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by LLEWELLYN HUGHES

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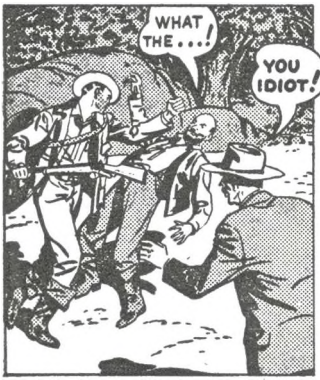

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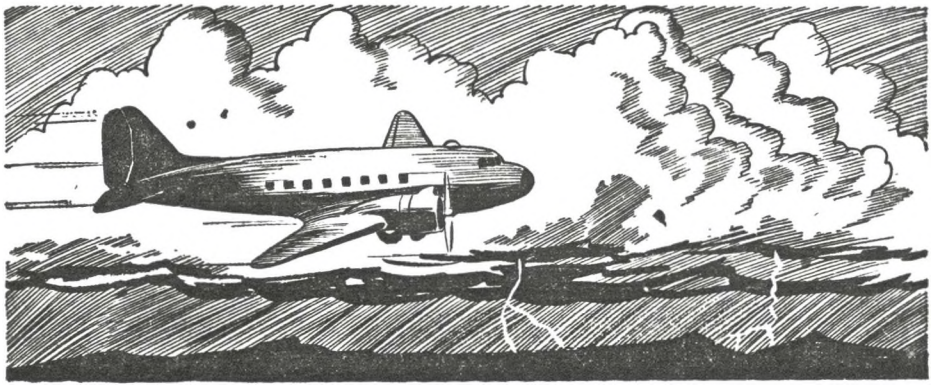

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers Meet

MOUNT EVEREST, highest known mountain in the world, was recently reported in the press as having gained an additional 198 feet as a result of a great earthquake in Assam. This would bring the height of "Chomolungma," as the Tibetans call the Himalayan colossus, up to an unofficial 29,339 feet—or something like 23 times as high as the Empire State Building in New York City! . . . But before we start feeling faint from the altitude, let's come down to earth and let Ed Dieckmann, Jr. (who contributes the fact story on Everest, "The Longest Fifth of a Mile"—page 60) tell us a little about those amazing native porters, the *Sherpas* or Everest "Tigers."

All expeditions have used Everest "Tigers" rather than Tibetans, who are superstitious weaklings beside them. And it is self-evident they could, some of them, reach the summit. Sukpas or no, it just might be one of these men from Nepal who conquers the "Goddess Mother of the World!" That is, if Red China, invading both Tibet and Nepal, backs out!

As an example of their strength and stamina: they carry two metal oxygen cylinders weighing up to thirty pounds each to more than 27,000 feet! No ordinary men, they! They come from Northern India, in the hills. *Sherpas* they're called, but "Tiger" is better. For without them, not one single expedition would be possible! Despite the fact that seven "Tigers" were lost in an avalanche in 1922, there wasn't the slightest trouble getting volunteers in '24! Brothers, sons, even fathers of the dead men joined the ranks. For it is an honor for a *Sherpa* to be chosen for Everest.

Concentrating on that last 1000 feet, 1015 to be exact, I had to skip over the 1933 air expedition which sent a plane over the summit at the same time that Smythe, Shipton, Wyn Harris and Wager were crawling up its northeast buttress. Nor the tragic single-handed attempt of Maurice Wilson, English flier, who, though never having been on a high peak in his life, tackled Everest in 1934. He died below the North Col.

Never will there be better men than Norton, Wyn Harris, Smythe and Wager! In a way they failed. But do you really fail on Everest? Ice, altitude and hell! And even here, you cannot say that any of these were better than those who fell behind after leaving Camp Six. Somervell and Shipton were just as good as Norton and Smythe. Luck plays a strong hand on Everest. For instance, if we're really getting down-to-earth, a man may have diarrhea from a dirty mess-kit. It's as simple as that!

Regarding the fate of Mallory and Irvine, Wyn Harris and Wager found an ice-axe belonging to one of them during their climb in '33. It was lying free on the slabs of the ridge some distance below the First Step. From this discovery has sprung the belief that they *might have* made it to the summit, but were caught by darkness on the descent. Stumbling with fatigue, lost and half frozen, they met the thing which every climber, no matter how good, will meet if he climbs enough: an ordinary mountaineering accident! Apparently they were roped together; one of them slipped, the other put down his axe in order to grasp

(Continued on page 8)

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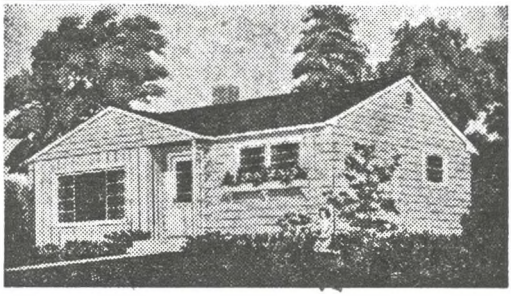

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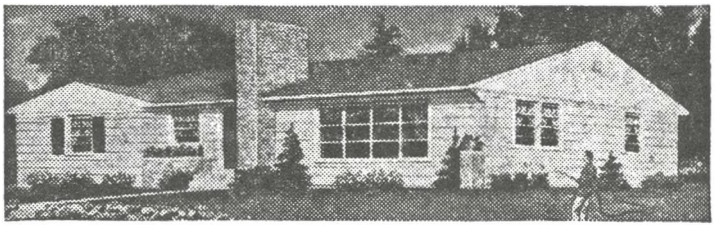

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(Continued from page 6)

the rope with both hands, then both plunged like an avalanche to the waiting glacier.

For nine storm-buffeted years that ice-axe had lain there, stuck to the mountain by its weight and friction alone. But no matter what clues are found or theories expounded, the answer is, and always will be, shrouded in mystery!

(Incidentally, the four lines of verse quoted at the beginning of Ed Dieckmann's article are from a poem called "Men and the Mountain," which appeared in the March 1950 *Adventure*.)

GEORGE APPELL'S account of the tragic Chivington massacre struck us as pretty strong stuff. "Hell on Horseback" (page 73) is the true and shocking story of an incident in American history which has remained relatively unknown—probably, as the author suggests, because of the discredit it reflects upon the white man's treatment of the Indians.

Here are a few documentary notes from Appell—

The facts brought out in "Hell On Horseback" have been rather obscure; nothing like the color of Custer's fight enters the matter, and also it reflects with great stench upon the all-noble white man, and historians can't have that sort of thing going on.

During many years of research upon the history of western America, I repeatedly stumbled across references to J. M. Chivington and his "raid." He is mentioned in Congressional minutes, Army reports, and stenographed conversations. So I sat me down and started to dig and, eventually, came up with the cross-references in a pattern; I also got the details of the attack. In my story, all quotes are as spoken. And reaction to the event and its cost to the United States are, of course, real. It required no great sleuthing on my part to see what Chivington had really done—upset the cart for thirty years—as eighty years ago that was realized and regretted. I came across Kit Carson's remarks following the massacre, but they wouldn't stand reprinting—even in a lusty magazine like *Adventure*. Suffice to say that Carson was "agin" it. It is notable that the massacre remains obscure in our version of the Indian Wars. We hear only of Custer and Crook, Gibbon and Terry, Mackenzie and Harney and Sherman. This one, though—Chivington—has many monuments: every gravestone that was planted in the west for the thirty years following his drunken night ride to Sand Creek.

AN AMUSING sidelight on Edward Arthur Dolph's short story in verse ("The Bamboo Pole"—page 64). The creator of the redoubtable Sergeant Casey explains the setting of his poem—and for good measure, tosses off a couple of extra stanzas which reveal the identity of the youthful lieutenant in the case—

Occupation Day, in memory of the 1899 landing of the Americans in the Philippines, was celebrated for many years. Men who had left the service and gone into business in Manila usually footed the bill for entertaining their comrades, soldiers and citizens alike. There was plenty of liquor and as a result the afternoon parades of the Veterans were sometimes wonderful things to behold.

As for the facts in the case—

Now old Casey's gone to Heaven,
May the good Lord rest his soul!
But he didn't get there climbing
Up his famous bamboo pole.

You may well believe this story,
For it's true as true can be,
And the "looey" in the poem
Is no other man than me!

DALE CLARK (author of "Hard Won"—page 77) writes—

This isn't really my *first* appearance at the Camp-Fire—I threw a little short-short stick on the fire a few years ago. It was a Western. "Hard Won" is a middle-Western or Middle Border job. The Middle Border is where I was born and raised.

The blizzard really happened. There was another bad one in the 1880's—I knew survivors of it. Real, honest-to-Arctic blizzards are as rare along the West Fork of the Des Moines river as major earthquakes in California, or hurricanes in New England. Hundred mile an hour winds happen in that country, snowfalls occur that bury the fencelines, and the temperature has been known to drop to thirty and forty below. When all three happen simultaneously, the result is a genuine blizzard. The average winter snowstorm is not a blizzard, any more than a .22 rifle is a superbazooka.

My father twisted hay to feed the stove when he was a kid. Then a fellow invented a straw-burner stove. He did not get rich from his invention, although folks drove for miles over the prairie to see the thing work. I knew people who marveled at the straw-burner—have family connections who lived in sod dug-outs on the prairie—lived nextdoor to a Norwegian seaman who had turned homesteader.

In fact, the old settlers supplied all of this story except the labor of writing it.

(Continued on page 104)

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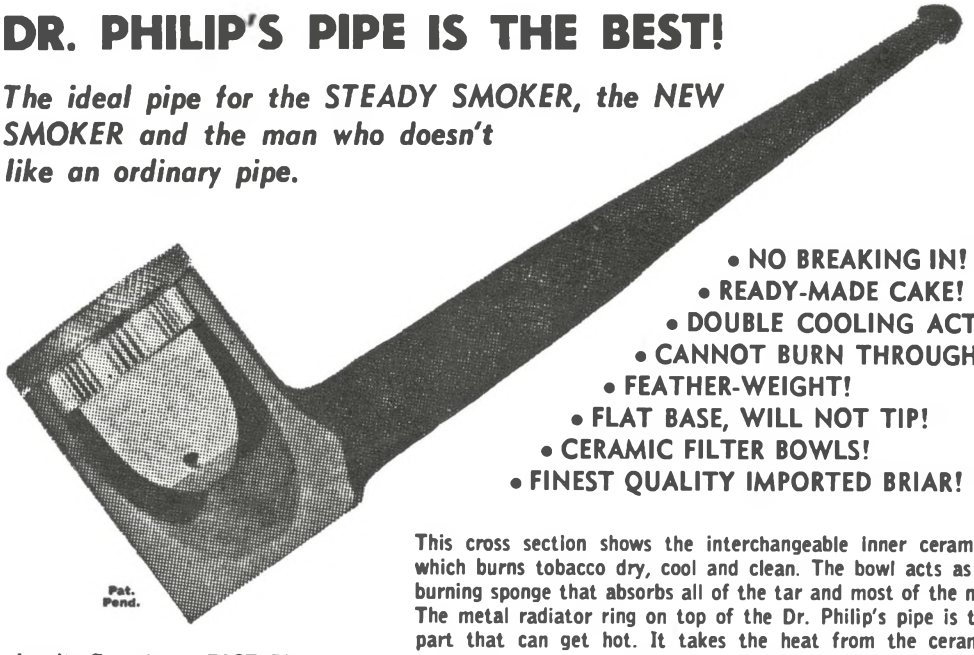

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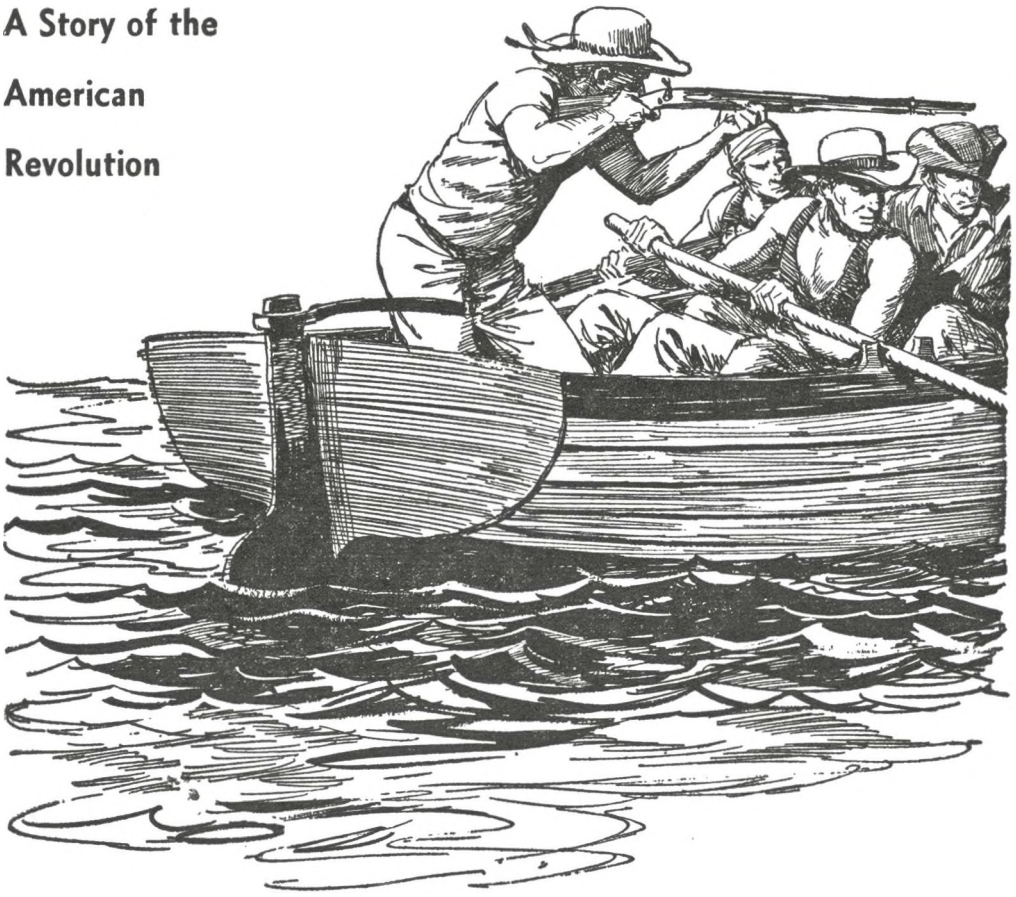
PRISON SHIP

By
LLEWELLYN HUGHES

A Story of the American Revolution



BEFORE the Military Tribunal, convened in the Fortress of Halifax on that April afternoon in 1775, the trial was in its third and final day.

REX vs. HARWOOD
For Treason Against the Crown

Inasmuch that Mark Harwood, son of John Trevalyn Harwood, Esquire, not only did declare his opposition to the decrees of His Majesty's Parliament and state his sympathy with the Rebels in resisting those decrees, but that he has likewise overtly stated his determination to join their Rebellious Cause and fight with them in defiance of the Crown. . .

The prisoner Harwood had been taken at sea by His Majesty's Frigate *Orion* under extraordinary circumstances, when his father's sloop was observed to be in difficulties.

Four days previously, the home of John Trevalyn Harwood, Esquire, then Stamp distributor for Marblehead and its vicinity, had been set on fire by the rebels and

Insanely, he attempted to escape, plunging off the longboat a hundred yards from shore.

burned to the ground. It was true that in this violent action the prisoner most certainly had no hand. Yet he would have stayed behind in that rebellious hotbed of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, not to take up arms against those who had wantonly destroyed his father's property, but to join them in revolt against His Majesty's parliament.

However, to protect his mother and sister, their lives already having been in jeopardy during the mob's attack upon their residence, he had helped them to escape. To this end he had managed to get them aboard his father's sloop, intending to sail them to the British-held town of Boston, from where he would make his escape back to the rebels. For he well knew that his father could not man the sloop alone, and that he, the son, was necessary to the sailing of the vessel.

Even so, all four of the persons aboard were in danger of their lives when a storm blew them off their course out to sea, where they were espied and rescued by a British frigate and taken to Halifax. One of the extraordinary features of the case was that, for all his heroic efforts on behalf of his mother and sister, it had been his own father who had formally charged Mark Harwood with rebellious sentiments and had brought about his arrest.

This self-confessed enemy of the King and his ministers was a tall and powerfully built young man, a student at Harvard College until it had been taken over as barracks by the troops of General Gage. Auburn-haired, he was handsome of face,

his features lean and aristocratic, his eyes a deep and dauntless blue.

In his own defense he spoke in a clear and ringing voice that could be heard by everyone in the court.

"In this struggle of the Colonists, if my ways of thinking differ from his own" (he was speaking of his father who was present at the trial) "they derive from his own teaching. He it was who taught me from my boyhood to defend the oppressed and down-trodden, and to stand up for the right against the wrong. Thanks to my father I learned that principle well. I have sought to abide by it. You are now willfully charging me that by so doing I am committing treason. If that be so, I repeat the words of a great defender of liberty, Patrick Henry. I am opposed to taxation without representation in debate of it. Instead, it is being forced on a people at the point of the bayonet and I prefer death to such slavery."

In summing up for the Crown the prosecutor, Major Tessler, slowly rose to his feet. It was true, he admitted, that no treasonable act had been committed *in esse*. The charge would not be pressed. Due to the highly-respected name in which the prisoner's family was held in England, the court was prepared to be unduly lenient. Nay, it would go further.

"If you give your sworn word to desist from all further opposition to the Crown, I am authorized to release you. A merchantman is due to sail for England. Reunited with your family, accommodation will be made for you aboard her."

The prisoner appeared to be considering it. He then said, "By accepting the terms of that offer, freedom itself would lose its meaning for me."

"Hear this well," Major Tessler warned. "We are now at war with the rebels in America since the clash of arms at Concord and Lexington. That doubles the danger in which your treasonable statements place you. Do you here and now say that you side with these rebels against your King and parliament?"

"I do."

"And you would fight for their cause?"

"If I could—yes."

In the face of that bold statement there could be only one verdict. Mark Harwood was found guilty of being an enemy of the Crown and as such sentenced to "confinement" as a prisoner of war.

THAT sentence conveyed nothing of the horrors and tortures to which it applied. For in Mark's case—as of other rebel war prisoners—it meant a particular ship anchored in the harbor of Halifax, a rotting hulk converted from an Indiaman into a floating dungeon.

All sorts of rumors about the ship were whispered in Halifax and, indeed, all along the coastline of Massachusetts. It was said that when the wind blew inshore the screams of men below her decks could be heard. On the wind also came the foul stink of her. Few men, it was said, could last a month entombed in that prison ship, that either a prisoner died there or, even worse, went mad.

Mark was ferried out to the ship along with four other prisoners, two British deserters, and two Negroes. On board they were ordered to strip, given convict clothes without regard to size, their feet left bare of stocking or shoe. They were then taken to the blacksmith's shop on board where fetters were hammered on their ankles, a length of chain connected between them allowing the prisoner to walk only with a short step. This was a preliminary to further restrictions. With the others, Mark was taken to the hold of the ship, which contained sacks filled with straw as beds on the scummy boards and additional shackles fastened to the bulkheads.

It was nightfall when they hobbled down there (not that the time of day made much difference in that hole) and McQueen, the head guard, paid special attention to Mark, possibly having been instructed to do so.

"My Lord Rebel," he bowed mockingly to him, "you're going to be real cosy down here. Clean sheets every night and a glass of Madeira served on a silver salver before we tuck you into bed."

Mark looked at him without speaking, measuring the huge ungainly brute. When McQueen had left, the man on the straw beside him offered a word of advice.

"Don't ever argue with that bastard. Let him jeer at you all he wants without answering him back a word. You'll live that much longer."

The stench in the hold was overpowering.

All night the clanking of chains kept on incessantly as men shuffled in the dark to the foul receptacles placed in the corners for their convenience. Voices came from every direction, muttering, mewling, cursing, praying. Snores mingled with all. Rats scurried across Mark's sweat-saturated body, on which he could already feel lice crawling. He thought of the sparkling river where he and his Harvard chum, Roger Ames, used to go bathing, of Samuel Corwithin's sweet-scented garden, and of his daughter Anne, lovely Anne whom he had loved from the moment he had first known her, when she was little more than a child. Here, in such a place, even to think of her was worse than any other punishment he might have to undergo.

Day after day, he was unable to keep down the vile scummy gruel ladled out to them. Existing on water and the one piece of moldy bread, he became so weak that the picking of oakum—the prisoners' daily work—was a task beyond the strength of his fingers. Gradually his stomach became inured to the food, and sometime during the autumn the oakum-picking was suspended, the convicts being rowed ashore to work in a quarry, breaking stones for additional fortifications around Halifax.

