

The **WIDE WORLD**

THE
MAGAZINE
FOR MEN
JANUARY 1950

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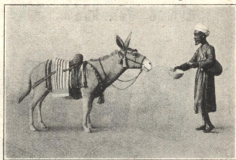
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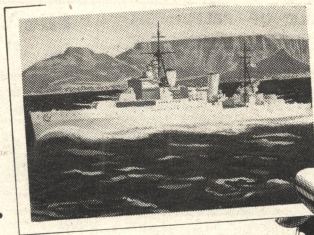


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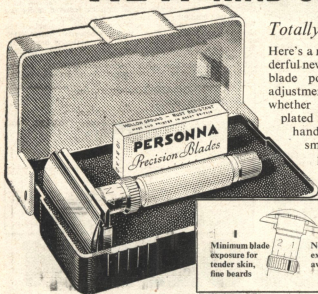


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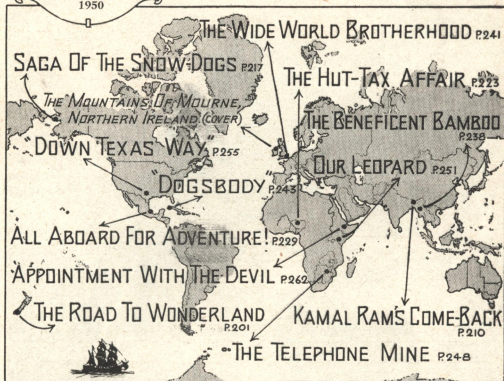
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"MUCH TOO SCARED TO MOVE." (SEE PAGE 206.)

THE ROAD TO WONDERLAND

By GERALD H. HAMILTON

Photographs by courtesy of New Zealand Tourist Dept.

WHEN the early Pacific navigators—Messrs. Cook, Vancouver, and company—reached

the fiords in the south-west of New Zealand they proclaimed that they had found wonderful harbours, deep and large enough to hold the combined navies of the world; they also pointed out that these inlets possessed one serious drawback—nothing without wings could get out of them overland. In course of time, however, passes were discovered which provided exits from several of the fiords. Of these, perhaps, the track to Milford Sound is the best known, and the New Zealand Tourist Department has given it the resounding title of "The Finest Walk in the World."

The track is certainly sufficiently spectacular for almost any taste, with the nineteen-hundred-foot Sutherland Falls as its chief attraction. For many summers past large numbers of tourists have tramped across it to stay at the hostel, built on what is practically the only stretch of level ground beside the Sound.

With the increase in motor-traffic, a less energetic generation of sightseers was anxious to view the wonders of Milford—if the visit could be made without the labour of a three-day trek across a mountain pass, no matter how beautiful it might be. Their clamour for a road was sufficiently persistent to bulldoze a reluctant Government into an attempt to satisfy them. On this occasion, however, public opinion

A very interesting account of a remarkable undertaking recently completed by the New Zealand Government—the construction of a highway and tunnel through a mountain wilderness in the South Island, thus making a great scenic paradise accessible to tourists. The difficulties were formidable indeed, and many disastrous accidents occurred through avalanches, floods, and rock-falls, but at long last the task was successfully accomplished.

was singularly ill-informed concerning the difficulties of the undertaking; nor can the Public Works Department, which was unlucky enough to fall heir to the job, be blamed for all that followed.

It was quite impossible to build a highway over the Milford Track itself, but an alternative route had been under discussion for years. Two great canyons, three or four thousand feet deep, cut into the mountains, cleaving the high plateau from opposite sides. They were the upper valleys of the Hollyford and Cleddau Rivers; and each of them ended in a great wall of cliffs—a mighty slab of rock not more than a thousand yards thick.

Engineers declared it was practicable to make roads up both these valleys, and these highways could be linked by a tunnel through the dividing wall. So simple did the project appear when first mooted that estimates for cutting the suggested tunnel were as low as £2,000.

The road was commenced about seventy miles away from the site of the proposed tunnel, on the shores of Lake Te Anau, and slowly made its way upwards through the dense beech-forests of the Eglinton Valley. From the head of this valley it crossed the Main Divide by a low saddle, circled in dizzy fashion round a mountainside, and then dropped abruptly into the Hollyford Valley at a point where the river bursts through a gorge. This Marian Gorge, as it is called, offers a striking contrast to the

park-like scenery of the Eglinton. Its black rock walls, thousands of feet high, are shiny with an ever-present film of water, dripping slowly from the melting snows above.

Thus far the sponsors of the scheme could congratulate themselves. Their labours had enabled the general public to view some grand scenery which, until the road was made, had been the monopoly of Alpine clubs.

Passing through the gorge, the road entered



the deepest part of the valley and wound steadily upwards, round one rock-buttress after another, and across dozens of culverts and small bridges. These last were necessary because the sides of the valley are covered with a lacework of little waterfalls which produce surprisingly large streams.

About a mile up the valley, over the river from the road, the almost-vertical Mount Christina rises six or seven thousand feet, with a hanging glacier nearly half-way up its side. At intervals huge blocks of ice would break off from this glacier, falling into the river beneath with a roar which echoed and re-echoed across the deep valley, seemingly for minutes on end. A very impressive spectacle, no doubt, but not particularly reassuring to the men working only about a hundred yards from the point of impact!

NATURE FIGHTS BACK

By this time it had become obvious to the road-builders that the mountain gods resented their intrusion. All night long they could hear the thunder of avalanches, and it must have appeared to them merely a matter of time before one of these awe-inspiring slides spilled over into the gorge where they were toiling. Added to the potential menace of the ice and snow was the rainfall, which increased from a mere

170 in. a year at Marian to over 300 in. at Milford.

A heavy downpour in the mountains high above the valley often ripped away the bed of a mountain stream, eventually forming a dam, a small lake, and a spillway. When this occurred at night those working below had no warning. Then, if more rain followed, the resultant flood-pressure burst the dam, whereupon a huge mass of mingled shingle and water launched itself over the rim of the valley, dropping thousands of feet to the road below. Even if there was no loss of life, deep gullies were gouged out of the new highway, valuable equipment was smashed to fragments, and the patient work of weeks undone in a few seconds.

Winter snows stopped work—sometimes for months. The sun, on occasional clear days at this season of the year, could penetrate into the deep valley for little more than an hour a day, so that for the most part the roadmakers passed their time in a species of Arctic twilight.

At long last, despite many setbacks, the road reached its highest point at the base of the black cliffs lying beneath the Homer Saddle. In the eight miles from Marian the highway rose eighteen hundred feet, though most of the climbing was done in about half that distance, with an average gradient of something like one in twelve. Nowhere was the gradient more than one in eight. Surveyors and engineers could

congratulate themselves on such a relatively easy ascent to the summit snowed on their blueprints, three thousand feet above sea level.

The tunnel was planned to emerge in the Cleddau Valley, on the opposite side of the Saddle, at a considerably lower level, allowing a one-in-ten gradient throughout the thousand yards of its length. As the passage was being bored from the upper end, this entailed considerable danger of flooding, and pumps had to be kept working day and night throughout the operation.

It is hardly necessary to explain that the great canyons which we have been describing were not cut out of the ancient plateau by the relatively small rivers that now run down them; they had been scooped out by enormous glaciers during the Ice Ages. It was perfectly obvious to the engineers that the mighty fragment which had *not* been scooped out—the Saddle itself—must consist of extremely hard stone. This conclusion proved only too correct, for the amazing obstinacy of the rock easily blunted the finest drills hitherto used in New Zealand. Special replacements were obtained from America, but these were so highly tempered that they broke almost as easily as their predecessors had



Looking down the upper Hollyford Valley.

blunted. Not until a mining engineer from America had actually inspected the rock *in situ* was a satisfactory drill produced. A number of similar hold-ups occurred, due to other unsuitable equipment.

A large camp grew up around the entrance to the tunnel—much of it, by necessity, directly



"He would rise from the table 'broke'."

beneath the great cliff, with many of the buildings actually standing amidst the debris of former avalanches. Work was pushed on as quickly as possible—three shifts to the twenty-four hours—and the "face" advanced at the rate of about forty feet a week.

High wages were offered to men willing to labour under severe conditions. There was constant danger from avalanches and rock-falls; the camp was completely snow-bound for long periods, and at all times cut off from most of the ordinary amenities of life. Though accidents were unavoidable, the number of fatalities was surprisingly small—a tribute to the discipline maintained in essential duties. Despite the good pay, it proved difficult to retain labour. Claustrophobia—fear of enclosed spaces—was the chief cause of unrest. Men would work for months beneath those towering cliffs, conceiving an ever-increasing dread and hatred of them, until the inevitable nerve-storm occurred, and

they fled from the valley. They'd "had it!" they declared. When the great land-slide came, as come it must, it wouldn't get *them*!

THE GAMBLERS

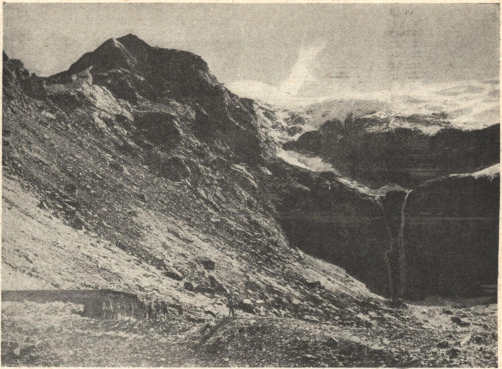
Although strict safety rules were enforced during working hours it was impossible to impose other restrictions. Wages were high and the purchasing power of money in the valley almost nil. Amid such desolate surroundings some form of distraction was essential, and the money burned holes in the men's pockets. Although, in theory, alcohol was forbidden, in actual practice authority was compelled to look the other way, and the "booze-waggon" travelled the valley day and night. Gambling was continuous, ubiquitous, and infinitely varied. Few workers left with any assets beyond their last pay-envelope, though wages were paid regularly in cash. In consequence, the supply of ready money seemed inexhaustible, and throughout the twenty-four



The road (on right) from Marian Camp to the Homer Tunnel.
The stream is the Hollyford River.



Mount Talbot and the Glacier, another wonderful sight on the way to the Tunnel.



The entrance to the Homer Tunnel in the Upper Hollyford Valley.



Looking down the Valley, closely hemmed in by majestic mountains.

hours hundreds of pounds changed hands in dozens of games.

Now and then, conscience-smitten after a bad hangover or a run of bad luck, a man might save £100—which he was able to do in a couple of months—and announce that he was going "out" for a holiday. Then, on the eve of departure, he would sit into a game, rise from the table "broke," and next day start the dreary grind once more.

Little wonder that the place became notorious, and that a big proportion of the "hard-doers" in the country found their way there, to be joined by similar characters from Australia.

Nevertheless, though the camp could scarcely be considered a breeding-ground for the more obvious virtues, there were compensating factors in genuine hard work and contempt for hardship, and a high rate of progress was maintained.

In the mining industry safety regulations are carefully framed and enforced by law; moreover, miners are experienced workers and themselves insist on adequate precautions being observed. With an undertaking such as this, however, many of the men were completely "green" and learned merely by their own mistakes.

To those unable to occupy themselves with drink or cards, and who had never acquired the reading habit, the employment of leisure was a major problem. Finding themselves in the pink of condition and surrounded by high mountains, it is little wonder they began to climb; and these amateur Alpinists soon became the cause of more anxiety than all the drunkards and gambling-sharks put together.

AMATEUR ALPINISTS

Leading out of the Hollyford Valley to Milford was a high mountain pass, the Grave-Talbot; the camp climbers determined to cross it. The task, however, required some skill and—more important still—experience. These men tackled it much too light-heartedly, and in consequence contrived to get themselves into some particularly nasty predicaments. Losing their way, one party—without a solitary ice-axe or even an alpenstock amongst them—boldly embarked on a soft-on-top-hard-below slope which a fully-equipped Everest expedition would have avoided with a shudder. Needless to say they soon started the snow—and themselves—sliding inexorably towards the yawning precipice at the bottom. Presently, by some miracle, the avalanche slowed up, leaving them spread-eagled several hundred feet farther down, much too scared to move.

Luckily it was very cold weather, and by nightfall the snow had hardened sufficiently for a rescue to be effected. The marooned men were returned to camp somewhat frostbitten,



their howls of anguish as they thawed out sounding like music in the ears of the exasperated rescue party.

Despite such incidents, no ban could be placed on climbing; no doubt the authorities recognised that "down under" a prohibition is apt to be regarded as a challenge, and if mountaineering had been made *verboten* half the camp might have essayed the next escapade. As it was, the number of Alpine enthusiasts luckily remained small.

Except when the very worst weather conditions prevailed, the road up the valley was kept clear by means of bulldozers and snow-ploughs, though temporary power failures were unavoidable. These put the pumps out of action, whereupon the tunnel was in danger of flooding; but repairs were usually affected within a short time. Eventually, however, there came a storm so severe that all attempts to clear the drifts were unsuccessful; the camp was completely isolated, and food became a problem. Worst of all, it was found impossible to relieve the shift on duty below.

By Herculean efforts food and drink were dragged to the mouth of the tunnel and lowered to the trapped men. They worked, ate, and slept at the bottom of the long slope for *three weeks*! Afterwards they declared they had been quite happy, leading a sort of cave-man existence. Trouble arose, but not with them; it was the other two shifts, condemned to temper-trying inactivity up above, that caused anxiety.

When the tunnelling first commenced the only men to be found in the whole of New Zealand with experience of rock work were the gold-miners of the North Island. These hardy fellows drew high wages, and enjoyed a monopoly of all the drilling, but under their contract, they were not paid for stand-by time. Now, by way of



"The next step's up to you!" retorted the engineer.



A vista of towering peaks in Milford Sound

compensation, and to get things moving again as soon as possible, the engineer-in-charge offered them £1 a day to shovel snow. They promptly declined.

"We're employed at £12 per week," announced their spokesman. "And we won't take less. The next step's up to you!"

"You're wrong," retorted the engineer. "The next step's up to you—and it's down the road, directly the snow clears!"

This was a bold decision to make, since there was no guarantee the rest of the men in camp would not strike in sympathy; and nowhere are dictator methods less appreciated than in New Zealand. But the remaining workers took the whole incident with a conspicuous lack of excitement. A few days later the snow disappeared, and the discharged surfacemen departed.

This left the camp with only a small number of skilled surfacemen; the remainder had to be recruited from among the general labourers. They faced the job cheerfully, declaring they were willing to try anything once. At first, needless to say, the rate of progress fell off, but it soon picked up again, and before long was expedited to more than sixty feet a week.

A MOMENTOUS DECISION

At this juncture the war in Europe broke out, and although our remote valley was more than twelve thousand miles from Berchtesgaden the Government immediately announced that work must cease; all but the most essential projects would have to be abandoned. Could this tunnel be considered essential when the road was merely intended for the benefit of tourists? Yet, if the enterprise were stopped, suddenly and indefinitely, everything that had already been accomplished might be irretrievably

lost. Unless power was maintained, the tunnel would inevitably flood; machinery diverted to war aims might take years to replace; and such equipment as remained, in that wet climate, would soon be fit only for scrap.

Luckily for the scheme, strategic reasons were discovered for keeping construction going; Milford was such a magnificent harbour that it might become necessary to use it as a naval base, in which case the road would be invaluable. The tunnel reached the Cleddau Valley before Japan entered the war, which saved another painful decision, since almost every able-bodied man in New Zealand was immediately drafted to national defence. By this time, however, the camps had been closed down and all useful gear removed. Silence and the snows reclaimed the mountains for their own.

In 1943, soon after my return from the Middle East, I visited the valley. Except for a small maintenance gang at Marian, it was completely deserted. The camps huddled beneath the great cliffs with the disconsolate air of "ghost-towns" on an abandoned goldfield. I walked up towards the tunnel in the midst of an oppressive stillness.

This was merely a flying visit, but, about a year later I began to muster cattle in the Lower Hollyford Valley below the Marian Camp, which constituted our one link with civilization. Early one morning, riding up to the camp to collect some mail, I discovered it to be the scene of bustle and activity, or as much bustle and activity as a few men can create in a camp built for several hundred. An avalanche had fallen some days previously, overwhelming a great part of the Homer Camp.

Before work finished on the tunnel a massive portal had been built, extending some distance out from the actual entrance in order to protect traffic against falling rocks from the slopes above.

Now countless tons of debris, with the momentum gained by their great drop, had smashed the feet-thick concrete like an egg-shell, and the remains of the portal, together with the upper portion of the camp, lay buried thirty or forty feet deep beneath vast masses of ice, snow, and rock.

The gang at Marian had heard the roar of the avalanche, but did not suspect that it was pouring into the valley. At that time of year the awe-inspiring thunder of distant snow-slides was almost of hourly occurrence. The avalanche had first been reported by a gang of hikers who had been spending a holiday at Milford; on their return journey, to their consternation, they found the exit from the tunnel blocked. Forthwith they returned to Milford, whence the post-office people were informed by radio telephone. Thus the gang at isolated Marian got their first news of an avalanche eight miles away from a town a hundred miles distant!

DISASTER!

It was several days before I had an opportunity to visit the scene of destruction. Already huge crevasses had appeared in the slope of ice and snow, which still quaked ominously when I ventured upon it, though many moons were to elapse before the ice melted. Poking up through the surface here and there were lengths of planking, great rocks, and snaky coils of wire. The one object still standing was a solitary power-pole, left as a sort of futile guide-post to the chaos beneath.

That vast mass of ice and snow must have been gradually piling up for years on the slopes above the cliffs. Had it fallen a couple of years earlier, when the camp contained large numbers of men and the machine-shops and cookhouses were in full use, it would undoubtedly have caused the greatest loss of life in any one disaster in New Zealand history.

This, of course, was by no means the first or largest avalanche which had fallen into the valley, but it received considerable publicity because of the havoc it caused. I well remember another, which swept down from the hanging glacier on Mount Christina, while I was in Marian. When I suggested to the foreman that I should go up and have a look at it he told me not to be a fool. "The whole valley is quivering," he added.

Despite the warning, I went, finding things just as he described. I became disagreeably convinced that if I even *shouted* the towering sides of the valley would come crashing down, though it was absurd to imagine my puny voice could have any such effect. Never have I been so conscious of a kind of malevolent instability requiring merely a hair-trigger stimulus to set everything moving! Nor shall I easily forget the effects of the fierce winds which had resulted from the vacuum created by the avalanche. Far up and down the valley floor trees had been uprooted, or sheared off as though by a great knife, with their branches twisted, splintered, or even ground to dust.

Within six months another relatively small slip occurred in Marian Camp itself, when a single dam gave way high up in a stream, tore away a bridge, and smashed half a dozen huts. In yet another, still farther up the valley, a car was smashed while the passengers were admiring the scenery some distance away.

And so destruction continued—and is likely to continue—in this mountainous, rain-soaked corner of New Zealand. The incidents I have related received publicity merely because of the tunnel and the road; in valleys remote from any road I have seen evidence of much greater falls. On one occasion a small mountain suddenly decided to break in two, leaving a yellow precipice five or six hundred feet high, bordered along the verge by a pattern of surprised trees, untimely ripped from the bosom of the bush, and left to shiver in the cold winds far above a plain of dirty yellow rubble.

That the road to Milford will always be liable to sudden onslaughts from the mountains towering above is undeniable, but those best qualified to judge are convinced it can be kept open. It is true that, as yet, the Homer Tunnel, as it is called, can be used for one-way traffic only; nevertheless, the road to Milford is practically complete at the moment of writing, and will be in full operation in the near future.

The story of the Homer Tunnel can no doubt be paralleled in other countries, but this account of the difficulties that attended its construction may induce some of the tourists who travel in comfort and security over the world's great mountain highways to pause awhile as they gaze on the scenery and spare a thought for the men who made such excursions possible.





“ ‘We’re going to close your station,’ announced the senior officer.”

FOR

several years subsequent to 1942 an observant passenger travelling eastwards in the express from Calcutta to Bokahat, in Northern Assam, might have noticed the train flashing through a deserted station during the morning of the second day of the journey. He would have had to be very observant indeed, however, to notice the small, stout, and disconsolate figure standing forlornly in the doorway of the stationmaster's office, gazing sadly at the train as it thundered past.



Mr. Kamal Ram watched the express out of sight; then he went slowly back into his empty, disused office. Kamal Ram wore the official peaked cap of his position and a blue uniform

coat, below which a white cotton *dhoti* billowed out. His brown face was round; his nose, like his figure, was short and thick; below it a long black moustache drooped dejectedly. His eyes were very dark, and the disappointment from which he had suffered during the last six years had given them a perpetually mournful expression.

“A stationmaster without a station!” he muttered to himself for the thousandth time, as he slumped into a chair. Strictly speaking, he had a station, but it no longer functioned as such; to-day it consisted only of a few dilapidated buildings, a siding or two with rust-covered rails, and a weed-strewn platform. Deserted, forgotten, abandoned, unwanted—it was indeed a pitiful sight. Yet it had once been the best kept, cleanest, smartest, and most efficient station on the whole line. Kamal Ram could have wept at the thought.

Not a day passed that he did not recall the fateful morning, just on six years ago, when he had received the blow which had brought his whole life crashing down about his ears.

It had happened in December, 1942. A warm sunny morning, he remembered, and he had just finished telling the sweeper to give the lamps another polish when a car had driven into the station yard and stopped in a whirl of dust.



KAMAL RAM'S COME-BACK

By JAMES DOVE

It was a military car of some description, Kamal Ram noticed from its colour, and out of it stepped three British officers.

He moved briskly forward to meet them.

"*Salaams*," he said, smiling a welcome.

"*Salaams*!" replied the eldest of the three. "I want the stationmaster," he continued, speaking in atrocious Urdu.

"I am he," replied Kamal Ram, in his careful English. "May I be of any assistance?"

"Oh—er—yes," answered the officer, slightly taken aback to discover he was addressing the person he sought. "This is Manijan Station, isn't it?"

Kamal Ram nodded. What other station could it possibly be?

"I'm A.Q. Movements," the officer went on; then, seeing the puzzled expression on the stationmaster's face, condescended to explain

Kamal Ram, stationmaster at Manijan, in Northern Assam, was heart-broken when the war in Burma led to the closing of his beloved station and his own relegation to the humble status of caretaker. For six long years he remained at his post, forlorn and seemingly forgotten. Then came his chance—and he rose to it splendidly! Names of persons and places have been changed, but the facts are vouched for.

that this meant he was in charge of all transport arrangements in the area. "I want to look round your station."

"But of course!" replied Kamal Ram, very gratified that so important a personage wished to inspect his

charge. No doubt the *sahibs* had heard how beautiful it was, how well kept, how efficient!

"Don't bother to come with us," said the officer, as Kamal Ram made to accompany them. "We'll wander around by ourselves and then come back. I expect we shall want a word with you later."

Kamal Ram had returned to his office, made sure it was clean and tidy, arranged three newly-dusted chairs for the officer-*sahibs*, and waited patiently for their return.

They soon came back, taking the chairs he offered them. Then the blow fell!

"We're going to close your station,"

announced the senior officer. He spoke casually, as though the matter was of only the smallest importance. "Probably in a week or two. You'll hear officially from your District Manager, of course, but I thought I'd let you know first."

"Close my station?" repeated Kamal Ram, hardly able to believe his ears. "Close my station?"

"Yes," repeated the officer. He spoke slowly and very clearly; the little stationmaster did not seem to understand. "In about a week or two from now your station will be shut down." He went on to explain the reasons for this decision, but Kamal Ram was so stunned by the news that he could hardly take in what the *sahib* was saying. Phrases like "the war in Burma," "good motor road nearby," "close to other stations," "hardly any goods traffic here," "great saving of men and time," filtered through to his mind, but they meant nothing to him. He was conscious of only one fact, one stark, horrible, unbelievable fact—they were going to close his beloved station! No longer would it hum with life; no longer would trains stop and passengers alight, engines puff and wagons clatter merrily in the sidings. It would become silent, deserted, dead! How could they be so cruel, so pitiless?

When the three officers had driven away he wandered about in a daze, trying to persuade himself that their visit had never really taken place and that, anyway, his District Manager would never allow Manijan, well known to be the best station on the whole line, to be thus abandoned. During the days that followed he almost succeeded in convincing himself that all would be well. Then, one morning, a letter arrived from headquarters which dashed his last hopes to the ground.

Manijan Station would close down, the letter informed him coldly and impersonally, from December the 18th at 16.45 hours, after the "22 down" had left, until further notice. There followed some instructions regarding the disposal of stores, wagons, and other equipment. The railway staff, the letter continued, would be posted to other stations where the increased traffic due to the war necessitated additional personnel; detailed instructions regarding their appointments would be sent under separate cover. Mr. Kamal Ram, stationmaster, however, would remain at Manijan until such time as the station reopened, to look after the interests and property of the company.

When Kamal Ram first read this he had been jubilant. He would not have to leave his beautiful station after all; he was to stay there until it reopened. Nothing could be better!

