliente

Paris, March 16, 1919.

I shall assassinate Monsieur Clément-Corday, "Tiger of France." I do not wish to do it, but ever since my father, on his deathbed, gave me the poniard of Charlotte Corday handed down in my family since it was secreted by my ancestor who helped in her arrest, I have felt an inordinate desire to kill men in high places. I do not understand this obsession. My whole soul revolts against such crime. But I am in the hands of a fate I cannot control. I am writing this diary to exculpate myself in the eyes of the world should I do this most foul murder upon a man whom I love and respect.


I have seen him—Monsieur Clément-Corday—and hate, hate with the hate of the damned! Yet I know that in my innate soul I do not hate, but am impelled to the emotion by irrevocable decree. Perchance it is the curse on the dagger pronounced by Charlotte when she slew Marat in his bath. I do not know. God save me from this deed!


To-day I bought a dummy figure of life size, such as are used in windows of clothing shops to display garments as they would appear when donned by men. I spent two hours hollowing out the left breast of the dummy. This hollow I filled with a huge, boneless ham, smoked until it almost was black. First I trimmed it to fit into the hollow, exactly as a carpenter might dovetail a joint of wood. Before I chose the ham as a medium I had considered and discarded as impracticable such fillings as cement, plaster, or putty. Nor was beef acceptable. I chose the ham because it will last longer without putrefying. For two hours more I practiced thrusting Charlotte's poniard into this fleshy breast, having first covered it with cloth painted with lines to represent human ribs and outlining behind...
the ribs the exact location of the heart. I wish to make sure of my aim. When I strike Monsieur Clémenceau shall die!

PARIS, March 26, 1919.

Forty times out of forty-five I struck with unerring precision straight between the diagrammed rib marks into the heart of my dummy. But this is not sufficiently accurate. I must be more expert, letter-perfect, in my thrust at the heart. Strange, but even with all this thrusting and despite my effort to polish the poniard blade, a spot remains upon it. It seems like a rust spot. But I surmise it is the blood of Marat which dried into, and remained on, the weapon. Otherwise it is as bright and keen, sharp-pointed and deadly, as when it bit the heart of Corday's victim.

PARIS, March 29, 1919.

Monsieur Clémenceau dies to-morrow! To-day I struck true every time I thrust with the poniard. I have arranged with Monsieur Gaston Boudin-noir for an interview with the "Tiger." Little does he dream what awaits! And yet—I wonder at my calm cruelty and deliberate preparation. I find myself hating myself for the dastardly thing I am about to do. It is the curse of Charlotte Corday on the poniard; it can be nothing else than this curse which drives me to do this foul deed.

Etienne Desmorts frowned as he read these entries in his diary. He shook his head.

"It is not enough!" he muttered. "I must practice more—with my dummy clothed. I had not thought of that."

Desmorts closed his diary, rose from his desk, and secreted the little book of memoirs in a closet built into the wall. From the closet he produced a coat somewhat the worse for wear. With this he went to the dummy standing in a corner near the window of his room. Without much difficulty he adjusted it on the form, then sniffed as an odor of decaying meat greeted his nostrils.

"I must get another ham," he muttered with a grimace. "This one—" He shrugged.

Desmorts was a dapper little Frenchman, not more than five feet five inches tall, but every inch of him steely muscle. His brown eyes were more nearly black. The dainty mustache of an exquisite adorned his upper lip. His wavy hair of raven hue surmounted a high, fine forehead and a face almost spiritual in its delicacy. Etienne's small ears were set high. His teeth, which his lips had bared in grimacing, were in two perfectly aligned rows, which evidenced scrupulous use of a brush. His hands were small, but strong.

As he picked up the poniard which had been Charlotte Corday's, and prepared to strike through the coat at the dummy's breast, the knuckles of his right hand were white with the tension of his powerful grip on its hilt. Stepping to one side, Desmorts lunged with the dagger. It sank deeply into the flesh of the ham. Etienne withdrew the blade and opened the coat.

"Ah—" he murmured. "Perfect!"

In the painted-cloth diagram was a fresh cut cleanly made between two picture ribs and into the heart. Etienne closed the coat and struck at it again and again, from every possible angle—upward, downward, from left, from right, and obliquely. For each time he hit he opened the coat to inspect the "wound" he had made in the diagram. It was a slow, tedious process, nor was it light labor. Etienne's brow was glistering with perspiration and his hair was matted on his forehead.

"Forty true hits out of forty-one," he totaled ecstatically. "No need to delay longer. I needn't buy another ham, either."

Blithely he washed, then sprayed co-
Logne in the air from an atomizer, so that the stench of decaying ham no longer was noticeable in the apartment.

"No need for delay," he repeated.
"To-morrow—I strike! To-day—now—a stroll on the Champs."

Etienne Desmorts carefully locked the door of his room, one of many in the Pension des Messieurs whose front faced on the new Rue les Croix de Guerre. Sauntering down a narrow corridor to a stairway, he descended two flights into a long hall leading to the exit of the big lodging house.

His heart was light within him: A smile in his eyes, he ogled many a pretty girl as he strolled the Champs Elysees. Many a sweet smile he received in return, for Etienne had a winning way which few women could resist. But his smiles were more from force of habit than from an immediate desire to arrange an assignation. His hand must be steady. His purpose must not be disturbed by wild indulgences which might cause nervousness. Afterward—if he were successful and escaped—he could enjoy life as he would.

No man looked less the assassin than did Etienne Desmorts as he gayly promenaded, greeting with a smile every acquaintance and friend who chanced to cross his path. It was evident, from their cordiality, that he was a general favorite even among men.

In a cafe he sat at a table and sipped absinth disguised with red wine. For, although a ban has been placed by France upon the sale of absinth, the law is winked at and made a national mockery. Despite Etienne's determination to avoid whatever might unnerve his hand, the absinth was so palatable and his mental strain was so great that one glass led to another—another—a fourth ere he realized he must cease such madness on the eve of his great enterprise.

Yet another glass he imbibed—to steady himself, as he argued in excuse. But this glass began to make Etienne feel exuberant. He was on the threshold of an achievement which would rid him forever of the curse on Charlotte's poniard. One stroke of its keen blade would end the haunting spell it had cast upon him. Clémenceau's blood must flow! That other fool who had tried to assassinate the premier with bullets had been careless. Evidently he had not practiced as had Etienne for the ordeal, else the task would not have been left for another who held no hate.

But Desmorts did hate—for so he had written. But it was not a personal hate. It was a hate inspired by Charlotte Corday's poniard. He dwelt upon this point insistently, until his thoughts began to grow hazy from the effects of the absinth.

Etienne's step was unsteady as he wended homeward. Without undressing he flung himself on his bed, and soon was snoring, prey to fitful dreams and horrid nightmares which caused him to live through scenes yet to be enacted, and to voice wild thoughts in tones louder than the caution of consciousness would have permitted him to use.

II.

In the room next Etienne's, Lucien Duvallais pressed an ear against the thin partition separating the two apartments. Lucien's face was full of horror as he listened to the ravings of Desmorts.

"When I thrust Monsieur Clémenceau dies!" came Etienne's voice. "Unhappy poniard . . . goad to ruin! . . . I don't hate! . . . Hate worse than fiends . . . devils . . . devils . . . green . . . blinding glare . . . poor 'Tiger,' I won't hurt you. . . . Die, monster! . . . Oh-h! . . . Guillotine!"

Followed a wild shriek of delirium which made the listener shrink and shudder in pallid fear.