Brutal guards forced them to wield crowbar and sledgehammer without let-up except for a half-hour midday rest. Hard as the work was, Mark welcomed the fresh air and the exercise of his muscles; and with the return of his strength he became obsessed by one recurring and dominating thought.

And yet what possible way had he of attempting escape, shackled as he was? Prizing open a chain link with a crowbar? Smuggling one of the rock-splitting chisels aboard? Every night before the hold lantern was removed, McQueen and other guards searched each man in turn, the least infraction of rules resulting in drastic punishment. Men accused of shirking work at the quarry were roped belly-down on a bench while McQueen lashed their backs with a leather thong until they were too weak to stand.

Escape was impossible. The only escape was at night when he lay on his straw pallet in the noisome hold. Dreams. Memories. No, they were scenes starkly clear before his eyes in the dark. They were plays in which he himself appeared, his father, mother and sister, Roger Ames and other friends, Samuel Corwithin and his daughter Anne.

ONE such re-staged scene took place in the drawing room of his home when he had just returned from Boston, his schooling at an end. Harvard College had been taken over as barracks by British regulars, in the process of which he had knocked down a bullying sergeant.

There he was in blue coat and gilt buttons, sprigged waistcoat, silver-buckle shoes, raising his mother's hand to his lips. At her needlework. Greeting him with as much affection as she could summon into the hauteur of her lovely face. His sweet prosaic sheltered mother! And there—his father. A tall man with a wine-dark complexion, standing with his back to the fireplace, the counterpart, save in dress, of his own father, William Trevalyn Harwood, whose imposing oil towered behind him over the mantelpiece.

"Sir." It was a rebuke rather than a greeting. "What news of Boston?"

"There's going to be trouble, sir. General Gage has clamped the lid down, but there's violence seething under it."

"In which, I hear, you have taken part. I'm told you broke the jaw of a British sergeant."

"Drunken regulars took possession of our college rooms and one or two of us objected to their methods."

"No doubt they were carrying out orders. You set a rebellious example by opposing them."

The time had come when he felt he should make himself clear to his father. "Armed forces have seized the town of Boston in violation of the freedom and liberty of its citizens. You yourself, sir, taught me to oppose tyranny in whatever shape it—"

"I also taught you allegiance to the Crown. Over this roof flies the symbol of what we Harwoods, and others like us, hold most dear. The English flag. It represents the Charter, the law, under which we live in the Colony."

"Sir, when a law becomes intolerable to a people—"

"Enough! If you are not prepared to defend that flag and what it stands for with

the last drop of your blood, I disown you as my son . . ."

The magisterial voice was weakening, fading away to nothingness, until it was blotted out entirely amidst the curious sounds as of snoring and, bringing him to a sharp sense of reality, the raucous shout of McQueen as he strode through the hold plying his whip. "Up you get, you scum! Four o'clock in the morning!"

The day came when he couldn't stand another hour of it. Desperately, insanely, he attempted to escape during a flurry of snow, plunging off the longboat a hundred yards from shore as they were being rowed back to the prison ship.

The fetters were still attached to his ankles, though the connecting chain was broken, giving him at least that much freedom to swim; for during the day he had managed to pound with his sledgehammer at one of the links, weakening it so that with a strong wrench he could break it.

Forced to the surface for air, he heard shouting and musket fire, the aim of the guards being unsteady due to the choppy waters. Recklessness had ever been part of him, but this, impeded by ankle fetters, numbed by the cold water, was utterly without reason. Reason? What man could retain his clarity of brain while confined in chains in a foul and rat-infested hold? Escape! Escape! Or else lie there and die without even the attempt to escape no matter what the odds against it. And so here he was, no longer swimming, but feebly trying not to be dragged down by the weight of his fetters. No plan of any kind should he happen to reach shore. Hide, if he could, until he found some way to free himself of his irons...

He was not fully conscious again until he was back in the hold of the ship, hanging from a beam, his wrists strapped together. There, before all the prisoners, McQueen laid twenty lashes of the cat-o'-nine-tails across his back in a solidified silence but for the hiss of the thongs.

The lantern was taken away, leaving him suspended there in the darkness until someone, at the risk of similar punishment (he learned later it was his friend Jo Downs, the big Negro)took him down, caught him in his arms and laid him bleeding and half dead on his straw pallet.

Rocksalt for his festering welts, a minimum of bread and water for sustenance. What kept him alive? He couldn't tell. Weeks passed before the doctor pronounced him fit for work again, and he was glad to occupy himself with the picking of oakum, the stone-breaking having ceased because deep snow covered the quarry. Slowly the winter merged into spring, then summer. Gradually his strength returned.

The days, the weeks, the months. Prisoners died, others taking over the ankle fetters they had worn, the pallets on which they had lain. This coming of new prisoners provided their only excitement, for each newcomer was a newspaper, his lips the printing press for every whispered word passed from convict to convict throughout the ship.

One claimed he had been taken while serving on a privateer out of Boston. How could that be when the town was held by General Gage and his troops?

"The redcoats have evacuated Boston long ago. General Washington forced them out of there."

General Washington?

Another brought belated word of a Resolution that had been adopted by the leading patriots in Philadelphia.

"Called a Declaration of Independence—"

The days, the weeks, the months. And almost every night Mark escaped from the prison hold by the only way left open to him.

That evening when he had sat for hours in her rose arbor, motionless in contemplation of her, the garden drenched in moonlit beauty, perfumed by gillyflower and honeysuckle and then— a figure in white seeming to float toward him down the path from her house!

"I knew you were here."

"How did you know?"

"I can't say. I was unable to sleep. You were calling to me. I dressed and came to you."

The loveliness of her. Piercing him through like the thrust of a rapier! The blood surging through his veins up into his temples! Unable to govern himself he tried to take her in his arms. She was gone as if by magic, as if he had only dreamed she had come to him. Mark lived it again now in the blackness and stench of a prison hold, escaping back to its moonlit enchantment, its clove-scent of gillyflower—until the

crack of a whip, a man's sudden cry of pain, shattered the scene.

"Get up, you scum! Four o'clock. Get your gruel and into the boats for the quarry . . ."

IT WAS a stifling night in August and for Mark the dark hold had this time become a panorama of smoke and lawlessness, a jetty, a river, colored blood-red by flames roaring through a colonial mansion. Once again he could see himself racing back from the sloop toward the Corwithin house.

As the son of a hated Royalist and she (daughter of the beloved Marblehead member of the Continental Congress) the very firebrand of a patriot, there had been a gulf between them that seemingly could not be bridged. But his political views had changed, her raillery had become less sharp-tongued, and on that night—the last time he had seen her—

Rigid with fear she was standing by the gate between their two flower gardens. Panting for breath, words left his throat raggedly. "I—I can't go without telling you, Anne."

"Lucile—and your mother—" there were tears in her eyes—"bring them here for safety."

"No. That would harm you and your father." He was still struggling for breath. "Boston. They'll be safe there. I must go with them. Nobody else to help man the sloop."

Behind him the crackling of the flames mingled with the yells and imprecations of a vengeful mob bent on destruction.

"Father," she sobbed, "tried his best to stop them. They wouldn't—"

"Anne, listen to me—I've only got a moment. I love you."

And then the miracle of it! Look again, Mark Harwood! Convict aboard a prison ship in the harbor of Halifax! Yes, there you are in your smoke-begrimed finery and silver-buckled shoes, lace at your wrists and throat, standing by a garden gate in a red-dish glare, Anne in your arms, your lips pressed on hers.

"Wait for me. I'll make my way back."

"Oh, my love."

"Swear to wait for me—no matter how long it may take me to return."

"I swear it."

The scene vanished and he couldn't recapture it. In the darkness of the hold something seemed to be tugging at the sleeve of his stripes. God! How many years had passed away? Only two? It was 1777 according to everyone's testimony, and yet to Mark at least ten years had—

"You awake?" The tugging at his sleeve continued, the whisper coming from Jo Downs beside him.

"Yes, I'm awake."

"Lean closer, so's nobody can hear us. Listen! Right now, this minute, I could break out of my fetters without even tryin'. I'm goin' over the side come midnight, slide down the anchor chain an' be on my way."

Mark went rigid in every limb.

"McQueen took a good look at my ankle chains jest a while ago, didn't he? Same like he done with everybody. Couldn't see nothin' wrong with mine."

Was the big Negro raving? Was he dreaming, as he, Mark, had just been dreaming?

"Listen! I'm tellin' you all this 'cause you ain't ashamed to be friends with a black man. I got a file, an' now I'm passin' it over to you. Hide it right inside yo' straw mattress."

"A file?"

"My rivets is filed almost through, cracks filled up with dust an' spit. Never min' where I got the file, 'cause what I'm telling you is the truth."

The truth? Yes, it was the truth! Mark knew it by every instinct in his body. Escape! The actual possibility of escape! He was so tense, he could feel beads of cold sweat breaking out on his forehead.

"That new prisoner Dobson give me the file—the one who tell us about the American victory at Princeton—he slip it to me jest befo' he die here. Reckon it took me two weeks—workin' steady every night when someone snore extra loud. Here, where yo' hand?"

The file was passed over to him. He was grasping it! It was small and pliable—the most miraculous instrument in the world—in the palm of his hand. He was stuttering, hardly able to keep his voice to a hoarse whisper. "But—but when you have gone down the anchor chain. . . ."

"Swim fo' a place called Mill Cove. Land there one time when I 'scape from a press

gang. That quite a piece of water cross the harbor from here—all o' three mile. Then I aim to lick out through the woods fo' Digby Neck due south, lay low till I see a chance of grabbin' me a small boat, row across the Bay in it fo' the mainland."

Desperation seized hold of Mark. "Must you go tonight, Jo? They'll find you missing and search every nook and cranny of the place. The file will be of no use at all to me—if you go now. Can't you wait and let us go together? Two of us should stand a better chance than one."

"Keep yo' voice down. Maybe I'm signin' my own death warrant—but lean closer while I tell you how to use that ol' file..."

IT WAS toward the end of August, Mark's patient and blood-sweating filing done, the attempted escape of the two men awaiting only the propitious moment. Three nights in succession it had been delayed, for the daytime skies were cloudless, indicating moonlight or the radiance of stars. On the fourth day it began raining, and on their way back from the quarry thick gray clouds covered the sky.

To put distance between them and a searching party from Halifax it had been agreed that they should make their break as soon as the ship was hushed down for the night. First they must get rid of the guard known to be stationed on deck outside the companionway. Quietly throttle him if they could. Otherwise, brain him with their removed leg-irons, the only weapons they would have.

After McQueen had concluded his final inspection and taken the lantern away it was generally held to be around nine o'clock. An hour or so, perhaps two, must elapse before the guards could be reckoned on as asleep. To keep track of the time Mark began counting the seconds by pressing his fingers on the floor beside his pallet. He started with his left hand and when that was tired switched to his right. Twelve times five fingers made sixty. One minute. Thirty minutes made half an hour, sixty would mean a full hour. He became hopelessly confused in his counting. He stopped it, his brain soggy. He was sweating profusely, his sinews tightening into knots. That wouldn't do. He must call upon and depend on the instant obedience of his muscles, must remain calm and in full command of all his faculties.

He felt a hand groping for his head, drawing it down to whisper a tense message in his ear.

"I cain't wait no longer. Get rid of yo' fetters. I'm free right now. I got to go, that's all. I jest got to go after all this waitin'."

Mark first prepared to free his right foot. To prize open the shackle he exerted a steady pull on it using both hands. The rivet parted with a slight click. God! Free of the cursed thing! Rid of it after more than two years!

The left shackle. A protracted prizing on the rivet with both hands. It resisted his efforts. He put all his strength into it until his eyes bulged. The Negro tried it. As best they could they tried it together.

"Where yo' file?"

"In the straw."

"Better file some more."

In his nervousness and the paralysis of his fingers, Mark couldn't find the tiny hole in the pallet where he had hidden the file. Now in frantic desperation his finger-nails ripped the sacking. He kept riffling the chaff and straw between his sweaty palms and at last—

The peculiarly revealing rasp of a file! A noise that couldn't possibly be mistaken by anyone who heard it! In odd moments of absolute silence in the hold it was as loud as a cross-saw, and to cover up the telltale sound Jo Downs simulated a deep-throated snoring augmenting the snores of other prisoners. But Mark felt that the filing must surely have penetrated to the far corners of the hold. Two minutes—three—five! How much longer? Had the cutting edge of the file worn smooth so that it wasn't accomplishing the slightest result?

The rivet head was loose. Prizing the fetter apart, he got his foot out of it. "Ready," he whispered, his whole body trembling violently.

"One at a time," Jo whispered. "Join me at the foot of the ladder."

So soundlessly did the Negro move that Mark had to feel the empty pallet until he was sure he had gone. Rigidly listening, he got to his bare feet, began making his way along the center of the hold past snoring and fretfully tossing men, his hand

groping before him until it touched the other man's tense back.

There were two sets of ladderways to the deck. They climbed them slowly and softly, Jo Downs in the lead, both of them tightly gripping their shackles so that the chain wouldn't rattle. A lantern hung over the top of the companionway and in its nimbus of reddish light they found themselves confronted at the outset by a difficulty they hadn't foreseen.

NOT one guard was stationed there, but two of them, leaning half-asleep over their muskets. In that crucial moment both Mark and the Negro stood motionless on the next to last step. Then, gathering himself for the leap, Jo Downs sprang at the nearest guard and brought the iron shackles down flush on his head. The man spilled to the rain-shiny deck, his musket slithering across it. As Mark hurled himself at the other man he tripped over the companionway cowling and the guard swung the butt of his musket at him, catching him with a terrible blow in the stomach and knocking the pent-up wind out of him. The guard then ran forward bellowing the alarm.

"Prisoners loose! Prisoners loose!"

Trying to rise, Mark pitched face-forward on the deck again, from which prone position Jo picked him up, slung him across a shoulder and hurried with him to the stern where he propped him against the rail.

"You hurt bad?"

"No. But—but I can't get my wind."

"You ain't goin' to give in now, is you?" Jo was frantic with anxiety. "Cain't you stand on yo' feet?"

Mark tried agonizingly to straighten up. "Heave me over the side, Jo. Maybe the water will—maybe I can manage to swim—" He was gulping air into his lungs. "Maybe I'll be all right again in a minute—"

"I cain't wait," Jo pleaded. "I got to go now—fast."

"That's right," Mark agreed. "Get away while you can."

With a last backward glance, Jo Downs went over the stern, swarming down the anchor chain.

The whole ship had come alive, a pandemonium of shouting from the prisoners down below, orders being roared up forward, extra lanterns lighted, McQueen cursing, bellowing his men into action.

"Guard that companionway in case more of 'em are loose. And shoot to kill."

As McQueen, pistol in hand, ran aft over the deck, Mark grabbed a belaying pin from the rail and flung it with all his might. It caught McQueen full in the face, knocking him senseless. In the light of the lanterns, shots being fired at him, Mark climbed over the stern and jumped.

As he had hoped and prayed, the sudden shock of the water revived him somewhat and he struck out with gathering strength, shots being aimed at him as long as his bobbing head could be seen. At a safe distance he turned on his back to float, conserving his energy before he swam again. Three miles to a place known as Mill Cove. Where was that? In what direction did it lie? The harbor waters were calm, hardly a ripple disturbing them, the sky overcast, a slight rain falling.

The prison ship's lanterns were little more than blobs of yellow light dancing fore and aft. From the maintop another lantern was evidently signaling the shore, and before long, booming across the placid waters from the Fort, a cannon fired three times in succession.

With a steady stroke he swam on, refusing to permit his random direction to dismay him, buoyed up by a growing belief that the hellish years of his imprisonment had come to an end; and in the elixir of the freedom of his body he suddenly cast precaution aside and sent out several calls ahead of him.

"Jo! Jo Downs!"

He was answered almost at once, faintly and weakly, from somewhere in the harbor beyond him and to his left.

"Jo?"

"Over here . . . cain't swim no mo' . . ."

By repeating the call, the Negro's voice sounding more and more exhausted, Mark finally swam alongside him.

"What is it, Jo? Cramp?"

"Dunno." He was gasping. "Cain't move my legs—cain't even float no mo'."

"Here, Jo, put your arm about my shoulder."

"Ain't no use. Reckon I catched me a stray bullet."

"A bullet!"

"Didn't feel like nothin' at first—like maybe a floatin' plank hit me in the back.

But I'm coughin' blood. The Lord ain't with me no longer. After all these years in chains—pickin' oakum—breakin' stone—"

"Don't lose heart, Jo, don't give up. Hold on to my shoulder. I'll get you ashore."

But the big fellow suddenly had nothing at all left. Without a further word, with only a gurgling sound in his throat, he was gone under the water, sinking like a stone.

Mark could only swim on, his heart heavy in the bitter realization that except for Jo Downs and his file, his two weeks of patient waiting until he, Mark, was ready to go with him . . .

Alternately swimming and resting on his back, trying to gauge his direction by the tiny cluster of lights marking the Fortress of Halifax, hour after hour seeming to pass, he now kept praying for the first streak of dawn which would give him a compass bearing. But the dawn was nowhere near at hand, and quite suddenly, treading water, there was hard sand under his feet. In the darkness and rain, he slowly waded ashore, crawled through a growth of weeds up a rise of ground and flung himself full-length in the bush, unable to take another step. There he lay like a dead man until sobs began to rack his body . . .

IT WAS two weeks later, allowing for a day's faulty reckoning, perhaps two. The sun had poured down on his bare head and from a mile offshore the forest stretched without ending to right and left as far as his bloodshot eyes could see. Green wooded promontories, necks of land, islands along the rockbound coast, took on fantastic shapes. There a pitchfork had thrust into the cornflower blue of an inlet; there a Minuteman's hat was crowning a highland. A Liberty Tree flag shaped itself in the gathering clouds of the sunset. Such was his fancy.

And now at last he stood on the American mainland and a great hymn of thanksgiving was going up from his body and soul. Dangers still lay ahead in the vast, unknown and desolate terrain he must yet travel.

He gave no heed to them. During the days and nights immediately behind him he had lived on berries and shell-fish, quenching his thirst from streams. Nature would no less succor him here.

From the body of an Iroquois, strayed far from his tribe and dead from no revealed cause, he had taken moccasins, fringed leggings, such clothing as he could use, and a hunting knife. Having secretly watched a fishing hamlet near the southern point of Nova Scotia, he had, under the light of the stars, pushed a small boat out with the tide, hoisted sail and set a course across the Bay due west. Some day he hoped to recompense the owner of the "borrowed" property.