Then a disturbing thought occurred to him, and his joy began to subside. What would he do all day? He referred to the letter again. "Look after the interests and property of the company." Put like that it sounded important, but what did it actually mean? He supposed it meant that he would stay in the deserted station to guard it. In other words, he would be little more than a watchman, a *chowkidar*. He, Mr. Kamal Ram, the perfect stationmaster of the model station of Manijan—a *chowkidar*!

Yes, a *chowkidar*, thought Kamal Ram as he sat moodily in his office this morning, six years later. That's what they called him now!

Each year he had laboriously penned a letter to the District Manager—carefully phrased, suitably respectful—begging that Manijan station, be reopened and allowed to operate once more.

But the District Manager always replied in the same unsatisfactory vein. When the traffic situation warranted the reopening of Manijan Station, Mr. Kamal Ram would be duly informed, but until then his duties would remain as at present. One reply had even added tartly that his complaint was not understood, seeing that he had received the increments and salary of a stationmaster yet had neither the duties nor responsibilities pertaining to such a post. "Salary! Increments!" snorted Kamal Ram, disgustedly. Didn't the District Manager realize that he cared nothing for salaries or increments? That was not the cause of the ache in his heart! What he wanted was the reopening of Manijan Station, to regain its former glory, splendour, and renown!

This morning, as Kamal Ram sat in his empty office lost in melancholy reflections, his thoughts were disturbed by a torrent of rain beating down on to the corrugated iron roof above him. More rain, he thought resignedly. Never had he known such a week for rain! Dejectedly he rose from his seat and went out on to the platform.

It was certainly pouring—literally in sheets. It splashed hard on the metals and lines, and streamed off the gutterless iron roof in a perpetual cascade. This was the third day of really heavy downpour, Kamal Ram reflected, interspersed with an occasional cloudburst. He had heard that the line near Bohajan was badly flooded, and if that was so the stretch between Parbatipur and Rangiya was probably under water as well. Thank goodness, he thought, that his section was on high ground, and never became flooded. There wasn't even a water-level inspector in the district, though, now he came to think of it, he remembered that when he was a boy a stream called Hojai Nadi, half a mile from Manijan, had risen until it flowed across the track. But that must have been forty years ago. Now, at Bohajan, for instance, the P.W.D. road was washed away regularly every year, and often the railway track as well.

Kamal Ram's thoughts were disturbed by the approach of a goods train, the "No. 12 up." He watched it pass through the station. The driver, seeing him, raised his hand in a mocking greeting, and shouted something. The stationmaster could not hear all he said, but he caught the word *chowkidar*, and stomped angrily back into his office. *Chowkidar* indeed! What right had the driver—a man who had been a mere apprentice when Kamal Ram had been ten years a stationmaster—to insult him? From force of habit he glanced at the clock on the wall. No. 12 was nine minutes late, anyway!

Well, he thought presently, there was little object in remaining at the station on a day like this. He had cleaned the lamps and dusted the empty office—he who had once had subordinates to perform such menial tasks—and nothing remained to be done. There were no more trains until the "16 down" at five o'clock, so he might as well go home for his midday meal and stay there until half-past four. Picking up his large black umbrella, he splashed his way along the muddy path towards his house.

He did not return to the station until a quarter to five, but even so he had to wait half an hour before the "16 down" rolled through, a quarter of an hour behind time.

At a quarter to seven, the "22 down" express rushed through. This was the signal for

Kamal Ram to go home for his evening meal, and once more he splashed off through the rain in the gathering dusk. At eight o'clock, when he returned to the station, where he always slept at night, it was pouring as hard as ever.

His plank bed stood in a corner of the office, which was dimly lit by a hurricane-lantern; its feeble light, shining through the open door, was just sufficient to make the fine spears of falling rain glisten yellow in the pitch-darkness outside. The electric generating-plant, to Kamal Ram's great sorrow, had been removed almost five years previously; no longer did the station glitter and sparkle with light.

He shut the door of his office against the dark, wet night outside, removed his outer garments, and was soon prepared for bed. When, eventually, he lay down under the mosquito-net, he wondered, as he did every night, how long it would be before the departed glory of Manijan Station returned. Surely it must be soon! Then he would once more strut the platform giving orders, instructing, supervising—respected, admired, and honoured by all. Lost thus in happy conjectures he soon fell asleep.

Kamal Ram was awakened by the rain, falling in torrents on the iron roof above him. It was coming in somewhere, too; he could hear drops splashing down. He'd better get up and investigate.

Crawling out of bed, he turned up the lamp. It took only a few minutes to discover that the rain was only falling on the floor. That didn't matter. He glanced at the clock—a quarter past eleven. In three-quarters of an hour the "5 up"—the Night Mail—was due. What a terrible night for the driver! Not for years had he known such rain.

Then, suddenly, a thought struck him like a thunderbolt. The Hojai Nadi! Supposing it had flooded? The possibility seemed highly probable, for the rain had poured down unceasingly for twelve hours! The water might be over the track; it might even be streaming across it, tearing and sucking at the stones until the lines were swept away and only a black yawning chasm remained.

Kamal Ram pictured the Night Mail, with its sleeping passengers, flying through the darkness towards the Hojai Nadi. Suddenly the driver would see the swirling water in front of him and brake desperately. But it would be too late. In his mind's eye Kamal Ram saw the enormous engine leap into the air, hesitate, and then plunge down the embankment, dragging its crowded coaches behind it, the helpless occupants screaming as they were hurried to their deaths!

Kamal Ram stood barefoot and irresolute in his gloomy, ill-lit office, palpitating with the agitation aroused by his vivid imagination. Then he made up his mind. Though it might be a wasted journey, he must go along to Hojai Nadi to make sure all was well.

Once more he looked at the clock. Twenty past eleven, and the mail was due at twelve. In such weather it would take him twenty minutes to reach the Nadi; there was no need of desperate hurry. Still, he mustn't waste time. Even more important, he must not lose his head. He tried to think calmly.

First he put on his shoes, uniform coat, and hat. Then, taking his own lantern, he went to the lamp-room and fetched a red hurricane-lamp, blessing his care in always keeping the lamps clean and filled with oil. Finally he put a red flag in his pocket and, carrying the two lamps



"The driver had spotted him!"

in one hand and his large black umbrella in the other, set off down the track.

Though the rain had now fortunately decreased to a drizzle, the night was very dark, and Kamal Ram stumbled along the line with difficulty. He was most anxious not to fall, for he knew that, if he did, one, if not both of the lanterns, might be smashed, which would entail the failure of his plan.

After about a quarter of an hour's walking, he noticed, showing up dimly a foot from the track, a white-painted gradient-board which he knew was a hundred yards or so before one came to the Nadi. He walked on more slowly, holding the lamps in front of him, straining his eyes to see the parapet of the little bridge which spanned the stream.

Suddenly he heard a noise somewhere ahead that made his blood run cold. A swishing, rustling, hissing noise, in which could occasionally be distinguished a muffled rattle or rumble as the swift current dislodged a stone and carried it along with it. Kamal Ram shook with mingled fear and excitement, but pressed onward carefully. He was determined to view the water with his own eyes before taking the momentous step of stopping the Night Mail.

A few more paces and, in the dim light of his lamp, he beheld the shining rails disappear into a smooth, inky blackness. Advancing until the water lapped his shoes, he held his lantern high. He could only see a few feet, but that was enough. Everywhere in front of him was water, swirling and gurgling swiftly across the line—a smooth, powerful surge which Kamal Ram realized the sleepers and loose metalling could not long withstand.

Turning, he floundered back along the track. His one thought now was to stop the Night Mail. There was plenty of time if he only kept calm and did not fall. He knew exactly what he had to do.

When he reckoned he had walked a hundred yards from the water he carefully placed the red hurricane-lamp on a sleeper in the centre of the track and trimmed the wick high to give the maximum amount of light without smoke. Then, the rain having stopped, he furled his umbrella, hung it on his arm, and advanced up the centre of the track, his lantern in one hand, the red flag in the other.

He had not proceeded very far before he sensed that the express was drawing near. It must have been running on time, for he had not reached the station when he observed the beam of its great headlight approaching and heard its distant thunder far down the track. He stopped and took up position, standing in the centre of a sleeper.

Directly he saw the light itself appear, Kamal Ram began to raise and lower the hurricane-lamp, with a steady up and down action. With his other hand he waved the red flag, occasionally holding it in front of the lantern, hoping that the beam would shine through it and make it appear to the driver as a red danger-signal.

The train continued to advance—slowly, it seemed, at first, and then faster and faster. Its enormous headlight shone fairly into Kamal Ram's eyes, dazzling and blinding him. To the stationmaster, standing there in the middle of the track, the train appeared to show no sign of stopping but, on the contrary, to accelerate its rush towards him. He thought resignedly

that, if the driver noticed him too late, he would at least see the red hurricane-lamp he had placed a hundred yards this side of the Nadi, and be able to pull up in time. So he remained at his post between the rails, doggedly swinging his lamp and waving his red flag.

Suddenly a long-drawn-out, piercing whistle rent the air, immediately followed by the grating of brakes. A sigh of relief swept over Kamal Ram. The driver had spotted him!

Already the train was slowing down. Kamal Ram waited until it was only a few yards away; then he jumped clear of the track. It passed him almost at walking speed, and in the ruddy light cast from the fire-box he was able to keep pace with it along the footpath by the side of the track until it jolted to a halt.

"What's the matter?" the driver shouted down as Kamal Ram trotted up, bearing his lantern and red flag.

"There is water across the track a few hundred yards ahead," panted the stationmaster. He was gasping from excitement and his exertions. "The stream there must have flooded, and I think the tracks have gone." He had hardly finished speaking when the guard arrived, whereupon he had to repeat his tale.

"And who are you?" demanded the guard, when he had finished.

"I'm Kamal Ram, stationmaster at Manijan," replied Kamal Ram proudly.

"Manijan?" echoed the guard contemptuously. "Oh, yes; that's the station that's never used, isn't it? Well, come along; we'd better go and see this water of yours—if there is any! I've been on this line five years and never known a flood yet!"

Before Kamal Ram could make the hot retort which sprang to his lips the guard was telling the fireman and an inspector to get torches and follow him. In less than a minute they were advancing briskly along the track.

As they moved forward poor Kamal Ram began to experience misgivings.

Of course the water was there; he had seen it with his own eyes. But supposing it was only a few inches deep and a yard or so across? What would happen to him then? How this supercilious young guard would sneer! After all, he had not tested the depth of the flood, and his lantern had only shown him a few feet of it. The farther they advanced the more his apprehension increased.

The sight of his red lamp somehow heartened him, restoring his confidence. "Only a hundred yards or so more," he said to the guard. "I put the lamp there in case I couldn't stop the train."

"Not much chance of that, the way you were scampering around all over the track, waving lights and flags!" growled the fireman, derisively.

Kamal Ram relapsed into silence. Though he knew it was wrong of him, his one hope and prayer now was that the Hojai Nadi had swept away the whole track, leaving a gap a hundred feet wide!

At last they reached the water, hearing its steady rush and gurgle.

"Humph!" remarked the guard, thoughtfully, and shone his powerful torch out along the track in front. To Kamal Ram's overwhelming joy, nothing but swirling black water was visible as far as the beam could reach.

"It seems you were right," the guard told



"Kamal Ram saw it was a timetable."

the stationmaster in more gracious tones. "Did you test its depth, or go out to see if the track was still there?"

"No," replied Kamal Ram. "There was no time."

"Well; we'll do it now," continued the guard. With that he told the fireman and the inspector to take off their shoes, roll up their trousers, and walk out along the track as far as they could.

"Keep hold of each other, in case one of you slips," he instructed. "Go on when the water gets above your knees, but stop if it gets up to your waist."

Each carrying a torch, the two men started out cautiously along the flooded track, whilst the guard and Kamal Ram watched them in the light of the former's torch. The water was soon up to their knees.

"Looks as though it'll be pretty deep," the guard remarked to Kamal Ram. "Ever had

a flood here before?"

"Not for about forty years," replied the stationmaster in superior tones. He was feeling more confident now.

Suddenly there was a yell from the fireman, followed by a splash. Loud exclamations from both men ensued, and more splashes.

"What's happened?" called the guard. He shone his torch in the direction of the sounds, but it was not powerful enough to illuminate the scene. All they could see were two dim shapes standing in the black waste of water.

"I fell down a hole in the centre of the track!" shouted back the fireman. "I don't know how deep it is, but I didn't touch bottom. I caught hold of the line and saved myself, and the inspector helped to pull me out."

"The line's gone," added the inspector. "I can feel it so far with my foot, and then it stops."

"All right!" shouted the guard. "Come back now."

The fireman and the inspector were only too glad to obey.

Within a few minutes they had emerged from the flood and replaced their clothes, and

soon the party was returning along the track to the train. Kamal Ram felt very proud and happy, for as they tramped back the guard, obviously anxious to make amends, congratulated him on his prompt and intelligent action in stopping the train. The others questioned him eagerly about the last flood and what damage it had done.

On their arrival, Kamal Ram heard a clear, authoritative voice, and a man in the coach immediately behind the engine called the guard, who obeyed with alacrity.

"Who's that?" Kamal Ram asked the Inspector.

"That's the General Manager," came the reply. "He'll want to know what's happened."

"The General Manager?" repeated Kamal Ram, awestruck. "I never knew he was on the train!"

Moving nearer to listen to the conversation, he heard the great man giving crisp orders about ringing up Headquarters and all stations along the line, placing lights at both ends of the flood, and informing the Chief Engineer immediately. Finally, to his great surprise, he heard his own name called.

Hastening forward, he found himself looking up at a tall, thin *Sahib* standing in the doorway of a white coach of the kind only provided for Very Important People. So the Inspector had been right; this *Sahib* was actually the General Manager himself. And the *Sahib* was speaking to him.

"You are Kamal Ram?" he asked. His voice carried clearly down to the track where Kamal Ram stood.

"Yes, *Sahib*," replied Kamal, trembling with excitement and nervousness.

"The stationmaster at Manijan?"

"Yes, *Sahib*," replied Kamal Ram again.

"And how long have you been stationmaster there?"

"Eighteen years, *Sahib*," answered Kamal Ram proudly, his voice regaining its firmness as he lost his fear. "That includes the last six, during which the station has been closed," he added.

"Have you known this line flood before?"

"Once when I was a boy, *Sahib*, over forty years ago—in this same place."

"There is no water-level inspector on this stretch, I believe?"

"No, *Sahib*; flooding is so rare."

"What made you think that the water might wash out the line to-night?"

"The rain woke me up at 11 o'clock, *Sahib*," answered Kamal Ram. "and I suddenly felt frightened that the Hojai Nadi might have risen, for we have had much rain. So I took a lantern, a red lamp, and a flag and went to see. I found the line was covered with water, so I put the red lamp down a hundred yards in front of the flood, and hurried back down the line to stop the train."

The General Manager was silent. Kamal Ram began to fear he had talked too much, making the *sahib* angry. But the great man's next words dispelled all such doubts, bringing to Kamal Ram such joy and pride as made up for all the sorrow of the last six years.

"You have done very well," said the General Manager. "Very well indeed! If you had not acted as you did, a lot of us would have been killed. You have saved many lives to-night. I wish everyone in the Company had your sense of duty and responsibility!"

Kamal Ram couldn't even stutter a reply.

"You must be tired, wet, and cold," the kindly voice continued. "Come up here and drink something hot, or you may get fever."

He reached down a hand which Kamal Ram grasped, too overcome to refuse, and felt himself pulled up into the warm, lighted coach.

Very soon a white-clad servant brought him a steaming drink, and the General Manager made him sit down and tell his story of the flood over again. When Kamal Ram had finished, he was asked questions about Manijan Station.

"Now," the General Manager said at length, "you have rendered a great service to the passengers of this train and the Company, and you deserve some recognition. Is there any way in which I can help you?"

"Oh!" breathed Kamal Ram, half rising up in his chair. "There is one way you can help me, *Sahib*—if you would."

"What is that?"

"Open Manijan Station!" replied Kamal Ram eagerly. "Open it and let me be a real stationmaster again!"

By way of answer the General Manager went to a table in the corner of the coach, picked up a paper, and smilingly handed it to Kamal Ram.

Looking down at it, Kamal Ram saw it was a timetable. But somehow it seemed different from the ones with which he was familiar. Then he noticed where the difference lay. Opposite Manijan, instead of the empty spaces to which he was accustomed, were figures indicating the times at which trains stopped there. Manijan Station was open once more!

"That's the new timetable," explained the General Manager, smiling anew at Kamal Ram's unrestrained expression of joy. "It starts next month!"

The passenger who now alights at Manijan cannot fail to notice a spruce, upright figure pacing the well-swept platform, or standing proudly at the door of the stationmaster's office. There is a cheerful smile hovering about his lips, his eyes are alert and happy, and even his moustache seems to bristle joyfully.

He looks at his watch—a quarter to seven. The "22 down" draws punctually out of the station.

He watches it out of sight, looks carefully round his beautifully-kept station to see that all is well, and then, with due stateliness and decorum, bids his staff good-night and takes his departure.

On the way home friends greet him, and the children raise their hands respectfully to their foreheads. Finally, as he reaches his freshly-painted home, he acknowledges with a gracious wave of the hand the deferential "*Salaams*, Stationmaster *Sahib*," of old Khubi Lal, the fruit seller.

Kamal Ram has attained his Nirvana.

DURING many months of the year the only certain method of travel across



some ten million square miles of the Arctic and sub-Arctic is by dog-team.

When blizzards hold up air, tractor and road transport, the "huskies" immediately come into action. Husky teams are stationed every few miles along the Alaska Highway, and as many as eighteen teams have been called upon in twelve hours to haul stranded lorries to safety. Rescue-teams are also kept at all major airfields in the North, and here again they prove invaluable in the winter. Crashed 'planes are usually located from the air, but almost invariably it is the huskies that bring out the stranded crew and passengers.

And where the freighter-plane and the tractor-train cannot go, there you hear the sunset howl of the husky.

Dogs are not only vital to the industrial development of the Arctic, but now that the Polar Regions have come into the strategic picture the husky has a marked military value, and all breeds of sledge-dogs are being trained with this objective in mind.

Straining at the traces, tongues lolling, bushy tails held at rakish angles, a dozen huskies will haul a load of a ton or more across territory impossible to mechanized transport.

During Vilhjamur Stefansson's famous expedition across Canada's Arctic islands, for instance, six dogs hauled loads ranging up to 1,200 lb. a distance of seven hundred miles, often covering thirty miles a day across sea-ice contorted into jagged ridges. This, moreover, is by no means a record; there are a dozen instances of huskies dragging incredible loads a distance of a thousand miles or more.

The industrial development of the Arctic regions—now in full swing—and also their defence would prove infinitely more difficult but for the sledge-dog. If the malemute husky is the king-pin of transport over a huge area of the American Arctic, his Siberian brother and the all-white Samoyede from the Kannin Peninsula (east of Murmansk), are no less indispensable to the Soviet Arctic.

The husky is not only invaluable for trans-

SAGA OF THE SNOW-DOGS



By FRANK ILLINGWORTH

Recently returned from his fifth trip to the Polar regions, the Author gives a most interesting account of the "huskies," or sledge-dogs, which constitute the only certain means of winter travel across some ten million square miles of Arctic wilderness. White man and Eskimo alike own a great debt of gratitude to these wonderful animals.

port purposes, but is often loyal to the point of death, and infinitely more sagacious than the average animal bred in "civilization."

In the winter of 1948, when the explorer Käre Rodahl fell ill in a desolate hut in Greenland, he crept into a sleeping-bag strapped full length to his sledge, and left it to his huskies to find their way home—a journey of sixteen hours, much of it across moving sea-ice in the semi-darkness of the Polar winter.

The famous Greenland hunter, Gerharm Antonsen told me how, when he accidentally blinded himself with a shot-gun, his malemutes hauled him back to a hunting-cabin, a distance of thirty-four miles.

Late in the war a malemute named "Grey Cloud" led a rescue-team back to its base in

Arctic Canada without guidance. The driver, a Canadian airman, realizing that he was about to faint from fatigue, strapped his wrists to the sledge and left the rest to his dogs, with Grey Cloud at their head.

Grey Cloud accompanied Rear-Admiral Byrd on his 1939 expedition to the Antarctic, where he quickly became "lead-dog." Subsequently this magnificent animal served with the U.S. Arctic Army, and not until twelve years of faithful service lay behind him was he retired. Now, in his thirteenth year, the gallant old fellow works only one hour a day, helping to train a new generation of sledge-dogs at the U.S. Army's husky-school.

Dogs played a very considerable part on the more northerly fronts during the war. Some idea of the husky's value in warfare was demonstrated in France during the first world war when, hastily imported to save a battery cut off in the Vosges, a single team hauled four hundred tons of food and ammunition to the gunners in six days! Samoyedes accomplished similar feats on the Finnish Front between 1939 and 1943, being mainly employed in moving ammunition and light guns.

It was these lovely white creatures from the Kannin Peninsula that made Nansen's Farthest North journey possible. "Polar," the explorer's finest dog, became as famous as "Finn," the shaggy great beast whose malemute howl was the signature-tune to Admiral Byrd's broadcasts from Antarctica shortly before the late war. Finn's deep, bass voice thrilled the world,

AN ANTARCTIC DOG-FARM

Up to 1943 Antarctic expeditions relied on huskies born and trained in the Arctic. Transporting them from the top of the world to the bottom proved a slow and expensive business, and when, five years ago, British outposts were established on a permanent basis in the Antarctic a dog-farm was started on the Argentine Islands, a mountainous, icy archipelago where plenty of seals are available for dog-food.

The animals live largely in the open, and summer and winter alike two of the four men at the "Antarctic Kennels" are kept busy training pups to run in harness, first with their mothers, then with other dogs.

The experiment has proved a complete success. Many of the animals that hauled British sledges more than three thousand miles between November and March last year were born and trained on the Argentine Islands. With the new generation of huskies, bred in the Far South, they will set off into the unexplored areas of Grahamland when summer returns to the Far South.

Malemutes are the only breed to have reached both the North and South Poles. Weighing anything up to 180 lb., they are ideal for the incessant hard logging of Polar explorations. They constituted the backbone of the sixty huskies sent to an Alaskan military base. Born at the Chinook Husky Kennels, Wonalancet, New Hampshire, these animals had been employed for the better part of a year training soldiers how to "mush." They demonstrated that a team of seventy-three dogs, led by the redoubtable Siberian husky, "Lady Waska," could drag a ten-ton military lorry across terrible country which the vehicle could not possibly negotiate under its own power.

Females prove excellent team-leaders. Although the dogs fight sanguinary battles—sometimes to the death—there is yet to be found a "leading lady" unable to defend against all-comers her envied position at the head of the hitch-line.

The Chinook Kennels are a training-ground for both military and "civil" huskies, and also an old-age haven for retired animals. Among its inmates are balls of puppy fluff perhaps destined to leave their bones at the Poles and such veterans as "Old Grizzly" and "Moody," two aged,

snow-blinded, four-legged pensioners. Moody and Grizzly are old-timers of Antarctic exploration.

"Rowdy," another famous dog, was a member of the first Byrd expedition to Antarctica, and his deep wolf-like sunset howl conjured up visions of the frigid days when he helped his two-legged masters to "mush" to the Queen Maud Range. Before he died in 1947—at the ripe old age of twenty—everyone at the Chinook Kennels had learned to love the old fellow. Even the cats! When, every evening at nine sharp, the malemute called at the "stores" for his reindeer blanket, half a dozen cats would be waiting to take advantage of his good nature and eight-inches long fur by snuggling down with him for the night.

The veteran earned his living by teaching the new generation of Polar pups to sled-haul.

"Coyote," another canine explorer in retirement at Chinook, accompanied Rowdy to the Southern Continent. His mother was a



"They demonstrated that a team of seventy-three dogs could drag a military lorry."

timber-wolf, and Admiral Byrd never tires of hearing how the old dog, despite his eighteen years, supplements his rations by pretending to be asleep close to trees where unsuspecting red squirrels play.

"Tin Tin" and "Fritz" are among the "workers" of the Kennels. Two of a litter of seven, they caused quite a stir when they were born—in a temperature of forty below zero—during the Second Byrd Expedition. Five of the seven, with their families, returned to their native land, Little America, to haul the U.S. Services Antarctic Expedition to success—a record of which any Polar dog might well be proud!

The Siberian husky is the greyhound among the snow-dogs. The Siberians were brought to America in 1909, and promptly broke the record for the famous Nome Border Cup Race, covering the twenty-six miles in one hour fifty minutes. Their success in the long-distance All-Alaska Sweepstakes was just as spectacular.

For ten years this meeting thrilled Alaska. Trappers, gold-miners, lumbermen, soldiers, sealers, white men, Red men, Eskimos, and their womenfolk all "went to the dogs" in Arctic style. Big bets were made. Gold-dust and currency changed hands, and voices rose in heated argument as the teams drew away for the four-hundred-and-eight miles non-stop haul from Nome to Candle and return. Five times the Siberians earned their drivers a fortune, and the record of seventy-four hours seventeen minutes, held by John Johnson, is still beyond the reach of the local dogs.