Waiting to hear no more, Duvallais
rushed from his apartment and down-
stairs. In the hall he telephoned
French secret-service headquarters.
Lucien informed the department that
he had suspected Etienne contemplated
crime from the moment he saw his
fellow lodger in the pension receive the
dummy figure into his apartment. Then
he had heard the dull thuds of a dagger
as it was wielded against the form by
Etienne. This, followed by mauldine
talk, had caused him to notify the de-
partment to act.

The voice on the other end of the
wire thanked Duvallais. A sharp click
greeted Lucien as the secret-service
man hung up his receiver. Lucien went
upstairs, his heart fluttering at thought
of what impended.

Suppose he were wrong? Suppose
it were but a nightmare? How would
Etienne greet him thereafter? He
would have lost a pleasant acquaint-
anceship. How could Desmorts have
become homicidal in his tendencies?
Lucien could not understand it. But
Monsieur Clémencet's life was needed
for France. It must not be sacrificed
to the designs of a man suddenly
turned maniac. Even if Etienne's
words were those of nightmare it were
best to safeguard “The Tiger of
France” against even a dream’s sug-
gestion. Comforted by the thought,
Lucien feverishly awaited the advent
of the bloodhounds of France.

They were not long in arriving—
three of them—tall, powerful, deter-
mained men. They entered Lucien's
apartment, and with him listened
against the wall between the two apart-
ments.

Etienne still was raving. “To-mor-
row—he dies!” His voice was more
a heavy moan. “Charlotte... don't!
... Don’t look at me that way!...
Turn... God! You smile!...”
Ah-h!... Fiend!... Clémencet-
die! When I thrust... farewell!”

It was enough. The three men tip-
toed from Etienne’s apartment and into
the hall. Then, with three burly shoul-
ders hard pressed against Etienne’s
door, they burst in.

As though warned by some presci-
ence in dream, Desmorts had awakened
and was sitting up in bed. His right
hand grasped the hilt of the poniard
of Charlotte Corday, poised ready to
strike. The detectives rushed toward
him, drawing revolvers. Etienne gave
a despairing cry. Then, with swift,
unerring aim, he lifted the dagger of
Charlotte Corday—and plunged it deep
into his heart!

Clémencet was saved!

Etienne’s diary was found by the trio
after a diligent search of the whole
apartment. The dummy figure in his
room was stripped of the coat Desmorts
had placed upon it. The crude dia-
gram of ribs and heart was revealed
on the cloth he had utilized for the
purpose. Beneath it, foul in odor and
sliced almost to ribbons by the many
thrusts of the poniard, the sleuths found
the ham. It were ridiculous were it
not so tragic in its significance.

Plucking the poniard from the sui-
cide’s heart and taking it, the diary,
and the dummy form with them, the
three ordinarily attired gendarmes of
the most efficient police department in
Europe went down the stairs and to
their automobile against the curb out-
side.

Lucien was warned to say nothing,
as it was feared publicity might inspire
another attack on Monsieur Clémencet
or affect him in his convalescence from
the bullet wounds inflicted in the pre-
vious attempt on his life. The cen-
sorship tightened around the details
concerning the finding of the popular
Monsieur Etienne Desmorts stabbed to
death in his apartment in the Pension
des Messieurs.

To the world the police gave a tale
of murder and their hunt for the slayer
of Desmorts. But in the private ar-
chives of the secret service of France are set forth the details in the thwarting of a crime which might have affected the whole world’s policies, and in its Chamber of Horrors are the hollowed-chest dummy and Etienne’s diary.

Having obtained possession of Charlotte Corday’s poniard cursed with the anathema of Marat’s slayer, the French government pondered what to do with the weapon. It was deemed inadvisable to permit its sinister influence again to wreck men’s minds. Its history was traced. One member in every generation of the Desmorts family, it was learned, had been either a murderer, a suicide, or a criminal ever since the poniard was taken from the blood-reeking hands of Charlotte Corday.

After many plans for its disposal had been offered, considered, and rejected it was decided to destroy the malign blade. But how destroy it? That was the question. One suggested casting it into the Seine, amid appropriate ceremonies. Another would have buried it. The ocean as a grave, for it likewise was mentioned. Smelting it into steel with other ore seemed to be the happiest solution. Thus smelted into an ingot or pig of steel, it would remove entirely any possibility of the poniard’s future use as a weapon. This disposition, therefore, was decided upon.

With other odds and ends of iron and steel the poniard of Charlotte Corday was cast into the crucibles of the Longuevriere Steel Company of Paris. The government breathed easier. It believed the curse was ended and that Charlotte’s poniard would bring harm no more.

III.

The steel revenue cutter La Marne, fitted with a new boiler made by the Longuevriere Steel Company of Paris, left her dry dock in Marseilles and steamed out into the Mediterranean. Her new boiler was the last word in modern construction. It had been inspected, and had withstood the maximum pressure test applied in such inspections.

Captain Raoul Cartier and his engineer, Jacques Dulait, were well pleased with the excellent adjunct to their craft, which had been thoroughly overhauled in dry dock. They could attain a speed heretofore impossible with the discarded boiler.

Since the armistice France had turned a vigilant eye toward her coasts to prevent smuggling. The Marseilles district, as always, was especially notorious for the traffic in contraband.

Cartier had been given strictest orders to halt any suspicious craft and, if necessary, to fire on any which might flee an inspection. Several vessels were stopped, examined, and permitted to proceed. It was a monotonous grind of routine duty. But the third day marked a break in the monotony.

A rakish steam yacht hove in sight, every line of her built for speed. Captain Cartier viewed this craft with deep interest through his binoculars.

“We shall see,” he muttered, signaling Dulait for more speed.

Under heavier pressure the La Marne darted like a thing alive through the Mediterranean swells, straight toward the yacht. The stranger evidently had no intention of submitting to an overhauling. No sooner had the French revenue cutter put on speed toward her than the yacht made a swift turn about and fairly flew through the seas.

Mile after mile went pursuer and pursued, without any appreciable gain by the La Marne. Captain Cartier, by means of a tube to the engine room, bade Dulait to add more speed.

“Up to maximum now,” was the purport of Dulait’s reply. “Can’t stand another pound of pressure.”

“We must!” raged the captain.
“Else they escape. More speed—more speed!”

Downstairs Dulait scrutinized his gauges. More speed meant more steam, more pressure on the new boiler already strained some pounds beyond the maximum test pressure it could withstand. It were next door to suicide to add more. But—— Dulait shrugged. It was duty. The captain wanted more speed. He must have it, if every man aboard die for it!

Working like Trojans, Dulait and his firemen soon had steam so high that the engineer momentarily feared an explosion.

“We gain!” shouted Cartier through the tube to cheer Dulait. “But ten minutes more, Dulait! Ten minutes more!”

Nervous with dread, Dulait watched the ever-climbing gauge. Sacré! If ever he got through this alive—never again would he risk this pressure! Yet he knew that he would risk it—because it would be for France—France, the glorious, the unconquerable, the white flame of imperishable honor!

Five minutes later a gun boomed overhead. Cartier had opened fire on the fleeting yacht. But he still was too far off for his necessarily light artillery to reach.

“Just a little faster!” he implored Dulait.

The La Marne literally bounded forward in response to Dulait’s desperate effort to win for his captain.

“Two minutes more, Dulait!” feverishly shouted Cartier. “Two minutes—and our guns bite!” But his guns never bit.

With a frightful roar the overstrained boiler burst, almost cracking the cutter in two. Captain Cartier was cast flat on his face, unconscious. Four of his crew were blown skyward, dead, Dulait among them.