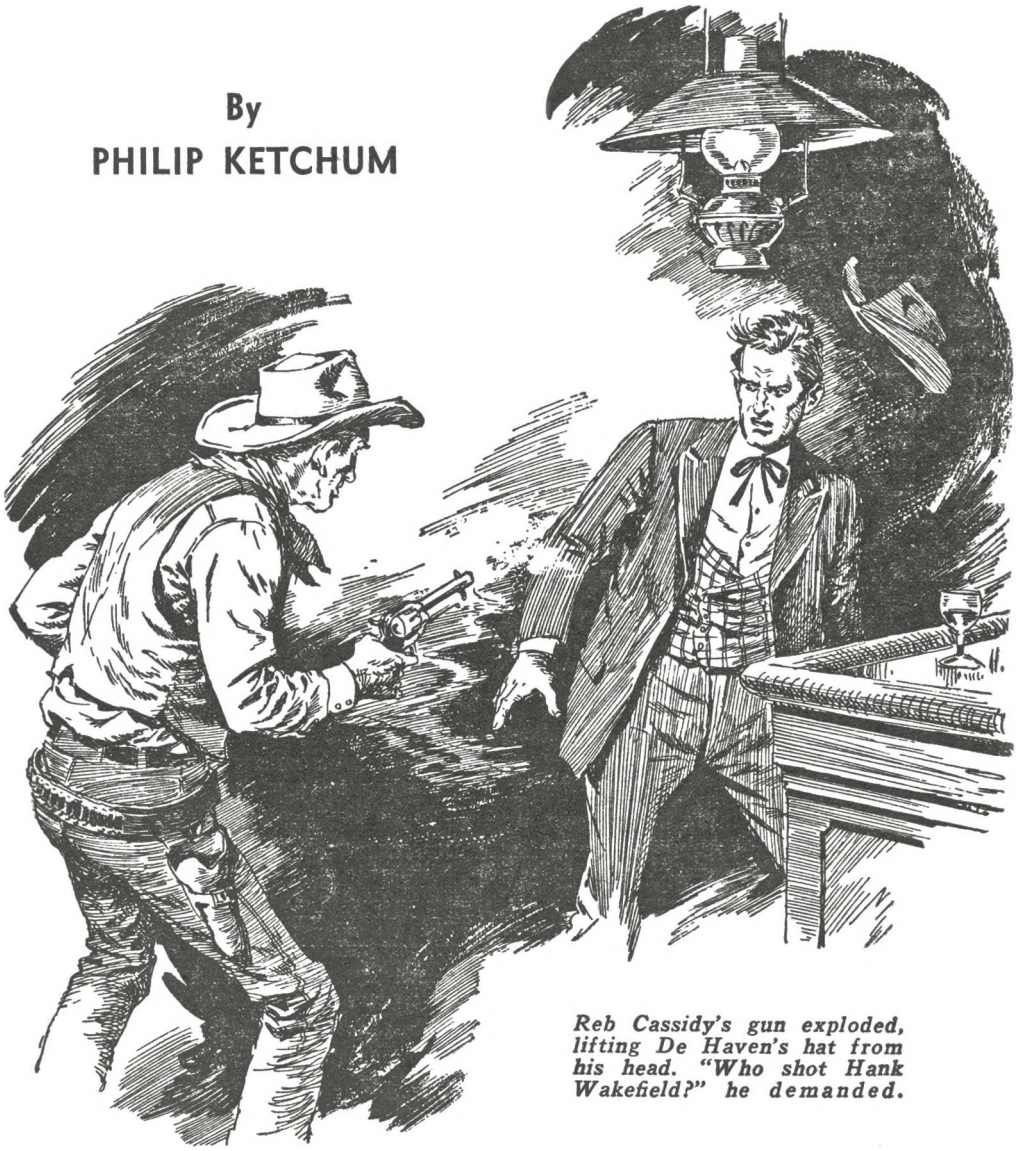
For now it lay half-submerged and useless, its bow stove in when a wave had fetched him against unseen rocks; a bitter last-minute loss, since he had meant to sail down the coast in it, hauling it ashore each twilight in order to find food and water.

The misfortune didn't deter him. He would set out on foot, following the coastline, crossing rivers when he came to them, his first destination Castine up the Penobscot, where he had heard there was a garrison of patriots.

From the south a gentle wind blew a faint trumpet call through the trees, and to Mark Harwood it was the call of a new nation which men had named the United States of America. He would play a part in the growth of that nation. He would fight for it. He would build a new home on the soil on which his father's house had so grievously fallen. Shining before his eyes was a vision of the future, and in the heavens, gorgeously colored by the sunset, he thought he could see Anne smiling at him and—waiting.

He began walking toward her.

By
PHILIP KETCHUM



Reb Cassidy's gun exploded, lifting De Haven's hat from his head. "Who shot Hank Wakefield?" he demanded.

THE SIDEWINDER

TRUMBO JOHNSTON dozed in the chair on the board walk in front of his office in Dry Gulch. Dozed, and now and then opened his eyes to scowl at the Golden Nugget saloon, across the street, or to squint at some rider coming into town, or leaving. The chair was a big chair. It had to be in order to accommodate Trumbo's body. Fifteen years ago, when he had first taken the job as sheriff in Dry Gulch, Trumbo had scaled a mere two hundred pounds. Each year since then, according to legend, he had added another ten.

Anyone foolish enough to have stopped and asked Trumbo what he was doing, would have received his stock answer. That he was thinking. And today, at least, that

was true. Trumbo Johnston was confronted by a problem which he hadn't been able to solve. A problem with alarming potentials. A month ago, three strangers had drifted into town and were still here, and apparently meant to stay. They had bought the Golden Nugget saloon from Sam Jessop, and were running it, but not in the easy, friendly way Sam had run it. They had built up the poker games and there had been several fights over the way the cards ran. A few days before, a rancher from the bench country had been shot in such a brawl. His injury wasn't serious, but it might have been. And the next man to question the cards might get himself killed.

Trumbo had had several talks with Frank De Haven, who seemed to be the leader of the three men. The talks hadn't been very successful. In fact, at the conclusion of the last one, Frank De Haven had said he would run his saloon as he wished, and without help or advice from a pot-bellied sheriff. Such a remark, Trumbo could overlook, but the attitude which had prompted it was hard to ignore. It made Trumbo sure there would be more trouble, and his job as sheriff was to prevent such a possibility.

How to do so was the problem, and there seemed to be no easy answer. He couldn't move across the street and police the saloon. He couldn't keep men from going there. He couldn't place De Haven and his two associates under arrest, for they had broken no law. For the same reason, he couldn't run them out of town. In fact, it seemed to Trumbo as he sat there in his chair, that he might find no answer until someone got killed. And an answer, then, would be too late, maybe for a friend of his.

THIS was a nice town, Trumbo thought, and he wanted to keep it nice. He stirred in his chair, opened his eyes, and glanced up and down the street. At Mennaugh's corner he saw a man and a burro. The burro was small and shaggy and carried a balanced pack. The man leading it up the street was old, stooped, and as shaggy in appearance as the burro. A hat with a sagging brim shaded his leathery face from the sun.

A grin came out on Trumbo's face. Here was Reb Cassidy, down from the hills for his quarterly fling at civilization, and new supplies for another prospecting trip. Reb Cassidy, five years before, had retired to the kind of life he had always wanted, an eternal search for the gold hidden in the hills. In the old days, Reb had been quite a heller. In fact, he still was. By sundown, if he ran true to form, he would be well liquored up, and in the process of tearing apart some saloon.

The grin on Trumbo's face disappeared. He glanced toward the Golden Nugget. The new men running the Golden Nugget wouldn't understand Reb Cassidy. If Sam Jessop had still been there and Reb had started acting up, Sam would have called Trumbo over and he would have put Reb away for the night. But not the new men. De Haven and his associates had their own way of dealing with drunks.

Trumbo shifted uneasily in his chair, then suddenly he was grinning again and a sound that might have been a chuckle rumbled deep in his throat. He closed his eyes and waited.

"Look, Napoleon," said a voice from the street. "Did you ever seen anything more disgusting. Just a lump of fat sitting in the sun."

Trumbo opened one eye. He said, "Howdy, Crowbait." He opened the other eye. He squinted, shook his head. "You know, Reb, it's getting harder and harder to tell you and Napoleon apart. If it wasn't for the ears—"

Reb dropped the reins of his burro and shuffled forward, kicking up clouds of gray dust. He stopped at the edge of the board walk, pushed back his hat, peered intently at Trumbo and nodded. "It's alive, Napoleon," he called over his shoulder. "Alive, but still just a lump of fat."

Trumbo straightened. He held out his hand. "Give me your gun, Reb."

"Give you what!" Reb screamed.

"Your gun," said Trumbo. "You look too weak to me to carry it. Too shaky. I don't believe you could hit that sign over there."

"What sign?"

"That Golden Nugget sign."

Reb Cassidy whirled around. His hand slapped down to his holstered gun, came up. There was the roar of a shot. Another.

Another. A fourth. Dust and wood splintered from the painted sign on the false front of the saloon across the street. The saloon doors burst open and men came boiling out. And up and down the street, others appeared to stare anxiously toward the sheriff's office.

Trumbo didn't seem to notice any of these men. He hadn't stirred from his chair. He was staring judiciously at the sign. He nodded his head. "First four letters, plumb center," he remarked "Not too bad."

"And one shot left for a lump of lard," said Reb Cassidy.

Trumbo chuckled. He could see De Haven across the street in front of the saloon, flanked by his two associates, men who went by the names of Eddie Howser and Lou Sanders. He glanced at the deeply wrinkled and scowling face of Reb Cassidy.

"Not too bad," he replied, "and not too good."

He reached for his gun, lifted it, and fired four times. Again, dust and wood splintered from the sign, and beside the bullet holes made by Reb, four more holes appeared.

REB turned and looked at the sign. He broke his gun and started reloading it. From up and down the street, men were drifting toward the sheriff's office, and from across the street came Frank De Haven, a tall, thin, dark-haired man with a pale, tight-skinned face.

"What's the meaning of this, Sheriff?" asked De Haven angrily.

"Meaning?" said Trumbo. "Why every once in a while the wolves drive Reb Cassidy out of the hills and into town. And I drive him back by showing him I'm a better shot than he is."

"That's my sign you're shooting at."

"It's better shooting at a sign than a man," said Trumbo.

Here and there, in the group gathered in front of the sheriff's office, men were grinning. Contests like this between Trumbo and Reb Cassidy were one of the traditions of the country. Which man was really the best with a gun had never been finally decided.

"One of those shots," said Reb Cassidy, who had been peering across the street, "is a little out of line. Watch these."

His gun came up. He fired four shots in rapid succession, then lowered it, and Trumbo, staring across the street, saw that the shot holes in the first four letters, now formed four perfect triangles.

Tight lipped, scowling, Frank De Haven stared at his sign, then looked thoughtfully at Reb Cassidy who was once more reloading his gun.

Trumbo stirred. He fingered four bullets from his gun belt, loaded them, and studied the sign across the street. "G and O," he said quietly.

He lifted his gun and fired twice.

"L and D," said Reb Cassidy.

He matched Trumbo's shots, then turned around, grinning. Each of the four triangles now had a center mark.

Everyone in the crowd seemed to be enjoying this but the three men who ran the Golden Nugget saloon.

De Haven edged forward. He glared at Trumbo. "Who's going to pay for that sign?" he demanded.

"What's the matter with it?" asked Trumbo. "Is it hurt?"

"What this town needs is a new sheriff," said De Haven.

"Get Reb Cassidy," said Trumbo. "He's almost as good as I am."

"On my worst day," said Reb, "I'm better than Trumbo ever was."

He swung toward De Haven, lowering the barrel of his gun. It went off, driving a bullet into the board walk, inches from De Haven's feet. De Haven jumped back, catching his breath, his hand lifting and sliding under his coat. But he didn't pull the gun holstered there. Reb Cassidy, perhaps accidentally, was still covering him.

"Sorry," said Reb Cassidy. "That was an accident."

He was grinning and he didn't look at all sorry. De Haven glanced at Howser and Sanders. His eyes swept the rest of the watching crowd, and he decided, apparently, that this wasn't the time to make any issue of what had happened. With a dark look on his face he swung around and headed toward his saloon.

TRUMBO thrust himself erect. He turned and entered his office. Someone came in behind him and closed the door and he glanced up and saw Reb Cassidy scowling at him. "What's the idea of all the horseplay?" asked Reb Cassidy. "You having trouble with that fellow who didn't like our shooting?"

"Some," Trumbo admitted.

"So you picked on me to jab him."

"I didn't think you'd mind having a little fun," said Trumbo.

"What you afraid of?" asked Reb.

"The law," said Trumbo. "It won't let me act until it's too late to do much good. Sam Jessop sold his saloon a month ago to three fellows from outside. He's a little sorry about it now, but a deal's a deal. He tried to buy it back, but De Haven wouldn't even talk to him."

"If I was sheriff," said Reb, "I'd run De Haven out of town."

"It's a free country," said Trumbo. "If you were sheriff, you'd do what I'm doing. Do you like to play poker?"

"I'll take you on, any day."

"And I'll take you," growled Trumbo. "But not tonight. Tonight you sit in a game in the Golden Nugget."

"And what?"

"And after a few hands you ask out loud if anyone's seen Hank Wakefield."

"Who's Hank Wakefield?"

"He's a man De Haven shot up the other night. You ask about him, out loud. If you hear he's been hurt, you demand to know who shot him. And just about that time, you duck."

"I never ducked in my life," said Reb Cassidy. "And I never won anything playing another man's game. This had better be good, Trumbo, or I'll fill you full of holes and watch the fat run out."

"It would drowned you," said Trumbo. "Now go away. I've got things to do. Make the poker game at about eight, and don't be too liquored up."

After Reb Cassidy had left his office and trudged up the street with his burro, Trumbo crossed over to the Golden Nugget, spotted De Haven at the far end of the bar, and moved that way. De Haven scowled as he approached. He didn't offer to buy Trumbo a drink, which had been one of the delightful weaknesses of Sam Jessop, his predecessor.

"You and that prospector are going to get me a new sign," said De Haven, grimly. "Make no mistake about it."

"I doubt it," said Trumbo. "Particularly

if Reb Cassidy hears about Hank Wakefield, the man who got shot here the other night."

"Wakefield started that fight," said De Haven. "He went for his gun first."

"Maybe he did," Trumbo agreed. "But Reb isn't a reasonable man, particularly when he's had a drink. You've heard of Reb, of course. Down in Texas, when he rode with the rangers, they called him 'Sidewinder' Cassidy. They say it took three guns to carry the notches for the men he killed."

"What are you trying to do?" growled De Haven. "Scare me?"

"You saw him shoot," said Trumbo. "He's just as deadly when he's drunk, and twice as fast. Of course, maybe he won't hear about Wakefield. But if he does—"

"If he comes in here," De Haven snapped, "we'll take care of him."

Trumbo shook his head, sadly. He glanced at De Haven, scowled, and pointed to the diamond clasp on De Haven's tie. "I'd take that off if I were you. It's a perfect target. I saw the Sidewinder go up against a gunman who wore a gold tie clasp and—but you're not interested, I know."

De Haven fingered the clasp. There was a little perspiration on his forehead, but then perhaps it was a warm day. Trumbo shrugged his massive shoulders and turned toward the door.

He walked down the street after this and had a brief talk with Bill O'Brion, who, about a week before, had lost a wad of money in one of the poker games in the Golden Nugget. A few minutes later he ran into Ollie Keegan, another heavy loser. Both of these men, as it happened, were quite fond of Reb Cassidy, and each knew a couple of others who could be counted on for help.

Trumbo continued his tour of the street and its places of business, and in Schwab's Emporium came across Sam Jessop who was deep in a political argument with three high valley ranchers. He managed to pry Jessop free for a few minutes, and after this started back toward his office. Napoleon, he saw, was at the tie-rail in front of the Yuma saloon and as he passed the door of the Yuma he could hear Reb Cassidy's roaring voice. Reb was getting into shape early.

THAT night, shortly before eight o'clock, six men drifted into the Golden Nugget saloon. They stopped for a moment, just beyond the door. Frank De Haven, they noticed, stood at the far end of the bar. Eddie Howser was in the deep corner of the room and Lou Sanders at one of the near corners. The six men, after a short conference, split up, two moving toward Howser, two toward Sanders, and two heading for the bar. These last two, Bill O'Brion and Ollie Keegan, came up to where De Haven was standing.

De Haven looked at them sharply. He glanced toward Howser, then Sanders. His hand lifted to his gun. "What is this?" he demanded crisply. "What do you want?"

"We just want to see that Cassidy gets a square deal," said Bill O'Brion. "He'll be up here pretty soon. Right now he's at the Yuma saloon, talking about Hank Wakefield, asking who shot him. Reb Cassidy thought a powerful lot of Hank Wakefield."

De Haven moistened his lips. "Wakefield asked for what he got. You know it. You were here."

"Don't explain to us," said O'Brion. "Save your explanations for Reb Cassidy. Maybe he'll listen. Maybe he won't."

"What are those other men doing?" asked De Haven. "The two with Howser and the two with Sanders?"

"They're just going to see to it that Howser and Sanders stay out of the ruckus," Bill O'Brion explained. "Whatever happens when Reb Cassidy gets here is between you and Cassidy. But it's got to be fair. Don't go reaching for your gun before he does. We wouldn't like it."

De Haven again moistened his lips. He gulped, glanced from side to side, mopped a hand over his face. "Where's the sheriff?" he demanded. "I want the sheriff brought over here."

"Right now," said Bill O'Brion, "Trumbo's probably just getting started on his third piece of pie. It wouldn't do any good to send for him until he finishes his supper. He wouldn't come. In fact—"

The door suddenly burst open and Reb Cassidy half fell into the saloon. He staggered forward several paces, stopped, braced himself, and glanced from side to side. In the far corner of the room the two

men near Eddie Howser closed in, covering him with their guns. In the corner near the door, Sanders was blocked off. Bill O'Brion and Ollie Keegan stepped away from De Haven, leaving him alone at the bar, but still watching him closely.

Reb Cassidy had been told to sit in a poker game when he came to the Golden Nugget saloon, but he didn't bother with that. "Where's my friend Hank Wakefield?" he roared. "Someone told me he got shot."

There was no answer from anyone in the saloon. De Haven touched his gun, but didn't draw it. He backed away a step.

"If he was shot," screamed Reb Cassidy, "where's the varmint who shot him?"

Still glancing from side to side, Reb's eyes fell on Frank De Haven. He stared at De Haven. He lifted an arm and pointed at him. "You," he demanded. "You. What do you know about Hank Wakefield?"

De Haven gulped. His jaw wagged up and down but no words came from his lips.

Reb Cassidy's hand slapped at his holster, jerked into the air once more. His gun exploded, lifting De Haven's hat from his head.

"Who shot Hank Wakefield?" he barked. "Tell me. Who shot him?"

"I—I'll find out for you," said De Haven, his voice not too steady. "I'll find out right away."

There was a rear door and he was backing toward it. Suddenly he whirled and ran, jerked it open, and stepped outside.

In the saloon there were more shots and the sound of Reb Cassidy's booming voice. The evening, for Reb Cassidy, had gone suddenly tame. He was trying to liven things up by shooting out the lamps.

Trumbo Johnston, waiting near the back door, reached out and caught De Haven by the arm and stopped him.

"Get in there," said De Haven, excitedly. "Get in there and arrest that crazy man before he wrecks the place."

"It wouldn't do any good," said Trumbo quietly. "Reb Cassidy would just be back after you again tomorrow or the next day or whenever he got out of jail. You shot a friend of his, De Haven. You've got to face him. Maybe you'd better get it over with."

"Not me," said De Haven. "There's a law in this town."

"But you don't like it," said Trumbo. "Maybe you'd better come with me. There's a man in my office waiting to see you."

"Who?"

"His name's Sam Jessop and he'd like to buy a saloon. Of course you don't have to sell to him. You can stay here if you want to. But Reb Cassidy won't head back for the hills until he's evened the score for his friend."

De Haven pulled in a long slow breath. He heard another burst of gunfire from within the saloon. A shudder ran over his body. Without further argument he followed Trumbo toward the sheriff's office.

TRUMBO Johnston ordinarily didn't get down to work until ten o'clock in the morning, and the next morning was no exception. He unlocked the front door, waddled across the office to the jail door in the rear, unlocked it, and looked inside. Reb Cassidy sat there on a wall bunk, holding his head.

"A fine friend you turned out to be," said Reb, bitterly "I do you a favor and get thrown in jail."

"You almost wrecked the Golden Nugget last night," said Trumbo.

"Who cares," said Reb. "It's run by a man you don't like."

"It's run by a friend of mine, Sam Jessop," said Trumbo. "He bought it, last night. De Haven, Howser and Sanders have drifted on."

Reb Cassidy again rubbed his head and groaned. "Did I hurt anyone last night?" he demanded.

"You parted Bill O'Brion's hair with one of your shots."

"I could have come closer, too," said Reb. "I'll show you. Where's my gun?"

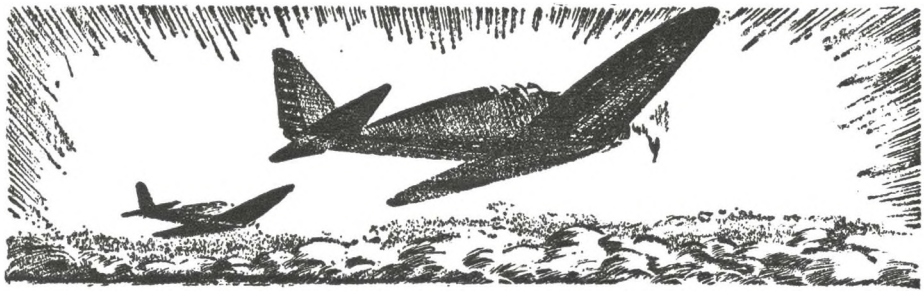
"In on my desk."

Reb Cassidy struggled to his feet. He squeezed past Trumbo, picked up his gun from the desk, checked its loading and stepped out on the walk. He squinted at the sign across the street.

"Take the last four letters," said Trumbo.

Reb Cassidy's gun lifted. It exploded four times. Dust and splinters of wood jumped from the sign across the street.

Trumbo grinned and drew his gun. The contest was on again.