The husky is the toughest dog in the world. On Polar trips "Siberian" and malemute, Samoyede and "Labrador" have on many occasions hauled heavy loads up to fifty miles a day on a diet of frozen walrus-hide.

VORACIOUS APPETITES

As a matter of fact, they will eat practically anything. "Rora," leader of a team I drove in 1939, greedily devoured gloves and a sealskin hood—and this is nothing! During Ejnar Mikkelsen's expedition to Greenland his team broke loose from their chains and, in the course of a few minutes, devoured a month's supply of dog-food, a pair of skin boots, part of a sleeping-bag, the hide straps from ski boots, and the thong of an eighteen-feet-long whip! They probably wished they had eaten the handle as well when the horrified Mikkelsen used it to chastise them!

Two days later, in a mad downhill rush, the same dogs nearly flung themselves over an ice precipice. Fortunately the heavy sledge overturned, acting as a brake.

The "expert" sled-driver, or "musher," normally handles his team with as much ease as if driving a car. The dogs may be traced in pairs, in single file, or in fan formation, each with its own trace-line. A wooden case is attached to the back-half of the sledge for small equipment, and the driver sits in front of this on his sleeping-bag—when the load permits. A bridle is attached to the front of the sledge to help him to avoid sharp ice-corners.

The thrill is immense when the runners hum over sparkling-ice, leaving a trail of snow-spume, or when the "musher" erects a sail to assist progress



and the huskies race ahead at perhaps fifteen miles an hour, wheeling left and right as the whip cracks over the team-leader.

"Yake!" yells the musher, and his team, tongues lolling and eyes puckered against the glare, lurch forward. Guiding the sledge by holding its "gee-pole" in his gloved right hand, the driver uses his feet as brakes when, racing downhill.

"Yake!" he shouts again, as steep gradients appear, and the willing dogs put added vigour into their efforts. The leading animal seems to anticipate the musher's orders, and at the commands "Haw!" or "Gee!" he promptly wheels to left or right.

On the other hand, mushing can be incredibly hard work, with the driver going ahead "breaking trail" if the snow is deep, helping to haul the sledge, or laboriously wading with the team through the slush of early spring.

It is not at all uncommon for huskies to plunge through snow-bridges spanning crevasses. Three dogs fell through bridged crevasses in quick succession on Roald Amundsen's "Race to the South Pole," and once his companion, Pjaaland, only just managed to seize his dogs' traces as his sled disappeared below the surface. The animals strained forward desperately, digging their claws into the snow to avoid being dragged down by the weight of their load, while the men hauled the sledge back.

Sometimes dogs drop from the traces into the depths of the ice. When one of Surgeon-Commander Bingham's huskies fell into a shallow crevasse in Greenland he rescued the animal by dropping a noose over its head and hoisting the struggling beast up quickly before it choked.

Occasionally, man, dogs, and sledge all disappear—as on Mawson's last Antarctic Expedition, when Ninnis fell through a snow-bridge. Mawson and Mertz shouted down to their unfortunate companion for three hours, but the only answer from the blue depths of the ice was the moaning of an injured husky on a

ledge a hundred and fifty feet below the surface.

The vanished sled carried most of the party's equipment, and that night all the food for the rest of the dogs consisted of a few items of old clothing and several rawhide straps. Subsequently the animals collapsed one by one through starvation and had to be destroyed.

Invariably man and dog are bound by a deep bond of friendship and understanding. Scott never tired of talking about "Biegias" and "Vaida"—half-brothers who hauled in the same trace. These two spent their nights lying one on top of the other in the snow, changing position every few hours so that each had a share of the warmer position!

There can be few huskies entirely without endearing ways, and the killing of animals that have worked faithfully for months on a minimum of food is a heart-breaking experience. On many occasions, however, Polar travellers have been compelled to shoot some of their dogs to feed the remainder. On his journey to the South Pole, for instance, Amundsen had to order the destruction of twenty-four magnificent dogs. Each man killed his own animals, and they subsequently admitted that their ordeal at what they later called "Butchers' Camp" was the worst in the long journey across the desolate ice-cap.

Every winter sees snow-dogs and their drivers adding further chapters to their two thousand years of fascinating history. Here's one example. Swirling up the Richardson Highway, you learn that the rest-house at Big Delta, on the Tanana River in Alaska, is known as "Mary's." And thereby hangs a tale.

"How come it should be called 'Mary's'?" the stranger asks. The old-timers have their answer ready.

A PLUCKY WOMAN

"Mary," they explain, "is a fine musher. Every year she enters her team in the North-



"Huskies" resting in the snow at Moose Factory, Northern Canada.

west Stakes — like Miss M. Joyce, veteran of the Alaska trails—and there ain't a man she can't rival. Mary married. 'Scandinavian Bert' (he drifted over here from the Yukon) and became Mrs Hansen."

"These two settled down at the Delta Roadhouse — you know, where the ferry crosses the river. One winter's day, a fortnight before her first baby was due to be born, Mary hitched her six huskies to her sled and set out alone for the hospital at Banks, ninety-six miles down the Richardson Highway. A

month later she made the return journey, with her two-weeks-old daughter strapped to the sled! That's why the cabin at Big Delta is called 'Mary's'."

The husky will haul itself to exhaustion, and if occasional sled-dogs crazed by hunger have been known to tear out a sleeping man's throat, there are also scores of instances of extreme loyalty.

One summer's day, when the white wastes of Greenland sparkled in the sunshine, an Eskimo child strayed into the glaring wilderness. Inevitably she became lost, and when, after a two-days' search, she was found, the six-year-old told an amazing story of loyalty and tender care by a dog—"Seti," a malemute.

Instead of the normal brown eyes, some Arctic dogs have strange-looking bluish-white orbs which are not sensitive to the dazzling glare of the sun on summer snows. But Seti had brown eyes and—like so many of his kind—had gone blind. What the malemute lacked in vision, however, he made up for in loyalty and wisdom.

Seti was unable to lead his little charge home—but he *could* care for her until help arrived. And this Seti did, with the devotion of a mother. At night he offered her the warmth of his thick fur, and when found the child was curled up cosily against the old malemute like a puppy.

The husky is even more indispensable to the native of the tundras than to the white men; the former has no alternative for long-distance travel.

As a general rule, Eskimo dogs are given little opportunity to eat slowly and digest their food properly. Food is thrown to the team, so each dog is forced to gulp his ration for fear of losing it to another. A hunk of meat in the stomach, the Eskimo believes, offers "something to lean on" for many more hours than normally-digested food. The Eskimo has another rather brutal way of preventing his animals assimilating their rations quickly. He will either file down their teeth, or knock them out when they are



Half-bred timber-wolf "huskies."

pups, thus preventing proper mastication. Lack of teeth has another advantage from his viewpoint: it prevents the dogs from eating their traces!

Sledge-dogs are fed only every other day; the explanation is that an animal accustomed to



A fine "malemute" at Longyear, Spitzbergen.



"Rescued the animal by dropping a noose over its head and hauling it up quickly."

sustenance every forty-eight hours is better able to continue working for long spells without food than one used to daily meals. Food must always be husbanded against emergencies. Storms and bad ice often delay the teams; supplies run short; and without food both man and dogs fall victims to the pitiless Arctic. Moreover, it is not possible to carry sufficient stores on the sledge to feed both the dogs and their owners, as would be the case in less fearsome country.

Of all flesh, the Arctic dog most relishes bear-meat; it takes a first-class driver to control his team once they smell bear. So great is their hatred of the animal and their love of its flesh that bear-scent is one of the few things which will make Eskimo dogs bark.

They dash headlong after the animal and, catching up with it, they tumble all over it, clawing and snapping wildly. Either they bring Bruin down (usually at a high price in killed or maimed) or the hunter shoots him. Strange to relate, once the bear is killed the dogs become docile, sitting quietly in the snow awaiting the moment when they are permitted to attack the carcass. The blood is the first thing they go for.

The day's work over, the huskies curl up in the snow, tail over nose, until snow-spume

or falling flakes completely cover them. Morning—it's dark for twenty-four hours a day during the winter—sees them emerge from their lairs to shake themselves and tug at the traces once more until home is reached.

Such is the routine of the sledge-dog in the extreme Far North—a hard life indeed. Even in the Southern tongue of Greenland huskies are not treated as pets. They play a fundamental part in the constant struggle for existence, and though the Eskimo undoubtedly loves his animals he does anything but make fools of them. Though the musher never regards his dogs as pets I know from personal experience that they make devoted companions; indeed, had my wife not forbidden it on the ground that a husky would "tear the children to shreds," I should have brought one of these lovely creatures home from the Arctic.

Travel by sledge in the Far South is restricted to the summer. At this period, of course, the Northern Hemisphere is experiencing the rigours of mid-winter, and until May the husky will be hard at work over a vast area of wilderness country stretching southwards from Nome, in Alaska, right around the roof of the world to the eastern tip of Siberia, across the narrow seas from Alaska.



THE HUT-TAX AFFAIR

W



HEN the Government messenger brought written word to Mellor that the collection of hut-tax in his district was to be extended to cover the wild and primitive tribes of the Kura Hills, he whistled softly to himself and proceeded to give the matter much thought.

It wasn't the fact that this order lengthened his tour by another week which worried him. It wasn't that he had to turn aside from hospitable Hausa villages—with good shooting *en route*—and climb the rocky heights and narrow ravines of an almost unknown and untravelled zone of the country. Nor was he troubled by the thought that these small and isolated tribes, cut off for centuries from contact with other natives, had developed a thorny independence which treated all comers as enemies.

What bothered Mellor was the conflicting nature of his instructions.

From the seat of authority had come orders that the annual hut-tax was to be collected from all villages and tribes alike, and without exception. It was to be a tax of a shilling per hut per annum. The native inhabitants were to be informed that the money would be spent, for their good, in opening up roads and communications. Mellor was to take a police escort, but no show of force whatever was to be made, and on no account must hostilities be allowed to develop.

This letter had greatly pleased the Administration. It was fair and equal for all. Moreover, it was in accordance with the official slogan of the period—"peaceful penetration."

"All very nice and well-thought-out," reflected Mellor. "Except for the fact that the Kura Pagans won't know that other tribes have also got to pay the tax, and won't realize they are not the victims of an armed raid. Particularly as the money will be spent for opening up roads, which is the very last thing they want! And they don't use money, so I shall have to take sheep, horses, and goats in lieu. Finally, if I don't use force I shan't collect the tax, and if I do use force I shall be for the high jump!"

Going to the fly of the tent, he spoke to his orderly, who strode away in the sunlight. Within a couple of minutes he returned with a corporal of the Nigerian Police, in smart dark blue tunic and shorts, who stamped his bare heel and saluted.

"Mama Bima," said Mellor, in Hausa, "I have had a *takada* from the *Baba-n-Baturai*. It is a matter of tax. We leave Gindiri to-morrow and go by the hills through Tafchin, Kangan, and Burrum. We shall want an interpreter to talk our word with these people. See if you can

By CASSITER WRIGHT

The Author writes: "This story is absolutely true. The events described occurred in 1920, and created much excitement at the time in Northern Nigeria. To avoid giving pain to his relatives I have changed the name of the Political Officer concerned."

find one in the market. Let it be known to the *Sarihi*, who may find us someone."

Mama Bima seemed troubled, working his bare feet uneasily in the sand.

"*Zaki*!" he said. "There will be trouble. These people are wild and savage. They know nothing, and have never paid a tax. It is even said that they eat men, by old custom. It will mean fighting—"

"It must not mean fighting," Mellor broke in. "That is the thing forbidden. On no account must it mean fighting! Go and get that interpreter, and tell the carriers and the others to fall in at sunrise to-morrow."

It was the usual retinue of a Provincial Officer on tour. Six uniformed native police, armed with carbines, a native clerk who pedalled his cycle over carrier-tracks and bush-paths; Mellor's cook; steward-boy; horse-boy; two Government interpreters; and about thirty carriers. These were the men who fell in the following morning and marched in single file through the market-place of Gindiri with careless greeting and good-natured banter. Not a single member of that party ever returned.

Clear of the village, the grey-and-green slopes of the Kura Hills rose twenty miles to the east. The nearest of the three Pagan villages was Tafchin, and Mellor hoped to make it by nightfall. Half-way to the foothills he broke his journey for the midday halt, lunching in the mud *gidida* (hut) of the last white man he was to see. This was a prospector of the Niger Company who was drilling the dry bed of the adjacent river for alluvial tin. Mellor and he were old friends, and to him the Provincial Officer explained his difficulties.

The prospector gave emphatic warning.

"You can't do it!" he cried. "You either go in 'by strong,' and battle for it, or you'll go without it. Tax! What do Tafchin and Kangan know about tax? You may get away with it at Tafchin—they've had a little contact with the outside world and the inevitable white man—but Kangan is hopeless! Does the Administration imagine the Kura Hills and the

Marina at Lagos are the same sort of thing?"

Mellor merely grinned. He was a likeable fellow, and perhaps he hadn't enough imagination to fully understand the danger. But he had definite instructions, and meant to carry them out.

So, after half an hour's halt, the little expedition went its way, and from then on was lost without trace. After a period of silence came suspicion and rumour, followed eventually by certainty and punishment. The exact facts can only be surmised, for the dense bush of the Kangam valley hid the massacre, and later on the half-dumb evidence of sullen natives, convinced of the nearness of their own end, was not very detailed. But, little by little, the next few months cleared up the mystery of the vanished expedition.

Mellor's party spent that evening in the foothills of Tafchin. At its approach the cow-horns of the Pagan outposts wailed their warnings and the war-drum called back the straying members of the tribe. In this village, however, the white man's arrival was not altogether unexpected, and Tafchin yielded its quota of sheep, goats and ponies without a fight, though with much wailing and gnashing of teeth.

In the morning the elders met Mellor at the foot of the slope, noted the *bindigas* (carbines) of the police, and gave in to the demands of the interpreter. The latter did not mention "tax," although the matter had been impressed on him by Mellor; he deemed it unnecessary. For the sake of simplicity, both the interpreter and the Pagans of Tafchin treated the matter as a demand by superior

force. Outside the limits of civilization this seems quite feasible and sufficient reason.

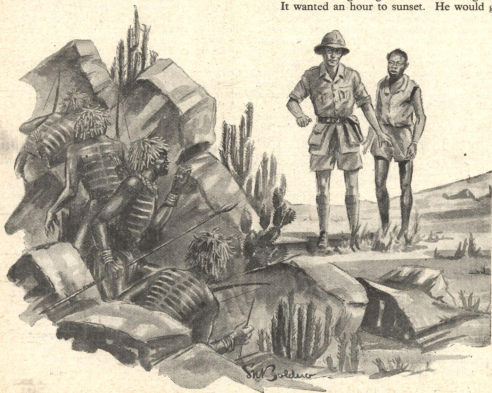
Early in the evening of the next day Mellor and his party, elated at the ease of the first collection, camped in the valley of the stream that runs at the foot of the Kangam ridge. They had travelled slowly, on account of their accompanying flock. Once again the cow-horns wailed; the communal drum echoed in the hills.

But no naked, ochre-stained Pagans of Kangam appeared. Not even a single black form was seen to flit through the oil-palms and dense bush of the valley. A thousand eyes had watched—and were watching. The savages of Kangam had observed the expedition, with its captive flock, wend its way along the valley, and drew their own conclusions. They waited to see if it would continue its journey. If it did not—well, circumstances would decide, but it would be treated as alien raiders had always been treated, whether they were Fulani slave-seekers or Hausa cattle-thieves.

The expedition camped down for the night under the heights of Kangam village itself. The carriers dumped their loads and relaxed; Mellor's personal boys got busy. His horse was tethered and his tent run up. The police stacked their carbines and hung their bayonet-belts on the nearest bushes. Fires were lit and food prepared. And, unceasingly, from the ridge above, came the ominous blare of the horns and the intimidating booming of the war-drum.

Meanwhile Mellor cogitated his best plan of action. He finally decided that a show of force might provoke a fight. If he went alone, however, accompanied only by an interpreter, he stood a chance of getting a reasoned hearing.

It wanted an hour to sunset. He would go



"Mellor paused for a moment among clusters of big granite boulders."

up to the village with the interpreter, talk to them quietly, and give them the night to consider matters.

He called the corporal, Mama Bima, and told him of his intention, but the corporal surprised him by the vehemence of his protest.

"I beg you, *Zaki!*" he said. "Make you not go, sah!" Then he added, in Hausa: "It is madness! If you do not take us, then why are we here?"

"It is an order, Mama Bima," replied Mellor. "The people are easily frightened. They may listen to me if I go alone."

After more protest, Mama Bima gave up. This political work seemed insane to him; not so would his old officers of the Second Battalion of the W.A.F.F. have behaved! But it was an order. He saluted and stood by with evident

few yards behind. And although no sign of life came from the thicket around or the rocks above, and no movement betrayed a watcher, instantly the horns blared forth a wilder alarm and the beat of the war-drum quickened.

The bush became thinner as the ascent grew rockier and studded with more boulders. The stone was still reflecting the day's heat, and Mellor paused half-way up to mop his forehead.

Above him he saw the mud and palm-thatch huts. They seemed to quiver in the pandemonium of noise. The cow-horns sounded



all round him—some quite near—but there was nobody in sight. It was uncanny.

The uphill climb took nearly half an hour, and Mellor paused for a moment among clusters of big granite boulders before stepping into a clearing on a wide ledge. The place appeared utterly deserted. With the interpreter behind, he took a few steps forward.

One moment he was alone. Then around, behind, and at the side of him appeared redochred, yelling savages, tense with bestial excitement, noses twitching, and with their little wooden-tipped poisoned arrows already strung. Slipping from behind boulders, from the open doorways of the huts, from the cactus clumps, they closed in upon the white man.

anxiety while Mellor called up the interpreter and gave him instructions.

The latter was filled with apprehension, and very reluctant to start, but eventually his abounding faith in the white man's powers persuaded him.

Mellor stepped through the shallow stream and commenced to climb the slope, the native a

Mellor held his hands up, palms open, to suggest no enmity, and turned to the interpreter. Then, with the hum of an angry bee, a little arrow sped between them. The interpreter lost his nerve. He dropped, wailing, to his knees.

Looking round, Mellor saw the dusky crowd of naked Pagans almost on him, saw the knives drawn and the flight of arrows in the air. He drew his revolver for the signal that was to bring the police, but at that moment an arrow struck him in the throat and he fell. There was the short flurry of a hound-pack at the killing of a fox, and then everything was quiet save for the monotonous wailing of the cow-horns and the measured reverberations of the drum.

Except for the sound of hundreds of running feet, the quietude was preserved as the young men of Kangan swept on down the slope. They took the little camp on the run, going through it and back again in a frenzy of destruction. The Hausa police, caught squatting at their meal, their arms stacked, speedily went down under the stabbing knives. Carriers, clerk and cook, horse-boy and steward, all fared alike. Here and there a screaming fugitive ran aimlessly among the trees for a few seconds until fleet and silent death overtook him.

Five days later two Government mail-messengers came along the Kangan valley path, bringing Mellor's letters and papers from England, and the correspondence from the Provincial Office. They chatted easily as they walked under the sloping ridge of Kangan village. At any moment they expected to find themselves in Mellor's camp. They had followed his route from Gindiri to the prospector's camp. He had directed them to Tafchin, and Tafchin said the party had passed on, by the only road through the hills, in the direction of Kangan.

Passing unmolested through the valley, observing no camp or signs of a camp, the messengers went on to Burrum. The Pagans of Burrum declared they knew nothing of a white man or carriers, and didn't want to. Greatly puzzled, the messengers retraced their steps to Kangan, and the watching outposts that had seen them pass unharmed along the valley before saw them return again.

This time they pursued their inquiries up the slope to Kangan itself, and here, in consequence, they died quickly. For, even in their ignorance, the elders of Kangan had heard of the white man's power of punishment. The last thing they wanted was publicity, and they were prepared to go to any lengths to avoid it.

The Union Jack hung slackly in the heat that shimmered from the red earth round the Provincial office at Kerafi, and the khaki-clad Hausa sentry sprang to attention as the Resident of the Province passed through the open doorway. In the shade of the outer office sat the Junior Political, deep in papers.

"Any news this morning, James?"

"No, sir. Nothing. And there's no word from the N.A. Perhaps we haven't given them enough time. After all, it's a hundred and fifty miles."

"Nothing to natives, James! I'm beginning to fear something serious has happened. I don't like the look of things, and I don't like the way Mellor's letters are piling up. Still more, I don't like the fact that he's not sending in mail for home."

"He may be sick in some native village, and—"

"The clerk would have sent in. And Mellor had Mama Bima with him—a most reliable fellow. No; there's been some trouble. Of course, he may have sent direct to the M.O. Send the orderly over for him, James."

Within two minutes Grant, the station Medical Officer, bent under the low doorway. He was an outsize man, bulky and red-faced, and panted in the heat.

"Good morning, Grant," said the Resident. "Sorry to have to call you over. I'm afraid it's serious. You haven't had word of any sort about Mellor, by any chance?"

"No. Is he sick? Where is he now?"

"Ah! That's the trouble—we don't know. Sit down; there may have to be an official inquiry, so you ought to know the facts. Mellor was switched off his usual beat to introduce tax in the Kura Hills. Headquarters, of course. Since then there hasn't been a word from him—no report, no home mail, nothing."

"He had an armed police escort, I suppose?"

"Yes, but the Administration circular said they were not to be used. 'Peaceful penetration'—you know. But Mellor may have taken it too literally—and they are rather primitive in those hills."

"What about the usual messenger contact?" asked Grant.

"That adds to the mystery. Two messengers went out with a few office queries, Mellor's home mail, and some shot-gun cartridges. They should have returned a week ago. But there's no sign of them, either."

At this moment there was an interruption. An elderly, bearded Mahommedan had entered the outer office. Behind him flocked half a dozen *Dogarai* (Native Administration police) in their red turbans and *rigas*.

The greybeard spoke. "The *Bature* is not to be found. Nor are his servants, or his carriers, or the *Dan-Sandas* (police). They are not! We have had many men out. All say the same. The *Bature* slept at Gindiri. Next day he spoke with the Niger Company white man. That night he slept below Tafchin. He took *Jangali* (tax) from Tafchin, over which they still grieve. He passed on to Kangan. He is not there, for we sent traders in with salt to find out. But he did not go on to Burrum. The folk there say they know nothing, and that, I think, is true, for we have a man sick there with guinea-worm. He cannot walk, but he would have known."

The Resident broke in.

"But this is foolish talk, *Alkali*. Men—many men—do not vanish. Equipment, tents, boots, and arms do not vanish."

The old man bowed respectfully. "It is as you say, *Zaki*. It will doubtless be explained. But the *arna* (Pagans) are wild and treacherous folk, and those who want the explanation must take men and guns to get it."

The worried Resident waved the party outside; then he turned to the other two.

"He suspects something—and he's right. There has been trouble. Good Heavens! The whole party! Well, it's up to Headquarters now."

A month later a half-company of the —th Battalion of the Nigerian Regiment beat up the Kura valley for the third time. This time they

were returning from Burrum. Investigation of the disappearance of Mellor and his entire escort had passed from civil to military hands. True, the punitive expedition had a civil officer attached to it, but the O.C., Captain Gardner, had full powers, and was expected to use them.

During the last three weeks they had toured the route and searched the villages.

There was no evidence, no clue. Yet Captain Gardner was now going to Kangam, as a last resort, on a "hunch." He meant to remain in the vicinity of that evil-smelling village until he *did* get evidence. The justification for the "hunch" was the difference in the attitude of the three Pagan communities. Under cross-examination Tafchin repeated that Mellor had come, had been paid his tax, and had then gone away.

Burrum, at the other end of the valley, was equally decided. It was no use asking them about a white man and carriers, because, so far as they were concerned, and had explained for the umpteenth time, there hadn't been any white men or carriers.

But Kangam infected Captain Gardner with suspicion. Twice he had submitted the village folk to a searching cross-examination.

and the plea of blank ignorance had been unanimous.

But the primitive native is a poor actor, and there was a sullen, underlying defiance that showed in fits of restlessness, while bad temper glared out of rolling eyeballs. Nevertheless, though the cow-horns might still call to each other, and the war-drum sound the note of doom through the hills, Kangam remained on the best behaviour it could muster. This was no peaceful little party to be rushed and overwhelmed, but a body of well-armed native troops who were ready for a fight and looking forward to it.



"The arrest was duly made."

So the half-company returned again to Kangam, and officers and troops settled down in the valley to play a waiting game. Their camp was established not a hundred yards from where Mellor's ill-fated party had camped eight weeks previously.