Under her own momentum the La Marne staggered forward many feet, then drifted and began to settle by the head so quickly that when she took her last plunge she carried with her the remaining members of her unconscious, ill-starred crew.

Dulait’s body was found by an expedition sent to search for the missing La Marne. From his breast protruded a thin, triangular-shaped piece of steel, not unlike an ancient dagger’s blade. Its point had found his heart.

The searchers plucked out the metal and cast it overboard. To them there seemed no reason for keeping it or leaving it imbedded in poor Dulait’s heart.

But when the story of the La Marne’s engineer was told in France, together with the display of débris from the ill-fated cutter, certain high officials in the secret service shuddered.

For into the steel of the La Marne’s boiler had been smelted the poniard of Charlotte Corday! And who can say the steel in Dulait’s heart was not the same as that which ended the career of Marat in those long-ago days of the French Revolution?

The facts are told. Is the curse now dead? The years that lie ahead only can tell.

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A LITTLE flea sat on a rock,
Making a miserable sound.
He didn’t know what to do with himself,
There being no dog around.
CARROLL was uncomfortable. He had the feeling that the four walls about him made him their prisoner. The stillness, the delicate odor of flowers standing dimly in a far corner, the magnificent draperies that hung like shadows on all sides, the air of mystery which seemed to lurk even in the harmless ticking of a clock down the hall— it all puzzled him. His was a direct nature. He was unaccustomed to the subtle ways of the East. But the command had gone forth that he must see her, and, unafraid of anything, as he usually was, he had accepted his orders quietly.

Many moments passed in a sort of desolate stillness amid all the luxury. A master hand had evidently decorated the chamber. Each detail, unpretentious in itself, melted like the tones of a symphony into the whole. It was as though the owner of the place had created a separate and individual universe all his own.

Carroll had wondered from the very beginning. He recalled distinctly the bowing servant who ushered him cautiously up the wide staircase, throwing open the heavy door with one sweep of his arm. He had stood for a moment on the threshold, puzzled, distraught. If it hadn’t been that he was acting under orders he would have turned back. But he cursed himself for being too imaginative and entered. He was on trial, so to speak, and it was important that he appear courageous even if he were not.

He sat in a chair somewhat away from a large, open fireplace where a fire slumbered among the red coals, casting a mysterious light over a pair of velvet curtains that hung solemnly near him. His idea was that a door lay beyond.

The room’s silence was what managed to set his nerves on edge. If there was any one behind him in the darkness they made no sound. He thought he had heard the light scraping of a shoe on the rung of a chair a little while before, but dismissed the thought from his mind.

Suddenly his ears caught a faint sound beyond the curtains. He grew tense. Was it possible that she might come through them? This held him interested above all else. His eyes swept back and forth across the folds of velvet. They lingered for a moment on what appeared to be a shining jewel. From this point they did not stir, for the seeming jewel was immediately followed by a finger and then the most sensitive hand he had ever seen. It hung in the curtains like a white rose half lost in the moonlight. For a second he wasn’t sure but what it was a rose. But there now appeared the slenderness of an arm and a cool throat around which a necklace of jewels clung and glittered.

Carroll couldn’t move. His arms had tightened on the chair and he sat like a piece of carved stone. So much depended on what he should do—what he must say. His whole future depended on the decision made in the next few moments; at least, that was the way he felt then.

As he gazed upon her dead white face he caught his first glimpse of the gown—a shimmering, dark affair that followed her supple body closely until it seemed lost in the darkness that hung around her feet. Gasping, Carroll leaned forward. It was perfect. He could tell them, but he must convince them! His attention was at this moment drawn away from the lovely creature before him by a loud voice that broke the silence like the crack of a rifle.

“Yawcub, turn on the lights so these nize buyers from the Vest can see the wonderful gowns our house carries. Ah, gentlemen, aint’ this divine?”
How Uncle Sam Musters Out His Soldiers.

To the man in ranks this is the Day of days. He is going home. There is an excuse for sentimentality at this time, and I have all the sympathy in the world for these boys. The War Department looks upon the private with as much favor as it does a general, where records and insurance are concerned. I might go so far as to say that this applies in all cases. After all, each one in the army is a soldier, no matter whether the man has a plain shoulder strap or silver stars.

A careful account must be rendered by officers in the field concerning every man in their detachment or company. This accounting goes through the famous "Military Channels" up to the highest authority, where it is transcribed and kept for future reference. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the morning reports of companies in the Civil War are identical with those kept in this great war, and they have been preserved with as much care as though they were exact evidence of the laws of the Medes and Persians.

With the start of the Great War, or, rather, with the entry of America, the authorities at Washington were confronted with many major problems, one of the greatest of these being a satisfactory method of keeping a record of each man in the service. It might be that the great powers in the army worked out the present system, but I very much doubt it. From an experience of two years, both in the ranks and as an officer, I am inclined to say that the men in the field have really been the instigators and developers of every bit of the system which has been given the name of "Personnel Work."

When a man gets up in the morning in the army his record for the day begins, and it is set down with as much attention to detail from that hour until he retires, as though he were the only man about whom a record was being kept. A roll is called at reveille and still another in the evening when he quits his day's toil. A roster is kept carefully as to his various sicknesses and the causes thereof. Still another roster records his pay, and there are many more rosters for a hundred different purposes. Careful notation is made of the history of this particular individual from the hour which he enters service until he leaves it. A mere catalogue of the forms used would run into the thousands. These forms are divided into classes, the most important being those of the adjutant general's office. These concern enlistments, discharges, deaths, desertions, and routine
matters. The Quartermaster Department naturally keeps a careful watch over its property and its distribution, and the number of forms there are countless. The Medical, Ordnance, Aviation, and all other departments of the army, each with individual pride and necessity, has developed its own system of forms. It is truly amazing how wide in scope and infinite in detail are the regulations that govern the preparation of all forms. To the layman such strict accountability seems strange at first sight. With the gradual growth of admiration for the service, this surprise wears off, and one begins to comprehend the necessity for it all. There have been many criticisms of the means and methods used in the army, but so far I have yet to meet some one who has a better system to put in its place. It may be involved. It may be hard to understand. However, it works. That is the acid test.

The principal bit of paper work is the service record. This is the personal and intimate history of each individual in the ranks. It is a little booklet wherein are recorded the name of the man, his army serial number, his home address, his nearest beneficiary, and description of his person, individual scars, size of shoes, et cetera, followed by an account of his previous enlistments, and then all that happens to him until he dies or is discharged. This booklet accompanies a soldier wherever he goes. If he is court-martialed, this is where the record appears. If he wins a medal in action, if he is wounded in battle it is written down in these pages. For example, if a man deserts, the service record is forwarded to the adjutant general of the army, accompanied by an exact description on another form, and the man is posted as a deserter over the country. At this point it is interesting to note that there have been fewer desertions since the war was declared than before, even though the army has been multiplied forty or fifty times. Eighty-eight percent of the men brought up before court-martial have been convicted. No man has been executed for a purely military offense.

The second document which makes a man's hair turn gray in the service is the pay card. This is a little slip of paper upon which is written the dates when the man is paid. It is signed by the soldier and witnessed by an officer and the Personnel Adjutant, who uses it as a legal document to pay the men. It is natural that extreme care is taken to see that this card is accurate. The Personnel Adjutant is responsible for all payments of troops. If he makes an error of some magnitude and it is shown that it was his fault he pays the bill. When I say that, as Personnel Adjutant, I have prepared rolls for as much as two hundred and fifty thousand dollars some conception may be obtained of the responsibility which the government places upon an officer. Had it not been for the loyal cooperation of the enlisted men, who prepare these rolls, I don't know where I would be at the present moment. Right here I want to say that if the public at large knew of the loyalty of the average man to the service and the amount of work which he is compelled to perform, it would be amazed. At one camp where I was stationed our office never closed. The men went on in shifts, and we formed brigades almost overnight and shipped them off to France with never-failing regularity.