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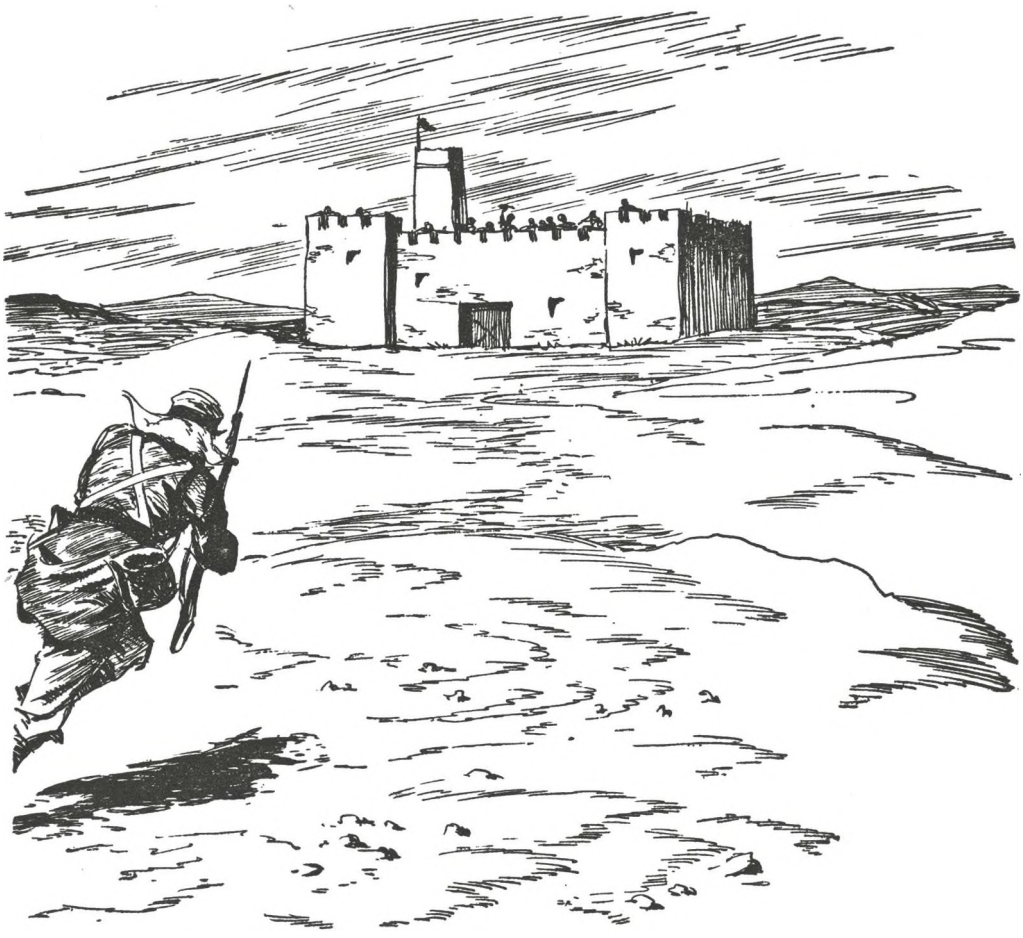
MAN-AT-ARMS

By
GEORGES SURDEZ

When they emerged from the hollow, the Legionnaires saw their goal before them—a square, massive fortress, surmounted by a watchtower.

A French Foreign Legion Novelette



THE replacement men from the regimental depot at Meknes had lined up in the center of the vast yard of the barracks at Dar-Makhzen, Morocco. Twenty-two Legionnaires, very trim in their new khaki uniforms, waists swathed by the blue sashes, faces tanned and rugged beneath the rigid peaks of the white-hooded kepis. The white walls and tiled roofs glittering in the sun against a horizon of mountain crests formed a superb background for this martial display.

But when he recognized Legionnaire Guarnec standing at the right of the line, Sergeant Fremont was overwhelmed by a sense of panic, a superstitious dread.

Three years of separation had not lessened his affection for the man; he still loved him like an older brother. But of late he had come to understand just how much Guarnec had caused his early mistakes in the Foreign Legion, his troubles and trials, his sufferings and humiliation. He loved him, that was true, but he hated the sight of him.

As he spoke the words of welcome, he

kept glancing at Guarnec. The Breton had not changed in appearance. He stood there as in the old days, with his great stature, his broad chest, dwarfing the others. The childlike innocence of his face was lighted by eyes that showed like violet petals against the golden tan. No, Guarnec was not a man, he was a handsome, gigantic boy, and would never be anything else, although he must be nearing forty and his life had been hard, bitter.

Nor had his character altered. His peculiar sense of humor must be intact. For the man nearest him seemed furious and uncomfortable, so Fremont knew that Guarnec had played one of his favorite jokes, a sly rap on the ankle with the gun butt—"Oh, sorry, old chap!"—or a handful of gravel poured down the neck. Some few others showed bruised faces, undoubtedly because they had attempted to protest.

"Bentata!" Fremont called the roll. "Chevrier, Crackow, Dohr, Guarnec—"

"On deck!" the big fellow shouted.

IT WAS the first time in several years that Fremont heard that reply, that voice. It echoed deeply, stirring forgotten memories. Then Guarnec suddenly cast aside all doubts, showed his solid, white teeth. "Eh, there, hello—kid!"

The sergeant sketched a gesture, half a wave and half a salute, because he could not ignore the past altogether. But he could see that the "kid" had taken immediate effect. No need to worry about a sergeant whom Guarnec knew so well. The men had relaxed, were slipping from his grasp.

"Listen, kid—"

"Silence in the ranks!" Fremont barked.

This was merely a signal for Guarnec to swing into one of his clownish acts. He clasped a hand over his mouth, rolled his eyes, shook in mock terror. Fremont was aware that he was far from an idiot, and knew better. When his comrades were grinning, he lowered his hand, snapped to attention, and called out with exaggerated respect, "At your orders, Sergeant."

Fremont allowed that to pass, but perspiration oozed down his spine. This was the beginning. As soon as possible, he must have a serious conversation with Guarnec, convince him that for Fremont at any rate, the old, merry days were dead, that dignity must be preserved. He must make him understand somehow that this was a crack march company in Morocco, that he was a sergeant, that they were commanded by Captain Brusson de Kolloch, who did not allow jokes on matters of decorum and discipline.

He called out the last name.

"Who's senior corporal?" he asked.

"I am, Sergeant." A rather short, stocky chap stepped forward, presented arms, very brisk, very earnest. Guarnec greeted his appearance before the line with an incongruous, small sound made between pursed lips.

"Corporal Schmaltz, August."

"Corporal Schmaltz, take the detachment across the yard to Building B, ask for the corporal for Room Five. There will be an inspection by the captain at three o'clock. Dismissed."

"'Shun!" Schmaltz howled. "Right shoulder—arms! Right face! Forward—arrrrch!"

The Lebel rifles swung up with a single surge; the men moved away as if actuated by metal springs. Everything was military, save Guarnec, who fell out casually as he passed near Fremont. His right hand was stretched out, and although the sergeant knew the power of that paw, he submitted his fingers to the torture of a greeting. A strong aroma of cognac completed the identification. No use wondering where Guarnec had obtained liquor—he would have found it in the middle of the Sahara.

"Glad to see you, squirt!"

"How are you, Guarnec?"

"Swell, kid, couldn't be better." Guarnec swayed a bit, grinned. He spoke with a singing Breton accent, clapping a hand on the noncom's shoulder. "You're most as big as me, and a sergeant! Say, how about wetting this down?"

"Better keep on with the others," Fremont advised quietly. "We'll get a chance to talk later."

"I get it, I get it!" Guarnec winked. "Yes, Sergeant! Very good, Sergeant! At once, Sergeant!"

And he cavorted away, pretending to trip on his rifle, juggling the weapon. Ten years of Legion, at least two of them with the disciplinary company to learn obedience and respect, had not begun to cure his playfulness!

AFTER the noon meal in the sergeants' mess, Fremont went to the room he shared with two other sergeants. He removed tunic, puttees and boots, stretched on his cot for a siesta. Senior-sergeant Antonini, buckling on his garrison belt to go on duty, coughed and patted his mustache.

"The captain was watching from the window," he said.

"So what?"

"You know he is strict on that outward marks of respect stuff. If we had Old Man Hirschauer, for instance, it would be all right. He kids with anyone. But de Kolloch is different. That's the Legion for you. Who's the guy—what's he to you?"

"My first pal in the Legion. I was only a kid."

"Must have been. You're not twenty-five yet."

"Name of Guarnec."

"Heard of him. Funny fellow." Antonini brushed the braid of his kepi with a sleeve. "I don't know but that's worse than a real tough egg. He got the whole bunch of them into scrapes all the way up, stealing from natives and fighting cops. Three complaints before the major. But that'll be settled easily. De Kolloch doesn't mind that, says he likes his Legionnaires scrappy. So long."

Left alone, Fremont tried to sleep.

But he started to think about the incident in the yard, which de Kolloch had seen. Guarnec had been here less than one hour, and already was causing him uneasiness. How many times in the past had he dragged him into trouble, how many days in prison, in solitary, had he won for Fremont? Eight, and sixteen, and thirty, and sixty. That had been something of a joke, in the past, when Fremont had been reckless. But now that he had re-acquired ambition, it was different.

Not that Guarnec would intentionally harm a friend. He was very fond of Fremont. He had risked liberty, health and life for him many times. On one of those massive shoulders was the scar of a knife slash intended for Fremont's throat. But that was Guarnec—he might gamble his life for a pal, but he could not curb his natural spirits for anyone or anything.

"I've got to get a laugh out of this racket," he had told Fremont long ago. "Otherwise, I'd go crazy and start murder-

ing guys right and left. When that Corsican swine rides me, for instance, I've got to clown or I'd rip my bayonet through his guts."

There had been a time when Fremont had shared the same view. When the pompous strut of a conceited drill-sergeant, the stupid phrases of an illiterate officer who believed himself a wit, had driven him to madness. Not more than any other army in the world does the Legion take into account individual intelligence. Rank is the standard; chevrons and stripes mark out intelligence and education for all to see, and in any matter, including spelling and poetry, a corporal knows more than a private, a sergeant knows more than a corporal, and so on all the way up the ladder.

When Fremont had reached Sidi-bel-Abbes, signed up for five years of Legion, he had been barely eighteen, a lanky, nervous, sensitive boy. The world he knew had tumbled about his ears; he considered himself lost. He had enlisted after a fearful scene with his father, because he had failed to pass the examinations to the Military Academy. And had failed, not because he lacked intelligence but because he had wasted his time playing about Paris.

"You spent the money I sent you for books on drink and women!" his father had accused. "You, who never have earned a crust of bread. You will always be a bum, a tramp, but never an army officer. That takes guts."

"I may be an army officer, father."

"I don't intend to waste any more money on you. The only way would be to go through the ranks. Let me laugh at that idea. Get out of my sight."

BY THE time his father had calmed down, and suggested that another year was possible, Fremont showed him a slip from the army. He had enlisted in the Legion, using an assumed name, an assumed nationality. And all suggestions that the enlistment could be annulled through family friends, that a softer spot could be found for him in a home regiment, had been rejected. Fremont had gone to Algeria, to win his epaulette at the point of the bayonet, against sundry Saharans, Moroccans and Druses.

The life had proved incredibly hard at first. Not because of physical hardships, for a tired man likes any bed and a hungry one any food, but because of a sharp change in contacts and habits. Fremont had mixed with school boys of his own age and class, then with a merry crowd in the Latin quarter. Overnight, he found himself surrounded by grown men, hard-boiled soldiers, many of them uneducated foreigners, chaps who lived like animals. His ways were different, his speech amusing to them.

Within a day, he was the goat for barrack-room jokes. His cot folded up when he got into it; he found his boots filled with gravel in the morning; his pack tumbled when an inspector touched it. And whenever he opened his mouth, a dozen voices would imitate his polished, student's French.

When he had tried to use his fists, a massive German had battered him mercilessly. For it was one thing to fight boys and quite another to cope with a hard-muscled ex-peasant. When he had dropped under those horny fists, the other had kicked him several times, mumbling oaths against "dirty, gabby Frenchmen."

It was then that Guarnec had intervened. Fremont had been aware of him only as one of his tormentors. But Guarnec moved forward.

"Cracks about nations are out," he said.

One enormous hand had clapped about the German's neck, lifting him on his toes, helpless. The other fist, driven with passionless efficiency, had caught the chap under the right ear, knocking him out completely. Then Guarnec had lifted Fremont to his feet, twisted his bleeding nose between casual fingers.

"Stop worrying—it isn't even broken. Come over here and tell me about yourself." To the others, he had announced, "This squirt is my pal from now on. I shall talk to those who don't understand immediately."

Evidently he could afford to talk that way, for when the German recovered his senses, he did not protest or ask for another chance. Guarnec dominated the room, and even the corporal spoke to him deferentially.

"Tell me about yourself," he said, and Fremont gave him an account of his past. Guarnec nodded.

"Rich, that's your trouble. Can't blame the guys—you high-hatted them. You're

only a squirt and you had to be taught your place. You don't know anything about anything, do you? Bet you've never been drunk, eh?"

"No, sir," Fremont answered mechanically.

"What kind of talk is that? There are no sirs in the Legion. Just a lot of guys who can't be anything else but butcher's meat for the government. There's only two things a Legionnaire has left to do—live and die. He must do plenty of the first to forget about the other until it comes around. You don't want to be an officer, kid. You want to be a man, a Legionnaire. You'll have more fun. I'll teach you the ropes."

Guarnec was sincere, but he proved a queer teacher, from all accepted standards. He taught Fremont to overcome his distaste for alcohol and tobacco. A man got drunk and smoked. He taught him that too great discrimination in the selection of feminine companionship was poor policy and led to suffering, heartbreak.

"They don't count, they're nothing. You're the boss, see? If you talk mush to them and write love letters, they ask you for dough. But if you slap them around and they see you don't care much, they give you their dough. See?"

Fremont, who was a bachelor of letters, had read much the same things in the philosophers. In his own way, Guarnec was a Montaigne. And he was a sort of king, a chieftain, among his kind, although he did not even wear the single chevron of a first-class Legionnaire. Fremont admired him, believed him.

In three months, no one would have recognized him. His vocabulary had been pruned in one way, enlarged immensely in another. He smoked a big pipe and was not awed by two or three quarts of wine in a single evening. His youth and his handsome, dark face made him popular in the night establishments, and he took cruel advantage of that. Moreover, under Guarnec's tuition, he had learned to fight swiftly, in unorthodox, efficient fashion.

"A kick in the shin and then give 'em the knee, kid. I don't have to do that because I'm big. But remember, when you see there's going to be a fight, strike first. When you fight, fight every time as if your life depended on winning. Suppose a guy comes at you this way—you know he's going to kick, so—here, stand up and let me show you."

There were many chances to practice, in a garrison town. Very soon, even among officers, Fremont had the reputation of a vicious, hard-drinking, rebellious young brute. But Guarnec was proud of him.

"I'll take you on a serious job soon," he promised.

The chance had come when a local gendarme had beaten a drunken Legionnaire. The affair aroused much indignation among the troopers, and wise authorities decided to keep them in barracks until the other was transferred. But Guarnec, Fremont and another man, with the complicity of their mates in the dormitory and the tacit complicity of the sergeants on duty, went over the wall after roll-call one night. They located the guilty man just as he was returning home from a farewell visit to a cafe. The punishment was silent, efficient. The victim was to remain three months in the hospital.

Back in barracks, sure of safety, Fremont quivered and gagged as he recalled the brutal performance. He pressed his palms over his ears to muffle the thud of fists and boots on human flesh.

"Had to be done," Guarnec consoled him. "See, if they ever get away with beating up a Legionnaire like that, they'll always gang up on one of us who happens to be alone and drunk. This way, they'll arrest him, but stay polite. Cops are lice, anyway. I wish that one would croak." Legionnaire Guarnec had an intense hatred of detectives, policemen, gendarmes and all that ilk.

Fremont had known such men as courteous chaps in uniforms with brass buttons, who kept away burglars and came around on the first of the year to get their presents from his people, like the postman and the servants. Guarnec knew them from another angle, and had ghastly stories to tell of their brutality, injustice, and abuse of power.

IN imitation still, Fremont became a cop-hater. His first serious trouble came from assaulting a gendarme. Thirty days in a cell. But he did not mind the price when he came out and saw that his reputation was good among his friends. His early ambition to rocket through the ranks, to go home as an officer, had van-

ished. He would be a Legionnaire's Legionnaire, asking nothing of life except fighting, booze, and a good time. Like Guarnec, his idol.

"Why are you here, anyway, Guarnec?" he asked once.

That had puzzled him often, for Guarnec was a Breton, hence a seaman. He had sailed about the world as a boy, had served in the Republic's fleet, knew most of the ports of the world. He was often lonely for the sea. Yet he was a pack-toting, foot-slogging Legionnaire!

"Cops," Guarnec said shortly.

"What for?"

"For nothing at first. Then plenty later."

"Tell me—"

But Guarnec, that time, had grown angry, shoved him away. It was months after, in the small hours after a long drunken spree, that he talked about himself. It was on the sloping plank serving as bed in a military cell, naturally. The morning after payday ordinarily found Guarnec and Fremont there, with wool-covered palates, aching heads and the prospect of a week of special fatigue.

"They did me dirt, kid."

"Who did?"

"The cops, officers, the whole lot. I'm not bad. I wasn't asking for any trouble. I'm a Breton, and I never went to school much. Cabin-boy at ten. Grand Banks, Newfoundland. Then on a four-masted steel bark, Australia, China, Japan, South America. Then I was on a trawler, regular Navy, during the war. Channel, Mediterranean, Greek sea, that was war time. Then they put me on a battleship, gunner. I liked it. One day, we're in Brest, and my home village is only an hour away. I'm sent with a message somewhere by my captain. I think I'll sneak a visit home—had a girl there, Breton style. Well, one of the cops was sweet on her, and he spots me. So he arrests me, asks me for my leave. It was not his business, see? He was civilian police.

"They hold me over and inform my ship. I would have got back in plenty of time. But they held me over, and it was two days' illegal absence. Fifteen days in the brig. Spoils my record—my chief doesn't trust me any more. So when I get leave, I go home and pick a fight with the cop. It was man to man, and he was willing. But after I had licked him, it was assaulting a cop!

"They gave me six months, and then I was sent to Discipline. At Toulon, Navy barracks. What's the use of telling more—once they get you they get you. I was there two years, for talking back, for doing this or that. Nothing to it, just guards playing around. Then I was sent to the pen in Africa for socking one of them who thought he was in the old Navy. Yeah, there's that kind, too. But he didn't give that explanation, you can bet.

"I managed to behave. I come out, and I hear my girl has married that cop, that they have a couple of kids. I don't dare go home, or chance being too near, not the way I feel. So I enlist in the Legion. Everything's swell—I'm a corporal in six months. But a new sub-lieutenant comes, egg who used to be a keeper in the prison camp. I'm demoted in a month.

"So what's the use? I tried to tell my captain, who had been a good friend. But he froze up on me, very polite: 'My dear fellow, I cannot listen to gossip about a colleague.' They all hang together, cops, officers."

And Fremont had listened, sympathized. He himself had felt the dividing line between constituted authority and ordinary men.

Then another revelation had come. His company had been sent to the Sahara to participate in a punitive column. The Legionnaires who had been toughest in barracks, those who had occupied prison cells most of the time, proved among the best fighters. Perhaps because they wanted to show that there was one place where they ranked high—the firing line. And those men were cajoled and praised by the same officers who had repressed them harshly up north.

Guarnec, the bane of noncoms in garrison existence, became the darling of the outfit. He was tireless, an inspiration to others. He could fight with gun and bayonet almost as well as with his hands and feet. His murderous fury at the climax of a bayonet charge was not easily forgotten—men bowling about before the flying butt, the long steel blade darting and stabbing like the bill of some frightful bird.

"Come on, kid," he panted over his shoulder to Fremont. "Come on, let's get them!"

And Fremont, his tremors of fear wiped

out by the other's confidence, obeyed, came on—and matched the performance. When the company, decimated, ragged, proud, marched back into a civilized center behind blaring bugles and thumping drums Guarnec was slated for corporal, proposed for the Military Medal. Fremont was due to receive the lone chevron of a first-class Legionnaire, and, as he had a citation, the Colonial Cross.

A young lieutenant who had spoken to Fremont often, called him aside on the night of the return.

"Fremont, you appear to have a good education."

"Bachelor of letters, Lieutenant."