Part of the treatment of Kangam as a village under strong suspicion was a daily visit from an armed search-party which entered and examined a section of huts from floor to thatch; it seemed impossible that some articles of loot should not be hidden. So, on alternate days, Gardner and the civil officer, with twenty riflemen, climbed the ascent and put Kangam through it. The village itself, half-way up the great ridge of Kura, was quite beautiful, though decidedly smelly. Stretches of short green turf filled the hollows on the plateau, and doves cooed in the dark evergreen trees. Goats and sheep mingled with stringy fowl; vultures flapped around and stalked between them. During these searches the naked Pagans of Kangam sat sulkily about, their kinky hair, plastered thick with a mixture of palm-oil and red ochre, contrasting oddly with their dirty skins. Their bodies had the outline of their bones picked out in white china-clay. Thus they give the impression of being half-skeleton, half-goliwog, and wholly inhuman.

A week of searching had combed the village from end to end, without result, so Gardner went a step farther. Calling an assembly of the elders, he reminded them that they were under grave suspicion, and that he was going to take half a dozen of the young men away for trial. He would leave it to them to pick out the guilty.

To his surprise, they readily fell in with this suggestion, and next morning saw five captives, already bound with bush fibres, delivered into his hands.

Investigation showed two of them to be imbeciles, one a bad case of leprosy, and the other two to be foreign to the tribe, though kidnapped when very young. A small price, Kangam doubtless felt, to pay to get rid of the unwelcome visitors on their doorstep! The wretched captives, quite unable to understand why their lives had been spared, were speedily returned up the hill.

The Hausa troops were now chafing at the futility of the position, the two white men were acutely conscious of wasted time, and the demeanour of the Pagans was one of sulky and impotent anger. And then, unexpectedly, came the incident that brought enlightenment.

The hut-to-hut search had been thoroughly done, and Gardner was considering his next step. As a matter of routine more than in hopes of a discovery, he had sent an armed patrol up the slope and through the village. As always, the

cow-horns had sounded warning as the troops left the cover of the valley.

The patrol was under a sergeant, Moma Giwa, and had left the camp half an hour when the white men heard shots and a confused howling, followed by the redoubled uproar of the drum. Down in the camp the rest of the men fell in, and, hastening to the rescue, found that the patrol had fought its way down the slope, not without loss. But carried in their midst, tightly trussed up, was a strongly-built young Pagan with torn and bleeding nostrils. Gardner recognized him as the son of one of the sub-chiefs.

Breathless and excited, Moma Giwa explained matters, meanwhile holding out a silver whistle! Up in the village, he said, he had led his men round some huts; the prisoner had suddenly rounded a corner and run into them. Thrust through his nose was the familiar silver whistle of a police corporal!

This was sufficient for an arrest, and the arrest was duly made, but immediately the arrows began to fly and there was a hand-to-hand fight with a crowd of savages.

Action was now justified, for the patrol had been attacked and had lost two men, so the question of Mellor's fate became, for the moment, of secondary importance. Gardner gave his men a ten-minute talk, the machine-gun was assembled, and the troops moved up the slope.

The people of Kangam put up a fight. They rolled great granite boulders down the hillside, and the air was full of the little reed arrows with the poison-impregnated soft-wood points. They even tried a headlong charge, but it petered out against the machine-gun. No Pagan tribe stands rifle-fire for long, and presently a shrieking, demoralized mob broke and ran, leaving the soldiers to the systematic burning of the village and destruction of the corn-stocks that mean the fullest punishment. The chief—a powerful man with a bestial, stupid face—and half a dozen of the elders were in irons.

They were under the impression that speedy execution was to be their lot, and slowly, word by word, and grunt by grunt, the white men elicited from them the details of Mellor's end.

They were tried in the Provincial centre, and three, including the chief, were hanged. Two received long sentences of imprisonment, and one was deliberately acquitted—to take back wisdom to the remnants of the tribe of Kangam.

It must be stated, in fairness, that at this period the Kangam Pagans regarded tax-collection as robbery under arms. But then I saw both sides of the story, for I was the Niger Company's prospector, poor Mellor was my friend, and the Kangam people were my neighbours.



ALL ABOARD FOR ADVENTURE!

Told by E. P. HADDON and set down by JOE AUSTELL SMALL

A rousing story full of the real WIDE WORLD spirit. Five young Americans, tiring of the humdrum daily round, determined to devote a couple of months to an ambitious cruise that seemed likely to provide colourful memories for the rest of their lives. After much planning they set out in a small sailing-boat bound for tropic seas, sun-kissed lagoons, and lands of mystery and romance. The skipper had learnt navigation from a book, and his crew were the veriest amateurs, but all were determined to make the enterprise a success. You will enjoy every line of this vivid narrative, which represents the dream-come-true of thousands of men who, if the chance offered, would love to follow the example of our five stalwarts.

II

The first instalment related how the five adventurers—W. W. Strode, skipper; Hans Nagel; Adrian Hines; Nolan Sanford; and E. P. Haddon, the narrator—arranged a cruise from Galveston, Texas, to little-known Yucatan, Mexico. Setting out down the Gulf of Mexico in Strode's little *Fortuna*, they had a narrow escape from disaster after going ashore at a lonely point on the coast. Later, they entered the port of Tampico, where they were threatened with the seizure of their boat owing to an unwitting infraction of regulations. The authorities, however, graciously overlooked this, and the Customs chief entertained the party to a sumptuous lunch. You can now read on.

S



OMEBOY must have talked about that lunch, for very soon certain Pressmen in the city discovered our expedition had come to Mexico for the avowed purpose of collecting zoological specimens. The trouble started when the story appeared in the local papers the following morning.

• People began to arrive before sun-up, and soon after dawn the docks near the *Fortuna* resembled a miniature menagerie. Word had spread that we wanted birds, animals, reptiles—anything that could fly, walk, or crawl. Parrots of all kinds and colours indicated their emphatic disapproval of this enforced migration by vicious squawks and shrieks; monkeys squealed; snakes hissed; birds chirped; and quite a large crowd gathered to view the exhibits and watch the fun. It proved very difficult to convince some of the would-be vendors that we were not in the market for assorted livestock; they departed considerably ruffled and disappointed.

One Indian brought along a large iron drum he insisted we should look into. Lifting off the perforated lid, Adrian bent down to peer inside. Next moment the head of a big boa-constrictor popped up! Adrian yelled, dropped the lid back in place, and fled for the ship at top speed.

In addition to the animal-dealers, newsboys arrived, trying to sell us papers. They felt sure we wanted to know what was happening, having been away from civilization for so long! The

youngsters showed no perturbation when we pointed out that some of the journals were old. The papers were neatly folded, and looked fresh enough; what could it matter to wandering foreigners if the news was a little ancient?

The Customs officer who had been assigned to guard the *Fortuna* was a real dandy. Dressed in a natty white uniform, with a revolver slung in a beautiful holster of alligator leather, he looked a most striking figure, and had an eye for every *señorita* who passed by. I noticed he spent a good deal of his time tinting and polishing his lengthy finger-nails!

This elegant representative of officialdom was a very friendly fellow; the fact that the hospitality he extended to all and sundry of his acquaintances was at our expense didn't seem to worry him in the least. Whenever anyone he knew happened along the Customs man would greet him like a long-lost brother and conduct him across the wharf to our ship for a drink—from our slender stock, of course! Tiring of this procedure, we thought of doctoring the liquor, but decided it might be too risky. We weren't anxious to risk another fine!

At this juncture we met Bill Holmes, a bright boy of fifteen, the son of an American oil man living in the town. Bill was vastly interested in our trip, and offered to take us fishing up the Tamesi River, near Tampico. We liked Bill; we also liked fishing, so the excursion was arranged for the following morning.

The Tamesi is a beautiful stream, unusually clear, which winds placidly through countless banana-plantations, its banks lined with huge coconut-palms. Every thatched hut along the riverside possessed its *cayuca*—a primitive canoe hollowed from a tree-trunk. Loaded down with bananas, coconuts, and other peasant produce, these craft often showed little more than an inch of freeboard. The natives handle them so skillfully, however, that accidents seldom happen.

THE NEW HAND

Young Holmes was exceedingly anxious to join our party for the rest of the voyage, and



This sketch-map shows the route the *Fortuna* followed round the Gulf of Mexico

eventually—much to his delight—we consented to take him along if his parents approved. He could be very useful, for none of us knew Spanish, whereas Bill spoke it fluently and made an excellent interpreter.

We caught fighting yellowtails as fast as we could haul them in, returning to the port well satisfied after a very enjoyable day. Bill duly secured the necessary permission from his people, and next morning we set off again—with six people aboard and bunks for only four!

Outside the jetty, off the Rio Panuco estuary, the log-line was ceremoniously dropped overboard again, and the routine of our cruise resumed. For three days, the wind being very light, the *Fortuna* glided slowly along the coast of Tamaulipas under canvas, heading for Vera Cruz. Hitherto the shoreline had been low and sandy, but now it began to give way to rugged mountains.

Before we left Tampico the skipper of a deep-water ship had generously presented us with a small supply of rum and wine, which went some way to replace the inroads made by our Customs guard. Before our meals, therefore, we sat on the deck, listening to Adrian grumbling to himself down in the galley, and partook of appetizers. We now regarded ourselves as

veteran sailors, and were really enjoying the cruise. Hans continually remarked: "This is the life, boys!"

Why he did it we never understood, but Adrian, after washing his hands of the whole business, had eventually decided *someone* must do the cooking and that he was the person best qualified! He had, therefore, gone back to the stove and the cooking-pots, gradually mastering the technique of working in the confined space. It must be said in fairness that he turned out some very tasty dishes.

One day Hans spotted a huge turtle fast asleep about fifty yards off our port bow. Putting on his second tropical helmet—he had already lost one—he proceeded to study the creature. While he was thus preoccupied Strode happened to put the *Fortuna* about, and the boom slammed across the deck,

sending Hans sprawling and hurling his helmet over the side. Picking himself up, Nagel stared resentfully at the boom, meanwhile rubbing his head.

"I'm gonna watch that thing from now on," he growled.

A short distance off Vera Cruz we caught a big yellowtail on a trolling-line. Adrian emerged from his galley and inspected our prize critically, laying the big fish on the deck to get a better view of its beautiful colour. Suddenly the yellowtail roused itself, flapped into the air, and slapped the cook smartly across the cheek with its tail! Taken completely by surprise, Adrian collapsed on to the planking with considerable force. One more mighty flap, and the yellowtail vanished overside!

Adrian growled angrily, glowered at his laughing audience, and retreated to his sanctum.

Arrived at Vera Cruz, we tied up alongside great ocean-going liners, feeling just as important as any of them. Young Holmes threw a line over the side, and within half an hour he had caught a *pompano* big enough to feed the entire crew. Adrian brightened visibly, hurrying ashore to procure various delicacies to go with the fish.

A SHOCK FOR ADRIAN

After he had gone a most unnerving thing happened. We had left the *pompano* in the water, suspended from a stake, and presently a shark, fully twelve feet long, swept close alongside and calmly nipped the big fish off just behind the gills! The sight made Bill Holmes very angry. Rushing into the cabin, he came out with our

heavy harpoon—specially made for the cruise by a Houston blacksmith. Unfortunately, however, the attached line was badly tangled, so he flung the whole thing out on to the wharf for easier handling. While he was on his way to tackle this job one of a group of Mexican longshoremen, rushing up eagerly to watch the sport, tripped over the harpoon and knocked it into the water!

Returning well-laden from his shopping-tour, Adrian reached the ship just in time to see someone haul the *pompano's* head—all that was left of it!—out of the water. I shall never forget the expression which spread over his face! Tossing his purchases on to the deck, he raised his eyes heavenwards, muttered something to himself, and then, his shoulders drooping despondently, stalked off to a nearby bar to console himself with beer.

Eventually the time came to bid good-bye to Vera Cruz and resume our voyage. Having now become seasoned seamen (in our own estimation) we put out from the port with much greater confidence than before. Nothing of any note occurred until we decided on another trip ashore. This entailed crossing the bar which protected the



"The docks resembled a miniature menagerie."

lagoon at Chiltepec — a never-to-be forgotten experience. Not only was the water very shallow, but waves were rolling in high and fast, some of them breaking in masses of creamy foam. Strode, however, proved equal to the task, and handled *Fortuna* excellently.

None of us had ever seen a more beautiful sight than that big lagoon, completely surrounded by coconut-groves. It was the nearest thing to a South Sea film-setting I have ever set eyes on. A village of picturesque thatched huts nestled amid the tall palms close to the shore, and the people who ran to meet us appeared very friendly. As we tied up at a little fishing-dock two heavily-armed police-officers, wearing neat helmets, came up and formally examined the ship's papers, later escorting us on a tour of inspection. The villagefolk fell in behind, and before long practically the entire population was accompanying us.

Presently Nolan asked for a drink of water, whereupon two men immediately scurried to a grass hut, brought out long poles, and knocked down a couple of green coconuts, deftly cutting out the ends with their long *machetes*. We found the juice most enjoyable—very cool and refreshing.

No women, we noticed, joined our ever-increasing escort. They stole cautious glances at us while continuing their various tasks about the huts, but directly we approached more closely they invariably scuttled indoors; they were taking no risks with strangers! The yards round the houses were littered with copra, the meat from the coconut, which is sliced or broken up and placed on woven mats to dry in the sun.

Having spent an afternoon on this fascinating lagoon, we put to sea again, this time making for the island of Carmen, which was reputed to be well worth a visit.

During the whole day we encountered heavy seas and continual squalls. We had to take in sail and rely on the engine, but *Fortuna* pitched so violently that cooking became almost



impossible. The chilly wind, blowing with gale force, stung our unaccustomed skins and made us shiver. Strode remarked that we ought to have known better than to start a Gulf voyage late in the summer, for in the Caribbean August and September are squally months.

"Barometer seems to be trying to predict a hurricane," he called out presently, above the roaring of the wind. "Needs a little adjusting, I think," he added, in an effort to be reassuring.

TOUCH AND GO

Near midnight things really began to look serious. The moon had been shining brightly, but suddenly heavy clouds blotted it out completely. The seas appeared to be getting heavier; every now and then one broke aboard. Save for the phosphorescent glow of their crests it was extremely dark. The *Fortuna* ran more or less helplessly before the gale; it took the helmsman all his time to keep her on her course. Every sea that passed under her keel sent her sweeping upwards like a surfboard; when it raced ahead she was left wallowing in the trough until another roller lifted her once more.

I must admit we were all pretty scared; the conditions were bad enough to worry old hands, let alone rank landlubbers like ourselves.



" 'Her keel struck bottom !' shouted Strode."

Without warning there came a dull thud, which seemed to jar every timber in the hull; it drove all the wits out of us.

"Her keel struck bottom!" shouted Strode. "This looks like the end, boys!"

I was at the wheel just then, and fervently wished myself somewhere else. Very close to panic, I spun it hard over, but the little vessel didn't seem to respond; with the motor at full throttle she continued to drive ahead. Then she struck again, just as heavily as before. "This time she's going to remain fast," we told ourselves, thinking fearfully of the angry seas astern. All of us felt sure we were doomed to shipwreck.

Once more the *Fortuna* touched bottom, jarring us on our feet, but still she forged ahead. Four times she bumped in this alarming fashion; then, suddenly, she cleared the shoal and was back in deep water once more. There was no sign of any serious leak below, and we came to

the conclusion that we must have struck sand—an exceedingly lucky thing for us! All hands, however, appeared to have lost courage, and when the skipper hove to, eased off the motor, and ordered the heavy anchor to be let go we obeyed the command with alacrity. It seemed to us the wisest course to adopt; we dreaded running aground in real earnest.

By this time the gale had pretty well blown itself out. Lying head to wind, our little craft continually buried her nose in heavy seas, but the anchor held and she rode the waves gallantly. Finally, six exhausted fellows turned in for a much-needed sleep—four of them in bunks and two on the cabin floor. Meanwhile, spray still drove across the deck and a stiff breeze whistled eerily through the rigging, but we felt reasonably safe.

When morning dawned everyone was much more cheerful. Careful examination revealed no trace of underwater damage, and Strode was pleased to discover that he had

been steering a correct course, for we were actually within a few hundred yards of the channel leading into the Grijalva River. Three miles upstream lay the town of Frontera, in the State of Tabasco, and we decided to put in there to look *Fortuna* over properly.

Shortly after dawn we raised the anchor and headed up river. Heavy clouds gathered overhead; soon it began to rain. Thick jungle crowded right down to the water's edge, and we saw big alligators swimming in the sluggish current, their knobby outlines occasionally materializing close alongside. Indians stood in front of their primitive thatched huts along the banks and waved to us.

Reaching the town, we went through the usual formalities and then busied ourselves with laying our sodden gear out to dry, for the little vessel had shipped quite a lot of water and all our belongings were soaked. We spent the whole day

getting things shipshape again, but were greatly relieved to discover that the bumps we had expected to finish us had done no appreciable injury! The *Fortuna* was apparently as staunch as ever. Just before sunset, feeling much easier in mind, we put to sea again, intent on reaching Carmen.

"JERRY"

We arrived at the island just in time, for the weather threatened threatening again. No sooner had our papers been officially checked than a man who had been studying us intently from the wharf came over and introduced himself as "Jerry." A well-built American, with close-cropped hair, red-faced and good-natured, our new acquaintance invited us all out to his home, proving a most entertaining host. He told us he had been living on the island for several years, making a living by selling the natives bicycles, gramophones, and records.

"Maybe they haven't got much but a grass hut to live in and fruit to eat," he said, smilingly, "but all the same they *must* have a gramophone. You'll find my music-boxes in the deepest jungles!" He spoke nothing but the truth, for later on we verified his statement near the Guatemalan border, in one of the wildest and loneliest regions imaginable. Jerry certainly got around!

Arrived at our host's palm-thatched house, we were regaled with a wonderful spread. Wine, as always, was served first as an *aperitif*; we continued drinking it throughout the meal. *Pompano*, freshly caught out in the Gulf, was brought to us piping hot, and the coffee was perfect. The feast ended with some delicious pastries. We hadn't expected to eat like this in "uncivilized" Yucatan!

Later on Jerry pressed us to spend the night with him, and we were only too pleased to accept. After so many hours on a pitching boat we thought it would be nice to sleep in beds that kept still!

Just before retiring we noticed there were no screens or mosquito-nets in the bedrooms, which augured none too well for dreamless slumber. But our resourceful host had his own way of circumventing winged pests! Instead of beds we were to sleep in hammocks, large, fine woven, and covered with bobinet netting, draw-strings at the ends closing the openings. Large hand-woven fibre mats were unrolled below, and the netting carefully tucked under them. This effectually kept out insects and also prevented ground-moisture from reaching the sleeper. Throughout the night myriads of winged creatures buzzed menacingly around our defences, but none of them succeeded in effecting an entry. Meanwhile rats scurried noisily among the palm-leaves that roofed the hut. It was a novel experience, out there in the jungle; we thoroughly enjoyed it, smiling at thought of the contrast with our beds at home.

The day that followed was a memorable one. We rose early and, after a good breakfast, Jerry announced that we were going to inspect the beautiful town of Carmen. The people had learned of our arrival, he said, and were very anxious to welcome us. We should find them most kindly folk—and we certainly did!

Jerry made a point of introducing us to every dignitary in the place, and also to many people who were not so dignified. Their hospitality was literally overflowing! Every

time we met someone out came a wicker-covered bottle of potent *habanero*. None of us was accustomed to much strong drink, and when it came to the fourth introduction we tried, very politely, to decline the proffered refreshment. The man looked at us aghast, and Jerry hastily explained that such a refusal was regarded as a deadly insult! With profound apologies we hastily put matters right, whereupon the relieved Yucatecan beamed upon us ecstatically.

Sensing what we were in for, we clung to the hope of being able to stave off complete intoxication by merely sipping the drinks that were offered. Unfortunately, however, we were generally handed big tumblers, which one was supposed to drain with due signs of appreciation. That liquid hospitality was indeed a problem! But with each fresh introduction we worried less and less about the consequences.

When we had met practically everyone in Carmen, and sampled all the *habanero*, our cicerone decided, for some reason best known to himself, that we simply *must* see the cemetery! This proved to be a huge place, surrounded by lofty white walls and entered through a giant arch. The walls, we discovered, were honey-combed with compartments, arranged in three tiers. In these, behind glass fronts, we could see coffins. Trinkets and other cherished belongings of the deceased were arranged in front of the caskets, in full view of passers-by. The cemetery itself was full of graves, with a bewildering variety of elaborate headstones.

THE LIZARD HUNT

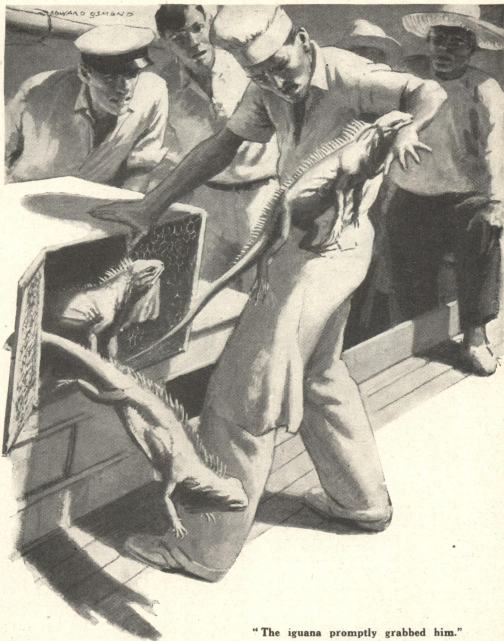
We had just left this cheerful place when two large green iguanas—lizards which grow to four or five feet in length—scampered across the road in front of us. These iguanas are prehistoric-looking creatures, with a row of spiky scales on their backs running their entire length, giving them an odd resemblance to dragons.

I think our potations must have been responsible, for under normal conditions we shouldn't have taken off after those lizards with wild whoops of glee. But we suddenly called to mind the fact that we were supposed to be engaged in some sort of expedition for the purpose of securing specimens for museums. So, without any hesitation, we dashed in pursuit, dodging startled natives in clumsy attempts to capture the creatures.

Alarmed, they took to the trees. Adrian—who had once been a circus-performer—started climbing up after them, while the rest of us shouted encouragement. Presently Adrian shook the lizards out, and we made sure the fall would stun them, but speedily discovered they could jump in such a fashion as to absorb the shock of landing with their strong tails. Moreover, they hit the ground running, moving so fast that we completely failed to intercept them.

One of them scaled a tree again, and this time Adrian caught it off guard. He shook the branch violently, and when the dislodged lizard dropped it fell on its back and lay dazed. Strophe slung it over his shoulder by its tail; then we resumed the chase of the second iguana. With his high-topped boots and breeches, and his long, tousled hair and moustache, Adrian looked like some wild Cossack from the Russian steppes as he sprinted excitedly after his quarry.

After a while he shook down two more stunned lizards, the skipper insisting on carrying the lot. Thus laden, he stalked proudly along



"The iguana promptly grabbed him."

with the air of a veteran hunter returning from the chase, the rest of us bringing up the rear.

Why all three lizards recovered from their daze at the same identical moment and determined to attempt a concerted escape I am unable to say. But they *did*, and as a result Strode underwent a most trying experience. One beastie seized his hand; another bit his neck. Screeching loudly, the skipper released his hold, but the angry lizards still clung to him.

"Get 'em off me! Get 'em off me!" yelled Strode, dancing madly around. The natives, who had hitherto appeared quite

unappreciative of our performance, now began to laugh heartily at this unexpected development. The creatures were eventually pulled off, taken back to the *Fortuna*, and stowed in one of the cages we had brought along. Fortunately the skipper had sustained no real injury.

I really think Carmen is the most beautiful place I have ever visited; it comes very close to that "tarnished jewel in a tropical sea" you see on the movies. It is a veritable green paradise, girt about by shimmering sunlit waters, with a restful atmosphere I find it impossible to describe. The island is situated at the mouth of

the great Laguna de Terminos; beyond lies the Gulf of Mexico. Along its waterfront are many boat-building yards. The native craft are constructed of mahogany, which is plentiful in Campeche, and dug-outs of all sizes and descriptions are everywhere. The island is noted for its export of *chicle* (raw chewing-gum) and dye-woods. At one point we came across an ancient cannon lying in the restless surf—a mute reminder of the far-off days of the Spanish conquest. We learned that Cortez landed here when he first visited America.

Adrian was preparing breakfast in the galley on our second morning at Carmen when I heard him give a sharp exclamation. "Wanta take a swim, boys?" he called out. "We've got company!"

THE MERMAID

We crawled out of our bunks, rubbing sleepy eyes, to find ourselves confronted with a most unusual spectacle. Dozens of men and women were having an early morning swim within two hundred feet of our boat. The men wore shorts, but the ladies were in a state of nature! As we stared agape they laughingly splashed one another, dashed hither and thither, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Presently the menfolk retired, but the women lingered. One attractive Indian girl swam over to the *Fortuna*. Climbing calmly



Hauling aboard a big barracuda.

aboard, she asked for a cigarette and threw her long hair over her shoulders to dry. Reclining on the deck, this dusky mermaid surveyed us with the utmost nonchalance. Having finished her smoke, she smiled appreciatively, dived overboard, and swam gracefully away.