The third record of importance is the allotment blank. This is the form which records the amount of money deducted from the man's pay each month which he gives to his family. The country knows already that Uncle Sam helps the soldier's family by adding to his allotment. A concrete example will explain this should the reader not understand. For instance, a man is mar-
ried and has two children. He is compelled to make an allotment of fifteen dollars for the wife and family. The government adds fifteen dollars for the wife, ten dollars for the first child, and seven dollars and fifty cents for the second, making a total of thirty-two dollars and fifty cents in addition to the man's quota. It is needless to explain that this record is about as important as any. A companion paper to this is the insurance form. On this piece of paper the amount of insurance which a man takes out and the name of the beneficiary are noted. If the man is twenty-eight years old and desires ten thousand dollars War Risk Insurance he pays six dollars and seventy cents a month and this is deducted from his pay. If he should be killed his beneficiary would be paid fifty-seven dollars and fifty cents per month for twenty years.

The next record is the soldier's qualification card. Upon this little piece of cardboard there is painstakingly recorded the man's principal occupation in civilian life and all other occupations in which he has had experience. The purpose of this card is to note what a man's qualifications are so that as far as possible he may be placed in similar work in the army. This card has, in addition, his educational qualifications; his proficiency in foreign languages, if any; his mental and physical status, and the hundred other details necessary to the proper assignment of the man. To explain what this card stands for would take a complete article. This card is prepared after an interview with the man. It has been the efficient instrument by which we have been able to equip and send whole divisions to France in three months, whipping a raw bunch of civilians into soldiers almost overnight.

Now follows a long list of papers. It is unnecessary to list them here. Each one is important in its place and cannot be neglected. When one remembers that all of these papers have got to be prepared in the front-line trenches, as well as in the comfortable offices in Washington, some idea may be obtained of the difficulty of army paper work. The company clerk has to grind away at his typewriter under shell fire. Certain reports have to be made no matter what conditions the company is working under. No excuses are in order. A thing has to be done, and that is all there is to it. Did you ever stop to think of it? The list of casualties is a result of painstaking and long-suffering hours of men working out in the mud and rain and snow, going without their meals and suffering hardships beyond description. It is not a simple matter to do things. That is why the American Army has been the marvel of the world. It has offered an example to other nations which holds one breathless in amazement. I went into the army March, 1917, as a private, and I saw the general development of the system from the very start. Hardened as I have become to its many angles, I have never gotten over my surprise that plain citizens were able to adapt themselves to any conditions, handling highly technical problems, settling them efficiently and speedily, and doing what it has taken generations of Europeans to learn.

Now we come to the day of discharge.

All of these records have to be tested and weighed and investigated. The most minute detail cannot be overlooked. If an error has been found it must be looked into. The importance of these records is great, in view of the fact that when a man returns to civilian life some controversy may arise and the settlement of the case depends on the accuracy of the papers. So when the date of mustering out arrives the first sergeants and company clerks must
buckle down to the hardest kind of work. Each soldier must be paid up to the day he leaves and clear up all shortages in equipment or pay for the losses. He is given a uniform which is allowed to wear for four months. It is then returned to the government. He is instructed concerning his rights under the insurance law. His allotment is stopped. All indebtedness to the government is cleared up. He is given a final physical examination.

The man is then handed a discharge certificate, which shows that he has been honorably separated from the service and is entitled to travel pay to the place where he entered the army. The companies are lined up, the organization commanders make a brief speech to the men, outlining to them what they have gained by their life in the army, cautioning them to remember that discipline is as necessary to the private citizen as it is to the soldier, and wishing them the best of luck in the world. This ceremony is made as impressive as possible, and the reader would be surprised to know that many men regret leaving the ranks, even though the life has been a hard one. The day will come when we will all look back to those months of weary toil with a feeling of cheerfulness that war gave us a chance to buckle down and forget self in the thought of our country.

When the men are gone the papers are bundled together with rosters of the names and are sent to the Adjutant General of the Army for storage. At Washington complete records are kept, and it is possible to pull out at a moment's notice the history of any man.

This outline of how men are discharged from the service should convince the reader for good and all that it is not a simple thing to send our boys back home. There is another thing to remember. Your boy is a better citizen as a result of his experience as a soldier. He has been taught to think of others. Unselfishness is an art, and if he has learned it thoroughly this one thing alone makes the war not so bad a thing after all. Discipline in the American army has not been imposed by higher authority. We have not had to grind our men to death through long years. Our discipline is self-imposed and starts with the men. The American boy takes naturally to his duty. It is easy to teach him how to do things. His mind is nimble and he grasps information with amazing facility. If he comes back to his home with a better conception of his duty to his family, and is satisfied as a result of these months of privation and struggle, the relatives and friends may feel gratified that he has been granted so fine a chance to learn a man's job.

The returning soldier will be the controlling factor in politics for the next generation. What he has learned in the army he will impart to others in civilian life. That is why we take so much trouble when we discharge him to impress upon his mind the dignity of the uniform and the privilege of a soldier to die for things that are larger than his own petty self. America responded to the President almost as one man. She sent her sons gladly, and the thousands who died surely did not die in vain. Let us be thankful that we have been granted an opportunity to prove our worth to the other nations; also that we have lived up to the ideal which knows neither greed nor malice. Let us be thankful that we have been led by a President whose mind comprehends all things. In the parlance of the army "they called us and we came across."

Caring for Disabled Soldiers.

An extensive program of caring for disabled soldiers after their discharge from military service has been announced by the War Risk Insurance
Bureau, which is charged by Congress with this work. Twenty-one hospitals with a capacity of fifteen hundred beds already are in use, and the War Department has turned over to the Treasury seven camp hospitals for care of disability cases. These are to be enlarged and improved out of the nine-million-dollar fund appropriated for hospitals for disabled soldiers to be controlled by the War Risk Insurance Bureau and conducted by the Public Health Service, another Treasury agency.

When treatment in the hospitals of the War Department fails to restore men to such condition that they are fit for active service and they are discharged, the work of the Bureau of War Risk Insurance begins.

Under the provisions of the War Risk Insurance Act all soldiers ten per cent disabled from causes suffered in the line of duty are entitled to compensation and to treatment by the Bureau of War Risk Insurance. Any man disabled in the service and discharged from the service may make application for treatment to the Public Health Service station in his home town or at the nearest station. If immediate treatment is necessary it will be administered by the Public Health Service. If the need for treatment is not immediate the case will be reviewed by the Bureau of War Risk Insurance and assigned to a hospital.

Men who after discharge develop physical disabilities attributable to military service are entitled to treatment. The Bureau of War Risk Insurance may be called upon to care for more than twenty-five thousand cases of men discharged for tubercular tendencies.

The War Department has turned over to the Treasury Department for the care of disability cases hospitals located at Camp Cody, New Mexico; Camp Hancock, Georgia; Camp Joseph E. Johnston, Florida; Camp Beauregard, Louisiana; Camp Logan, Texas; Camp Fremont, California, and at Perryville, Maryland. About seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars will be expended for enlarging and improving these hospitals.

The Treasury Department has purchased the Speedway Hospital in Chicago, with a capacity of fifteen thousand beds. Improvements and changes costing half a million dollars will be made in the hospital, and it is planned to make this hospital a national center of medical study and research.