"I'm putting you on the corporals' training squad and putting in an application to Saint-Maixent School for you."

He evidently expected thanks. Fremont's face set hard.

"No, thank you, Lieutenant."

"Why not?"

"Doesn't interest me," Fremont spoke steadily, deliberately. He felt very big, very clever as he rebuffed that young chief, enjoyed the look of angry sorrow on his face, smashed his words home. "I wouldn't wish to have a commission. I'm happy among my friends, Legionnaires, real men."

"You're making a bad mistake, Fremont."

"That must be a habit, Lieutenant. I must have made mistakes or I would not be here in the first place. May I be excused, Lieutenant? I have an appointment with a few of my comrades to get drunk."

The young officer had nodded, taken a wallet from his tunic, presented ten francs at his fingers' tip. Fremont knew that this was a test. So he accepted the ten francs, thanked the lieutenant calmly, saluted and left.

And he, his friends, had taken the reserved quarter apart that night. There had been the sounds of bottles smashing mirrors, of squealing women and fighting men. Blood flowed, the patrols circulated through the narrow streets like lifeboats in a stormy sea, battered and helpless. Fremont had emerged with one eye the hue of a ripe fig, a knife cut in his side. The same order of the day that was to have made his and Guarnec's promotions public, announced their shame—thirty days of prison, fifteen of them solitary cell.

ANOTHER year, a third had passed, with Guarnec and Fremont inseparable, two against the world. They campaigned in the Middle Atlas together, around Rish and Gourama and Midelt.

Still side by side, they were sent back to Sidi-bel-Abbes for a rest period with the First Regiment. Together, they faked illness well enough to be sent to the hospital in Oran, which appealed to them because it was a large city where Legionnaires given afternoon liberty enjoyed much freedom from supervision. And it was there that Guarnec recognized on the street the man who had been a guard in the prison camp, then assigned as a sub-lieutenant in the Legion. One of his many foes among "cops and their sort."

The fellow was in civilian clothes, and they learned that he had left the service to get married. He was manager of a barrel factory.

"My meat," Guarnec said. "Kid, you keep out of this."

"What do you take me for?" Fremont retorted.

The poor chap had preserved certain army habits, and they located him easily, one evening, in an establishment where a respectable business man had no reason to be. Guarnec took him in charge, while Fremont, armed with a heavy wooden stool, kept others from interfering. The big Breton literally juggled with his prey, beat him badly, but did not injure him—that is, broke only his jaw. All would have been well; the man would have kept quiet to avoid a scandal.

But somebody had summoned the patrol, and there was another fight. There were seven *Tirailleurs* in that patrol, and two city cops joined them before the end. But there were ten or twelve Legionnaires in various places along the same street. Theirs not to reason why—when native infantrymen and police are manhandling Legionnaires, strict duty is plain.

As street rows go, that was a pretty one. Despite the fact that all these Legionnaires, being in Oran, were either listed as sick or convalescent, the patrol was defeated. As for the cops, one went to the hospital, and the other was found later hiding in a rain barrel—at about the time when Guarnec and Fremont, back in the fever ward at the Hospital, were trying to deny their participation in the mêlée, despite bruises and cuts.

This time, the newspaper mentioned names, recorded the fray. Oran is a modern city. And Fremont saw in the audience, at the trial, his father, garbed in black, with the tiny ribbons of the decorations he had earned as a battalion commander in World War I ornamenting his lapel. Guarnec drew down a year, while Fremont, justly or not, was given the routine punishment: sixty days, thirty of them solitary cell.

"So long, kid," Guarnec said. "You got off easy. We'll meet again. And don't let anybody fool you. You're a regular guy."

Fremont had felt very bad at the separation. Why not? Guarnec was his pal. In the short space of three years, had he not changed Fremont from a soft, silly youth to a strong, tough man? Were there many lads of twenty-one who commanded as much respect from their comrades as he did? Respect based on his personality, not on chevrons.

Before being taken to prison, Fremont had been led into a sunlit room, where his father was waiting for him. The old man had not offered his hand.

"Your mother read about you in the papers—undoubtedly, despite my wishes, she had corresponded with you, as she knew your Legion name. She fell sick, and to quiet her I promised to come down here and help you. I've lied to her; I did nothing."

"I expected no less from you, father."

"You are right." The old man nodded wearily. "You are my son. My own desire was to employ what meager influence I have to help you. But I have been in the army myself, although you seem to forget it. I did not wish to offend you, to humiliate you before your comrades. I understood you had to take it as you had given it, on your own."

Fremont was startled. His father understood something of what he felt! Yes, he would have been ashamed had his father made efforts to distinguish him from the others. Being touched, he resorted to sarcasm to hide it.

"Well, I have earned my bread for three years. If you consult my record, you will see that I did my job well. I could have decorations, too, had I fallen for that bunk."

"I shall tell your mother that you are in

good health," the father said. "You're finding yourself bit by bit. You have physical courage. Moral courage will come later. Good-bye."

They shook hands.

And Fremont went to prison. Dimly, he felt that he had lost out in the interview with his father. There had been no reproaches, even when he had mentioned earning his own living, for the postal money orders he had obtained from his mother. For among his pals, it was not dishonorable to write a "chiseling" letter home to obtain funds for an extra spree. Even Guarnec had a sister from whom he got money at long intervals.

Moral courage would come later? What had his father meant?

After serving his short term, he was transferred to Morocco, in another regiment. It chanced that none of his old comrades were in his battalion. And, although he had believed himself famous, he found that the sergeant accepted him as an ordinary Legionnaire and paid no attention to his parading of independence. If Guarnec had been with him, he might have attempted to rival the local clowns and toughs, but the separation from his big friend seemed to have taken a good deal of the spirit out of him.

A skirmish in the hills while on patrol won him a citation, and brought him to the attention of Captain de Kolloch. Brusson de Kolloch was an odd character, brave as a sword, aloof, with a rasping, sarcastic tongue. He was reputed to be a snob because of some title or other and a large private fortune. But he showed guts and leadership under fire, and, in the final analysis, that was all the Legion wanted of him.

"Making you sergeant," he said. "Colonel approved already." Fremont attempted to go into his act, refusing ironically. De Kolloch eyed him coldly. "If you don't like the honor, you'll like the pay. Don't be a damned fool. You accept promotion or take three months' prison. Impudence to superior. Have no time for foolishness, clowning. Dismissed."

Fremont, caught short, had obeyed. After eight months as sergeant, he suddenly grew ambitious. After all, he had almost completed the course for school, once, and he did enjoy the comparative freedom of a noncom's life. Perhaps it would be all right to have a commission.

There was small doubt, until today, that de Kolloch would back him for an appointment to Saint-Maixent School. But with Guarnec present, there would be some trouble. There was the one man who could prove a stumbling block!

SERGEANT IKMANN, a youngish German, entered the room, hung up his kepi and unbuckled his belt. "Say, I'm glad to be here, Fremont! Some butter-fingered slob dropped a hand grenade in practice and one of the splinters went this far from my nose—" he indicated with thumb and finger. "And, by the way, the old man wants to see you."

"Tell him I'm out," Fremont said. But he swung his feet to the floor and reached for his boots. "What does he want?"

"You know him. Talkative, eh? He *would* tell *me* the details."

Fremont halted before the mirror, adjusted the angle of his kepi, as carefully as a young girl starting off on a date. Details had their importance with de Kolloch. A smartly turned-out sergeant softened his heart.

The sun was hot, but a cool wind blew down from the mountains. He looked at the crests. Within three weeks, a month at the most, his battalion would be out there somewhere, campaigning. For the snow was melting, and operations would resume.

De Kolloch was waiting for him, behind the table he occupied in the company's office. He was a broad-shouldered, saturnine officer in the late thirties, with a hard, square face framed by a brush of stiff brown hair. The chin, the set of the mouth, gave him a resemblance to a famous general. It was said that de Kolloch did nothing to lessen that resemblance.

He nodded in greeting as Fremont came to attention.

"Well, Sergeant, what do you think of the new draft?"

"They look very good, *mon capitaine.*" Fremont was worried, for when the captain used many words, he was putting a man off-guard. "Forty percent are reenlisted men with previous service in Morocco. Two military medals in the lot."

"Very surprising," de Kolloch remarked.

"As a general rule, the regimental base appears to consider my company a refuge for cripples, malingerers and incorrigibles. I saw them from the window. They march well, very well. And, Sergeant—" the voice grew confidential, gentle—"you have nothing else to report?"

"I don't believe so." Fremont corrected himself, for the captain detested such answers. "No, Captain."

"Too bad," the officer said softly. Then his words came like machine-gun bullets. "Witnessed tender scene in yard. Know my principles familiarity noncoms and privates. Disgraceful. Poison to discipline."

"I could not refuse to shake hands, Captain. The Legionnaire is an old friend, and—"

"Might be brother, father. Don't give damn. He is private, you sergeant. No justification public effusion. Actually put hands on you. Bad for prestige, Sergeant. Have your application appointed school commission. Expect me approve if behave thus?"

De Kolloch was going splendidly in his telegraphic style.

"I didn't realize, Captain, that—"

"Should realize. Should have given two days' prison. Motive undue familiarity. You did not give. So I confine you quarters two days. If chevrons interfere social activities shall be happy remove them. Understood?"

"Yes, Captain."

"Shall watch you. First favor shown man, zip! This not Friendly Society—March Company, Foreign Legion. Remember."

"Yes, Captain."

"Looked up record. Man not bad. Breton, like me. Hardheaded. Show you how talk to him. Come along." De Kolloch rose, and Fremont experienced the same sense of surprise as always. The captain had a short torso and legs like a stork. He turned from an undersized man into a tall one in the mere act of rising.

The new men were ready for inspection. De Kolloch made them a little speech, which Fremont doubted they could decode. It took some time to supply connectives between words automatically. But they stood there, sweating and willing to listen. The captain repeated each name. One of his principles was that a man should feel he was known as an individual, so as not to resent being treated like a machine.

"Guarnec? Breton? Am Breton myself. First names?"

"Yves-Marie-Joseph, Captain."

"Real Breton. Man-at-arms, eh? Tradition, patriotism, religion, stubborn, loyal—Bretons, eh?"

Fearfully, Fremont saw the old look of bland innocence spread over Guarnec's face. The Legionnaire was about to make a comeback. He tried to catch his eye, to shake his head.

"Yes, Captain. Brittany has the highest percentage of illiterates and cretins in the French Republic." And nothing could depict the hypocritical expression of intense pride in Guarnec's eyes.

For an instant, Fremont really pitied de Kolloch, rendered speechless by the retort. The captain had started the conversation, could not very well blame Guarnec for answering. The men who had overheard stared into space with vacant eyes and set lips. But there was a suspicious quivering of the rifle tips, as the throbbing of constrained laughter pulsed through their tight-clenched hands.

De Kolloch opened his mouth, shut it.

He walked on, and Fremont, striding four paces behind him, could see his ears glow redly. The officer made short work of the rest of routine inspection, declared himself pleased. He did not look at Guarnec again.

In the office, he sat down to consult the documents concerning the replacement men. He lingered over the report on Legionnaire Guarnec, Yves-Marie-Joseph, for several minutes.

"That acquaintance of yours, Sergeant—Communist?"

"I never heard of his belonging to any political party, Captain. As a matter of fact, I don't belive he ever voted, for he has been in service since before his majority."

"Subversive speech. Must be watched."

"Yes, Captain."

"Not asking you. Dismissed."

Fremont had to confess that some years before he would have applauded Guarnec's answer, his "putting a fast one over" on the old man.

Even now, he admitted that there was no one like his old friend for starting off in a new place with a loud bang. On the

very day of his arrival, he had won actual fame.

The whole company knew him as "The Breton Man-at-Arms," and the cooks were spreading the nickname throughout the entire battalion. And it was only the first day!

Two days' confinement for Fremont, and a feud with the captain. That was not such slow work.

CHAPTER 2

THE inevitable interview proved stormy. When Guarnec entered the rear room of a cafe to keep the appointment made by Fremont, he was evidently furious. He ignored the hand offered him, straddled a chair. He shoved the kepi to the back of his skull, unfastened the top buttons of his tunic in a well-remembered gesture. He looked his years, seen so near, and through his boyishness the sergeant could sense an unspoken weariness.

"That's the way it'll be, eh?" he asked heavily.

"What?"

"Three days I've been around. You told your orderly to keep me away. Then I have to sneak to come in here and talk to you. I don't know why I even came."

Fremont poured cognac into thick tumblers. He had sent away the special glasses brought him by the owner, aware that they would irritate his friend as another affectation of refinement. He laid the package of cigarettes on the table.

"I was punished, confined to quarters. The orderly explained that. I couldn't have visitors. As for meeting you in the front room here, it's full of people, soldiers, sergeants, and everything is reported. I can't be seen drinking with privates; you know that as well as I do."

"I have drunk with officers in public."

"I'm not an officer."

"You intend to be," Guarnec sneered. "You'll kill your mother for it; you'd step on your old friends. Come on, tell the truth —you wish I was any place but here. It was all so nice, being the handsome sergeant with nothing in common with disgusting, low-down Legionnaires!"

Fremont grew angry, his face flushed. He felt sorry for Guarnec, understood his attitude, but felt that it would be wrong to yield the point. After all, there was nothing to be ashamed of in wearing chevrons, and he was done with stupid behavior that ended in wasted years.

"Sure, I got worried when I saw you, Guarnec. Why not?" He tried to joke: "You make everything so simple and quiet for all of us. Like climbing right on de Kolloch's neck, first thing. Now, what was the sense of that performance?"

"You ask me that?"

"Sure. I'm not asking you why you did it. I'm asking you what was the sense."

"Well, well!" Guarnec rested his big hands on his knees and stared at Fremont in mock amazement. "See who is talking! I'll be damned! Listen, when a guy comes at me with that 'my fellow-Breton' stuff, like he was going to a mean dog with a bone, I know what follows. Feudal business, you know, man-at-arms, and it's supposed to be flattering. I was supposed to think, 'Why, this handsome and rich officer admits he is just a man like me. How decent of him.' You know what the next thing would have been if I had acted pleased?"

"No."

"I've had that Breton approach before. He'd have asked me to be his orderly. They

always do. Noble Breton in the castle, Breton serf watching the gate. Classy stuff, like a book: 'Master and man for generations.'" Guarnec tossed off his glass, refilled it from the bottle casually. "I lost all taste for licking boots years ago."

"Admitting you may have been right," Fremont conceded, "what about me?"

"What about you, yes?" Guarnec spoke slowly.

"You understand how I'm fixed?"

"You have a soft snap and you want to keep it. You don't need me—you don't want to be bothered with me. You're a gentleman, or, being a mere sergeant, an apprentice-gentleman."

"I get good money and easier living." Fremont spoke angrily. "I'm not blaming you, but I wasted enough years showing off, butting my head against stone walls to prove it was hard. Anyway, we wouldn't be together if I lost my chevrons; I'd be transferred at once. I am your friend, and I can help you along, as in the old days. I happen to be lucky, to have the more money—"

Guarnec's eyes flashed.

"Sure. So we'll add my pay and yours and split it down the middle, fifty-fifty, as before." His teeth showed in a snarling laugh. "I don't think you like that idea, do you? It's impossible, isn't it? You're willing to throw me ten francs now and then. And, when I'm drunk, I'd be slob enough to take them. Now, let me tell you, if you ever lend me any dough I ask for when drunk, as soon as I am sober, I'll break your neck."

Fremont stiffened.

"I'm not afraid of you, Guarnec."

"No, and who have you got to thank for being a man that's not afraid? Me, and don't you forget it."

"Yes, Yves. Listen—"

"I know. You're sorry, but what can you do about it? Life is that way. It isn't convenient for us to be friends. I don't blame you. We never belonged together. I should have known that."

"Don't be sore at me, old man."

"Sore at you?" Guarnec smiled scornfully. "You know what I'd be doing if I was sore. This will pay for those drinks I had. You can't be supplying Legionnaires with drink." The big man aligned several bronze coins and a grimy bill on the table.

"Well, so long. It was nice to meet an old pal."

He rose and buttoned his tunic, straightened his kepi.

"Just a minute—where are you going?"

"Back to my own kind, kid. Back with guzzling, dirty-mouthed, second-class Legionnaires. Now, shut up, and let me pass—"

"I've told you I was not afraid of you."

"You're no longer afraid of a beating," Guarnec shrugged. "But you're afraid of what I am, afraid of what's left in you that's like me. Afraid that you'll remember what it's like to be a man, to talk back to some snob like de Kolloch. But don't worry—that's dead in you. You're through. For the rest of your natural life, whether sergeant or general, you'll obey and shut up—for stripes, for medals, for money."

"I want a future—"

"Sure. And inside six months, you may be lying out somewhere, kicking off, thirsty and wondering why you didn't drink and have a good time. You're just a punk—" The big man caught Fremont's right arm and held him still. "Don't worry, I won't hurt you in your job if you leave me alone. I give you the right to live as you like, but don't undertake to reform *me*."

He reached out and flung the door open. He came to attention, saluted and said loudly, crisply, "Thank you very much, Sergeant! Good night, Sergeant!"

FREMONT pushed his way through the crowd around the bar. He was almost weeping. Yet there was nothing he could say, less that he could do. Cold reason told him that he was following the right course. But to have this scene, with Guarnec!

He knew the man better than he knew himself. More than once, when his spirit broke in the torment of a sobering spell, Guarnec had cried before him, head between his hands, sobbed and called himself a fool and a madman. And, when he, Fremont, had had such spells, Guarnec had patted him, consoled him, made plans. They would pull out of the Legion, buy a small boat and fish, they would get a farm in Morocco, they—

A friendship like that—and that was all it came to? He felt very old, very tired.

An almost overwhelming temptation came

to him, from his old self: To go, chevrons and all, and slide between Guarnec and somebody else at one of the tables, to reach for the bottle, saying loudly, "These chevrons must be off before noon. Let's have some fun."

That would be something to be remembered!

He entered the barracks, walked towards his quarters. Crossing the yard, he met a group of men, Captain de Kolloch, who wore slacks and a visorless cap, the veterinarian, Sergeant Antonini and the muleteers' corporal. He saluted and was about to pass when the captain stopped him:

"There you are, Sergeant! Wondering where you were. Too late now."

"I have liberty until one, Captain," Fremont retorted, with a glance at his wristwatch. "It is not quite nine-thirty."

"Yes, yes. But Carabine had the colic."

Carabine was the oldest and nastiest mule in the ammunition echelon, an enormous, bony beast, with the temperament of an operatic tenor and the delicate health of a wealthy maiden aunt. Somehow, everybody appeared to think she was of importance to the company. They had even disturbed the captain!

"Am I suspected of contributing to her ailment, Captain?"

"What? Nonsense, nonsense. But you have a way with her, Sergeant." The officer meant to be pleasant. "Merely wishing you were here to help us. Had most difficult time."

"She is quite well, I hope, Captain?"

"Yes, yes."

"I shall express my congratulations to her as soon as possible."

There was a pause. By the light of the lantern, Fremont saw Antonini was shaking his head, and the veterinarian, a stout, easy-going sub-lieutenant, was trying not to grin. De Kolloch's voice had changed.

"My friend, are you trying to be humorous?"

"Not in the least, Captain."

The officer peered into his face for an instant, then swung aside and walked away. Fremont was furious with himself. That was the influence that Guarnec had over him. Why had he said that? To what purpose? De Kolloch would believe him drunk, which was bad, or sober and impudent, which was much worse.

Certainly, the captain would be in no mood to approve his application for a special course in France. He might pay for this humorous remark with a delay of six months!

Inside two weeks, Guarnec had created a band of reckless characters, as he always did wherever he went. For the first time, Fremont was on the other side of the fence and knew the impotent, furious rage of noncoms faced by systematic, deliberate misinterpretations of orders, with the men keeping just within the limits of discipline. Ikmann, the young German sergeant for instance, would collapse on his cot when he returned from drill.

"The swine, the dirty slobs, the stubborn pigs."

He was bayonet instructor, and when he put a detachment through the routine drill, they had at heart to demonstrate that he did not know what he was teaching. They would do everything wrong, and when he called one of them out to demonstrate just where the flaw was, the fellow would suddenly become agile, clever, and make a fool of the teacher.

"That big lout of yours," he told Fremont, "he managed to make me lunge, tripped me as if by accident, and I went on my face. And when we resumed, he went on *his* face, as I had. Lieutenant Hallez was watching us, and he laughed. All right, but suppose it had been de Kolloch?"

"Get him for something else," Fremont suggested.