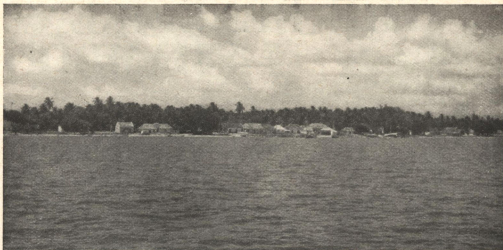
Adrian looked after her meditatively. "This is certainly a most wonderful island!" he remarked.

Jerry, our kindly American friend, had been telling us about the wonders of a jungle river called the Candelaria; his account sounded so interesting that we determined to make a trip up the stream. If the water wasn't too low, Jerry informed us, we might be able to reach a point quite near the Guatemalan border, well into the interior. Unfortunately, he couldn't spare the time to accompany us himself, but he provided us with a reliable Indian guide. This man must have been about fifty, and had very little to say. A white moustache lent dignity to his appearance, and he peered at us shrewdly from beneath a huge straw *sombrero*.

When word got round concerning our departure a crowd of our new-found friends assembled at the wharf to see us off, bringing farewell gifts of all descriptions. Many of them, however, had brought the inevitable *habanero* or another concoction—known as "milk of the panther"—distilled from berries and jungle fruits. This liqueur, we found, possessed a kick



A coast scene near Vera Cruz.



A Mexican fishing village.

like a Missouri mule; the Yucatecans certainly like their drinks strong!

Amidst salvos of good wishes we got under way and moved slowly out of the little harbour. My last glimpse shorewards revealed two policemen attending to a gentleman who had succumbed to too much *habanero*; they were lifting him on to an ox-cart preparatory to his removal to the local lock-up. I was really sorry to leave friendly, exotic Carmen, and I shall never forget my all-too-brief sojourn. I felt that I should like to turn back and live there for the rest of my days, doing nothing but laze about and enjoy myself. That's the spell of the tropics; those magic lands do something to a man!

On our way across the Laguna de Terminos, making for the mouth of the Candelaria, we had yet another odd experience. Spotting the three captive iguanas, our hitherto taciturn Indian guide became quite talkative, announcing that no rarer culinary treat existed than properly-cooked iguana-meat. Should he assist us to prepare a delicious meal? The skipper decided this was not at all a bad idea. We didn't need the lizards, and it might be just as well to eat them before they got loose in the cabin. Already a snake of unknown species which someone had given us had escaped from its cage, leaving us wondering uneasily as to just where it had got to; we certainly didn't want iguanas joining our company.

MORE EXCITEMENT

Intent on supervising operations, Adrian donned the white chef's hat with which he had provided himself and cautiously opened the cage. Inserting his hand, he grabbed the nearest iguana, which promptly grabbed him! Adrian jumped back in alarm, leaving the lid open, and in a flash all three creatures scrambled nimbly out, dived over the ship's side, and started swimming for shore!

The skipper and I quickly lowered the dinghy and rowed after the escapees, but directly

we approached they submerged, coming to the surface only to repeat the performance again and again. The runaways, we discovered, could swim quite a long way under water! After a lively game of hide-and-seek, in which we scored no points, we gave up the chase in disgust and rowed back to the *Fortuna*.

Adrian, looking much annoyed, greeted us with a question—based on his former unhappy experiences—that we couldn't answer.

"Why is it," he demanded, "that every time I start preparing an extra-good dinner it always runs away from us?"

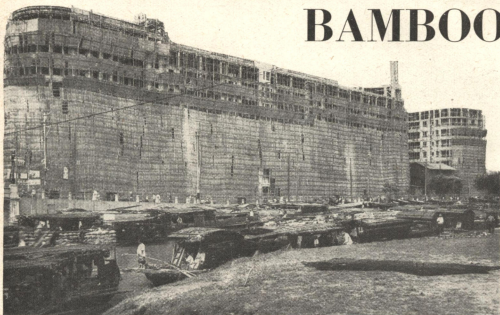
Later on we caught sight of one solitary lizard, still swimming shorewards, and when we got close enough Hans shot it with his Luger pistol and we hauled it aboard. Adrian and the Indian started getting it ready; meanwhile the rest of us relaxed, sipping appetizers of berry-juice and waiting to be fed. No group of men, surely, ever felt more at peace with the world! The boat glided smoothly onwards over a glassy sea; the blood-red setting sun cast a wonderful crimson glow over the jungle-fringed shore ahead, and life was grand indeed!

In due course the iguana-meat, cooked to a turn, was served on a bridge-table set in the cockpit. While we ate, our guide sat at the wheel, steering toward the Candelaria. Every now and again he grinned amiably at the white men who were now learning, for the first time, just how delicious lizard-meat can be when prepared by an expert.

Later, as we neared the land, a big dug-out loomed up ahead, manned by six Indians. Two of them stood in the bow, gesticulating wildly and brandishing formidable-looking spears. We glanced interrogatively at our Indian, who appeared perplexed and concerned. He hadn't heard of any hostile natives hereabouts, he told us, but one could never tell with these jungle-folk. We had better be ready for trouble; if these river-Indians got too much strong drink they were liable to make mischief!

(To be concluded)

THE BENEFICENT BAMBOO



Bamboo scaffolding and matting screens on a new building at Shanghai, China.

BAMBOO is, beyond doubt, one of Nature's greatest gifts to the inhabitants of tropical and sub-tropical countries. Without it they would indeed be lost; with it they can—and do—accomplish miracles.

For instance, there is never any housing shortage for the native dweller in bamboo-growing areas; nor is there ever likely to be.

Bamboo, with its amazing strength, lightness, and weather-resisting properties, makes an ideal building material, and all the craftsman needs in the way of tools is an axe, a chisel, and a hammer. Nails and screws are seldom necessary, for the expert can notch, splice, and joint with incredible skill. I have often seen work where it was almost impossible to discover any joints at all, yet the only implement employed was an old but razor-edged clasp-knife!

In house construction the "male," or solid, bamboo is used for beams, uprights, and joists, while the "female" or hollow variety, skilfully split and flattened out, serves for flooring, doors, partitions, and similar items. Interior fittings generally present no difficulty, for here again bamboo provides the answer with light but immensely strong chairs, tables, and cupboards, not to mention beds, screens, curtains, and mattresses. And there is never any scarcity of material, for the bamboo is a fecund and lusty grower and, given suitable conditions, can add a couple of feet to itself in twenty-four hours!

In certain parts of the East Indies,

Hardly given a thought by people in countries where it does not grow, the bamboo is indeed a blessing to dwellers in tropical and sub-tropical regions, serving countless purposes and helping to shape the whole pattern of life.

By H. E. CHAMBERS

where one species of bamboo attains a height of well over a hundred feet, with a base-diameter of anything up to two and a half feet, there is no limit to its uses. Thanks to its accommodating habit of growing in sections, or "internodes" ranging in length from a few inches to several feet, it is frequently employed for making saucepans, buckets, and oil- and water-storage tanks.

The sections, being self-sealing and non-porous, are ideal for storing liquid. I have tasted beer which had been kept thus for a considerable period without any serious deterioration in flavour!

On almost every waterfront and riverside in the East bamboo plays an important part. Jetties, pontoons, fish-traps, derricks, cranes, and even the warehouses themselves all owe common allegiance to the plant. Nor can one move far without being aware of the teeming bamboo-rafts and houseboats, while other craft, though built of different woods, have bamboo masts, oars, fishing-tackle, and even sails!

In parts of Burma and Assam bamboo bridge-construction on the "suspension cable" system has been extensively carried out, and many of these structures are outstanding examples of native engineering enterprise. The main supporting cables of these bridges are secured on either bank to suitable trees or stout scaffolding, and the cables themselves usually consist of many twisted bamboo strands. To these are attached either cane hoops or ropes, supporting the floor of the bridge, itself consisting of flattened split canes. Although strongly built, the bridges

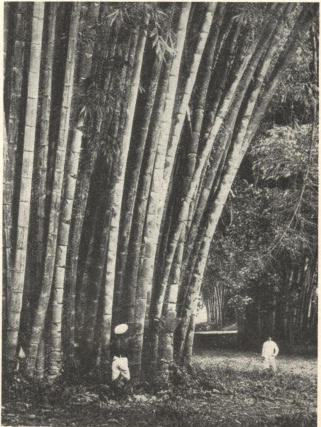


Bamboo rafts in the native quarter, Batavia.

receive periodical inspection, for they have to withstand severe tropical storms and torrential downpours as well as catering for considerable traffic—often heavy mule-trains. More often than not they span deep gorges at a height of fifty or so feet, and may range from twenty to six hundred feet in length! For the European, the most disconcerting thing about these native bridges is that, unlike their elaborate steel-constructed counterparts in the West, they sway and vibrate at every step, and in a really strong gale may swing as much as thirty feet. When this happens it is certainly a case of “hanging on”!

In waterless districts quite ambitious irrigation schemes are sometimes carried out with the aid of ingenious bamboo pipelines. These are inexpensive, quick and easy to lay, and speedily replaceable in the event of damage. Such lines often extend for several miles, and bamboo water-pumps are used to keep them supplied. I came across one of the cleverest pieces of work I have ever seen while staying at the house of a storekeeper in Borneo. Being of a practical turn of mind, and something of a handyman, my friend had fitted up his place so that water was “on tap” in all the rooms. All the necessary “plumbing” had been carried out in bamboo, from the water tank in the roof—supplied by a pump from a nearby well—to the bamboo taps, which were neat little sliding affairs of solid and hollow bamboo. The whole thing worked splendidly, differing little from a

normal system—once one got accustomed to a stray lizard or frog suddenly popping out into a wash-bowl! While I was there my resourceful



Giant bamboos at Kandy, Ceylon.



A primitive bamboo bridge in Burma.

friend was experimenting with a speaking-tube from his house to the store, complete with whistles—all of bamboo. I never heard if this got beyond the "paper" stage.

Other uses of bamboo are as varied as they are legion—children's toys, bird-cages, blow-pipes, torches, and spear-shafts, to mention only a few. Cases have been known, too, when the internodes have been used to conceal contraband—usually drugs—in an otherwise innocent shipment of the canes. Nor must it be forgotten that in the not-too-distant past bamboo, split and pointed, has played its part in the gentle art of torture, particularly among Far Eastern nations.

I have already mentioned that bamboo possesses great tensile strength, but naturally it has its limits. I well remember one man, at least, who discovered this fact to his cost. He was mate of a small trading vessel on the China coast, and, realizing that such a life can make a man

physically soft if he doesn't look after himself, made determined efforts to keep fit. Feeling the need for something more than mere "physical jerks," he contrived a home-made horizontal bar. This was a neat, collapsible affair with inverted V-shaped ends and a thick crosspiece, constructed entirely of bamboo. It could be erected on deck when required, and on it, stripped to the waist, the mate would perform strenuous exercises—usually before an admiring audience of native stevedores.

One fateful day, however, when the ship was moored in a remote Yellow Sea port, the mate was swinging and somersaulting with considerable gusto when the bar suddenly snapped in the centre with a loud crack. The unfortunate gymnast sailed through the air, finally landing on the iron deck in a highly undignified posture. The glee of the audience was immense—and noisy!

When the officer had regained his wind he scrambled to his feet, seized the offending apparatus, and hurled it into the water.

It must not be imagined, however, that the uses of bamboo end with building and constructional work generally: nothing could be farther from the truth. If you've ever been fortunate enough to taste young green bamboo shoots, properly cooked, you'll agree that they are nothing less than a real delicacy. Pickled in brine, they may not be everybody's fancy, but they nevertheless make a useful addition to the store cupboard. Personally, I think they are at their best salted, boiled, and served with rice and sweet potatoes—a dish fit for a king! Even the seeds of this obliging growth are edible, and a pleasant fermented drink is made from its flowers.

Could anything more be reasonably asked from one very ordinary plant?



A bamboo house. Madagascar

WIDE WORLD BROTHERHOOD



THANKS to the steady increase in our membership,

By THE EDITOR

try to make this absolutely water-tight and permanent. The more hermetically-sealed the

slightest sign of falling off—a very gratifying phenomenon—I think we can now take the first step towards a goal that numerous Brethren have been seeking ever since our fraternity was first founded—enabling them to get in touch with one another by letter. The lonely folk who long for congenial pen-friends overseas, ardent stamp-collectors eager to get in touch with fellow-enthusiasts, those contemplating emigration and anxious to learn the real facts from people on the spot, as distinct from statistical official information—all sorts and conditions of men and women, with all sorts of interests, have asked us, as soon as our strength warranted it, to publish a list of members willing to correspond with their fellows in other countries.

The time has now arrived when this is practicable. We shall therefore be glad to receive such particulars from interested readers, and shall publish the first batch at the earliest opportunity. It must be borne in mind, however, that the *WIDE WORLD* goes to press three months in advance, so don't get impatient—and don't expect really representative lists until we hear from Brethren on the other side of the globe. All we require is your name (block letters, please), and your W.W.B. number, full postal address, and a single word indicating your pet subject, such as "Stamps," "Emigration," "General," or whatever you select. Address your letter to the Editor, marked "Pen" in top left-hand corner.

We feel sure that every member, in his dealings with the new friends thus introduced to him, will never forget that so far as they are concerned he represents the W.W.B. just as definitely as if he met them face to face, and will do all in his power to maintain our high ideals. These are not casual strangers; they are Brothers!

Just a few words of warning! The Magazine, of course, goes everywhere, and this scheme is bound to attract the attention of many people for whom it is *not* intended. If, after your name appears, you happen to be approached by "gate-crashing" non-members or would-be-enterprising commercial firms, use your own discretion about answering them, always remembering they are definitely unwelcome guests. Begging-letter writers and other undesirables should be completely ignored.

BOTTLE MESSAGES

Recently, it will be recalled, I suggested that favourably-situated members overseas might care to launch "bottle messages" addressed to the Editor, rewards being offered to the original senders of communications received and also to discoverers who posted them on to us after they had come ashore. A veteran member of an American club which specializes in this amusing pastime now sends us some valuable suggestions based on practical experience. He writes: "Select a good stout bottle; thin glass doesn't stand a chance if washed ashore on rocks or coral. Take particular care with the corking;

container the greater its hope of survival; the finder can always break the glass to get at the contents. If the glass is clear enough to be seen through, let the envelope be as conspicuous as possible—red, or some other bright colour, with the word "Reward" prominently displayed. Don't rely on paint or adhesive labels to attract attention; the sea will speedily remove anything of that kind! Incidentally, I believe the record for a bottle message is a journey of about four thousand miles, accomplished in three years. Good luck to your venture, which should produce some interesting results." I am much obliged to our correspondent, and hope that some W.W.B. message may succeed in setting up a new record.

IN THE SHADOW

In view of present-day conditions, the average Briton may be forgiven if he smiles somewhat bitterly when he hears that time-honoured phrase about the "land of the free." Nevertheless, we in the Homeland have a great deal to be thankful for, although we may not always realize it. Some of the letters which reach our offices in connection with the Brotherhood emphasize this fact in rather startling fashion. There are countries whose inhabitants are not allowed to send even a few shillings abroad; there are others—in the grim shadow of the "Iron Curtain"—where men must walk exceedingly warily. Listen to the following, from a correspondent in one of these unhappy lands now on holiday over another frontier. For obvious reasons I do not mention his name or nationality.

"Having read your magazine for years I should love to join the W.W.B., and enclose fee for badge. Please do *not* send me the certificate, however, as it might get me into serious trouble when I return home, and kindly take great care that my name does not appear in print anywhere as a registered member. I can hide the badge, but our nationals are not permitted to belong to any outside organization whatsoever, and must always answer 'No' when the authorities make inquiries on this point."

The italics, of course, are mine. Can you imagine what conditions must be like in this reader's country to compel him to write in such a strain? Fancy the beneficent W.W.B., with members all over the globe pledged to kindly comradeship, constituting any sort of menace to a sovereign state where the ordinary decencies of life are respected!

OPTIMISM UNLIMITED

We are very grateful for the numerous suggestions concerning W.W.B. activities received from Brethren all over the world; these will receive careful attention in due course. Some are eminently practical; others may become possible as our organization grows; yet others—born of an enthusiasm which is really heart-warming—are unfortunately out of the question. Take the following by way of example: "Now that the Brotherhood is growing so fast,

APPLICATION FORM

To the WIDE WORLD BROTHERHOOD, Tower House, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.
I wish to join the Brotherhood, and enclose herewith 2s. 6d. (50c. U.S.) for Buttonhole Badge and Certificate of Membership.

(Block Letters, please.)

NAME

ADDRESS

American readers can apply to our New York office: George Newnes, Ltd., 342, Madison Avenue, New York, 17. If you do not wish to mutilate your copy, this application may be made in letter form.

don't you think it would be a good idea to buy up suitable premises in all the large cities everywhere and convert them into hostels where members could stay for a moderate fee, either permanently or when on holiday? These places could have halls where local Brethren might hold meetings, etc. I feel sure many of our members would be glad to contribute to the initial expense."

The basic idea, of course, is excellent, but I wonder if the writer has any notion of the cost of such an ambitious scheme under

prevailing conditions? Quite apart from the housing shortage and building restrictions, we should require a membership of open-handed multi-millionaires to get it even started—and it is probably quite unnecessary to state that the majority of the Brethren are *not* in that category! All the same, we need a certain amount of optimism; it puts the sunshine in life. Although I can't quite visualize a world-wide chain of W.W.B. hostels, who can say what developments (probably on a much more modest scale, however) may lie in store?



THE HOUSE ON THE BRIDGE

THE housing shortage lends additional interest to the accompanying photograph of what is known as the "Old Bridge House" at Amble-side, in the Lake District. It stands perched on a little bridge spanning a stream called the Stock Beck which, at this point, is only about ten feet wide. The house, which contains two rooms, one above the other, is very small, the upper room being reached by an external staircase, seen on the right. The history of this Lilliputian dwelling is rather obscure. One story is that a Scots quarryman built it over the river in order to avoid paying ground-rent! On the other hand, the outside staircase suggests the work of Scandinavian settlers. Occupied until about thirty years ago, this curious dwelling now belongs to the National Trust.

"DOGSBODY"

By "SEAGOER"

THIRD OF-

FICER
POTTS
was feeling
distinctly
disgrun-
tled. It



was bad enough that, on his first visit to Havana, he should have been detailed to stand by the ship on the night after her arrival, just when he was itching to get ashore and sample the delights of the "Gay City." To make matters worse, however, he had been ordered to keep an eye on the skipper's newly-acquired dog, with the thinly-veiled warning that if he valued his good name and his future chances of promotion he must on no account allow the animal out of his sight!

Sitting in an old deck-chair on the after-deck, Potts gloomily decided that a third mate's job on a small freighter wasn't all it was sometimes cracked up to be! He had only just emerged from the apprenticeship stage, and was already discovering that, despite youthful enthusiasm, the responsibility of being a watch-keeper, and the dignity of a strip of gold braid, he was still very much of a "dogsbody" aboard the vessel.

That unflattering cognomen, indeed, seemed singularly apt just then! He looked down at his charge, curled up asleep almost at his foot. "Carlo" was a young black-and-white cocker spaniel which had been presented to the Captain that very morning by the company's agent. Captain Meadows happened to be a great lover of animals, and intended to take the dog home as a gift to his wife—hence the unwelcome guardianship suddenly imposed on young Potts.

Minding dogs, the latter felt, was no part of the duties of a ship's officer; he considered that people who chose to keep pets—skippers not excepted—should look after them themselves!

Further brooding along these lines might have made him still more discontented if he had not, at that moment, glanced downwards again—to find the dog gone! Springing to his feet, the startled Potts looked round the deck, but Carlo was nowhere in sight. Forthwith he hurried forward, calling the animal's name. Not, until he arrived amidships, however, did he catch sight of the spaniel—calmly trotting down the gangway on to the quay!

Rushing after it, the youngster reached the wharf just in time to see Carlo disappearing round the corner of a warehouse. Calling the brute was evidently quite useless; he therefore started to run. So did Carlo, and pursuer and pursued first raced up a long, cobbled street and then turned off sharply into a narrow side-turning. The lane was deserted and very dark, smelling strongly of stale fish and decaying vegetables. Looking ahead, Potts could see no sign of the fugitive.

Realizing presently that he was in a *cul-de-sac*,

This amusing story sets forth the awkward predicament which confronted a very junior officer aboard a British freighter. Names have been changed.

no means by which the animal could have got out. Eventually, he came to an arched opening, where a rusty iron gate stood half-open, and decided that this was the only place through which Carlo could have escaped.

He was about to enter when a woman suddenly appeared on the inside and barred his way. She addressed him sharply in Spanish, and although he couldn't understand a word she said, her shrill voice and expressive gestures left no doubt he was an unwelcome visitor.

For several moments Potts was at a loss. If it had been a man he would have had no hesitation about brushing him aside and plunging through the gateway, but one couldn't do that with a female. He accordingly answered her in English, hurriedly explaining that he believed his dog had passed through the gateway and that he wanted to catch him. His explanation, however, only produced a renewed torrent of invective; the woman placed herself squarely in the opening, with her hands on her hips and her black eyes snapping angrily.

Potts was now both embarrassed and desperate. Behind the lady he could just make out what appeared to be a large courtyard, and felt more sure than ever that this was where Carlo had gone. No doubt attracted by the harriard's strident voice, a small crowd had now collected in the lane and stood around in a half circle, silently watching the scene. The woman, noticing them for the first time, harangued them vehemently, with frequent expressive gestures towards the Englishman. Sullen mutters came from the onlookers, and presently a burly individual in dungarees and a beret advanced threateningly upon Potts, obviously intent upon removing him by force.

At this juncture the worried young officer made a snap decision. Lashing out at the big man with his left, he caught him neatly on the point of the chin, sending him toppling back into the arms of his friends. Then, turning abruptly, Potts thrust the screeching woman in the gateway aside and dived quickly through the opening. He did not pause to consider that if the courtyard proved to be yet another *cul-de-sac* he would be trapped and at the mercy of the crowd; his one and only thought was to find and recapture Carlo. Everything else could wait.

The courtyard, he noticed, was not so dark as the alleyway, being illuminated by the lights from a number of windows, and, looking eagerly around, he saw to his chagrin that there was another gate on the far side. It seemed a pretty safe bet the dog had gone out that way, and, judging by the angry shouts behind him, a

the young officer proceeded stealthily up the centre of the alley, scanning each doorway for a possible exit, but as far as he could see there was

quick exit was indicated for himself—if he valued his skin!

The pursuer was now the pursued, and, dashing across the yard, with a howling mob at his heels, Potts plunged through the opening into another dark and twisting alleyway. A stone struck his shoulder; a second whizzed over his head; the shouts in rear grew fiercer. Feeling distinctly scared, the youngster accelerated his pace until eventually, reaching the end of the alley, he suddenly found himself in a brightly-lit thoroughfare full of shops, trams, and plenty of people.

Evidently the folk behind him were not seeking publicity, for the chase ended abruptly; Potts was able to slow down to a walk and recover his breath. Becoming calmer, he lit a cigarette as he sauntered along and proceeded to review the situation. This, on reflection, struck him as anything but bright. He had lost the skipper's dog; he had deserted the ship whilst officially on duty; and now he was lost himself! It seemed obvious that he was somewhere in the centre of the city, but he had not the vaguest idea as to the whereabouts of the docks, and was exceedingly doubtful as to his ability to make himself understood.

He had just made up his mind to accost the next person who passed when a small, slight individual, wearing a faded drill suit and a broad-brimmed hat, suddenly materialised at his side and addressed him in reasonably good English.

"There is somewhere you would like to go, Mister Officer?" he murmured.

"There certainly is," answered the relieved Potts. "I want to get back to the docks, and as quickly as possible."

The little man looked surprised. "The docks?" he echoed. "But you make the joke, yes? It is too early to go back to ship. I am very good guide; I show you all the sights. Very cheap."

Potts groaned. "I don't want to see the sights," he retorted. "I want to get down to the docks, and I've no time to waste. Will you take me, or won't you?"

"It will cost you two dollars."

"I haven't any dollars, but I'll give you ten bob," replied the youngster. "For goodness' sake, get a move on!"

"Ten shillings, English money, cash down? All right, Mister Officer; you follow me."

Potts duly handed over the note, and they started off down the street, moving quite briskly; it was evident the guide did not relish his task and was anxious to get it over as quickly as possible so that he could return to more congenial work. He made no effort at further conversation until they had been walking for some five minutes or so. Then he stopped abruptly, with a sidelong grin. "Mister Mate have a drink, yes?" he asked. "One last drink before going on ship! What you call night-cap, eh?"

The suggestion struck Potts as a good one. He was hot, worried, and thirsty; a long, cool drink would be very welcome. He hesitated—and was lost! Already he must have been away from the ship a good hour; another few minutes wouldn't make any difference now, he reasoned.

"Lead me to it!" he ordered. "But make it snappy."

The little man's grin widened. Grasping



"He caught him neatly on the point of the chin."

Potts's arm, he guided him across the road and through a blue-painted door. A short passage led to a second door, and here he stopped. "I wait here," he said. "You get drink inside. Very nice place."