Portions of the Battle Mountain Sanitarium at Hot Springs, South Dakota, have been taken over for the work of the War Risk Bureau. Another hospital to be taken over is located at Corpus Christi, Texas, while one million five hundred thousand dollars will be expended in the erection of a hospital at Dawson Springs, Kentucky, on land acquired as a gift to the government.

A hospital costing nine hundred thousands dollars will be built at Norfolk, Virginia, and five hundred and fifty thousand dollars has been set aside for the erection of a hospital in or near the District of Columbia. The Marine Hospital at Stapleton, Staten Island, will be taken over, and one hundred and ninety thousand dollars is to be expended in enlargement and improvement.

A Soldier's Friend.

"The Sixty-sixth Congress did practically nothing of real consequence for the American soldiers, either to reward them for their fine work in putting the finishing touch to the Huns or to render them assistance when the time comes for going back to peace-time pursuits."

This was the statement made by Representative Royal C. Johnson, of South Dakota, in answer to the question "What Did the Last Congress Do for the Soldiers?"
“All the talk about passing reconstruction or readjustment legislation to benefit the soldiers ended in just talk,” said Johnson.

Representative Johnson was a soldier in the war, serving in all the grades, from private to captain; served in the House of Representatives before the war was declared, and was discharged from the army and went back to Congress after the armistice was signed. He appears to be in a better position than any other member of Congress to answer the question.

“All that Congress did to benefit the soldiers was to give them two months extra pay upon their discharge and allow them to keep their uniforms,” continued Representative Johnson.

“Congress did nothing in the way of the much discussed reconstruction of legislation, and what reconstruction there has been was carried on by the Federal departments. The work of sending to college after their discharge young men who were taken away from school and put into the army during the war was carried on by the departments. A large number of young men were sent back to college by the government, which paid their expenses.

“But Congress failed to do anything to offer employment for the returning soldiers who had been taken away from steady jobs and who in the majority of cases could not return to them.

“It also failed to adopt a system like that of Canada for giving the soldiers extra pay upon discharge based on the length and character of their service.

“On the contrary, many thousands of the soldiers were brought back and dumped in New York City, instead of provision being made for sending them back to their homes, their families, and their jobs. Many of them are still there, the subjects of charity, and cannot obtain suitable employment there nor get back to where they came from.

“Another woeful omission of Congress was the failure to reform the Articles of War and the court-martial regulations so that an American can serve in the army with a feeling that he will get the measure of justice to which he would be entitled in civil life.”

Representative Johnson is confident that reforms will be effected in the court-martial proceedings and sweeping changes made in the Articles of War by the next Congress. He has already obtained enough pledges from the members of the next Congress to insure these reforms, he said.

Soldiers Saved from Death by President.

Three more death sentences imposed by general court-martial have been commuted by President Wilson. Two of the men had been given the death penalty for willful disobedience of orders, but the third, Aaron H. Smith, was sentenced to death at Camp Greenleaf, Georgia, for having uttered unusually seditious statements.

According to the papers forwarded here, Smith said he “would rather be in a German military prison, under the military heel of Germany, than in the United States army.” On another occasion in the presence of many officers and enlisted men he said that “German atrocity was better than American autocracy.”

Major General Henry G. Sharpe, commander of the Department of the Southeast, recommended that the sentence be commuted to dishonorable discharge and imprisonment for twenty-five years, but President Wilson commuted it to dishonorable discharge and fifteen years at Fort Leavenworth.

The other death sentences commuted were those of Arshag Ashbahain, Company M, Fourth Infantry, to dishonorable discharge and ten years, and Frank
J. Burke, Company A, First Casualty Battalion, dishonorable discharge and fifteen years.

Commutation to fifteen years' imprisonment by President Wilson of death sentences imposed by court-martial on Benjamin Gorski and Gilaro Boki was announced by the War Department. The men were tried at Camp Dix for refusal to obey orders and for desertion.

President Wilson disapproved the sentence of dismissal on Lieutenant Albert D. Smith, charged with attacking another officer with a riding whip in the Pennsylvania Station at New York last June. He ordered the sentence reduced to a reprimand, restriction to camp for six months, and three hundred dollars fine.

Questions and Answers.

PRIVATE J. R.—Question: I was discharged from the army in January, after ten months' service overseas and six months spent in training camps here. Before entering the service I had been a sales clerk in a large provision house, where I had acquired a thorough knowledge of dairy products. But on my return here I was unable to secure my old position, and tried unsuccessfully to get another. Then friends of mine who own a dairy farm in Nebraska wrote offering me work for them. But my home and my people are here, and I should not like to leave them for the West. What should I do? The opportunity offered by my friends is the only one open to me. Should I take it?

Answer: You should know best about this, but it seems to me a wise thing for you to accept the position offered you in view of the fact that it seems difficult to secure one in your own home town.

CORPORAL L. M. F.—Question: Before I went overseas in May, 1918, I had been on friendly terms with a girl of whom I was very fond. I had hoped that when I came back I would ask her to marry me. But she now seems to take no interest whatever in me, and it is just as if we had never been more than acquaintances. She does not even ask me to call on her, and though I am still very fond of her I am not the sort to push myself where I do not know my standing. Please advise me what I should do.

Answer: This is a delicate situation. I think that you should either have a heart-to-heart talk with the girl in question or else drop her altogether from your mind. If she does not care for you surely you do not want to marry her. However, faint hearts never win fair ladies. I would make an attempt to learn the truth from her at least.

SERGEANT S. G.—Question: I was drafted in January, 1918, at the age of twenty-two, went to France soon after, and returned to this country in the spring of 1919. During my absence abroad my mother, who was a widow and with whom I had always lived, had remarried. My stepfather, though an American, was strongly pro-German and a man whom I never liked or got on with. Now I get along even worse with him, and feel that I cannot continue to make my home as I used to with my mother because he is there. I love my mother deeply and should hate to leave her, but feel that for my happiness I must. Do you think I should wait a little longer and hope that things at home will improve?

Answer: It is unfortunate, this situation, and I can only advise you to talk at length with your mother. Perhaps she will understand your position, if you state it fairly and simply. She is entitled to her happiness, but it is to be regretted that she married a man out of sympathy with his own country.

PRIVATE C. N.—Question: I have
lately seen a man I know well who was drafted the same time I was, sent to the same camp, trained in the same outfit, and discharged at the same time. This man was a bugler, and so far as I know never shot an army rifle in his life. But here at home, and still in uniform, I have seen him wearing a sharpshooter's medal. In our camp buglers were not required to drill, go to the rifle range, or stand any of the usual formations. I should like to know where this faker got his medal.

Answer: I would say offhand that your friend is merely adopting an honor to which he is not entitled. Give him fair warning of the dangerous consequences of such an act. It is illegal to wear any military insignia not fairly earned through official channels.

H. P. G.—Question: Since being discharged from the army several months ago I have been receiving each month War Risk Insurance blanks and letters from the government. I had not seen overseas or suffered any injury in service, and thought that in my case the insurance automatically stopped on the date of discharge. Why does the government keep writing to me? I don't want to keep up the insurance and never wrote the government that I did so.

Answer: You are very unwise to give up your insurance. You are allowed six months' grace, and if you cannot assume the same amount you carried while in the army you can at least take up a small portion of it. Write at once to the Bureau in Washington and make arrangements to continue your insurance.

Interested.—Question: What regulations have been drafted covering the equipment that a soldier may keep after discharge?