He knew that, according to the code prevailing in Guarnec's set, that was legitimate. The next time Guarnec, neatly turned out, tried to leave barracks for town, Ikmann, on duty at the gateway, stopped him, scanned him from head to foot.

"Not properly dressed. Turn about."

A noncom does not have to indicate what part of dress is out of order. Guarnec turned about as instructed, returned in ten minutes. And was sent back. At eight-twenty, when it was too late to start for town—ordinary liberty ended at nine—Ikmann indicated his excuse: The tip of a boot-lace showing below the puttee, in back.

Guarnec did not protest. Technically, the sergeant was within his rights. But, although he returned at nine with the orders, from that day on, no one saw him pass out

of barracks through the gate. He was climbing the wall somewhere, no one could discover just where. And when his liberty was curtailed for one reason or another, he went to town nevertheless, returning the way he had left, mysteriously. He was something of a personality in town, and it was known that the local cops, two in number, avoided the establishments he frequented.

For a long time, three weeks or more, Fremont had little to do with his former friend. He had spoken a few words to Lieutenant Hallez, who was friendly, and Guarnec had been assigned to another section.

"I know how it is," the lieutenant said. "When I was in a French regiment, the son of my father's boss came as a recruit. It's all very well to say that no personal considerations enter. When they do, it's annoying."

FREMONT was on patrol duty in town for an evening, doing major police work. The local police could not be expected to handle the two to three hundred Legionnaires who poured into the segregated streets from five-thirty to eight-thirty. After lights-out had sounded, the job grew a bit easier, as most of the men had left. It was after ten when the patrol was called upon to quiet a dispute in number sixteen, kept by Lard-Tub, an obese Spanish woman.

As soon as Fremont appeared in the doorway, the chin-strap of his kepi under his chin to show he was on duty, the quarrel ended. There were four Legionnaires in the center of the floor, three armed with chair legs, the fourth, Guarnec, unarmed.

Hugging the walls were a half-dozen privates of the Colonial Artillery, also equipped with improvised clubs and bottles. The girls were huddled behind the bar. All movement, all sound were suspended, save for the barking of a mastiff chained at one end of the counter.

"What's up?" Fremont challenged.

"It's Legion night, as you know, Sergeant," one of the Legionnaires replied. "And these guys came in and tried to take over."

"Sergeant—" One of the artillerymen, a tough young Frenchman who wiped a cut on his forehead, came forward. "We have midnight leave, special. We didn't come here until after ten, when all Legionnaires should be gone. You see, we were just back from outside duty, and our captain—"

"Never mind that," Fremont cut him short. "Have you Legionnaires midnight passes? Show them to me." He stood by the door, taking the passes one after the other. Three were valid. The fourth was not: Guarnec had handed him a yellow slip outwardly resembling a pass, but bearing advertising matter for some toilet article. Fremont returned the papers. "In order. Now—" he addressed the owners—"you must choose. Either the Legionnaires go, or the artillery. We don't want more fighting."

The answer was not in doubt. There was a battalion of Legion in town and but a section of artillery. Moreover, in some manner, Legionnaires always had money. Furious, cursing, rebellious, the artillerymen filed out, to seek their luck elsewhere.

"See that you're back by midnight," Fremont advised the Legionnaires.

When he was leading his patrols through the streets again, he laughed at Guarnec's presence of mind. How quickly the fellow had produced something that looked like a document, knowing that all any noncom would wish was an excuse to put the others in the wrong.

His strict duty was to arrest Guarnec. But he could not do it in such a trifling case. For arrest would have meant serious charges against his former friend: Absence without leave, nocturnal disturbance in a public spot, blows and cuts inflicted on soldiers of another corps duly provided with passes. Captain de Kolloch, who had no reason to like Guarnec, would have given him fifteen days' cell, which the major would have jacked up to thirty, as a matter of routine, and the local commander would have doubled—to sixty.

He felt no remorse for having stretched such a slight point. But the following morning, he was summoned to battalion headquarters. The major, a tall, reedy man, was there, with de Kolloch and the Alsatian captain, Old Man Hirschauer, who commanded the machine-gun unit. Fremont remembered that two of the four men involved in the row the night before had been from the machine-gunners.

"We sent for you to clear up a point, Sergeant," the major said. "Legionnaire

Guarnec was arrested at two in the morning, trying to scale the wall near the bakers' oven."

Fremont felt a sensation of intense cold in the pit of his stomach. His slip from duty was discovered. But nothing showed on his face. Guarnec taught his pupils to fight things out.

"Yes, Major?"

"Guarnec tried to tell the patrol sergeant that he had lost his pass, giving him liberty until two. Having lost it, he was unwilling to pass through the gate. At that time, he cited your name, said you had seen the pass. Three witnesses confirm this. Now—"

Fremont was about to speak, when Hirschauer, seated a little behind and to the left of the major, winked quietly, shook his head, then seemed interested in something out of the window.

"Now, Guarnec denies having shown you his pass, claims that he handed you back one of the passes you had already returned, slipped to him by one of his comrades. What I am seeking to find out, Sergeant, is if the pass was genuine. I personally countersign all late liberty passes. I have reason to believe some of those passes are sold, by the men to whom issued, to others. Did you read off the names and ask each man to answer?"

"No, Major."

"And naturally, you paid no attention to the names on the passes, so that the switch was possible." The major turned to the captains. "That proves what I was saying, gentlemen. Patrol noncoms should be instructed specially in such points. Thank you, Sergeant—you may leave. No blame to you on this occasion, but particular instructions will be issued."

Fremont left, almost reeling with relief. But one thing emerged from the incident: Guarnec had been willing to go to prison rather than expose him. He had denied that he had presented to the sergeant a patent forgery. For a moment, he had held Fremont's career in his hands. It was comforting to know this.

He had not gone far before a hail halted him. The two captains were behind him. He retraced his steps, saluted. He saw Hirschauer nudge de Kolloch warningly, and the square-jawed officer glowered but kept still.

"Sergeant," the old captain spoke gruffly, "I hope you understand that you fooled no one. You covered for Guarnec. I hear you know the man well, so you would have noticed his name. You understand why the major went through this little comedy.

"Now, I have toted a knapsack myself, before you were born. So you can believe that I understand. I have persuaded your captain to be lenient a first time. That's all."

"Thank you, Captain."

GUARNEC was out of circulation for eight days, doing special drill with the punished squad behind the prison. Captain de Kolloch, although he had taken Hirschauer's advice, continued to treat Fremont like a leper. If the sergeant's chances for promotion depended on him, as they did somewhat, they were growing very slim.

Fremont wondered for a while just why de Kolloch had allowed the older officer to dictate.

Then it came out that Hirschauer was to take the battalion over for the coming campaign, as acting-major. And he realized that the captain, for all his stiff-necked ways, was something of a diplomat.

Guarnec, to celebrate his freedom, returned to barracks drunk. All would have been well ordinarily, but a new corporal was at the gate, a young Belgian, very conscious of his dignity. When the drunken Legionnaire called him a stuffed monkey he ordered him taken to the lockup. Fremont was in charge that evening, and the Breton grew maudlin, cajoling—then, as inevitable, insulting.

Before the men of the guard, who were laughing openly, he could not keep silent.

"Two days' cell."

The report went before the captain, who swelled up the two days to fifteen, the maximum in his power—and a harsher punishment than may be meted out by a subaltern officer in other regiments. The captain in turn reported to the major: Fifteen more days. Guarnec was spotted and being watched all up the line.

Fremont had not worried: He believed that the battalion would take the field soon, and all punishments would be forgotten. But the opening of the campaign was delayed, partly by the heavy rains, partly because of diplomatic considerations, and

Guarnec served a full month. For which, naturally, he blamed Fremont. In fact, the sergeant had given the original impulse.

Two days after his release, Guarnec was on sentry duty before the supply-sheds. As Fremont passed nearby, he stepped forward to bar his passage, presented arms, then stood at attention.

"I want to talk to you, Fremont."

"Later."

"Right now. If you try to duck me, I'll smack you over the head with the butt. Believe me? Good." Guarnec took breath. "You did me a favor that night in the dump. I tried to do you another when they pinched me on the way back. All right. Fifty-fifty. Old pals, you know. But what you did when I was drunk, I'll never forget, never. You know I didn't mean any harm. I was friendly—"

"You were drunk."

"That's what I've been telling you. And you took advantage of it to pin a month on me. You must have made out a dirty report for that guy to slap me so hard. You're trying to get me away to disciplinary company. All right, I'll go. I'll even go to the pen. But it's going to be for something real, you bet."

"Yves, you—"

"Shut up. Keep out of my way when I have a couple of glasses in me, or you'll be sorry. I can keep from retching when I see you, if I'm sober. But if I'm drunk, I'll smack you."

Fremont thought of pleading with him, then shrugged.

"Understood. Let me by, now."

Fremont realized that it had been inevitable from the beginning that Guarnec would resort to threats. In his unreasoning fashion, the Breton judged his young friend a traitor. A traitor to what? Guarnec himself could not have said. And there was no purpose seeking to explain to him that their situations were different, had been from birth, that it was normal that Fremont should have returned to his own mode of existence.

Guarnec was nearly forty, and Fremont had just passed his twenty-fourth birthday. For that big fool's approval, Fremont was expected to throw away a good career and sentence himself to a life in cells and prison camps. That was madness.

Well, Fremont decided, he had jeopardized his chevrons enough as it was. He had alienated de Kolloch, who had previously been loftily friendly, and he was not too popular with his colleagues, who suspected him of siding with the unruly element among the privates.

There was no help for it, Guarnec would attack him some time. He knew the man's stubborn streak. And there was no way of avoiding him. A transfer at this time was unthinkable, with the company due to take the field. And, as Guarnec had talked loosely while drunk and the rumor had spread that he intended to "smack Fremont on the mug," it would seem like a flight.

One result was already felt. Before, Fremont had often declined an invitation to go to town for the evening, as he had to study. Moreover, he was trying to avoid drinking. But now, when he made that excuse, the others nodded knowingly—Guarnec!

"The man's always on my mind."

That thought irritated him.

And it seemed that everyone was pushing him forward, which was partly true. Legionnaires, privates and noncoms, are human beings with normal curiosity and a liking for spectacles. All were eager to see whether Fremont would be able to cope with Guarnec.

Fremont admired the Breton as a fighter, nevertheless felt that he could beat him. He was not as tall, not nearly as massive, but he was young and agile. He judged that Guarnec's bull-like strength was formidable against a partially drunken foe, a man who would stand and take it. But Fremont remembered that he had been baffled for five minutes by a wiry little sergeant of aviation, back in Algeria, who had made a bet that he would stay on his feet that long if only gloved fists were used.

"It's the gloves," Guarnec had explained later. "I can't get going with them on. Awkward, you know, like swinging your booted feet into bed. Bare-handed, I'd have smacked him in thirty seconds."

But there had been something else, too—the smaller man's skill and spirit.

"I'll let him swing on me," Fremont resolved, "duck it and knock him on his behind with a shove. By that time, they'll grab him, hold him. And I'll warn them that I'll make charges if he continues."

But Captain de Kolloch must have heard whispers of the threats made by Guarnec,

for he spoke to Fremont privately one afternoon.

"Don't like brawls. You understand? Undignified. Bad for prestige. Such things must be stopped at once. Handled according regulations. Other companies may permit. Their affair. Mine, no."

There was a pause.

"Yes, Captain."

"First gesture, arrest. Will back you. Nonsense must end. Too much talk. Sergeant loses fight—no sergeant."

That left Fremont no alternative: If he chose to fight, he must win or give up his chevrons—voluntarily, as the records would show it. They always gave a beaten sergeant a chance to resign his rank. Even if he won, de Kolloch might demote him as a disciplinary measure—for the captain was not Hirschauer, who rather liked to see his noncoms uphold their authority with their fists.

Otherwise, he must have Guarnec arrested after the first blow, without striking back. That would be called, "Striking a superior in public," probably combined with "verbal insults to a superior in public," which meant from two to five years in prison camp. In Guarnec's case, with his record, the maximum was sure. And five years for striking a noncom marked a man in the penal camps, and stretched to seven or eight.

That was the safe thing to do. In seven or eight years, Fremont would be beyond reach, a full lieutenant, perhaps a captain, if there should be enough active service available.

"What a selfish hog I'm getting to be," Fremont concluded. "Thinking of those years for myself. But what else can I do, short of ruining my chances?"

CHAPTER 3

THE usual resort of the noncoms was a small establishment with music and a dance floor, where a drink cost seven to fifteen francs. Legionnaires were not allowed into it without showing that they could pay, and thus an automatic selection occurred. There, Fremont was sure of not meeting Guarnec. But one evening, still early, one of his comrades suggested, "Let's go over to Lard-Tub's."

"No," someone else said. "It's full of privates."

And they all looked at Fremont, to see what his decision would be. The sergeant finished his iced drink slowly, half-smiled, mechanically tightened his belt.

"Oh, hell," he said rising, "you don't need to needle me. I'll come along." He swept them all—there were four sergeants with him—with a bleak smile. "I wouldn't deprive you of your fun."

"You're crazy, Fremont. Nobody's said a thing about you."

"But you've heard Guarnec was there. And you wanted to see if I'd go. You're my kindly, devoted comrades." He stilled their protests with a glance. "You want a row. I'll make it here, if you prefer."

He felt more like himself than he had in many years. He was saying what he wanted to say. A definite sense of pleasure gripped him. To a man who once had the taste, fighting is like a drug—harmful, perhaps, but exhilarating. They trooped out behind him, and he entered the *bobinard* first.

Things were very quiet. Legionnaires were lined on benches, elbows on tables, drinking quietly, wine and weak anisettes.

A Russian private was playing a mouth-organ, and even the mastiff chained in his corner seemed lulled by the melancholy tune.

Guarnec was not in sight, but he must be about, because some of his pals were present, the fellows he dragged in his train.

A brief pause, and the organ went on. The sergeants took a corner table, some distance away, and ordered bottled beer. The girls started to sing, to dance. In that spot, the noncoms were quality, wealthy customers.

One of the Legionnaires had arisen and gone through the rear door, to another branch of the house. Two minutes later, two others left, through the front door. Those were more cautious than curious.

One of the sergeants sent the musician a drink, and a request for a favorite song. Lard-Tub, with unerring instinct, was calmly stripping the bar of breakable stuff, stowing it on the shelves behind.

Then the rear door opened, and Guarnec entered the main room, followed by the Legionnaire who had gone to inform him of the noncoms' arrival. He had been advised to leave, evidently, for he was speaking in a loud voice. "Why should I? I'm where I belong."

He did not look over toward Fremont, but crossed the room and sat with his back turned. There was an argument going on between him and the others. One patted his shoulder several times, persuasively.

"The dirty hypocrites," Fremont thought. "They want him to jump me, but they're arguing against it to prod him on. They know him."

"Let's go," one of the sergeants whispered.

"Look out, I might fool you and go," Fremont informed him.

There was a long pause, which the musician did his best to fill with harmony.

Then, slowly, Guarnec rose. Before turning, he shoved his kepi to the back of his skull, unbuttoned the top fasteners of the white tunic. Then he came toward the table occupied by the noncoms, his face hard despite a broad smile, the muscles of his mouth twitching spasmodically.

"Slumming?" he asked, without saluting.

Fremont tensed. The wheels had started to go around, the cogs were meshed.

There was a ceremonial, almost a ritual precedent to violence. Men, being articulate animals, must talk.

"Nobody's asked you anything, Legionnaire," one of the sergeants replied.

"I'm asking you."

"Go on and sit down."

"I'm not tired."

For thirty seconds, he stood there silently. The sergeants had resumed conversing in casual tones among themselves. One of them was drumming the table in time to the music.

"Why are you here?" Guarnec resumed.

"Go on, beat it." The sergeant who acted as spokesman shrugged. "What do you want, a bottle of beer?"

Guarnec shook his head, and addressed Fremont.

"Are you mute tonight, kid? Or does this guy do your talking?"

"I can talk," Fremont assured him.

"That's good. Now, I'm talking to you. This is my hangout—you know it. I don't like you here. You know that, too. I give you five minutes to get out."

"And after that?" Fremont asked.

"After that, I'll toss you out."

"You're addressing a sergeant," another noncom spoke up.

"You're in the wrong place to pull that stuff," Guarnec said. "It's between me and Fremont. If you mix in, the others will mix in." Several Legionnaires had risen and were hitching up their belts. Fremont started to smile. This was one thing his colleagues had not figured upon, as they did not know Guarnec well, nor the intense devotion he could create in his followers. "Your chevrons count as far as the street door, not in here."

THERE was a tense wait. And right in the middle of things, the door opened: The patrol, six Legionnaires and a sergeant on duty, a big, handsome Swiss with a calm face and clear blue impassive eyes.

He entered the room, one hand passed through his belt.

"What's going on?" he asked, puzzled. "A guy just told me there was trouble in this dump. I see nothing."

His men had grounded arms, and were looking at the bottles longingly. They were forbidden to drink.

"There's no trouble, Heimoss," one of the sergeants said. "We were just leaving."

Guarnec looked around slowly, sneered. "Put up job, eh? You came a bit too soon." He evidently thought that Sergeant Heimoss had come according to a plan made by Fremont, to catch him in the act. "But if it's trouble you want, you'll be served—"

Fremont had known from his tone what he was about to do. But he had no time to dodge, as he had intended. Guarnec's left hand had gripped his shoulder, hoisted him erect from the bench, while the big right fist smashed out for his face. He contrived to move his jaw aside; the blow grazed his cheek. He fell back, jarred.

"Get him," Heimoss called out.

His men were well trained. Three of them pinned the Legionnaires, by presenting bayonet tips to their chests, three others dropped their guns and grappled with Guarnec. They held him, but even the triple impact did not knock him down. He was not even struggling.

"You've got it now, kid," he said. "A swell court-martial case. All complete and safe, with patrol and everything. And five witnesses that you gave me no provocation. Five years, easy. Smart work, eh?"

Fremont had straightened, pulled out from behind the table. He spat blood on the floor, because his lips were cut. Yes, it was exactly how it should be—there would be no more trouble. Guarnec was done for. All he had to do was to allow the patrol to take him away. No wonder Guarnec believed the episode carefully organized!

"You want to make a report?" Sergeant Heimoss asked.

Fremont made up his mind in a flash.

"A report? What for?" He addressed the men holding Guarnec: "Let go of him!" And, as they did not understand what he meant at once, he shouted loudly, "Let go of him, I tell you."

They obeyed, and Guarnec stared, bewildered, as Fremont swung. The punch caught him squarely on the jaw, and he marked the blow with a rather ludicrous bobbing, half-falling, his fingertips touching the floor. He rose, reeled back two steps, his mouth agape. He was half-stunned.

"The door, damn it, the door!" Fremont shouted. And the nearest man pushed it closed, locked it. Fremont was tearing off his belt, his tunic. He tossed them and his kepi into a corner. "Come on, you bum, you asked for it. I'll show you whether I have to ask help to handle you, you—"

"Eh," said Guarnec, "eh, kid—maybe—"

He was bewildered, startled beyond thought. By striking him back, Fremont had ruined his advantage. And by taking off his tunic, he was accepting the encounter man to man. It made Guarnec realize that he had done his former pupil an injustice, and made him hesitate long enough for Fremont to get another free shot at his jaw.

Again, he acknowledged the blow with that bobbing fall, but he rose with his arms up, guarding himself. He knew only one way to fight, to drive ahead, and he ran at Fremont. In theory, the sergeant knew what to do—dart aside and punch from a distance. But Guarnec was all over him in a flash, pounding with short, hard blows, grunting as he punched. Fremont was pushed back against a pillar; the impact knocked the breath from his body. Instinctively, he grasped the flying arms, wrestled. When he contrived to pull clear, dodge aside, he was startled to see that the Breton was laughing.

"Come away from that pillar—I don't want to brain you. Eh, what a boxer one has become. You act like an Englishman."

HE RUSHED in again, and Fremont caught him squarely between the eyes, a blow hard enough to crack a skull. But the sergeant, as the fists buffeted him, heard his laugh. He crouched lower, and struck for the body. According to all natural laws, the liver of a chap who drank as much as Guarnec must be sensitive. But it was like pounding a barrel.

How had that little aviator done it? It was foolish to stand toe to toe—he knew that—but when he broke ground, tried to get space to move about in, his legs struck benches, stools, or he bumped into the spectators, and always, that great mass was before him, surmounted by that grinning, bleeding face, and hard blows rained about his ears.

"He's playing with me, making it last," he thought.