Pushing open the door, the young officer

found himself in a large room furnished like a lounge. The strains of an orchestra met his ears, and he could see couples dancing at the far end. He was just about to beat a hasty retreat when he spotted a long bar at the side, and forthwith made a bee-line for it, determined to have his drink and depart quickly. The bar counter was crowded, but he managed to find a vacant stool, perched himself on it, and ordered an iced beer. He was already feeling qualms of conscience at this second lapse from virtue when a female voice addressed him.

"Hallo! Where have you been all the evening?" it asked.

Startled, Potts looked around to find an extremely attractive-looking girl at his elbow.

Muttering "Excuse me!" he hastily picked up his glass, but just as he was about to gulp down its contents he saw a familiar face reflected in the long mirror behind the bar. It stared back at him with an expression of incredulous astonishment, and next moment the Second Mate was at his side.

"For Pete's sake, what are you doing in this dump?" he demanded, curtly. "Aren't you supposed to be standing-by, Potts?"

The luckless Third Officer made a valiant effort to pull himself together. "I—er—just dropped in for a quick drink," he replied. "You see, the Old Man's dog got away—and I've been looking for it."

"You mean you left the ship without a

relief?" cried Evans. "By Jove! You'll be for the high jump, young fellow!"

"I know it!" rejoined Potts, miserably. "But I didn't do it intentionally. I was so keen to catch the confounded dog that I rushed after it along the quay. Then I got into a spot of trouble, and eventually lost myself. A guide was taking me back to the ship and suggested a drink, and—well, I felt I needed one!"

"H'mm!" commented Evans. "Well, you don't need a guide, anyway. Just follow this street and it will take you straight to the docks. You'd better get going now. If you're lucky you may get away with it!"

"You mean you aren't going to report me?"

The Second grinned. "Of course not! Accidents happen to all of us, laddie. I've fallen down myself before now. You get cracking—and tell that precious guide to go to blazes!"

When Potts arrived in the street again the little man had vanished. Having received his recognized fee for introducing a customer, he had doubtless departed in search

of more profitable game. Hurrying alone, the youngster was soon back on board the ship. Greatly to his satisfaction, he found that the Captain was still ashore; apparently his absence had not been noticed. The feeling of relief, however, was somewhat offset by the thought of the inevitable interview with the skipper and the necessity of breaking the news that the dog



She was tall and graceful, wearing her close-fitting silk dress with an undeniably exotic air; evidently she was one of the professional dance-hostesses attached to the establishment, and anxious to make his acquaintance. This was about the last thing Potts wanted just then. There was a time and place for everything, and this was most decidedly *not* the time!



"Whose dog is that? Come on, man, speak up!"

had vanished. The more he considered this ordeal the more depressed he became.

Potts was sitting in the empty saloon, eating a sandwich and drinking a cup of cocoa, when Evans entered. For the second time that evening the Third almost choked over his drink when he saw that the other was carrying a dog under his arm!

Hastily the youngster jumped to his feet.

"Where on earth did you find him?" he asked.

Evans placed a warning finger to his lips.

"Not so loud, laddie," he answered. "Bring your supper along to my cabin; I don't want to talk here."

Once inside his own quarters, Evans carefully closed the door and placed the dog on his bunk. Then, lighting his pipe, he sat down beside the animal and grinned at his junior.

"This seems to be your lucky day, after all, eh?" he remarked. "You lose a dog; I find it! Not bad, in a place the size of Havana!"

"Not bad?" echoed the amazed Potts.

"Why, it's almost a miracle! I never expected to see Carlo again."

"And I don't suppose you will, either," answered Evans, grinning still more widely.

"You don't what?" gasped the mystified Potts. "You mean to say this isn't—"

"Of course not!" interrupted Evans. "Just a pretty good resemblance; they might almost be brothers. I had a spot of bother getting him, but I think it was worth while."

The Third stared hard at the dog, which had now composed itself to sleep. The spaniel was undoubtedly the very image of Carlo; he found it hard to believe this was another animal.

"You're not pulling my leg, are you?" he demanded, suddenly.

"I am not," replied Evans, emphatically. "I tell you this is another dog altogether. But I'll give you the low-down and satisfy your curiosity. First of all, I happen to know that although the Old Man was only given the dog this morning, it wasn't just a sort of accident. Last trip

he happened to mention to the agent that he was thinking of giving his wife a spaniel for her birthday. The bloke must have remembered what he said, and kindly presented him with one to-day. The skipper is as pleased as Punch about it—hence your job as watchman and the hints as to what might happen if the animal got lost! To cut a long story short, after I'd met you to-night I ran into a pal who works at the cable-station and told him the yarn. Knowing the ropes in these parts, he suggested that if you went to one of the pet-shops you might be able to pick up an almost identical dog. I put it to him that we ought to get busy at once, so we breezed along and knocked up a fellow of his acquaintance who keeps cockers. After a bit of haggling, I got this animal. It's remarkably like Carlo, and I don't see how the Old Man is going to tell the difference!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" exclaimed the vastly-relieved Potts. "Thanks a lot, Evans; I shan't forget this in a hurry."

"Okay," grinned the Second. "So long as

you don't forget you owe me a couple of quid for the animal we'll call it quits! By the way, you'll probably be glad to know that the Old Man won't be back till morning. If you're willing to lose your beauty-sleep trying to get this tyke to answer to the name of 'Carlo,' everything in the garden ought to be lovely!"

The following morning, after an early breakfast, Potts took the dog out on deck for exercise. Unlike its predecessor, it seemed to take to its new environment as a matter of course, showing no desire whatever to go ashore. Under the tonic of brilliant sunshine and cloudless blue skies the young officer felt a new man; the trials and tribulations of the night before faded into oblivion. Havana appeared bright and fascinating; he looked forward eagerly to his official shore-leave.

Suddenly an outburst of snarling and growling behind made him spin round, and for a moment he stood rooted to the spot, his eyes almost popping out of his head.

A couple of yards along the deck, two young black-and-white cocker spaniels stood nose to nose, glowering at each other ferociously. Behind them, his face a study in amazed annoyance, was Captain Meadows!

Potts pulled himself together just in time to grab the nearest animal as it flew at its rival's throat. Picking it up, he held it under his arm. The Old Man seized the other dog, meanwhile glaring angrily at his subordinate.

"What's the meaning of this—this tomfoolery?" he thundered. "Whose dog is that? Come on, man, speak up; don't stand there like a—petrified lunatic! I asked you a question: whose dog is that?"

"It's—it's mine, sir," stammered Potts.

"Then take it away. Lock it up! And report to me at once!"

Five minutes later a trembling Third faced a red-faced and still-infuriated skipper.

"Now, Potts," snapped the Old Man. "I want an explanation. It seems that, not content with losing my dog, you have to bring one of your own on board! I presume the animal is yours?"

"No, sir—I mean, yes."

"Stop hedging, young fellow! Is it or is it not yours?"

"Yes, sir; it is mine," replied the unhappy junior. "I—er—bought it, sir."

"And why buy a dog identical with mine? But I think I see it now! That animal was intended to replace the one you lost, eh? You fondly imagined I shouldn't know the difference. Am I right?"

Potts had enough intelligence to realize that his only hope lay in making a clean breast of things, otherwise he would become hopelessly entangled. This he proceeded to do, leaving out only the fact that Second Officer Evans had figured prominently in the deception scheme.

"Humph!" grunted Captain Meadows, when the youngster had finished. "I suppose you know you have been guilty of a major offence—deserting a ship while on duty?"

"It happened on the spur of the moment, sir," replied Potts. "I had no intention of leaving the ship; my only thought was to get your dog back."

"That's no excuse! If you'd had any sense you'd have sent a man ashore after it. In any case, you shouldn't have let it go; it doesn't require a high degree of intelligence to mind a dog! However, as this is your first voyage as a serving officer I may decide to overlook the incident. On the other hand, you may hear more about it. Now get out, and send Mr. Evans in to me."

The Captain was lighting his pipe when the Second Officer entered.

"Evans," said the Old Man, glancing at him shrewdly. "It has reached my ears that you were seen last night coming aboard with a spaniel under your arm. Potts has been most careful not to implicate you in any way, but I want to know what part you played in this pretty little conspiracy."

Rallying swiftly from the first shock of surprise, the Second replied: "I felt sorry for the youngster, sir. And I thought it might—er—case the situation if we could replace the lost dog, so to speak. The idea was entirely mine, sir."

"H'm! I see. But you don't seem to have shown a great deal of nous in this affair, Evans! You knew I was staying the night with the agent, but it didn't occur to you that the dog, which he had bred, would naturally return home. As a matter of fact, the brute woke us all up, barking like mad about one o'clock. I'm afraid your ingenious idea was wasted after all."

"So it appears, sir," returned Evans, looking somewhat crestfallen. "But I hope you won't be too hard on young Potts. He's feeling pretty badly about the whole affair."

"I gave him a good dressing-down—and he deserved it!" snapped the Captain.

He did not think it necessary to add that he had already decided to let the matter rest. A kindly man at heart, he had no intention of clipping a fledgeling's wings; he recalled that, more years ago than he cared to remember, he had been a "dogsboby" himself!



SHORT STORIES

THE TELEPHONE MINE

By ROY PEARSON

IN addition to the large and well-known properties, South Africa possesses numerous small gold-mines, many of them bearing strange names associated with romantic native legends. The story I am going to relate concerns one of these little workings. It is perfectly true, but at the request of the prospectors concerned I have changed their names and suppressed any reference to the exact location of their "find."

Moved by the same impulse, Graves and Muskett simultaneously ceased their rock-chipping, sat down, and wearily wiped the perspiration from their brows. All around, as far as the eye could see, the black branches of the stunted *mopani* trees made the country appear desolate and infinitely depressing. Gazing out over this parched and dusty landscape, Graves suddenly tossed aside the canvas bag containing the samples he had just collected.

"We can't carry on much longer in this fashion," he growled. "Seems to me we're just wasting our time!"

Drawing a scrap of discoloured paper from the pocket of his shirt, Muskett carefully smoothed it out and studied it intently.

"The gold *must* be somewhere hereabouts," he commented, thoughtfully.

"You've been saying that for the past month," retorted his companion, impatiently, "but we still haven't come across anything worth while."

As the sun slid towards the horizon and mosquitoes began to arrive from the nearby Limpopo Valley the prospectors' native helpers started to build a fire which would not only cook the evening meal of coffee and *biltong* soup but also keep off prowling wild beasts. After eating, Graves and Muskett lit their pipes and, for the twentieth time, proceeded to discuss their lack of success. Scores of other gold-seekers had already combed this particular area of the Northern Transvaal, only to return to civilization empty-handed and bitterly disappointed. Were they to meet with a similar experience?

It was Bob Muskett who had been responsible for this particular expedition, which had come about in a rather unusual fashion. Some months previously, up in Rhodesia, he had met a queer old native who lived all alone beside the Umzingwane River. Muskett had killed a lion which was constantly raiding the hermit's cattle-*kraal*, and the old fellow expressed heartfelt gratitude. Later, yarning to the white man over the fire, the crinkly-faced cattlemau relapsed into memories of the past. Muskett mentioned the chain of mysterious ruins which stretch across the continent from the Indian Ocean; the native said he had seen some of them.

Two South African prospectors went in search of the legendary "King Solomon's Mines." They failed to find them, but eventually, through a curious train of events, contrived to locate a promising "strike."

"Who do you think built them?" asked the prospector.

"The old-time Arabs," answered the native. "Somewhere in this country, or not very far away, are the gold mines they worked

when they first arrived from the East. They remained here while the gold was plentiful, building forts to protect themselves and houses to live in, but when the gold became scarce they went away again."

Muskett shook his head doubtfully.

"That's an old story," he commented. "You have heard it from some of your educated sons who have been to the white man's schools and read books; you don't *know* it's true!"

There was a moment's silence while the old man regarded him steadfastly across the flames. Studying his companion, the prospector noted the unmistakable Arab nose, the distinctive acquiline features, and recalled that during his wanderings he had met hundreds of similar folk—definitely not negroid types. This old fellow, he reflected, might well be a descendant of the "old-time Arabs" he referred to.

"White man"—the patriarch was speaking again—"you have been kind to me, and therefore I am not angered by your rudeness. You say I cannot speak of these things from my own knowledge, but you are wrong! I will tell you a story that has been handed down from fathers to sons amongst us for many long years. You can believe it or reject it, as you choose, but it is true."

He paused to take a pinch of snuff from an old tin, sniffed vigorously, and then proceeded:—

"Ages ago, it is said, the great King Solomon's men dug for gold in this country, but no man has ever found their mines. We know, however, that our ancestors, who came south with King Mzilagazi, passed somewhere near them, though few of our people actually saw them. Much later a party of warriors, hunting on their own account just south of the uBengwana (Limpopo) are said to have discovered the diggings. They were then just holes in the ground, long deserted and almost completely overgrown. Only three members of the party returned to tell the story; the rest were killed in an affray with the Basutos. Those three were certain they had come across King Solomon's mines."

"And just where are these workings supposed to lie?" asked Muskett.

"If I knew that for certain I might be a rich man myself," replied the ancient shrewdly. "But if you are thinking of seeking them, our history tells us that we crossed the Limpopo near the border of the Tswana country. The hunters I spoke of set out towards the rising sun along the banks of the uBengwana."

Impressed by his conversation with the old

man, Muskett spent several weeks delving into ancient history and making discreet inquiries, and then persuaded his friend Graves to join him in a prospecting trip. So far, however, the two men had met with nothing but disappointment.

Graves was in a very pessimistic mood that night as he smoked pipe after pipe.

"I reckon your old native was just trying to please you," he observed, moodily. "Old men's gossip has started plenty of wild-goose chases; white folk ought to have more sense than to swallow their yarns."

"That may be," returned Muskett, "but you can't deny that native tales have resulted in many small 'strikes' being made."

"We don't seem very lucky, anyway!" snapped Graves; and his companion said no more.

A few days later, continuing on their way, the prospectors arrived near the kraal of a native named Chakata, who was apparently some kind of witch-doctor. These

Graves, but nobody seemed anxious to explain; evidently their business was peculiarly private and personal.

At this juncture the witch-doctor himself appeared—an elderly man with particularly



"Speaking into the mouthpiece with an air of intense gravity."

penetrating eyes. Pointing a knobbly forefinger at the visitors, he said: "I know what you seek, white men. Enter my kraal and let us talk."

The two prospectors followed him into a yard protected by a stockade of heavy poles intended to keep off lions. Chakata drew up a hollow tree-trunk for the callers to sit on; then he squatted on his haunches and regarded the pair closely.

"You seek the money-stone," he announced. "And you want me to tell you where to find it."

Graves and Muskett glanced at one another silently, but the wizard merely cackled with dry laughter.

gentry being usually knowledgeable fellows, of more than average intelligence, they decided to find out if he could give them any pointers.

Approaching the place, they observed quite a crowd of natives sitting under a spreading *umbuna* tree seeking audience with the magician.

"What do all you people want here?" asked

"It is my business to know these things," he went on. "I am Chakata, the *isanusi* (diviner). All these people you see waiting have come to seek my help in their troubles; they have proved my powers! I am ready to help you, but I want some return. Pay me my price, and I will tell you where to find the money-stone."

"What is your price?" demanded Muskett.

The witch-doctor's reply astonished them.

"I want a telephone!" he answered, earnestly. "I don't need all those wires you white men use, but just the handle you hold, the cup you speak into, and the thing you put to your ear."

Muskett grinned across at Graves. "We will willingly agree to that," he told the old man. "As it happens, I have the very thing at home, but it will take time to fetch it."

Chakata leaned forward eagerly.

"Then send one of your boys off at once," he said. "If you will do that, as proof of your good faith, I will trust you and tell you what you want to know."

"All right," assented Muskett. "It's a bargain!"

Hurriedly scribbling an explanatory note to his wife, the prospector summoned his personal "boy" and gave him instructions to proceed immediately to Nelspruit (where Muskett lived) and return as speedily as possible with a small parcel which would be handed to him.

When the native had departed on his errand Chakata appeared completely satisfied. His leathery face puckered into countless wrinkles and, his sharp eyes aglow, he began to talk again.

"You must follow the river toward the east," he said. "At present you are too far west. Soon you will come to a stream that joins the Limpopo from the south. Follow it until you see a gorge. Nearby is a large tree standing all by itself, far taller than all the rest. Close to this tree is a rock shaped like a sleeping woman. Search carefully in the neighbourhood of that rock and you will find many holes in the ground." He paused, and then added: "I have told you all I know, white man. When can I expect your part of the bargain to be fulfilled?"

"You shall have your telephone directly my messenger gets back," answered Muskett. "It will take him some time to reach Nelspruit and return. When he arrives I will bring you the gift myself."

"It is well," announced the diviner. "I rely upon your word, white man."

Travelling eastwards along the main stream, the prospectors located the tributary indicated, following it until they found the tall tree and the boulder resembling a recumbent woman. Then, for several days, they combed the vicinity, seeking old workings and taking numerous rock-samples—entirely without success. It looked as though another failure was impending, but on the fourth day Graves gave a sudden excited shout, and Muskett hurried over to him. Amongst the thick undergrowth Graves had stumbled upon a series of excavations, obviously very old, almost completely concealed by luxuriant creepers and other vegetation. Investigating one deep trench, the excited men came across a vein of

quartz running along the side. Here and there, where the rays of the sun penetrated the leafy screen above, shining golden specks were revealed.

Hastily chopping out specimens, they filled their sample-bags and then proceeded to peg out claims in accordance with the mining regulations: it seemed obvious to both of them that they had discovered a really promising "strike."

Some time was occupied in clearing the site; then, one day, Muskett's messenger reappeared, bringing an old-fashioned telephone-receiver in a carefully-wrapped bundle. Thereupon, in accordance with Muskett's promise, the prospectors broke camp and returned to Chakata's kraal, which they reached at sunset.

The wizard was seated outside his hut, apparently waiting for them. "I knew you were coming," he announced, smilingly. "And I see that you have met with good fortune."

"It is rather early to talk about that, Chakata," returned Muskett, "but we have found some gold, and now I have brought you the telephone you asked for."

The old man received it with rapturous delight, calling down blessings upon the giver and prophesying that the mine would yield much wealth.

The couple spent a couple of days encamped close by, sorting out their latest specimens ready for assaying when they reached civilization. Then, leaving the "boys" sharing out the loads, they went to the kraal to bid the old diviner farewell, finding him squatting amongst a bevy of clients. By his side was the telephone, which he occasionally picked up, speaking into the mouthpiece with an air of intense gravity and then pretending to listen intently, while the vastly-impressed audience gazed at him awestruck. Secretly much amused, Muskett asked a question.

"How does that help your divination?" he inquired.

Chakata looked up in surprise.

"It is most valuable," he replied. "I have always wanted one! The police do not like me; when I throw the bones (a native method of forecasting the future) they always make trouble. But if I use this telephone I am only employing the same magic as the white man himself, and they cannot complain! The telephone tells the whites what is going on among their people; I need it to talk to the spirits who guide me!"

The samples, duly assayed, yielded sufficiently promising results to warrant opening up the old workings. The "strike" did not prove fabulously rich, nor had the partners any reason to suppose it had any connection with King Solomon's legendary bonanzas. But the gold was undoubtedly there—enough to make it worth while setting up a mill of the type usually installed on small properties.

Few people who happen to come across the outfit—an old boiler and a three-stamp battery—in the thick bush near the Limpopo ever trouble to inquire the name of this little enterprise. Only the two partners know why it is called the "Telephone Mine," although there isn't a working 'phone within seventy miles—unless old Chakata's instrument can be reckoned in that category!

IT was one bright moonlit evening about an hour after sunset when "our" leopard first appeared on the scene. We were to get to know him very well during the next few weeks, but this first manifestation of what some people regard as the most dangerous animal in Africa was so sudden and unexpected that it gave us no time to be frightened.

My wife and I were sitting on the wide veranda of the bungalow, looking out over our newly-planted coffee lands, which terminated in a hard line marking the beginning of the bush. Far in the distance towered Mount Elgon, a forest-clad extinct volcano that relieved the monotony of the seemingly-endless thorn-scrub. In the brilliant light of the full moon every detail of the landscape stood out clearly, leaving mysterious shadows below the veranda and beneath the walls of the store-sheds to the right of the house.

We sat in semi-darkness, the only light coming from a lamp in the living-room behind us. "Pete," our little Sealyham, sat by my wife's chair, his eyes turned up longingly towards the plate of salted ground-nuts on the table. It was the most peaceful hour of the day, when we discussed the work that had been accomplished on the farm and planned the jobs for the next day.

The tragedy happened in a flash. One moment I was contentedly helping myself to a handful of nuts; the next I became aware of a thud on the wooden floor of the veranda, followed by a horrified gasp from my wife. Looking up, I was astounded to see a large leopard standing staring at us from less than six feet away. It didn't remain there long! With the power and speed of an uncoiling steel spring, every movement perfectly co-ordinated by the lithe muscles beneath that rosetted hide, it leaped forward and seized poor little Pete from beneath my wife's feet. For the fraction of a second it stayed there, snarling up into my face; then it turned and jumped over the veranda railings into the deep shadows.

For a moment I was too stunned to do anything beyond stare at the place where the brute had disappeared with the dog in its jaws. Then my wits returned to me, and, shouting for the boy to bring a bush lamp, I dashed into the living-room in search of my shotgun and a powerful torch. The few seconds' delay, however, had been enough to enable the beast to make its escape. Even as we ran out into the garden to start the search I knew it was useless. The leopard belongs to

OUR LEOPARD

By T. G. S.

A vivid little tale told by a Kenya farmer. A prowling leopard seized his beloved terrier from under his very nose, whereupon he vowed vengeance. But "Spots" proved decidedly cunning, and it was some time before the score could be settled.

the night; what chance has mere man against that superb killer during the hours of darkness?

The following morning we searched carefully for signs of the intruder, but it was the dry season, and the baked, sandy soil yielded no trace of a track. I found a few spots of blood—poor Pete's, of course—but they soon ceased, and afforded us no clue to the direction taken by

the killer. I realized it would be useless to continue looking for the beast, which might be lying-up miles away from the farm, but I vowed to avenge our pet at all costs.

The first step was to obtain a trap. That very morning I wrote to a firm in Nairobi asking them to send me a leopard-trap, one of those toothed gins with jaws so strong that it takes a couple of men to hold down the spring when setting it. They are nasty, cruel contraptions, but I am afraid the thought of our faithful pet was still uppermost in my mind.

I decided not to wait for the arrival of the spring trap; I would make another myself and set it that same evening. Calling my headman and half a dozen labourers, I put them on to cutting a number of stout posts from the plantation behind the house. By midday they had cut enough, and that afternoon we constructed a strong enclosure six feet square and the same number of feet in height, the walls being formed by posts firmly embedded in the ground and so close together that they touched one another, the whole small building being roofed in the same way. A narrow entrance was left, and above this I fastened my shotgun, with the barrels pointing downwards. A trip-wire two inches from the earth was connected to the triggers by fine, strong wire. It was getting late by the time we had finished, but I had already given orders to have a young goat procured as bait, and there was just time before nightfall to tether the unwilling victim inside the trap. I reckoned that there was little danger to the animal, for before the leopard could reach it both barrels of the gun would have been discharged, blowing a hole in the top of the killer's head.

That night I slept with one ear cocked for the sound of a shot. But there was nothing, and eventually I fell asleep to the mournful wailing of the hyenas. Next morning I was up at dawn and carefully made my way towards the trap, a loaded rifle in my hands. It is foolish to take any chances with a leopard!

As I drew near I heard no sound of bleating from the goat. I worked round until I could see through the narrow opening of the trap, my rifle at the



The little Sealyham puppy, "Pete."



ready. To my astonishment it was empty; there was no sign of either goat or leopard! Approaching cautiously, I examined the gun. It had not been fired, and on either side of the trip-wire I could distinguish faint pug-marks in the dry dust where "Spots" had evidently stepped carefully over the wire, and again where he had returned carrying the goat. Apparently I was up against an old hand who knew all the tricks of his hereditary enemy, man. I felt sorry for the goat, and mentally chalked up another death to be revenged.

After this failure I decided to abandon my own trap and await the arrival of the spring contrivance from Nairobi. Meanwhile I thought I would try to organize a drive amongst my neighbours. It was highly probable the killer had his home somewhere fairly close at hand, and it was possible that a dozen or more men, strategically placed in positions where the animal was likely to break from the bush when driven by a crowd of shouting natives, might have a chance of putting "paid" to its evil career.

Accordingly, I wrote notes to all my near neighbours, asking them to join me in the hunt. I fixed on a day the following week, and received

enthusiastic replies to all my invitations. It appeared that I was not the only one to have suffered from the depredations of the leopard, several of my neighbours having had chickens taken, and one—like me—having lost a cherished terrier. It might be of interest to mention here that small white dogs appear to be a greater attraction to a leopard than any other domestic animal.