Answer: Every enlisted man, on discharge, the War Department announced, will be allowed to retain as his personal property the following articles of uniform equipment: Overseas cap (for men with overseas service, hat for others), olive drab shirt, woolen coat and ornaments, woolen breeches, one pair shoes, one pair leggings, one waist belt, one slicker and overcoat, two suits underwear, four pairs stockings, one pair gloves, one toilet set, one barracks' bag, gas mask and helmet—for overseas men only. Soldiers who have turned in their equipments are authorized to redraw them by applying to the Director of Storage in this city.

The department calls attention to the fact it is unlawful for a discharged soldier to wear the regulation uniform without the red chevrons, which show his connection with the military establishment has been terminated according to law.
THE following letter appeared not long ago in one of the New York dailies. We think it should prove of interest to THRILL BOOK readers:

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR: Is there such a thing as communication with the dead? Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge, intellectual and keenly poised men, whose writings thousands have read with admiration, both assert that they have received communications from their sons, killed in the war. Many wonders that were "fantastic dreams" a few years back are now realities. Man flies thousands of miles; he throws his voice across oceans and continents; he sends messages around the world without wires. I have always been skeptical of happenings or manifestations beyond the ken of demonstrable science. But the modern marvels give me pause. May it not be that a link exists between the finite and infinite that is only a branch of science still in its infancy?

S. V.

We are inclined to agree with the writer of the above letter. We have entirely recovered from our one-time habit of scoffing at what we didn't understand. If men like Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge believe in the unseen, we, at least, feel at liberty to keep open hearts concerning the matter. We have thought about a great deal in the THRILL BOOK. We have published a number of mysterious stories. We have been wondering what our readers thought about the matter. Why not start some thought along these lines? If you are interested in any occult or mysterious philosophy, why not write to us? We will print the best letters we receive and open up some of the pages in the THRILL BOOK to this discussion. Candidly, it will be as much for our own information as for yours.

The psychic field is enormous and amazing in its wide spread and in its ramifications. To doubt that much of psychic claim has full proof may be imbecile. Mind-reading, mental telepathy, and a hundred significant phe-
nomena are established to our minds
beyond dispute, as are the everyday
parts of material industries. What is
needed more than anything else is an
intelligent discussion of the many sides
of the questions.

Are the dead with us? There is a
good question to ask. There are people
who scoff and those who claim they are
not interested. But many of these are
either poseurs or tellers of untruths.
It is the one subject which every one
discusses sooner or later.

Let our readers discuss this matter
publicly in The Thrill Book. We
will be glad to publish the best letters
from both sides, provided they do not
exceed three hundred words.

How little we really know about the
unseen world of science! Only
now and then word comes to the lay-
man of some marvelous discovery that
sets the world afire. It was so with
radium, wireless telephones, the tank.
We knew nothing about them until they
were in use. This is only natural. Sci-
ence is a study that requires a lifetime
to master, and even then the stu-
dent realizes that he has only gathered
a few of the fundamentals together.
We, personally, are rather interested
in the development of the dramatic
angles of science, and when the rapid-
fire novelette, “A Thousand Degrees
Below Zero,” by Murray Leinster, came
into our hands we jumped at the chance
to put it in The Thrill Book. Here
is a writer who not only understands
science from the viewpoint of a scholar,
but who also is a born “fictioneer.”
Without doubt, “A Thousand Degrees
Below Zero” contains a very strange
situation. We leave it to you. Sup-
pose on a broiling hot day in August,
you saw a cake of ice floating down the
Hudson River, and from the center
there rose a column of steam? Sounds
wild, doesn’t it? Read “A Thousand
Degrees Below Zero” and find out how
simple it all is if you know the laws
of science.

The second installment of “The
Opium Ship,” by H. Bedford-
Jones, carries Sir Gerald Desmond into
a still more conflicting series of ad-
vventures. It is a pleasure to read a
serial so entertainingly written, so brim-
ful of action and mystery.

Tod Robbins contributes another
startling bit of fiction called “A
Voice from Beyond.” There is noth-
ing that comes from his pen that does
not grip one from the first line to the
last. In addition, he knows the art of
short-story writing about as well as
any of the younger school. We are
going to give his new novel, “Red of
Surley,” a little publicity here, even
though it doesn’t appear in The Thrill
Book. It was published this spring by
Harper & Brothers, and it sets a new
standard for fiction. We are glad to
say that we have only recently pur-
chased one of Mr. Robbins’ new novels,
and we are going to give it to you in
the very near future. It is weird, un-
usual, fantastic. We can guarantee,
from close observation, that nothing
like it has appeared in any of the other
magazines.

Among the stories in this issue that
we can recommend especially are
“The Lost Empire,” by Frank Wall;
“The Mate,” by May Freud Dickenson,
and “The Poniard of Charlotte Cor-
day,” by François de Vallient. There
are two bizarre occult tales, “Back to
Earth,” by R. Ray Baker, and “Room
13,” by Will S. Gidley.

What do you think of the first
story in the “Tales of the Double
Man” series? The author, Clyde
Broadwell, has made a close study of
the psychic and unseen. It was a vic-
tory for us to get him to put into fic-
tion his interesting theories. Here is a man to keep your eye on.

It is gratifying to note here the unusual amount of praise we are receiving about our “Soldiers and Sailors Personal Relief Section.” Letters come in regularly from all parts of the world. The requests for information do not all get into print because many of them are confidential. We are including every letter that we are able to publish because in this way the information becomes of general interest.

Stray Bits from Our Readers’ Letters.

At last—a magazine that isn’t afraid to print unusual stories. It’s quite a satisfaction.

H. T. R.

Please mail me a specimen copy of The Thrill Book, together with subscription rates and application.

A. E. Halliwell.

29 Story Square, Barrow, In Tunstall, England.

I’ve passed The Thrill Book among the boys of our detachment. Without exception they one and all vote it about the “ripped-tornest” magazine they’ve ever tackled. In one instance, while Private Claude Logue, of North Dakota, was in the midst of a story, a call came for him to appear at the orderly room. On returning, he found some one had purloined the magazine. What he said regarding the fellow who took it need not appear here, for the language was too hot for paper. Later, the magazine was returned, but Logue never forgave the man who deprived him of his enjoyment. This goes to show that The Thrill Book is already making itself felt a sensation. All the men who tackled it are turning in their subscriptions.

Private W. R. Cholmondeley.


I have read your third issue of The Thrill Book. I especially read your editorial on the back cover. Needless to say your magazine looks good.

C. L. S.

Minneapolis, Minn.

Scriber—send me a bill, and check will go to you by first mail.

Ossining, N. Y.

I have a copy of your new magazine before me, and have found it very interesting.

J. C. Hawes.

Lexington, Ky.

Congratulations for the advent of the new venture in current literature for the people, The Thrill Book!

J. E. B.

Los Angeles, Cal.

Bully! Fine stuff! Am reading every issue, and shall subscribe at once. Here at last is the truly big venture.

Miami, Fla.

Ex-Lieutenant D. B.

I feel such a deep interest in The Thrill Book’s success that I am going to dare your disfavor and suggest that if you had fewer continued stories it would be more popular. One serial and a two-part story seems to me sufficient. What you have is excellent, however.

Mrs. W. B. T.

Hagerstown, Md.

I have just looked through your new semi-monthly publication, The Thrill Book. It is capital. The stories are virile and powerful. It is a man’s book. The feature “Around the World” is also very interesting; it is a valuable asset to the new magazine.

J. L.

New York, N. Y.

Accept my good wishes for the success of The Thrill Book. I’ve been talking it up a bit among my friends, and will try to boost the thing here as much as I can. I’m a physician, and my patients like to read.