His old admiration for Guarnec was still

strong—he did not believe it possible that he, Fremont, was standing up under those murderous smashes. Then, as they locked arms and struggled, he looked up, and saw, very near his eyes, the side of his adversary's neck and head. The veins stood out, the temples bulged, and he could hear the grinding of Guarnec's teeth as the man strained to pull away. The forehead was shining with sweat.

"He's feeling it, too!"

As always in a fight, his head was beginning to clear after a first fog, part pain, part anger. His body was attaining that light quality, as if it were detached from his brain, shocked and suffering far away. And his fear of Guarnec, for he knew now that deep within he had feared him, had gone. Guarnec was laughing and kidding, but he was trying, trying hard.

All right, come on again—lock his arms, that's it. Not bad, that time—only two or three socks that mattered. Funny thing that those did not hurt as much as the first. They did, but a guy didn't realize it. All right, again—now, he has the idea that when we break loose next I'll step back and wait, so—

Fremont leaped forward, bringing his right fist down in a chopping blow, in the hollow between the massive pectorals, just above the breastbone. Peculiar blow that, which he had perfected at one time, after someone else had struck him that way. It jars, seems to fold back the organs on each other. Sort of a compression feeling, maybe worse than a sock in the stomach. In the stomach? . . .

Why not? There.

Now, Guarnec was holding on, and he was strong. But not strong as you'd have thought from that bone-breaking handshake. No, Fremont had felt grips just as strong. Eh, Guarnec was not what he used to be. That's it, pal—put your arms around my shoulders, that's the idea—now, try with the left, then with the right in the armpit—there.

That's a dirty blow, and hard to shoot in, unless the other fellow is big, as big as Guarnec, and is foolish enough to clasp high. In the armpit, and another on the ribs just below. Sort of a funny laugh, now, eh, Guarnec?

"Come on, you big slob—"

"Coming!"

They paused and grinned at each other, hitched their trousers. Guarnec's nose was bleeding, and there was red smeared over his face, even into his hair. The left side of his face was swelling, and gave him a permanent wink. Then Guarnec rushed again—how did he do it? He looked slow and clumsy and he was on you before you could duck.

And then Fremont felt a jarring impact under his chin. The Breton had brought up his bent forearm sharply.

"So that's starting," Fremont thought. It was a nasty thing—two or three and you felt as if the top of your skull was flying off each time. Gave you a headache. A pain in his thigh, a blow with the knee. What was it?

A kick and the knee—

Like this—no, not quite. They were yelling all around, yelling. What about? Oh, Guarnec was bending over, bending over, pawing with his hands—one for the ear, that made the arm come up, so—and one for the jaw—

Guarnec was on all fours.

Fremont hurled himself upon him, struck him in the flank with one knee, rolled him over, punched at his head. Guarnec brushed off, and they scrambled across the floor like floundering fish, sliding and slipping on the tiles, each trying to rise first. The lamplight fell full on Guarnec's face—his mouth was open, gasping. You could not see that left eye any more.

But he could rush, still. Rush faster than Fremont could dodge. The sergeant felt his back against the pillar again, but this time Guarnec was not laughing, and gave him no respite. He had to get out of there himself, aside, a step to the right. What's the matter now—

Guarnec was craning his head to one side, peering around. Oh, he could not see Fremont, because Fremont, dodging to his own right, had reached his left side. Most convenient. And there you are—you're wanted downstairs in a hurry, Guarnec—there you go—

That one should settle you—right on the jaw!

Why, the dirty slob, you're stubborn, aren't you? Go down, go down, why, we must have been at this fifteen minutes, an hour.

Crying, now, are you? Crying with one

eye? Crocodile tears! You've cried before. I've seen you cry—afraid you're licked—

Down again—you won't rise this time, if I have to nail you to the floor. Now—

Guarnec had dropped to his side, arms sprawled before his face, one leg hunched up. There was something final about the way he fell, but Fremont had to make sure. One or two punches would not hurt. He leaped forward—

And that hunched leg distended, like the kick of a mule, aimed perfectly with Guarnec's one good eye. It caught the sergeant below the sternum. And Fremont was not hurled backward; the impulse of his body seemed just to match the drive of that muscular leg. Slowly, that leg bent back into position, Guarnec rolled on the flat of his shoulders, arms curved to protect his face against a possible counter-blow.

But Fremont was standing there, mouth open, shocked into unconsciousness. After two seconds, his legs folded, he sagged to the floor. Knees, elbow, head—his skull resounded with a sickening thump. Guarnec leaped to his feet and stepped forward.

But Sergeant Heimoss, pale and solemn, extended his arm across his chest. His already thick accent was thicker.

"No need, Legionnaire. You've won."

THE next morning, Fremont was allowed to leave the infirmary. The military surgeon told him, "You will feel pain for a while, but don't worry about it. There is no fracture. If you breathe again, that blow is seldom serious." And he nodded sagely, as if unaware of the humor of his remark. "You did a fine job on the other chap, if that's a consolation."

"Is he hurt?"

"Nothing broken. But he isn't pretty."

Fremont went to his quarters, eyes straight ahead. He passed acquaintances in the yard, but no one spoke to him.

Well, it was over. He had lost. Guarnec had beaten him in the end, as might have been expected. But he had been compelled to resort to a trick that he himself had said was reserved for small men against big ones. There was some satisfaction in that.

No one was in the room. Fremont ripped the stitches holding the chevrons in place on the cuffs. He wanted to weep. Three years' work gone for nothing, for an instant of pride, to save a fool from his folly. He was losing nine-tenths of his pay, many privileges—he would have to dispose of his small trunk, for instance. As an ordinary Legionnaire, he was entitled to a pack, that was all.

Where would he be sent? For they would not keep him in this company. Probably to some unit in Northern Morocco, or even to Algeria. Certainly not to an actively engaged outfit. And, away from action, promotion is very slow in the Legion.

He picked up the pen on the table, dipped it into the ink bottle, and methodically wrote out the necessary documents, which would save the need of a trial and official demotion. *Remise volontaire des galons*, they called this, voluntary surrender of chevrons. As if any man would give up nine-tenths of his pay without compulsion! Automatically, he dated the paper. Then he wrote:

REPORT

Sergeant Fremont, Andre-Jules, of the March Company, Tadla Battalion, concerning the voluntary surrender of his chevrons—

He lighted a cigarette thoughtfully when he was half through, and the tobacco stung the cuts on his lips. He rose to look at his face in the mirror, admired the purple and violet bruises. No, a guy with a mug like that could not stand before a section and give orders! That was the way with formalities—you saw their purpose, if you studied them a bit.

He signed firmly, underlining his last name, written a bit larger than the rest. De Kolloch liked that.

He went out again, crossed the yard for the second time, toward the office. Yes, the orderly said, the captain was in already. Fremont entered, took four brisk steps, paused, saluted. He handed the paper over. De Kolloch glanced at it.

"The expected document?"

"Yes, Captain."

"In order. Very neat." He swept Fremont from head to foot, scowled. "No right to remove chevrons. Application for surrender not yet approved. I approve it now." He rose crisply, like a figure on springs. For the first time in many days, Fremont saw him smile, as he offered his hand. "I understand you acquitted yourself credit-

ably against a noted expert. Congratulations."

Breathless, Fremont gripped the hand in silence.

"There was no other way out. I understood that as well as you did. But each one to his job, eh? Do not be discouraged; this is merely a short postponement."

"Where will I be transferred, Captain? I'd like—"

"That's arranged. Document prepared." De Kolloch sat down, signed a paper, stamped it with the official seal of his company. "There you are. You may leave. Good luck."

Outside, Fremont looked at his transfer. He was puzzled.

"Legionnaire Fremont is placed at the disposal of Captain Hirschauer, commanding Tadla Battalion. Field equipment. Baggage may be left with company stores. To take effect immediately."

Less than an hour later, he was interviewed by Hirschauer. The old officer rose, closed the door himself, gestured for Fremont to sit down, pushed a box of cigarettes near him. Then he walked up and down, hands locked behind his back.

"You're lucky, Fremont, very lucky. I have a debt to discharge. When I heard about your case—I mean, Guarnec and you—I thought, here's my chance.

"I'm Alsatian. I ran away from home at sixteen, to avoid serving in the German Army. You couldn't wait too long, as their police watched you when you neared military age. I lied like a good one and passed for eighteen, entered the Legion. I come from good farming people, peasants, honest, hard-working. For me, too, there was a Guarnec. By another name—an Alsatian, like myself. He's dead now. Because of him, I took nineteen years to get my commission, yet when I heard of his death, I was heartbroken."

Hirschauer remained silent for minutes.

"A captain straightened me out. So, I fix it up for you. You are transferred to another regiment. But that regiment has just sent a company up this way. You enter that company, nominally. But you are immediately attached to special duty. *Groupe-franc* for the coming campaign."

The *groupe-franc* is an independent outfit recruited from various units for especially dangerous missions. Fremont knew that the next few months would not be devoid of excitement.

"Captain Jacot is in charge. Report to him. By the end of the coming show, you'll be a sergeant again, or dead. You may leave."

CHAPTER 4

ONLY a fourth of the special group was composed of Legionnaires. There were a number of Frenchmen from colonial regiments, a few Moors from the *Tirailleurs* and two giant blacks from a Senegalese unit. Sergeants, corporals and privates, there was not a man in the lot who did not have a few citations for bravery, not one who had not been wounded.

Captain Jacot showed four rows of ribbons on his tunic. He was so small that one wondered how he had contrived to enter the service. Soaking wet, he could not have tipped the beam at one hundred and twenty-five. His soft voice and his shy manner were a bit amusing. But given a couple of scores of resolute men at his back, equipped with trench knives, clubs and hand grenades, and he was in his element.

"He is the devil," the native soldiers claimed.

He received Fremont coldly. "You are here by special favor. Hirschauer tells me you have guts. Don't make a liar out of him."

Compared to him, de Kolloch was warmth itself. And as for discipline, there was none exacted, so far as outside conduct was concerned. A man's scrapes were his own if he managed to settle them. But when in the small camp which Jacot had established near the town, the men were his slaves. He had achieved that miracle—there was alcohol, for use in emergencies, and it was untouched.

"No one goes out tonight," Jacot would say. And no one went out. There was no need to set sentries and spies. No one disobeyed the captain.

"You want to be careful when on a job," a raw-boned Frenchman warned Fremont. "He'll blow your brains out if he even thinks you're flinching. I've seen him do it—two years ago, up around Ascerdoun. A volunteer from the Spahis, a sergeant who had turned in his chevrons to be with us.

Thought himself tough. Well, he started cracking as we were lying in wait for a gang of raiders. He coughed and gave away the show two minutes too early. The guys beat it. And Jacot, who had recognized the sound of the other's voice, called him forward, put a bullet right through his skull. Never said a word about it, before or after."

Fremont exchanged his boots for sandals soled with strips of tire rubber, his tunic for a *gandoura* and his kepi for a turban. When the special group gathered, it appeared more like a band of Barbary pirates than an organized army unit. When the captain had anything to say, the men did not line up, but formed a circle around him.

Jacot would give his instructions slowly, clearly, shifting from one tongue to another without hesitation, French, Arabic, German, Russian. He might not speak all of them grammatically, but he could make himself understood.

He had instituted peculiar drills, which Fremont attended with the others. Approaching a given point on one's stomach, for instance, and hitting a given target with a grenade from a prone position. The captain supervised, sneering, criticizing, never praising. If a man did well, what wonder? It was his job—and in an emergency, his life. Fremont heard him reprove a man once for not covering himself properly. The second reproof was a stone in the face, flung with unerring aim at a distance of thirty feet.

"See what I mean now? If that had been a bullet, you'd be dead. Keep your damn head down—follow the heels of the man ahead of you."

One evening, at dusk, mules were brought into the special group's encampment. The men who fetched them were sent away, and Jacot assigned the animals to his own followers.

"If anyone can't ride, he had best drop out now," he said. "After we've started, no excuse will be accepted. If your behind gets sore, I don't want to hear about it. Line up for supplies."

The men received two hundred and fifty rifle cartridges, one hundred revolver or pistol cartridges, hand grenades, reserve rations for one week.

"Everyone here tonight," Jacot snapped.

At one in the morning, he awakened his men. They started out astride the mules. No one but the captain knew the destination, the goal of their mission.

At dawn, after a strenuous trip through the hills, they camped in a wood. No fires were permitted; the men were forbidden to smoke, to sing, to talk above a whisper. Jacot gave the example. He sat all day in one spot, never moving. It was dull, this patient waiting. After nightfall, Jacot gave a brief order, and they were on the move once again.

Fremont had gone on patrols in the region, and he had a map. He picked up landmarks, tried to keep track of their progress. He knew that the captain was avoiding villages and frequented trails, noted that he never marched his men along a crest.

"We've passed into the hostile zone," he informed one of his comrades.

"I wouldn't wonder," the other agreed. "By the way, hide that map and don't let the captain hear you discussing our direction. I forgot to tell you something—he does the thinking. All we've got to know is that we're moving, and that we'll have a dirty job to do at the end."

On the third evening, they only marched from twilight to midnight.

"We'll stop for three hours," Jacot announced. "Better get some sleep." He paused. "We're surrounded by hundreds of natives. Those of you who feel you can't get along without a smoke, use a blanket. I saw two matches flare last night. I said nothing. Tonight, I'll act."

Fremont was on sentry duty. He huddled against a tree, peering into the darkness. When he glanced behind, he could see the dim bundles made by the sleeping men. Once he started! The captain had come up noiselessly; he touched the Legionnaire's shoulder, vanished again.

At two forty-five, Captain Jacot gave the signal to rise, a soft note, low and melodious, on the tin pipe serving him for a whistle. The men gathered around him for instructions.

"Four of you must remain here with the mules. A squadron of Spahis will be sent to pick you up. If you are attacked, or the cavalry fails to show up by ten in the morning, try to get the animals back into our lines. Here is a sketch showing this spot and the probable emplacements of our positions at dawn. I know it will be a hard task to handle so many animals, but it must

be done and I count on you not to lose any." He named the four who were to remain. And so strong was his prestige that not one of those chosen uttered a word of protest, although they knew that they would have hard work and no glory.

"The time has come to outline our mission. The rest of us will proceed northeast, to take a fortification from behind. We will attain our starting position at five-fifteen, and wait there for the first firing. A battalion, mixed Legion and *Tirailleurs*, will make a frontal attack and occupy the defenders. We must climb the rear wall undiscovered, cross a sort of courtyard, and scale a second wall—the riflemen will be in pits dug below those walls, some distance from them.

"This surprise attack by our group is judged necessary because of the presence with the natives of a brace of renegades, deserters from the Legion, and the reported presence of two to five automatic rifles of comparatively recent make—we are sure of a Madsen automatic being there. Our main objective, consequently, will be to render those guns useless, by capture if possible, by destruction with grenades in any case.

"It is possible that our presence around here is known and our purpose guessed, for native emissaries are known to circulate in our zone. A counter-surprise may be planned against us. In that event, and no matter the danger, drive forward—if you are forced to shelter, seek that shelter ahead. In no case retreat. Your sergeants have the usual instructions. If there is an order to retire, it must come from me.

"In case I am killed or too badly wounded to have my presence of mind, continue the original plan, the neutralizing and destruction of the automatics, to the end."

He gave the order to start.

THE first to go were two Moroccan infantrymen, the Senegalese and a French corporal. Five men, to clear the way silently in case outposts were encountered. Jacot followed on their heels and the others crept behind, single file, by combat groups. Most of the men were veterans of that sort of work, and those who were new, Fremont among them, were placed between experts.

Counting Jacot, there were thirty-seven men in line, all carrying weapons, canteens, equipment. But there was not a sound that could have been heard twenty yards away. They sped along like ghosts, so quietly that Fremont found himself doubting that he was accompanied. But, now and again, came the touch of a hand from the chap ahead, warningly—a hole, or a log across the path, a boulder to be circled, caution!

And Fremont would hold out his left hand then, until the man following him touched it. Jacot, or whoever was really leading, had a phenomenal instinct for finding covered spots. Even on a dark night, moving silhouettes can be distinguished on crests, so they sought ravines, gullies.

"Five minutes' rest."

The whisper came down the line. Fremont passed it on, then squatted, trying to breathe harder, to distend his lungs. The pace was telling on him, and the nervous tension was probably even more tiring. The straps and slings caught his body in a web of leather and canvas, chafed and burned. He was reminded that he had not worn an ordinary harness for many months. This made him think of his lost chevrons, and of Guarnec.

If he were killed tonight, it could be traced directly to the Breton. Directly to that time, far in the past, in Sidi-bel-Abbes, when Guarnec had taken his part against the German bully. But if one undertook to analyze destiny, one could plunge back into past centuries, to find cause and effect. To take into account what had made him, Fremont, what he was, and the things that had gone to form the man known as Guarnec.

A jealous cop in a Coast village in Brittany—and Fremont found himself in the darkness of the Moroccan hills!

"Pass the word—get going—"

"Going."

A long spell of strain and silence. Another halt. Marching again. Far off, a village dog scented them and started to bark; other dogs joined in. A damn good thing dogs couldn't talk—their masters would quiet them, believing they were disturbed by a wild boar or a fox. The distant barking, nevertheless, had an ominous, heart-cramping sound.

"Halt. At ease."

The detachment spread out in a long line on the flank of a hill, behind a low lift of ground. They had arrived. There was

nothing to be done now, save wait for the signal to attack.

Fremont eased the straps, stretched out on his stomach, rested. But his hands touched the musette bag distended by the heavy grenades; the bayonet passed through his belt like a dagger, and the long, broad-bladed knife hung in a sheath fastened around his chest. With his Lebel carbine, his automatic pistol, he carried enough to kill hundreds of men, but he might not kill anybody. War is a wasteful business.

He thought of the deserters mentioned by Jacot. One of them must be Zurn, whom he had known well. A scrawny little fellow, not even considered fit to make a corporal. He had been caught stealing small change from his comrades, arrested. And he had escaped from jail, taken to the hills. There, that anonymous, under-sized Legionnaire had uncovered himself as a capable fighter. He was under sentence of death for sundry "murders."

Reports were probably exaggerated. One automatic rifle had become three, four, five. But it was certain that one was present, and likely to be provided with enough ammunition. Cases of cartridges for such weapons had been stolen from a convoy.

"Day."

Fremont thought of that word so hard that he imagined someone had shouted it. Yes, day was breaking. One by one, his comrades were emerging, darker shapes against the floating gray haze. And the bugles and trumpets resounded. The French expedition was at the appointed spot, at the appointed hour.

The thudding of a mountain battery, four guns popping one after the other, rhythmically. Then the first remote crackle of rifle fire, as the outposts came in contact. Gradually, the combat took shape, as new guns opened.

Very high, so high that their motors were heard like the humming of insects, five planes soared. They must have started from Meknes during the night, at about the same time as the special group had started the trip on foot. They passed overhead, and Fremont had a foolish impulse to wave.

Captain Jacot came to speak to the sergeant of Fremont's group. When he crouched he grew so small that it made one smile. But there was nothing ludicrous in the expression of his face. He was not pleased.

"The swine, the heavy-footed swine," he said, speaking of the infantry. "Supposed to be up here by this time. Suppose some reinforcements come up for the natives in the dump up there, and see us? That'll be pretty. What are they waiting for?"

"Never can tell," the man questioned replied calmly. "Never can tell, Captain." And when the officer had darted elsewhere, he laughed softly. "Always the same—he can't stand the last few minutes. Gets like a cat that smells fresh liver."

At last, rifles started to crack not very far off. Jacot put the tin pipe to his lips, blew one note: *Attention.* And he gestured: *Fix bayonets.*

The blades were unsheathed and fastened to the rifles. These were not the long blades of the infantry, but short, thick slabs of steel, as solid as hunting knives.

Jacot swung his arm high, forward, hand extended.

THEY rose and trotted after him. When they emerged from the hollow, they saw their goal before them, not two hundred meters away. A square, massive fortress of dingy brown walls, surmounted by a watch-tower, the whole evoking pictures of feudal castles.

No one was in sight—probably all the defenders were facing the approaching infantry on the opposite side. There was an arched gateway, but the portals were of thick oak, barred with heavy irons. There was no hesitation, scarcely a pause. The bigger of the Senegalese backed against the wall; another man used his joined hands for a stirrup, stood on his shoulders. And the little captain, like the star of an acrobatic team, scrambled up, knelt on the shoulders of the second man, placed his hands on the wall, and hoisted himself upon it.

It had been so well, so rapidly done that Fremont felt like applauding. Jacot had hooked a piece of steel over the wall, dropped a knotted rope. A few men followed him, lowered other ropes. In three minutes, the whole detachment was on top of the guard-wall, about three feet wide.