I was at the rendezvous early on the appointed day of the drive. There were fifteen of us, and when we were all in position the great drive began, my farm labourers, reinforced by some Nandi herdsmen, acting as beaters. From my post on the top of a rise in the ground I could see the line of beaters slowly approaching across a swampy bit of land that looked a likely place for the leopard to lie-up in during the heat



"With a wild shout he leaped into the swiftly-flowing river!"

of the day. There were several tall trees in the area, in one of which "Spots" might have taken refuge, and these the beaters struck with their sticks; they also threw stones into the leafy branches.

But it was all to no purpose. As the line of natives drew close a frightened waterbuck broke cover and dashed through the waiting guns, but no other animal appeared. In all, we had three drives that morning, but without success. At length we assembled beneath a large wild fig tree, to get some shelter from the sun and eat the sandwiches that each man had brought for his lunch. Having finished our repast and smoked sundry cigarettes while discussing the

next move, we stood up to start yet one more drive before calling it a day.

As we were moving away one of the company noticed an ants' nest plastered against the trunk of the tree, high up amongst the topmost branches. Annoyed at not having fired a shot all day, and perhaps anxious to demonstrate his marksmanship, he raised his rifle and took careful aim at the ball of mud.

The report had hardly died away before what appeared to my startled eyes to be several yards of exceedingly active leopard slid from the lower branches to the ground and disappeared into the scrub! Our quarry had evidently spent an anxious half-hour watching his hunters eating a meal only a few feet away from him!

That was the end of the hunt for that day! My friends departed to their farms, promising me that they would thenceforth wage active war on "Spots," and when I arrived home I found to my joy that the spring-trap had arrived from Nairobi. I set it that evening, baited with a large chunk of buck liver, but it proved just as useless as my home-made affair. That leopard evidently knew all about traps!

After a couple of weeks, during which time I set the trap nightly to no effect, I decided on another hunt, this time on my own—with the exception of three plucky natives who offered to accompany

me. These were not ordinary labourers; indeed, they despised work of any kind, except cattle-herding. They were members of the famous Nandi tribe, a brave and warlike race whose sole interest is cattle. In defence of their herds they will cheerfully attack a lion single-handed, armed only with a shield and spear. I couldn't have wished for more competent companions.

The leader of the trio told me that he thought he had located the hide-out of the leopard. During the daytime, he said, it lived in a deep cave on a hillside overlooking the river. He proposed that we should make a start by investigating this cave.

The little hill was covered with dense scrub, and on our arrival there the tall Nandi warrior led the way to where a thick patch of green bushes hid the entrance to a narrow cave in the rocky hillside. It was a most unhealthy-looking place, and I began to wonder how we were to persuade

the brute to vacate his lodging if he happened to be at home. But I had reckoned without my companions! They calmly proposed that one of them should enter the cave, armed only with a spear, and—if the beast were in—to drive it out to me, waiting there with a rifle!

It appeared a most foolhardy performance, but they insisted there was actually very little danger, and eventually I agreed to try it.



The Author's bungalow.

After all, I reflected, these fellows were experts in their way, while I was a comparative newcomer to their country.

I took post some yards away from the mouth of the cave, where I could get a good view of it, while the leader of my little band made his way boldly into the heart of the rocks. I still think it was the bravest action I have ever seen, for an angry leopard is emphatically not a beast to trifle with. I waited anxiously for several minutes, and then the native reappeared from the cave. He announced that "Spots" was not at home, but this was undoubtedly his lair. He suggested we should now spread out and walk along the river-bank, where we might put the brute up.

We had gone about half a mile alongside the river—painful going through thick undergrowth, with my nerves taut and my finger on the trigger—when there was a sudden movement

a few yards to my right and I observed a yellow spotted shape slinking away through the thick bush. I was just in time to try a snap shot, and I count it as the best I ever made—or am ever likely to make. I was using a .256 Manlicher rifle, and the small, soft-nosed bullet caught the leopard in the side of the neck, breaking the spine and killing him instantly. Poor little Pete was avenged!

The effect of the slaying of the leopard on those Nandi tribesmen was amazing! They are a highly-excitabile race; any sudden emotion is liable to produce a state of what appears to be catalepsy. In this case they started a queer little dance round their former enemy, meanwhile singing a song of victory. Their movements became faster and faster, and presently I noticed that one of them was frothing slightly at the mouth. Before long he whirled round several times, threw his long-throwing spear in one direction and his shorter stabbing spear in another, and then, with a wild shout, leaped into the swiftly-flowing river!

Luckily I had never seen or heard of crocodiles in this stream; perhaps the water was too swift and troubled for them. But there seemed to be a real danger of the man drowning. He was borne quickly downwards by the force of the current, while we trotted along the river bank as fast as the undergrowth would allow, encouraging him to try to swim for the shore. But I needn't have worried. He seemed to be a good swimmer, and the shock of the sudden immersion had brought him to his senses. It wasn't long before he landed on a spit of sand that ran out into the water, coming ashore spluttering and laughing and highly pleased with himself.

And thus ended my campaign. I have the leopard's skin still—a lovely thing. It adorns the back of the settee in my living-room, and whenever I look at it I think of poor little Pete, who died so many years ago. I have had many dogs since then, and, curiously enough, all of them have been terrified of the skin; if they chance to approach it the hair rises on the backs of their necks. I wonder if Pete's spirit warns them as to what happened to him?

MAN INJURED IN CHASE AFTER HIS INCOME

KALGOORLIE, Fri: In hospital in Kalgoorlie with a broken collarbone is Rawlinna man H. E. Carlisle who suffered the injury while chasing his income.

He and his brother ride motor cycles while chasing dingoes across the Nullarbor. It was during one of these hectic hunts that he crashed into a tree and finished up in hospital.

The chase is fast because it is claimed that a desperate dingo can run at 40 m.p.h.

This week his brother and partner C. A. Carlisle came to Kalgoorlie with 200 dingo scalps, 18 fox tails and eight

eagle beaks. He walked out of the police station with a cheque for £206/8/ for a fortnight's work.

It was the biggest single payment of this kind ever made by Constable Harry Iles.

WITH regard to our recent reference to the notorious "killer" dingo "Bumblefoot," which finally succumbed to a poisoned bait after defying hunters and trappers for years, a West Australian reader sends us the annexed cutting from the Perth *Daily News*. Chasing dingoes by motor-cycle sounds like "mechanisation" with a vengeance, and is obviously only a pursuit for the fittest and most skilful of riders. The rewards, however, as indicated by the size of Mr. Carlisle's cheque, are distinctly tempting.

OUT OF THE PAST



IN the spring of 1892, Charles Albert French, then twenty-one years of age, left his father's stony old farm in Vermont and went to Texas to seek his fortune in the cattle business.



He had read that the Lone Star State held out golden opportunities for ambitious young men to acquire independence and wealth, and he realized that the future on the unkindly New England farm offered neither, nor aught else save a meagre existence.

Charles French found employment as a cowboy on a large ranch fifty miles north of San Antonio, where he remained for five years. Then, having saved most of his wages, with true New England thrift, he found himself able to take up a section of semi-arid land in Schleicher County, farther south, in return for a nominal sum paid to the Government.

After making his payments on the land he had sufficient money left to build a rough cabin of cottonwood logs and the necessary outbuildings, to purchase a little furniture, some farming implements, fifty head of cattle, two pigs, a number of chickens, and sundry other essentials.

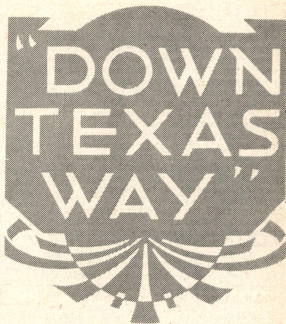
The next ten years were passed in unremitting hard work. There were deprivations, hardships, and discouragements such as fall to the lot of few young men. But Charles French had an obstinate streak in his make-up, and the darker and more unpromising the outlook the more determined it made him to wrest success from his undertaking, if hard work and sticking-to-it could accomplish it.

Soon after his arrival on his new property, he had, with the help of one man, built cabin and corral and put a brush fence around a small garden plot. He also turned the water on to his land in irrigation ditches dug by himself and his assistant from a good-sized mountain stream that rushed along the upper side of his property from east to west. As the years succeeded one another he got the increase from his cattle, sheep, and hogs, and, with the money received from the sale of the surplus, secured more land. Finally, he built a fine ranch-house and outbuildings of the red clay-like *adobe* of the locality.

In 1907, when he sent for me to come south to become his wife, his holdings in Schleicher County had grown to forty thousand acres; his cattle and other stock had increased to great herds, and he employed more than a score of cowboys and other ranch-hands.

Ours was the only ranch, and its people the only inhabitants in the county, which was approximately fifty miles square. The balance of the Schleicher land was arid, difficult to irrigate because of its uplands, on which nothing grew but mile after mile of cactus, mesquite, and greasewood, with an occasional cottonwood tree or fringe of stunted willow. There was no life save lizards, hideous "Gila monsters," rattlesnakes, and predatory wild animals.

As the ranch grew in importance it received the official title from the State of "The 102,"



Told by MRS. VERA M. FRENCH
and set down by
WALTER G. PATTERSON

Here, first published in 1924, is an exciting story told by the wife of a Texan rancher. It concerns three high-spirited youngsters, a desperate gang of escaped convicts, a night alarm, and a mysterious disappearance. "Mrs. French is an old family friend," writes Mr. Patterson, "and I am also acquainted with the two girls and have seen 'Charles Junior.'"

and tri-weekly trips were made to it by the rural delivery mail-carrier—a most welcome innovation, as we had previously been obliged to send a man fifty miles on horseback to get our mail.

In 1911 Charles Junior was born, an occurrence which, a decade later, was to give rise to a situation unknown, perhaps, in any other locality on earth.

A State law had been passed by the Texas legislature making it obligatory that a school-house be erected and a school conducted in every county "containing a settlement where there were one or more children of school age."

In 1920 Mr. French was the only property-owner in Schleicher County, and ours was the only "settlement" in the county. Charles Junior was the only child in the county "of school age," and I was the only person in the county, not otherwise engaged, who was competent to teach school.

We found it impossible to induce a qualified teacher from outside to come to the remote and isolated "102," and, as a consequence, after we had ignored the law until our little boy was nearly ten, and the State Board of Education had become

more and more insistent, Mr. French finally got the cowboys to put up a small log building in a cottonwood "park" on the edge of a deep gully, some little distance from the ranch house. Here, on January 2nd, I was duly installed as teacher.

I was thereby confronted with the unique situation of "conducting a school" in which my own son was the solitary pupil, a service for which the law allowed me, and insisted upon my accepting, a weekly stipend of twenty-seven dollars for the nine months' school year, "with a two weeks' vacation in the holiday season at full pay"—a service I had been giving my son gratis since he was five years old!

I had engaged a coloured woman to attend to the household affairs and prepare the family meals, and a Chinese cook, more or less inefficiently assisted by a Mexican boy, saw to the preparation of meals for the ranch employees in an outside shed near their bunk-houses.

Although I was a teacher in a "school" which comprised but one solitary pupil, and he my own son, I conducted it with conscientious attention to detail. In regular rotation of periods I coached "classes" in the proverbial "three R's," together with geography, history, and some of the so-called "elementary sciences." When Charlie had not prepared his lessons, or exceeded the limit of a healthy lad's natural mischievousness, I tried "moral suasion" on him in school, in my official capacity (the corrective measure to which the teacher is restricted by law), but took the birch-rod to him at home in my capacity as parent.

My odd little school ran along swimmingly for six months, the rules and regulations prepared by the Board for the guidance of rural teachers being as meticulously observed as could be expected in the unusual circumstances.

To be sure, the morning and afternoon "recesses"—restricted by school law to fifteen minutes—had a way of stretching out to twice that limit at times, when I had occasion to run across to the house to see how things were progressing there, or when my pupil wandered up the gully in search of black-haired shrew moles. But I carefully made this lost time up by keeping my scholar back for a corresponding period after school was supposed to be "out"—much to the young-gentleman's disgust.

Late in the month of June my two young nieces, Marie Parker and Eunice Peter, arrived at the ranch from New Jersey, as they had done the preceding two seasons, and have done regularly since.

Their schools in the north were "out" for the long summer vacation, whereas my school was still in full swing, and would have to remain so until September, in order to eke out the nine months' school year prescribed by law.

It may seem strange that these young girls should have been permitted by their parents to come from their Northern homes to Texas in what was known to be the hottest season of the year; but the "102" was located on a table-land, two thousand feet above sea-level, and near enough to the sea to benefit from its cooling breeze.

Compared with the extreme heat of the North at that season, it was a true summer resort, and my young nieces enjoyed life to the full. Running wild on the ranch, they speedily became as tanned as young Indian girls.

Marie and Eunice were graduates from a riding school and ardent and expert horse-women—and the ranch possessed plenty of cow-ponies. Although Marie was only sixteen at the time of which I speak, and Eunice just turned twelve, they were as free from fear on the backs of the tricky ponies as the cowboys themselves.

They thought nothing of riding two of the wildest of them, "Red Cloud" and "Black Diamond," and joining the men in the round-ups, or going to all the corners of the county in search of "strays." Not infrequently they were out with the ponies from sun-up to sunset, sharing the men's lunches and endearing themselves to these hard-riding companions by their care-free spirits and freedom from the airs and affectations of Southern girls.

When not on horseback they were wont to wander over the nearby plains to gather wild flowers, and quite often they visited my one-scholar school, which was a source of never-ending interest and amusement to them. In fact, they finally became so keen on it that, along in mid-July, they begged me to let them be scholars as well, and I duly enrolled them in the "register" provided for the purpose by the State of Texas.

With the school thus augmented, I adopted "roll-call," a detail which had previously seemed superfluous.

One August morning about ten o'clock Mr. French came hurrying over to the school-house on his pony "Snip," dismounted at the door, and pushed his way into the school-room looking very grave. This was so unusual an expression for him that I at once surmised something serious must have occurred. Hastily bidding the history "class," then reciting, to take its seat, I gave him my undivided attention.

My husband is very direct in his manner of speech, and never loses time "beating about the bush."

He strode over to my desk with his spurs jingling and stopped there for a moment, flicking nervously at his leather "chaps" with his ever-ready quirt.

"There's been a bad jail-break across the border," he announced, abruptly. "Over a hundred dangerous criminals—Mexicans, half-breeds, and whites—overpowered the guards at Nueva Laredo last night, stole weapons and ammunition, and made a safe get-away."

"Jordan, the mail-carrier, has just come in and brought word of it. Been trying to get us on the 'phone all morning, he said, but nobody answered. The convicts raided a ranch at daybreak outside Nueva Laredo, shot the rancher dead, rounded up the horses, and split into two bands, one crossing to the American side at Columbus, New Mexico, and the other making for somewhere near Fort McIntosh.

"If the latter band strikes north, as they are likely to, the '102' will lie in their direct path. Allowing 'em time to pay their compliments to the ranchers on the way, and provided they're not picked up meantime by the State Rangers, we might receive a visit from them in about two days.

"They'll fight shy of the big towns and be cunning enough to do their daylight travelling up the cuts in the hills, confining their raids on the ranchers to surprise parties at night."

Mr. French stopped, glanced at Charlie and the little girls, and then looked round at the dry log walls of the room.

"You'd better close the school," he resumed, sharply, "and move with your scholars over to the big house, where it will be safer. The scoundrels might get here sooner than I've figured, and there's no sense in taking chances. The least they'd do, if they came up the gully and caught you and the children here alone, would be to set fire to the building out of pure devilry. Better move right away!"

With that, and a hurried wave of his hand, he strode out, remounted his pony, and dashed away. He hadn't given me a chance to speak a word!

My husband had not lowered his voice while speaking, and the children drank in every word he had uttered. The girls shrank closer together and, with their arms about each other's shoulders, stared at him with frightened eyes. But it was different with Charles Junior.

He had spent the ten years of his life on a Texas cow-ranch and had never been off it except twice when he had accompanied his father

to San Antonio. Mounted on his wiry little "Spark Plug" he had ridden the range almost daily with the cowboys since his third year, when his chubby legs would barely reach across the animal's back. The cowboys were his chosen companions, and he had acquired many of their characteristics and their fearless outlook upon life, along with much of their deplorably picturesque language.

His father had encouraged this education, saying that he wanted his son to grow up into a "he-man," and not one of the "sissified productions" of the Northern States. Of this, however, there had never been the slightest danger. Before Charlie was seven he had crushed the head of many a rattlesnake, and had a goodly array of dried rattles in his room to prove it. When he was about nine he had shot a panther, and was now using its tanned skin for a rug. There was little prospect of him growing up into a "sissy"!

He promptly raised his voice in protest when I told him and the girls to strap their



" 'There's been a bad jail-break,' he announced, abruptly."

books together and made hasty preparation to follow my husband's advice by vacating the school building without delay.

"Aw, Mamma," said Junior, without stirring from his seat, "yuh ain't a-goin' to let a bunch of them measly greasers throw a scare into yuh like that, are yuh, mamma? Why, Dunc' and Reno Tom"—two of our cowboys—"run a hull bunch of 'em plumb back across the border down to the Gold Bar Saturday night, an' me an' them kin do it agin, if only——"

"That will do, Charles," I interrupted, determined to maintain



my dignity as parent teacher, but smiling in spite of myself at his ten-year-old precociousness. "Hurry with your books now, without any more argument. Then you and the girls can run over to the house and wait there for me."

I had long since despaired of getting my boy to use proper language while he was under the tutelage of his cowboy companions, aided and abetted as he was by his father.

That day and night nothing out of the ordinary happened. Mr. French had posted guards around the ranch to keep a twenty-four-hour look-out, and every man and boy on the place had been armed, including Lee Hung, the Chinese cook, and José, the Mexican dish-washer.

My husband also had the stock driven in off the range, closer to the buildings, and made general arrangements for the siege that might possibly ensue.

While word occasionally reached us during the next two days as to the northern progress of the fleeing convicts and their depredations *en route*, the fourth day succeeding the jail-break brought no signs of the appearance of their advance couriers at the "102." We had learned also that a large body of Rangers had been sent to intercept them, and with the hope that this had been accomplished we commenced to breathe more easily.

When, later in the morning, we heard that a rancher, through binoculars, had watched a

"Trussed 'em up in the ropes again."

battle between two large bodies of mounted men, which he believed comprised Rangers and convicts, in which the latter appeared to be worsted, we became certain we had nothing further to fear. In the afternoon, therefore, I reassembled my pupils in the isolated school-building. Even Mr. French was convinced that the "102" would not be attacked, and called in his men.

At sunrise the following morning a cowboy visiting the corral to attend to a sick horse discovered that twenty of our best ponies were missing, their places being taken by the same number of animals whose drooping heads and dejected demeanour showed that they had been ridden hard for many miles!

The soft earth about the gate of the corral had been trampled by many feet, and tracks of what seemed to be the hoofs of horses were

house and the remaining cowboys came hurrying out, under the impression that some of the buildings were on fire.

Mr. French was apparently the coolest person in the excited throng. He stood chewing at a straw, with his hands in his pockets and a half smile on his face, gazing at the jaded beasts, and now and then glancing, with what seemed to be mild curiosity, at the trampled ground.

"So the convicts didn't overlook us after all!" he remarked, calmly.

"Lucky they didn't think to burn us out; must have been in a hurry. Just trading horses with us was considerate treatment from fellows like them. Still, I'm sure glad they've come and gone. Shan't have to worry about them now!"

Accompanied by some of the men, he then started to check up exactly which ponies had vanished.

He found that his own favourite mount, Charles Junior's "Spark Plug," and the animals the two girls generally rode were among those missing; but he chuckled when he looked over the horses left in their places. Without exception they were large, rangy thoroughbreds of the



visible leading to and from the edge of the gully. Yet no unusual sound had been heard during the night, although the men's bunk-houses were less than a hundred yards from the corral.

The man who made the discovery had at once rung the alarm bell, and we in the ranch-

magnificent type always raised by the Mexican ranchers, who set great store by their horse-flesh.

"Can't see where I haven't got the best of the bargain!" said my husband with a laugh. "If I could only get 'Snip' and the kid's 'Spark Plug' back I'd have no kick coming on the deal."

Mr. French, in fact, appeared inclined to treat the whole affair as a joke; but I knew that most of his cheerfulness came from the relief he felt that the long-anticipated and dreaded visit of the convicts had resulted in nothing more serious than a horse-trade.

After ordering that the newly-acquired stock

should be watered, fed, and otherwise attended to, he took two of the herd-bosses with him and led the way into the gully.

At its bottom he stood for several minutes meditatively studying the trampled brush.

Presently he pointed to a litter of pieces of muddy sacking strewn the ground. "That explains how it was we didn't hear 'em come in and go out during the night," he commented, dryly. "They had the animals' hoofs muffled both ways." Then, after a brief survey of the trail the fugitives had left behind them up the gully, he called to the men and returned to the ranch-house.

He was whistling in his usual care-free manner, and maintained this demeanor throughout the day, but could he have foreseen the next twenty-four hours' happenings he would have had less confidence that our troubles were over.

When, the following morning, Mr. French and I came down to breakfast at six, Charles Junior and the two girls were not awaiting us in the breakfast-room as usual. We decided they had gone out to have another look at the trail left by the convicts, from whose visit they were extracting many delightful thrills, and we continued the meal without them, expecting every minute that they would come rushing into the room bubbling over with eagerness to give us particulars of fresh "discoveries" they had made.

As they had not shown up when breakfast was finished, however, Mr. French, at my suggestion, went out to round them up and hurry them in.

He returned a quarter of an hour later with a look on his face that I had never seen there before. He was plainly frightened.

"The children haven't visited the gully this morning," he said, sinking into a chair. "The men who have been up since daylight are positive they have not appeared anywhere about the grounds. I have been to their rooms, but they are not there. I can't see how it would have been possible for them to fall into the hands of the convicts at any time during the night without disturbing us, but I can't imagine what else can have happened to them. The outstanding fact is that they are missing, and with the country alive with desperate outlaws it's up to me to find what has become of them without an instant's delay."

With that he hurried from the room, and I followed him, filled with foreboding of I knew not what.

Unable to account for the children's absence, except on the assumption that in some mysterious manner they had fallen into the hands of a second band of convicts, my husband finally summoned his men, and in less than twenty minutes a score of the cowboys, with Mr. French at their head, were riding furiously over the mesa near the edge of the gully towards the north.

After they had gone I seated myself, a prey to the most dismal apprehensions, on a fallen cottonwood, trying hard to recollect when I had last seen the three children. They had been playing dominoes during the early part of the evening in the room where I was sitting, and I remembered that towards nine o'clock they had gone outside. Through the open window I had seen them walking towards the corral. I could not recall anything of them afterwards. They had not come in to bid Mr. French and myself good-night, but I had thought nothing of that, for it was an oversight they were frequently guilty of when they returned tired and sleepy. Their beds had been slept in during at least a part of the night, and a hurried investigation showed that the khaki overall rig-outs the girls often wore were missing. Upon searching my son's room, however, I found none of his clothes gone except a disreputable blouse and a pair of ragged old leather "chaps." None of my discoveries, however, shed the least light upon the mysterious disappearance of the children.

Soon after I had returned to the house one of the men came to me and told me that three of the big Mexican horses were missing from the corral; the trail of their hoofs, leading to the gully, was the only indication that mounted men had been about the ranch during the night hours. He thought it strange Mr. French had not noticed the hoofprints of the three big Mexicans and the absence of other tracks. He added that there was nothing whatever to indicate that the convicts had again visited the "102."

The perplexities of the situation were certainly not made any more clear to me by these fresh developments. If the children had gone away on the missing horses, as seemed probable, they must have done so in the dark hours preceding day-break; otherwise they would have been seen by the men who were out at the first glimmer of daylight. What could have possessed them to do such a thing it was beyond my power to guess. Assuredly they would not have started out for a canter at such an unearthly hour; if they had they would long since have been back for breakfast. In the absence of any evidence that the ranch had received a second visit from the escaped convicts, my husband's theory that they had been kidnapped

was apparently disposed of. Whatever the explanation of the mystery might be, the disappearance of the horses, and the fact that the children had dressed and stolen silently out of the house without disturbing us, seemed to prove that their action was voluntary.

During the rest of that endless day and all the following night I sat at a window in my room from which I could see up the gully, watching eagerly for the return of my husband and his men with news of the youngsters. During the day I telephoned to all the



Mrs. Vera French.

ranches within a radius of thirty miles of the "102," asking if anything had been seen of the young riders; I also sent the men remaining at the ranch to every corner of the property to search for them. In both instances no news was obtained. More and more I came to believe, like my husband, that the youngsters had somehow fallen into the hands of the convicts; it seemed the only explanation of the mystery that was practical or probable.

It was nearly ten o'clock on the morning after Mr. French and his men had departed that my long vigil was rewarded.