Salt Lake City, Utah.

J. U. G.

The Thrill Book is the first magazine I have read in English that really lives up to the word “periodical.” It stands for a great ideal. The numbers I have read convince me that you know how to conduct a magazine. The series of notices on the back cover have appealed strongly. Good luck.

Paris, France.

Monsieur D. R. N.

The basic idea of The Thrill Book has interested me greatly.

R. W.

Camden, N. J.

To paraphrase: “For many long days I have been waiting for you, my son!” Myself and several others whose desires are for the metaphysical and weird have often
spoken about the lack of an unusual magazine. Go to it!  
F. B. R.  
Chicago, Ill.

Here are a few alternate titles suggested by one reader for The Thrill Book:  "Magic Stories," "The Weaver," "Sensation,"  "The Web," "Thrilling Tales," "The Maze,"  "Crystal Sphere," "The Constellation," "The Comet." This reader has been very helpful, and I am sorry that she will not let us use her name.

Wishing you all success in the new venture.  
New Brighton, S. I., N. Y.  
G. N.

I hope your magazine wins out. I know it will. As soon as I am settled here I am going to get you a lot of subscribers. I want to watch The Thrill Book grow.  
Amherst, Mass.  
Mrs. D. J. M.

The Thrill Book ought to be a winner. I believe there will be a wide demand for a magazine of this nature.  
Weiser, Idaho.  
J. J.

I have just seen a copy of The Thrill Book. I had not known before that there was such a wonderful magazine.  
San Jose, Cal.  
L. M. T.

I feel sure that your magazine, which is a real innovation, should meet with success, and shall watch its development with great interest. It is encouraging that a publication of this peculiar sort has fallen into the control of a man in sympathy with its aims.  
G. B.

The new magazine is a great idea, and ought to be a success.  
St. Louis, Mo.  
L. W.

What a wonderful conception! Your selection of stories is immense. Especially did I like "Profit by Loss," by Clarence L. Andrews. He is a clean, vigorous, imaginative writer. Hope you publish more by him.  
Washington, D. C.  
P. S. N.

"Nothing But Dust" is the strongest tale I have read in many a day. Give us more. I wish that the author, Frederick Booth, had a story in every issue.  
New Orleans, La.  
S. N. T.

Please convey my compliments to Mr. Sneddon for his truly surprising story, "Magic in Manhattan." It is seldom one runs across a story that is at once humorous and fantastic.  
New York, N. Y.  
Arthur L. R.

The Thrill Book has already made a place for itself. It will continue so if you keep it up to the standard set in late issues.  
Helena, Montana.  
A. L.
Young Veteran.
The most popular war hero, of Hibbing, Mich., W. S. Smith, sixteen years old, has recovered from his wounds and is again ready for duty.

Smith, who enlisted in the American navy at the age of fifteen, and was discharged from the service because of his youth, succeeded in joining the Canadian army a few months later and was sent overseas.

His adventures would make a thrilling war novel. He has been wounded three times, given up for dead and was once reported as missing. He received one wound through the breast and the bullet came out of his back. He was hit twice in the hand.

Old Army Sergeant Spotted “Lieutenant.”

George W. Keller, an experienced army sergeant, was walking up Park Row, New York City, one afternoon recently. In front of the Park Row Building he saw a young man wearing the shoulder bars, hat cord and puttees of a United States army lieutenant. The coat, however, was of a material such as is generally worn by privates.

Keller did not salute. Instead he walked past and then turned around to make a closer observation of the “lieutenant.”

“What in the hell are you looking at?” the latter demanded.

“I am looking at you,” was the reply.

“What are you looking at me for?” exclaimed the lieutenant.

“I’m looking at you as part of the in-born right of an American citizen. I think you are phony.”

An agent of the department of justice happened along and both men accompanied him to the department’s office in the Park Row Building. The lieutenant said he was Charles Thomas, eighteen years old, of No. 328 Chauncey Street, Brooklyn, of the American Red Cross.

He was taken to the offices of Assistant United States Attorney Burdeau, where he produced a card certifying that Charles Thomas was a second lieutenant in the Red Cross Motor Corps. It was signed, “Doctor Smiley,” per R. B., and on the back was countersigned Charles Thomas.

Inquiry at the offices of the local Red Cross failed to elicit any information concerning the young man.

Commissioner Hitchcock held him in one hundred dollars, charged with illegally wearing the uniform of an army officer.

Fire Veteran at Ninety-four Leads Parade.

New York City’s oldest fireman, John F. Wenman, felt the rheumatism stirring in his legs at the end of the day, for in the afternoon he had marched two miles in the bleak, damp wind at the head of the annual Washington’s Birthday parade of the exempt and volunteer firemen’s association of New York City. Mr. Wenman, who shouted through the trumpet of an assistant chief in 1855, is ninety-four years old. Sixty-five other former fire fighters, none of them younger than seventy-eight, marched behind him.

Mr. Wenman’s white beard floated high in the air, and his legs did not falter as he led the veteran firemen past the reviewing stand in Union Square. Each man wore the heavy helmet he had used in the days when he climbed ladders and handled hose, and dangling at his hip was a cap which he might put on when the helmet grew tiresome. Half of the men wore the buff uniform of the exempt fireman’s association, showing that they had served at least five years in the department. The others wore the blue of the volunteer firemen’s association.

Carefully polished for the occasion, the old hand-power Engine 26, which threw water into the top stories of the “skyscrapers” of 1841, brought up the rear of
the parade, with thirty veterans tugging at the ropes that pulled it.

Many old firemen felt too weak to march. Thomas F. Kerrigan, seventy-five years old, solved the problem of showing his enthusiasm by mounting the reviewing stand and waving a small American flag as his comrades passed, cheering.

With him on the stand were John R. Voorhis, former commissioner of elections; Patrick H. Whitney, former commissioner of correction, and Alderman John J. McCourt. Dietrich G. Gale, eighty-five years old, was in charge of the reviewing stand.

Led by Belder's band and a squad of mounted policemen, the veteran firemen set out from their headquarters, in Jefferson Market. They marched through Tenth Street to Fifth Avenue and then north to Union Square. When they reached the equestrian statue of George Washington on the south side of the square they halted, and while the band played "The Star-Spangled Banner" John Mulligan, seventy-nine years old, scrambled up an old fire ladder and placed a wreath at the feet of the Father of His Country.

Then the veterans proceeded past the reviewing stand, where they waited while the band played a concert piece. The line of march continued west through Seventeenth Street to Eighth Avenue, north to Thirty-fourth Street and east to Sixth Avenue, where the parade was disbanded.

Called a Pro-Hun, Sueo to Get Even.

A lawsuit of extraordinary interest will be tried at the April term of the Logan County Court at Russell Springs, Kansas. It is the first attempt at a backfire of those who were suspected of being pro-German during the war and who were dealt with publicly by their neighbors for failing to do their duty in war activities.

F. J. Hanson, of McAlester, has brought suit for one hundred and twenty thousand dollars against F. E. Brooke and other neighbors for damages which he claims he suffered at their hands.

Hanson has lived in Logan County since the eighties. He is a wealthy land owner. During the war he had a stormy time of life. It is said he refused to buy Liberty Bonds or to contribute to the Red Cross. His neighbors asserted that he was strongly pro-German.

The loyal Americans of the community were aroused by Hanson's attitude, it is said, and finally the Hansons were arrested for violating the regulations of the food administration.