I had returned to my seat on the fallen cottonwood, and was straining my eyes across the broad mesa towards the north when I suddenly saw a great cloud of dust in the distance. I knew what it meant, and rose excitedly to my feet. Presently I heard the wild cowboy yells that have no counterpart anywhere else on earth, and in a short time I distinguished a body of horsemen coming at breakneck speed in the direction of the "102," swinging their *sombreros* and screeching like a band of escaped lunatics. From this I augured that their mission had been successful, and that they were bringing the children with them.

This surmise was quickly proved to be correct. First of all I picked out Charles Junior, riding at the head of the cavalcade, doing more than his share of the yelling and waving a borrowed *sombrero*. Next I saw Marie and Eunice, a little way behind. My boy was riding "Spark Plug," and the two girls were astride their favourites, "Red Cloud" and "Black Diamond." I was so excited that I could hardly wait for the cavalcade to swing in at the ranch, and when the children dismounted I simply rushed at them and hugged them all at once.

"It was that son of yours who started this business," said my husband, as he sprang from the back of the recovered "Snip." "He talked these poor girls into getting up in the night, helping themselves to horses, and starting on a crazy chase after that bunch of convicts, with the sole purpose of trading back the Mexican nags for the three pet ponies! Charlie planned to steal up to the rascals' camp while they were asleep at night



"Charlie Boy."

and make the exchange without asking their permission. The plan would have worked out all right but for the fact that the convicts woke up and took them prisoners, with a little plan of their own to hold 'em for ransom.

"We came upon the scene just as the rascals were getting ready to make a quick trip into the foothills with the kids, where they meant to hide until a messenger could get to the '102' and back with the ransom-money they reckoned they'd collect. But even before our arrival their kidnap scheme had run up against a snag that came near to frustrating it. Do you know, Mrs. French, I'm proud of that ten-year-old offspring of ours! An hour before we rode in he managed to work himself free of the ropes he'd been hog-tied with. In the dark he freed the girls, got hold of three of the outlaws' guns from their hol-

sters to arm himself and the girls, and was making a grandstand play for liberty when a couple of the villains crept up behind them, seized and disarmed them, and trussed 'em up in the ropes again. Our Charlie boy fought like a wild-cat before they finally overcame him.

"Well, when we had the bunch located, we came down on them yelling like Comanches, with our horses at full tilt and firing our six-guns at them a little promiscuous, but aiming high for fear we'd hit the kids. We sure must have scared the beggars, for instead of trying to fight back they just stuck their arms up in the air and surrendered like a parcel of whipped curs!

"We took our three pets back, but left them the ponies they'd taken from the '102' and the three Mex. horses the kids had ridden. Then we gave 'em three minutes to get their saddles on and hit the trail north. They got going in 'bout two minutes, as near as I could reckon, and to make sure they didn't stop we emptied our guns after 'em. Like as not we winged a few of 'em in the dark, but we didn't wait to find out. We were in a desperate hurry to get back to the '102' with the kids, so that you'd stop fretting about them!

"It's no use worrying where Charles French Junior is concerned! He'll manage to worm out of all the tight places he gets into in this world, and you can take that from me!"



The QUEER SIDE of THINGS

APPOINTMENT WITH THE DEVIL

By COUNT LUDWIG HUYN

An extraordinary story from Abyssinia, related by an Austrian big-game hunter who travelled extensively in the country between 1929 and 1934. He writes: "Don't ask me for an explanation; I can't think of one!"

THE year was 1934, and I was camped in Arussiland, Abyssinia, on the bank of the Manja River, whose waters, farther to the east, join the Webi Shebeli which, in turn, after flowing for hundreds of miles through the desert, loses itself in the burning sands of Somaliland not far from the sea-coast. This region had been described to me as a hunter's Eldorado, but I was disappointed to find that big-game had almost disappeared. Some devastating epidemic must have occurred, for wherever I went I came upon the sun-bleached skeletons of antelope, gazelle, and many other animals.

The Manja is fringed by dense jungle, at some points quite impenetrable, but in most places it is passable by tracks made by herds of cattle belonging to the Hamitic Galla who inhabit this country.

In accordance with the principle that native experience is the safest guide for the stranger, I pitched my camp on high ground above the jungle. The boys had to fetch water from a distance, but we were compensated for this inconvenience by being secure from malaria - carrying mosquitoes.

Late one evening I sat outside my tent, enjoying the cool air. Presently Seleka, my personal "boy," brought my dinner. I noted

with surprise that he was freshly washed and brushed-up and was wearing linen of spotless white. As the day was not a holiday of any kind, it occurred to me he might be intending to go a-wooing.

When I had finished the meal Seleka approached me hesitantly.

"What is the matter, Seleka?" I asked



"Geta (Lord)," he replied. "I should like the evening off. The *Getotch* (Great Lord) is coming."

What "Great Lord" could be coming to this wilderness—surely not the Governor of the Province? Had this been the case I should certainly have heard about it during the day.

"What *getotch* is this, Seleka?" I asked.

"I mustn't say his name," replied the boy, after quite a lengthy pause. "It is the *getotch*." Then, noting that I was still looking at him inquiringly, he suddenly blurted out: "It is *Shaitan*!"

"Who?" I cried in astonishment. "The Devil? You must explain."

Seleka's expression became very grave.

"Geta," he announced, "you know Gabre, the black man with the protruding teeth? He has often been visited by the Devil, and he says the Devil told him he was coming again this

evening. When he comes he will talk with Gabre's mouth! I want to be there; one learns all sorts of things one would like to know."

During my travels in Abyssinia I had often heard about "wise" or "possessed" people who were said to make remarkably correct predictions. There was, for instance, an old woman named Gifti Mummi, who had died a few years previously. She had become famous throughout the country because she had told Haile Selassie (the present Emperor) that he would become *Negus* at a time when he was not even heir-apparent to the throne. Gifti Mummi had also prophesied all the troubles that befell Abyssinia, together with their final outcome. Moreover, she foretold, with complete accuracy, the date of her own death.

"This sounds interesting, Seleka," I said. "I'll go with you! When the Devil arrives, come and call me."

I looked forward to this experience, for quite recently I had visited a Franciscan monk—*Père François*, the head of a mission—who had discussed Gifti Mummi with me. It appeared that she had eventually developed into a formidable political factor, and Haile Selassie—then *Ras Tafari Makonnen*—had deemed it advisable to banish her to Arussiland under escort. The men who took her there, however, paid dearly for their temerity; all of them died within a year! The good Father also mentioned the matter of "possession," saying that the people believed certain individuals were used by the Evil One as his mouthpieces, making prophecies and performing feats of divination which Europeans

found quite inexplicable. His remarks led me to think that he could have told me a great deal more, but apparently this was a delicate subject he did not care to discuss further.

Presently, from a nearby hut, I heard the sound of muffled drumming, accompanied by monotonous chanting in some dialect unknown to me. Next moment Seleka appeared before me.

"Come, Geta," he said. "It is time!"

At the last moment I wondered whether I ought to arm myself, but decided not to do so,



"A man lay on it, occasionally writhing spasmodically."

for if these semi-savages worked themselves into a fanatical ecstasy and elected to attack me weapons would have been of little use. I therefore contented myself with instructing the faithful Seleka to stay close beside me, whatever happened.

"And," I added, "if the Devil speaks in Galla or Wollamo, you must translate for me."

We entered the hut through a hole in the wall that served as the door. At first the glow of a big fire of *koira* and cedar-logs in the middle of the room dazzled me; it was several minutes before I realized there were quite a number of Gallas present.

"Welcome, *ferendji* (foreigner)," boomed a deep voice. "Your visit is an honour to me!"

"That was *Shaitan*!" whispered Seleka, excitedly. "You need not worry any more; you will be quite safe!"

"The honour is mine, *getotch*," I answered, anxious to return courtesy with courtesy. "I have never previously met anyone of the eminence of the Prince of Darkness! People talk a great deal about you in the land of the *ferendji*, but I don't think anyone there has made your personal acquaintance."

As my eyes became accustomed to the ruddy half-light from the fire I made out a curtained bed. A man—presumably Gabre—lay on it, occasionally writhing spasmodically. Now and then I heard a groan or the sound of chattering teeth.

Presently I was given a small cup of Mocha coffee—seasoned, according to the custom of the country, with salt. I drank it with seeming gusto, well aware that this ritual established me as a member of the assembly.

The fire was burning inside a circular ridge of baked mud, and now a muscular Galla, wearing nothing but a loincloth, began to walk round and round it. In his hand he held a lance, pointing at the ground, and as he made the circle he pleaded with the "great lord Devil" to be gracious to the people who were so devoted to him, and tell them the various things they desired to know.

Loud groans came from the curtained bed; I sensed, rather than saw, a convulsive twitching of the recumbent figure there. Silence prevailed for a while; then the deep voice said:

"*Ee-ee!* How brave of you to come here, Tassama! The day before yesterday you stole two *thalers* from Wolde's hut. Do you think I didn't know?"

"*Ba Haile Selassie!*" cried the astounded Wolde, turning fiercely upon another man. "I've got you at last; I suspected my wife! To-morrow I'll take you before the judge."

"Mercy, *getotch*, mercy!" cried the fellow I judged to be Tassama. "Don't say any more! I'll return the two *thalers* to Wolde at once, and give him another one as well, so that we can remain friends. And before you come again, *getotch*, I will paint the lintel of my door with the blood of a black he-goat. Mercy, mercy!"

"This is just a swindle, Seleka," I whispered into my companion's ear. "You don't believe it's genuine, do you?"

The drums were still beating out their monotonous muffled rhythm, and it would have

been quite impossible, even for anyone close to us, to have heard my words, but nevertheless the voice from the bed boomed out:

"How can you talk about trickery, *ferendji*? You are a wise man; we know that. But my wisdom is far greater than yours, because I am everywhere! You are my guest; ask what you like, and I will answer you!"

A cold shiver ran down my spine. The words were spoken with such assurance that I was taken aback. I realized that if I was to put this mysterious seer to a real test it would be well to ask him a question to which I did not even know the answer myself, thus avoiding any suggestion of thought-transference. After a moment's reflection, therefore, I said:

"*Getotch*, a week ago my boy Mariam left me for the post-station. I am expecting some money from Europe. Can you tell me when the boy will return, and how much money he will bring with him? If you tell me the truth I, too, will give a he-goat."

"*Eee-ee!*" came the queer cry from behind the curtain. "You can get the he-goat ready; your question is too easy! Listen! Mariam is camping at the ford of the Hawash River, under the *shola* tree where they give judgment. He will be back before nightfall the day after to-morrow, for he runs well. He will bring *birr jelle* (no money), but among the letters is a brown envelope with a piece of paper in it which, among you white people, is worth as much as two hundred *thalers*. Now ask me something else."

"How is my sister in *Ferendjiland*?"

"She is lying on the *alga* (bed) with a bad cold."

The rest of the proceedings, which included innumerable questions from the audience, all of which were duly answered, did not interest me greatly; I was only concerned to discover whether *Shaitan* had spoken the truth about my own affairs.

Two days later, at five o'clock in the afternoon, Mariam arrived in camp, dead-tired.

"Where were you the night before last?" I asked.

"I slept on the bank of the Hawash River, at the judgment *shola*," he answered. Thereupon I broke the seal of the mailbag. Among the letters, sure enough, was one in a brown envelope. It came from Switzerland, and contained a money-order for exactly two hundred *thalers*!

Who could have known about this remittance? I asked myself. Firstly, the museum which had sent the money. Secondly, a European in Addis Ababa who had authority to handle my mail; he could read the declaration on the envelope. But he would certainly not have said a word to anyone as to there being anything valuable in the mailbag. Actually, I learned, he had handed the sealed bag to my messenger without any remark at all.

This incident struck me as most extraordinary, but more was to follow. Two months later, when I was deep in the bush, I received a letter from my sister, in which she mentioned that, about the time of my encounter with *Shaitan*, she had been laid up with influenza.

Don't ask me for an explanation; I can't think of one!

A HOUSE WITH A HISTORY

THE building seen in the accompanying photograph stands at the corner of Marietta Street, one of the main thoroughfares of the thriving city of Atlanta, capital of the State of Georgia, U.S.A., with street cars and heavy traffic passing all day long.

The front formerly bore a sign indicating that a tyre-retreading business was carried on, and the building itself, as will be seen from the picture, was hung with discarded tyres by way of advertisement. This struck a WIDE WORLD reader as a novelty, and some years ago he took this snapshot of it. One night, nearly twelve months later, someone called up the police department, saying they thought burglars had entered the tyre-store. When the officers arrived to investigate they got a distinct surprise, for on the second floor they discovered a large still for making illicit liquor! This was capable of turning out from 300 to 500 gallons of "moonshine" whisky daily, and close by were big vats containing huge quantities of fermenting "mash." Everything was ready, in fact, for making a most profitable run of corn whisky—the variety favoured by illegal distillers. These "moonshiners," however, usually operate by night, in carefully-hidden mountain hide-outs, and not in busy cities, where the strong, characteristic odour which accompanies the process would speedily give them away. In this particular case it was surmised that most of the work was done in daylight, at a time when the legitimate tyre-retreading business was being conducted on the first floor. The heated rubber, of course, gave off a very strong and unpleasant aroma which acted as a most effective camouflage for the scents from the still!

In accordance with the law, the authorities promptly destroyed the apparatus, and our correspondent saw it being carried away. The individual responsible for operating the place was not in the building when the police arrived,



and must have received timely warning, for he immediately vanished and has not since been traced. The building has now been vacant for several years, though business premises are in great demand in the city. So far as the fugitive is concerned, the Federal authorities regard the case as still "open," but as illegal distilling is not popularly considered a very serious offence in Georgia it seems probable that no very active search will be made for the missing man.

THE MYSTERIOUS FACE



THE annexed photograph, with a rock roughly painted to resemble a face, and the inscription "Kilroy," represents a minor Scottish mystery. It was sent to us by a reader in Renfrewshire, who writes: "I took the picture on the shores of Loch Eck, near Dunoon. Thinking the rock looked peculiar, I went closer and snapped it. Nobody in the neighbourhood seemed to know anything about this unusual bit of decoration. Can any Scotsman throw light on its history or origin?" If we know our readers, there is someone, somewhere, who can supply full information!



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Braces Again

MY recent remarks concerning braces have produced sundry interesting observations from readers. The vast majority appear to be perfectly content to continue wearing these conventional supports, but there is a small minority which, for one reason or another, regards them with loathing and contempt. These stalwarts, apparently, look on braces as typical of the "reactionary" mind—symbols of a stick-in-the-mud outlook and Victorian inefficiency. They gloss over or airily ignore the awkward fact that belts and other methods of suspension are still not quite 100 per cent. satisfactory, while one or two correspondents actually suggest that the various alternatives to braces have to contend with an insidious Press campaign and subtle trade opposition cunningly organized by the manufacturers! People

who believe that would believe anything!

Nice People

Several of the critics who have written to me decrying braces are remarkably vociferous; some, judged by ordinary standards, are also distinctly rude! Because I appear to be in favour of brace-wearing, I am an "old-fashioned dodderer," a "paid hack," and a few other nice things! Good-natured tolerance toward other folk's points of view, you'll notice, doesn't come into the picture. This is thoroughly characteristic of certain "moderns," I believe, as witness the following charming example from the *Glasgow Evening News*. That journal recently quoted a men's wear publication which ventured to suggest that the young men who attended Princess Margaret at some fashionable race-meeting wearing open-necked shirts



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with the collars outside their jackets were not appropriately dressed for such an occasion. Apparently this greatly annoyed a reader, who sent the *Evening News* Editor a "snorter." After a breezy reference to "Victorian Cranks" and "tripe," he went on: "Tailoring circles should realize that men are becoming tired of the morons who perpetuate waistcoats, detachable collars, braces, cufflinks, pants, and such silly tighteners." Amiable, broad-minded sort of fellow, isn't he? How dare people advocate anything he doesn't like? Incidentally, this individual signed himself "No Socks," and appears to object to so many articles of apparel that

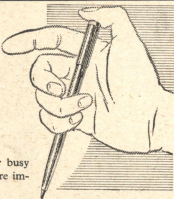
one wonders what he does wear

"Luxury"

The march of progress, of course, is irresistible; when some perfect substitute for braces is evolved (if that ever happens) you can be quite sure men will adopt it. Meanwhile, we males remain so much attached to these unromantic appendages—or they to



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us!—that I find one benighted fellow writing: "A little luxury I have treated myself to for years is a carefully-adjusted pair of braces permanently fixed to each pair of trousers I possess. The tailor's measurements notwithstanding, there is always some difference, and braces which give just the right length make a great contribution to comfort, appearance, and wear." This may sound like the whim of a man with more money than sense, but nevertheless I think T. F. W. has "got something." Whatever



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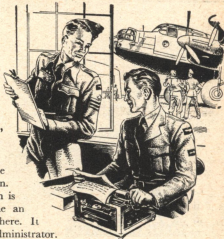
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the cause, there *are* differences in one's trousers, and hasty compensatory buckle-shiftings on a single long-suffering pair of braces are not likely to give the best results.

Another Invention

Mention of alternatives to braces reminds me that, according to the papers, an Ipswich tailor, having spent many years in devising "invisible" braces, has now perfected his device to such an extent that he has taken out patents and is getting ready to start manufacturing in quite a big way. The fundamental idea, as so often happens, is quite an old one—an improvement on the notion of wearing your braces under your shirt and bringing the tabs out through holes in order to fasten them to the trouser-buttons. This worked fairly well until it became necessary to unfasten them, whereupon they invariably shot back through the holes and vanished, leaving the wearer groping profanely to recover them.

Rather Costly

The Ipswich inventor overcomes this difficulty by actually incorporating the braces—made of the same material—with the shirt, which falls blouse-fashion over the projecting tabs, completely concealing them. The braces are very strong, and cut in such a way as to resist all normal strains. The plan is certainly interesting, but unfortunately, at the moment, these "shirt-braces" cost a great deal more than

the standard article. Even if mass-produced, it is estimated, their price would be about 35s. per garment.

The Value of Method

A Sussex reader sends me a tale of woe which I trust all happy-go-lucky folk will take seriously to heart. He writes: "From time to time, quite rightly, you have stressed the value of *method* in connection with one's affairs, even in trifling matters. Some years ago, being conscious of my own shortcomings in this respect, I decided to reform, and gradually became much more methodical. I kept my wardrobe tidy, knew where to find most things, and even went so far as to mark all my laundry stuff. Then, one day, I noticed that the laundry people had taken the trouble to sew little coloured tabs into my shirts, collars, etc., bearing an identification-number. That seemed to let me out, so I stopped marking new articles as I took them into service. The system worked excellently for a couple of years, but now I am in the soup!"

A Sharp Lesson

"It gradually dawned upon me that several of my cherished new shirts and collars seemed to have disappeared, although the laundry-lists revealed no discrepancies. Moreover, the collars sent home with shirts didn't fit them! When I came to check up I felt certain I had received things belonging to other



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customers, but this the laundry folk indignantly denied, pointing out that all the articles bore my



tab. Now—too late—I realize how foolish I was to abandon my own markings. I can't swear it has actually happened, but you can see the danger; the laundry has only to put your number on someone else's shirts, collars, or what-have-you and, in the absence of any

other means of identification, you're sunk! That, Captain, is my unfortunate position at the present moment—all through my own laziness!"

Up to You

This sad story speaks for itself; W. L. has my sympathy. It is easy to revile the laundries, of course, but most of them do their best; and one must never lose sight of the fact that, as the person most intimately concerned, it is up to *you* to make sure your shirts, etc., bear markings which will enable you to identify them beyond a shadow of doubt. Marking-ink is still cheap, and in view of the present-day price of replacements you can surely spare enough of your valuable time to safeguard your own property. A shirt that doesn't fit, and which you are convinced is a changeling—even though the laundry vows it's the one you sent—is a most exasperating reminder of lack of care!

Here's an Idea

Talking about laundries, I note that some of them are complaining they don't make enough money; the ever-rising cost of labour and materials runs away with most of the profit. All I know is that their charges, plus the "authorized increase," seem quite steep enough already. If they go any higher a number of folk will start considering the purchase of one of the

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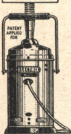
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Confession

I trust readers will not imagine, from my occasional observations on the subject, that I am a thoroughly methodical person myself, rigidly following a cast-iron routine. This is very far from the truth; my remarks concerning "method" are merely strivings towards an ideal I have *not* attained! In my youth I was just as casual and shiftless as most other youngsters, but experience gradually taught me, in spite of my own instincts, to adopt certain habits that tended to correct outstanding failings. Tiring of never being able to find anything, I got into the way of stowing my belongings away properly. Next, anxious to look smart, I learned to take care of my slender wardrobe. So it went on; step by step I made

progress toward tidiness and a sense of order. Most fellows have gone through the same process, though some have travelled much farther than others.

Watch Out!

I regret to say I still remain somewhat careless about things which don't particularly interest me, but I *have* discovered the value of "method" and "routine." Some people sneer at the latter, but (once you've got it down to a fine art and are convinced you can't improve on the process-



sure) it is the only practical way of tackling one's daily tasks. As you value your individuality, however, don't let routine get hold of your *mind*, or else you'll become a mere vegetable! Many of us are familiar with men who, all unconsciously, have allowed this to happen, and they are the dullest and most uninteresting specimens imaginable. They are "methodical" right enough, but they've carried the process too far and become merely mechanical!

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course, have come to stay—the better ones, at any rate—owing to their remarkable convenience and efficiency, though it is undeniable that they have a tendency to spoil one's handwriting and eliminate "character." A solicitor and a bank-official, however, from experiences based upon their respective positions, ask me to impress upon our readers in the strongest possible terms the danger of using "ball-points" to sign legal documents or cheques. The lawyer's letter is disturbing enough, and the reasons he gives sufficiently convincing, but the banker's remarks are perhaps even more startling, dealing as they do with immediate results.

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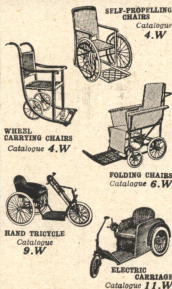
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The Old Topic

Some time ago I made a passing reference to a correspondent who, being presumably quite satisfied with the result of his own efforts, requested me to drop all further mention of shaving. I pointed out that this would not be fair to the "new entry," and since then several letters have come to hand stressing the fact that hosts of young men are still quite willing to receive useful "tips" concerning this perennial nuisance. A Cambridgeshire reader writes: "I have studied your columns ever since I started shaving, but never achieved any great success until, a few months ago, I noticed a reader suggested thorough massage of

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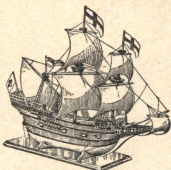
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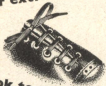


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the beard, either with a flannel or the hand, before starting operations. Somewhat sceptically I tried the experiment, discovering that it made a world of difference. Since then I have revelled in the smooth and comfortable shaves this method produces. I am deeply grateful, and suggest you should repeat the 'tip' for the benefit of others."

"General Knowledge"

The assumption that everybody knows something just because *you* happen to know it reminds me of the old story of the village council which reluctantly erected a "danger" sign at the top of a particularly steep hill where many accidents had occurred. Time went on, there were no more crashes, and the board needed repair. Thereupon an economically-minded member moved that the sign should be done away with; everybody now knew all about the perils of the hill. The week after this brilliant suggestion had been carried out a cyclist was killed; he *didn't* know about that hill! "General knowledge," of course, is one of the hardest things in the world to define; many distinguished University professors are blissfully ignorant of facts which you and I regard as elementary.

The Ways of Tailors

It always seems to me that good tailors are a class apart, following a chosen vocation rather than merely earning a

living; the smart young salesmen who handle ready-mades in the hosiers' shops are in an altogether different category. The *real* tailor can weigh a customer up at a glance, from his chest measurement to his station in life and even his habits! Moreover, as one would expect, he is an excellent judge of cloth, workmanship, cut, and all those little unseen details (quite beyond the ken of you or I!) that go to make up good clothes.



Some tailors, incidentally, are none too happy about present-day conditions in the trade, and the disappearance of the old-style craftsman, but that's another story. I was reminded of all this the other day when I chanced upon a well-known tailor of my acquaintance and stopped to chat for a moment. Even as he shook hands I noted somewhat guiltily the sweeping look that took in my whole appearance, and presently he tapped me on the chest.

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stuff in your inside pocket? "he asked, gently. "Spoils the whole effect!" Before I could defend myself he was apologizing. "I'm sorry" he said. "We're not in the shop now, are we? But I just can't keep quiet when I see good clothes being ill-treated. My father was exactly the same—even used to criticize strangers! That's the worst of being a tailor; it gets into your blood." I wonder if that is true of the younger men, or whether it will die out, like so many other things, with the present generation?

Man and His Pockets

Reverting to my tailor friend's remark, man's fondness for stuffing things into his pockets—and, on occasion, forgetting all about them—is notorious. Secretly envious, he laughs at woman's ability to go pocketless, meanwhile carrying everything she needs for the day in a small handbag. The ladies, in theory, are completely shipwrecked if they happen to lose that bag, but in practice this very rarely seems to happen. The male, on the other hand, is always leaving something behind!

The Captain

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