The Hansons suspected that the McMillans, their neighbors, had furnished the evidence upon which they were arrested, and Hanson purchased nine hundred and sixty acres which McMillan had been leasing for many years as pasture land.

Franklin E. Brooks, of Winona, was one of the leaders of the community in war activities. He is captain of Company E, Kansas Home Guards, Fourteenth Battalion. He also is interested in a bank. It was these connections which made him a leader of the patriotic sentiment of the county. With the Fourth Liberty loan coming on last fall, and being anxious that the county should go over the top, Brooke went to Kansas City, Kan., to consult Fred Robertson, United States district attorney, it is said, concerning the case of the Hansons.

Brooke claims that he was advised by one of Robertson's assistants to tell Hanson that he must make a subscription and buy some bonds. Brooke came back to Winona, and after a consultation with Hanson it was agreed that Hanson was to sell the nine hundred and sixty acres of grazing land to McMillan for three thousand seven hundred dollars, enough to cover the price which Hanson had paid for the land and his expenses so that Hanson would have money enough to invest in Liberty Bonds and give to the Red Cross.

After the deal was made, Hanson invested two thousand five hundred dollars in bonds, gave two hundred dollars to the Red Cross and deposited the other one thousand for investment in future war activities.

Then the war came to an end and the armistice was signed. Then also came a lawsuit filed by Hanson against McMillan to set aside the deed for the land and
one hundred and twenty thousand dollars lawsuit against Brooke for damages.
Brooke has a son in the army, a lieutenant of aviation.

Phones He's Alive After Grave is Dug.

Funeral arrangements were completed, death notices were published, and a grave was being dug for the remains of William I. McLaughlin, twenty-two years old, when there arrived at the family home, in Boston, Mass., the body of a seventy-year-old man of the same name, but no relation.

This led to the discovery that the boy reported dead was in perfect health and that there had been a gruesome mistake by an unknown naval official in Washington.

A telegram announcing the death reached the young man's home on a recent night. The message nearly prostrated the mother, still mourning her husband, who died recently. Arrangements were made at once for the funeral. Floral pieces were ordered and the site of the grave picked.

Word of the death spread rapidly. Scores of friends of the family began calling at the house. Then came another telegraph message that the body left Washington at two o'clock in the afternoon and would arrive in Boston next day.

As soon as this was received, Thomas J. McLaughlin, a brother studying for the priesthood in New York, conferred with priests of the Church of the Blessed Sacrament relative to the time of the funeral mass. Notices were sent then to members of Jamaica Plain Council, Knights of Columbus, for a special meeting to take action on the death and plan for attending the services.

The brothers of the boy, Undertaker Roach and several relatives went to the South station to meet the body. When the train pulled in a short casket was put off. The brothers thought there must be a mistake as William is slightly under six feet. To make certain the casket was taken to the undertaking rooms, opened and there was found a man of over seventy.

Fearing that his brother was dead and that a wrong body had been shipped, Thomas telephoned to Washington, but was told the corpse of William McLaughlin had been sent and none other. A second call was made to Washington and this time Thomas talked with William at St. Elizabeth's Hospital.

"Will, is this you?" anxiously asked Thomas. "Sure, why all the excitement?" replied the brother. He was told the story. "Run all the way home and tell mother and the girls I am in perfect health and expect my discharge in a few days," ordered William.

Telegrams were sent to the navy department immediately, explaining the error. Hours later, some time after midnight, a reply was received.

Some time ago William McLaughlin went to St. Elizabeth's Hospital suffering with influenza. He recovered rapidly, but was directed to remain there for his discharge from the service. Meanwhile seventy-year-old William McLaughlin died. His body is again en route to Washington on direction from the authorities there.

Hog Alive After Six Months in Straw Pile.

Farmers are discussing with considerable interest and merry humor a strange incident that occurred on the farm of Henry Merrill, about three miles north of Cutler, Ill.

Last fall, when Mr. Merrill thrashed his wheat, one of his fattening hogs got out of the pen and disappeared. Search was made for it, but no trace of the animal was found. It was quite a mystery, but Merrill was too busy to devote much time to solving it. He was making a straw shed for some of his stock to winter in. However, when the roof fell in before it was finished he abandoned the idea.

In clearing away the straw, recently, imagine his amazement when he beheld a long, thin, skeletonlike hog drag itself from beneath the pile. A closer inspection revealed the undeniable fact that the hungry piker was the one he had lost last fall. The hog was little more than skin and bones, but is already filling out on the selected food that is being given it in generous portions. Mr. Merrill is
confident that the hog will regain its lost weight rapidly, and he expects it will be "ripe" for slaughtering long before next fall.

Farmers in the vicinity are wondering that the hog survived the winter, or that it did not succeed in rooting itself free from the big straw pile. Some are of the opinion that it slept most of the time, hibernating, as it were, like bears and other wild animals do. Anyway, the hog had a warm nest and was never in danger of freezing to death.

Wins Medal for New Variety of Corn.

Doctor Frederick S. de Lue, a Boston oculist, has received a medal from the horticultural society of Massachusetts for having developed the highest grade of sweet corn, a variety he has named Golden Giant. The award is extraordinary in that the conservative Massachusetts society has made no award for corn in the last sixty-seven years. This was because of the minor defects his experts found in all specimens presented. Doctor de Lue's variety is deemed nearest the ideal both in physical form and in nutritive values.

Many years ago Doctor de Lue became deeply interested in plant life because of its relationship with the life of the ordinary human being.

Corn admittedly excels in nutrition, and Doctor de Lue concentrated his efforts on the native American grain. So for more than seventeen years he worked toward the ideal corn. His efforts were successful when the Golden Giant was perfected.

The new variety is remarkable, in that it matures from two to four weeks earlier than any other sweet corn, is grown with vastly less labor and has from sixteen to twenty-two rows of fine, healthy and large kernels.

Year after year it is grown without a single white speck or imperfection. Perfection of crop after crop for the last three years is attested by thousands of letters and communications sent to Doctor de Lue from all over the world, even from distant China.

The Golden Giant is rich in protein, starches, and sugar, and the experts of the Massachusetts society praise its nourishing qualities and general characteristics. Tests have been made showing it to be much richer in the nutriment for the human system than any known corn. At several of the government experimental stations and State farms it is being tried this year.

From his experimental farm at Needham, Mass., Doctor de Lue is sending packages of sample seed to all parts of the world.

Wears Big Shoes.

Olaff Alexander, a Virginia soldier, surely must be some man if his shoes are a criterion. Alexander was in a company commanded by Lieutenant Leslie Rinard, of Newcastle, Ind., and Rinard was so impressed with the size of Alexander that he brought a pair of his shoes home with him. The shoes are size sixteen and one-half, being made especially for the soldier by the government. Alexander, according to the lieutenant, is six feet seven inches tall and weighs two hundred and seventy-five pounds.

Poodle Adopts Seven Jack Rabbits.

Rachael, a woolly poodle dog belonging to Mrs. Mary Colbert, near Fort Worth, Texas, is mothering seven little jack rabbits and doing the job in a manner which evidently pleases the long-eared tribe. The poodle had recently lost her five little children. She was almost wild with grief. Then all at once she became her old self again and was frisking about the place in a way which excited the curiosity of her owner.

Mrs. Colbert noticed that her pet made frequent trips to a wooded spot several hundred yards from the house. She followed her and there discovered her fondly caressing the little jack rabbits.

Rachael had found the mother rabbit near her home, or at home, and killed her. Then she took charge of the orphans and is bringing them up.

Mrs. Colbert says she will allow the poodle to bring the little rabbits home when she cares to and that she will let them take their place in the yard.