Fifteen feet below was a large courtyard. It was absolutely empty, which Fremont

thought strange. Busy as the defenders were with the attackers, surely some of them must be about. Captain Jacot himself was uneasy, it was evident, for he scanned the walls, the loopholes, for a long minute before giving the signal to carry on. All trotted after him down an incline to the yard.

Jacot did not shout, did not speak, but he kept waving his hands palm outward, motioning for his men to keep spread out. He was white, and his face was twitching.

He lifted his hand again—and before he brought it down to indicate the direction a ripping discharge hammered. The air was filled with sound, with the whine of metal, and the multiplied impacts crackled against the wall like hail.

"Come on!" Jacot screamed.

He headed straight for the wall from which the shots came. It was, in fact, the safest course, for there was no cover in the yard, the doors were barred, and it would have been madness to run back upon the inclined way to drop to safety outside. Well, Fremont thought as he galloped with the rest, we know there's one automatic here!

He gained that wall, hugged it. And, from the opposite side came other detonations. But those were from rifles and carbines. Nevertheless, the special group was caught here, like rats in a barrel. There were seven or eight men lying in the yard, in the open, who had lost the race.

Jacot, darting about faster than any of them, was the coolest. He was throwing grenades at a window, a window from which the automatic fired. The first two fell back, exploded, the third went in. The majority of the men, backed against the wall, were answering the rifle fire from the other side.

"Blow in that door—knock it in!" Jacot cried. He literally threw himself on it, fought it, as if he believed he could smash it down with his puny weight. "Knock it in! No use blowing the lock—it's bolted—"

An elongated, dark-faced French private pushed the officer aside. He had a short-handled sledge in his hands. With the fatalism of his kind, he turned his back to the bullets, swung that metal club as calmly, deliberately as if working in a machine-shop. One of the thick planks soon splintered, broke, and Jacot tossed two grenades through the hole.

Then he reached in and jerked loose the inner bars. The way was open and one by one the raiders leaped in. Twice, those inside had to clear the doorway of a corpse, for the marksmen across the way were concentrating their fire on that one spot, which all must pass.

Then the door was masked again with planks taken from a pile inside. In the scant light slanting from a loophole, the survivors took stock of the situation: They were twenty-two standing, three of them wounded. It was idle to be concerned about those outside, the fallen. They were dead, for the natives fired at anything that moved. Twenty-two live men in here, and five corpses—the two dragged in, and three Moors, killed by the grenades.

IN THE sudden hush, the first sound of which Fremont became aware was the captain's laughter. Jacot was laughing, almost giggling. Perhaps it was his way of weeping. There was blood on his hands, blood on his face. His kepi had been knocked off, and his round skull was covered with a reddish growth, cropped short.

"There's only one automatic in this place," he announced. "If there had been another, it would have been across the way. They skewered us good, didn't they?" He took out a case, lighted a cigarette with his bloody fingers. "And, my lads, that automatic is right above us, trapped." He laughed once more. "And as long as we keep it busy, it's neutralized, isn't it? How does one get up?"

There was a crudely made ladder in a corner, leading up to a trap-door. There was an iron loop hanging down. Without hesitation, Jacot stepped up, passed one of the climbing hooks through the metal ring. "Two of you hang on to the rope and hold the door down, eh—in case they have grenades and feel tempted to toss them down."

True, had a grenade been thrown into that crowded room, it would have caused considerable damage. Two of the largest men grabbed the rope.

"Nice job," Jacot resumed, placidly. "They knew we were coming, after all. So they set this nice trap for us. Their only mistake was in overestimating the efficiency

of that automatic. They believed they could cut down the lot of us in a minute. Doesn't work that way. Now—"

"They're trying to lift that trap, Captain," a man said.

"Don't let them," Jacot smiled. "Quiet—someone is calling."

They grew silent. And they could hear very clearly: "Captain—Captain Jacot."

"Present."

"You're helpless," the other continued in fair French. "Drop your weapons and go out one by one, and no harm will be done you. There is no need for more killing now."

"Eh, eh—" Jacot called back. "Now that it's your turn, you want to quit. I make the same proposition, my friend. Drop your weapons and come down one by one, and no harm will be done to you. Not immediately. But you most certainly will be executed before nightfall."

"Your people have gone back. We can see over the wall from here. I give you my word—"

Jacot pointed his automatic at the approximate spot from which the voice issued, fired. Immediately, retaliating shot splintered the wood. The men dodged aside, like people avoiding splashing mud from a passing car.

"You know what that man's word is worth," the captain said. "We'd be massacred as soon as we were in the yard. Now, two of you pick up that pole—right—prop it under the trap. I'll get on the ladder—so. Pass me two grenades. Mahoud. Thank you." He was speaking in a low voice. "When I count three, the guys at the ropes ease up, the guys with the plank shove up. Ready. One, two, three—"

The trick was performed perfectly. The edge of the trap-door rose a few inches, suddenly. Jacot rolled in the grenades, grasped the rope and swung off the ladder, adding his weight to the pull of the two men below. He had not alighted when two dull detonations resounded above; then, as the sounds passed out of the building and returned through the loophole opening on the yard, the room was filled with noise, while loosened dirt rained from the ceiling and thick dust floated about.

Then silence, stunning silence.

One of the men started to cough chokingly, and foolishly went to the loophole for air. One of the waiting snipers across the way put a slug through his skull. Twenty-one now, Fremont kept score. Two men masked the opening with a plank. That shut out most of the light and they stood in the obscure room, waiting, waiting.

Plop . . . plop . . . plop, plop . . . plop . . .

"What's that?" a man whispered.

Jacot flashed the beam of a small electric torch on the floor, in the direction of the sound. There were damp spots on the beaten earth, and looking up, they saw blood seeping through the crack of the door, sliding, widening for five or six inches of dark stain, gathering into brilliant red globules that swelled, sagged and dropped —*plop, plop!*

"Somebody's caught a hunk," Jacot announced. "Let's see what the upstairs tenants have to say." He climbed on the ladder, knocked with the muzzle of his pistol. "Eh there, how are you making out?"

They waited anxiously for several seconds.

"Mahoud, another grenade. Same business, my lads. One, two—"

Fremont admired the little fellow. He was taking a chance that the moment the trap-door rose rifles and pistols would fire through the opening, blast his head to bits at a range of two feet. At three, the edge jerked up, Jacot flung the missile. The panel slapped down; they heard the explosion.

"There was extra weight on it this time, Captain," one of the men at the plank offered. "Probably a stiff."

"They can't hide a thing from you, eh?" Jacot smiled cheerfully. "*Eh bien,* we can't stay here forever. I'm going up there to see what's what. Push hard at the signal. One—"

"Captain, please—" A round-headed little chap pushed forward. "Let me go first. If I am killed, it doesn't matter much. The rest need you."

"They must," Jacot agreed, grinning down. "Look how superbly I have led them so far! Thank you. I appreciate the thought. Come on, one—two—three!"

AS SOON as the trap-door lifted, he bounded up the last rungs, firing fast. He disappeared for two seconds; then his face bent over the opening. "Consoli-

date that door down there, and let a few come up."

Fremont was fourth in line. The room he entered had been used as a storage place for grain. Sacks of wheat, of rice, of lentils, were piled against the walls, leaving a small square free in the center. There were three loopholes, two in front and one at an angle. Through this last, it was possible to see over the outer wall, toward the French lines.

"This is a mess," Jacot said with disgust.

There had been three men up here. The grenade explosions had mangled them. Underfoot was a reddish mud, formed by grain leaked from the burst sacks, by water from the perforated skins hanging from the ceiling, by blood. Two of the dead were Berber mountaineers. The third, although garbed as they had been, was a European. This one had died near one of the loopholes, his hands holding the Madsen automatic.

"Trying to shove it out so we wouldn't get it," one of the Frenchmen said with awe. "Managed to toss out all the ammunition down to the yard. Look, the boxes are emptied."

"Had guts, eh," Jacot nodded approvingly. "Slide this meat downstairs. Let's see what we can do. Two men at the loopholes, and try to make the chaps across the way realize we have good shots on our side. Fremont—" He held out his hands. "Pour some of that water over my hands, won't you?"

He washed his fingers, wiped them on his neckcloth. Then he produced a notebook and a pencil, started to sketch. "The wall here, door here. Let's see—the guard-path must pass just back of this wall—" He pointed his pencil at the rear partition. "Get tools and knock a hole through. I don't intend to stay here doing nothing."

The room, fifteen wide and perhaps twenty long, was as crowded as a cafe on pay-night, noisier than a machine shop. The men at the loopholes were firing often, and a crew of four men was breaking down the rear wall, with crowbars, the sledge and small trenching tools. The surface plaster was knocked off, and the porous native cement crumbled to dust. The flat stones, the loose bricks, were passed from hand to hand, dropped below.

"Eh, Captain, look," the man at the angle loophole called. "Ain't that pretty?"

In the distance, the infantry sections were advancing against the mountain tribesmen. It was the first time that Fremont had seen an attack by the Legion from the other side, from above. He wanted to cheer at the precision, the orderliness of it all, the rising of the lines, the swift advance, the pause for breath, which brought other sections on their feet, doubling forward.

Fremont was leaning over the captain's shoulder, breathing hard. The officer looked at him, smiled. "Does something to you, eh, Legionnaire? Can you pick your own lot? Are they in sight?"

Fremont nodded. Instinctively, he sought for the man who had taken the place that would have been his. He grunted with satisfaction: His fellows were all right, they had drawn big Joulie for a sergeant. Couldn't mistake that guy—he ran like a loping horse.

The staccato discharge of an automatic much nearer than those of the Legion suddenly pierced the din. Out there, that sound acted like a signal. The entire line of advance went down, hugged the ground.

"Light machine-gun, Maxim," Jacot guessed.

"Spanish automatic, Captain," one of the men corrected. "I was a machine gunner in the Spanish Legion. Can't mistake it. Good gun, but heats quick."

"How's that hole coming along?" the captain asked.

"We're through, Captain, but there's a drop on the other side." The laborers paused as Jacot fell on all fours, plunged into the hole. He emerged, dusted his hands. "About eight feet to the guard wall, aisle below, fifteen feet deep. Get a couple of planks up here, while you widen the hole a bit." He grinned. "It's big enough for me, but some of the mastodons would get stuck."

Outside, the automatic had stopped suddenly.

"What did I tell you? She heats."

"Maybe they have nothing to shoot at."

THE planks were being shoved up from below. They were hard to swing about, as they were ten or eleven feet in length, while the ceiling did not give more than seven feet clearance and the trap-door opened the wrong way for an easy slide

into place. There was much grunting and scuffling, shifting of sacks. With the marksmen forced to stand aside from the loophole, the enemy had a clear field, and slugs whined in, smacked on wood, coughed noisily into sacks.

"There she goes. Watch it—right—a bit this way."

Two planks were pushed out, cautiously. One dropped, over-balanced, to the aisle below. The other, carefully propped at their end, pushed farther and farther, reached the wall, rested securely. It was only six inches in width, but Jacot scrambled across it like a squirrel. He squatted to give instructions to those behind.

"Three men stay in the room downstairs, guard door. Six men in upper room. The others come here."

Fremont stooped low, crawled through the hole in the wall. Between the building captured by the raiders and the pathway along the outer wall, there was a gap of perhaps ten feet and a drop to the narrow yard below of over twenty feet. He engaged himself on the narrow, sagging plank. He was afraid it would break. He weighed nearly one hundred and ninety pounds; his uniform, rifle, and equipment must weigh more than another fifty.

Jacot reached out, caught him by the collar and dragged him on. "Come on, come on—" Fremont stood up, safe on the wall, and the next man was already arriving. It was strange to be in the open, comparatively safe, with the clear sky above, and clean air to breathe.

"Next, next—" Jacot called impatiently.

"Captain," a voice replied out of the hole, "you said three below, six above. There are two badly wounded."

Jacot laughed.

"Of course. I'm always under the impression my men are immortal. Well, you chaps inside hold out. Come on, lads, we have a machine-gun to neutralize."

He scuttled along the pathway, a little guy, full of hell.

The comparative calm did not last a minute. The architecture of the fortress allowed a clear field to snipers in the other wing at one point, a scretch of fifteen to twenty yards visible to them across flat-roofs between higher structures. Whether Jacot missed this or disregarded it, he did not stop. For three strides, he went untouched, then he stumbled, recovered, ran on, to slide to his face just short of masking walls.

Instinctively, Fremont had dodged back when the first bullets greeted him. The others crowded behind him and watched the captain. They thought him killed. Other slugs were flaking the bricks near him. Then they heard his voice.

"Come ahead, you swine! I said, cover forward, always."

Fremont mechanically slapped the top of his kepi to hold it in place and sprinted across. He believed the officer would rise, that he had been playing dead for the benefit of the others, but he huddled him and reached shelter. He was but four or five yards away.

"You hit, Captain?"

"What the devil do you think I'm staying here for?"

Another man was bounding across, leaping like a kangaroo. He was drawing the bullets, so Fremont rushed out, lifted the captain and carried him back. They laid him down again.

"Right leg, Legionnaire," Jacot indicated.

Fremont slit the leg of the trousers, bared the wound. The bullet had gone through the muscular part, missing the bone. A first-aid bandage was applied. And while this was carried on, the raiders were rushing across one by one.

"Help me up," Jacot said.

Fremont picked him up under the arms, set him on his feet. Jacot hobbled two or three steps. "I can walk a bit. I'll hang on to you, Fremont. Are we all here?"

"All but Charmont, Captain. I don't know whether he was hit or not, but he fell off. I looked down—he isn't moving."

Jacot hobbled on Fremont's arm.

"Stupid business, the human body," he grumbled. "A hole the size of a ten *sous* piece anywhere, and you're washed up." The captain shivered. Suddenly, he fell. Without releasing his grip on Fremont's sleeve, his body swung forward. Even that will of iron could not overcome pain and loss of blood. He had fainted.

FREMONT hesitated. Should he leave the officer here?

If some prowling natives found him first, they would murder him, torture him. The Legionnaire

picked up the automatic pistol, slipped it in a pocket of his breeches. Then he lifted the little man in his arms. The first few steps were easy; then the task grew harder. When he caught up with the others, he was wet with perspiration, almost nauseated from fatigue.

They had stopped at an angle of the defensive wall. To go farther would have brought them under fire from the opposite wing. Here, they were safe, for the walls rose sheer and it was not possible to fire upon them at that sharp angle. Fremont knew why—this construction dated back to the days of flintlocks, had not been planned to allow for firing at long range.

Down below, plainly visible in their rifle pits, were the Berbers. Not one of them granted the wall behind a single glance. They had not been informed. Moroccans, although fierce natural fighters, have little sense of organization, and their liaison service was non-existent. Each man had probably left it to someone else to carry news to the fighting pits.

"What do we do now?" asked one of the raiders.

"I'll try to bring Jacot around," another man said. He poured cognac between the captain's teeth, from a small, leather-covered bottle found on the officer. "That's it, Captain, take it easy."

Jacot opened his eyes, sat up. Then he hoisted himself erect by clutching Fremont's shoulder. "You brought me? Won't forget it. Let's see—" He slumped against the parapet, peered over. "Where's that automatic?" He had not lost sight of his mission. "Should be somewhere close. Isn't that it, Fremont? Somehow I can't see clearly."

The Legionnaire followed his indications. "Yes, Captain."

"It's all of fifty yards—too far to throw grenades. Where's the rifle grenadier?" When no one answered, the officer understood. "One of the casualties. Somebody should have thought to bring his gear along, *tromblon* and grenades."

"Killed in the yard, Captain. No one was thinking of anything much then."

"Four of you will have to go down. We might kill off a few from here, but they'd get that gun away and use it elsewhere. Fremont, pick three men."

It was death, down below. They might surprise the gunners, but the others would close in fast. Fremont saluted, nodded vaguely at the nearest men. One of the soldiers carried a coil of rope. This was made fast around a jutting stone along the crenelated crest.

"We'll help you out from here as much as we can," Jacot said as Fremont started down. The Legionnaire landed lightly, held the rope for the others.

"Eh, what dopes!" one man remarked. "They haven't spotted us yet. We could have brought artillery."

"How often do you look behind you when you're in action?" another cut him short, with a sneer. "Those guys are all right. They think the others would tip them off."

"Get down," Fremont ordered. He fell on all fours. "Come on."

His mind was working fast. He had a plan, a plan that would not attract much attention from those not immediately concerned. Using grenades would be foolish. Too noisy. And he knew why the snipers within had not sent out a messenger—there was the courtyard to cross, under fire of the French raiders. Some of those boys in the upper room were fine shots, and a runner would not have much chance to get as far as the gate.

The Moroccans inside were in the same plight as the raiders had been. They had had a fine plan, which had miscarried. And, in war, when a plan miscarries, it is most difficult to control subsequent events.

Halfway to the automatic's position, Fremont looked back and saw that one of the men held a grenade ready to throw. He shook his head, tapped the knife. Use the blade. The fellow grinned understanding.

The fusillade was very near now; one could distinguish the occasional sharp clang of a breech snapped shut. That was all very fine—the busier they were looking the other way, the better all around.

Fremont pushed himself up on his elbows. He was very near his goal, ten or twelve feet away. There were five men in the pit, one evidently directing fire, another at the gun, one holding magazines ready. Two others sat behind that group, filling extra magazines.

The gunner was not firing steadily. He would let loose two or three questing shots,

exchange some words with the man peering over the heap of dirt before the hole.

FREMONT gathered himself, then leaped. The second bound landed him inside the pit. He planted the knife in the center of the first man's back, whipped it free and grappled with the gunner. The surprise was complete; there was little shouting. Struggling men saved their breath. Fremont got rid of his second man with an upward drive under the ribs. He distinctly felt the resistance of the coarse cloak, then the soft, greasy slide of the metal in flesh.

The others were already straightening, with tense, mirthless grins on their faces. The bodies were pushed aside. Fremont examined the weapon—Spanish. But the mechanism was not a problem for a man accustomed to firearms.

"Take a look at that."

Fremont turned and saw one of his men pointing at an arm jutting from the piled bodies. It bore a blue and pink tattoo, interlocking hearts with *Frieda* and *Augustus* written above and below. It was the first man killed, the one Fremont had knifed from behind. It had been Legionnaire Zurn.

"Hear you got broke from sergeant," the other fellow remarked. "They'll give you back your chevrons for this. The native intelligence people had a reward of two hundred *douros* for his head."

"A man in uniformed service can't collect, though," another declared. "Ain't that a shame?"

Fremont looked behind, to signal the men on top of the wall not to reveal their presence. And he understood why the men in the pits had not discovered them—one had to get halfway out of the deep trenches to obtain a clear view.

The rifle firing swelled in volume. Fremont propped himself up, peered down the slope. The Legionnaires were coming on again; the lull in the automatic's firing had encouraged them. At the same moment, a terrific shock made him breathless; the air screamed. When he recovered, he explained to the others: The mountain battery had had the emplacement spotted and were trying to put the automatic out of business.

A scuffling above, and a half-naked man in a dark-brown cloak dropped into the pit. He had no time to shout, no time to raise his hands. Three knives struck him at the same time.

"A runner, coming to see what was the matter here—the gun hasn't fired," Fremont suggested. "Don't let them worry, it will fire."

He had widened the embrasure with his hands, so that he could swing the muzzle of the gun to the right, to enfilade a half dozen pits garnished with riflemen. They were some distance down the slope, probably the better to cover this place. Fremont adjusted the sights, crouched behind the automatic. A tentative squeeze of the firing lever to test the range, a bit short—and he emptied a magazine into the first hole at full speed.

"Look at that, will you! Look—"

The riflemen had been killed at their posts, so swiftly that those in the next pit had noticed nothing. They must have heard the firing of the automatic, but as it had fired from time to time all morning, they had paid no particular attention to it. Fre-

Conquering Deserters

by HARRY WIDMER

IN 310 B.C. the northern Africans cast their dubious lot with Agathocles, the tyrant of Syracuse, to overthrow the mighty yoke of Carthage. The Africans soon lost their fervor when Agathocles was badly mauled by the armies of Carthage. One night several thousand Africans decided to desert and go over to the Carthaginians. And on this particular night the Carthaginian camp took fire.

In the midst of their fire fighting, the harried Carthaginians mistook the advancing African deserters for the spearhead of a Syracusan attack. Wild panic broke out in the Carthaginian camp. In the blind terror of their headlong flight 5000 Carthaginians were burned to death, fell off cliffs or killed each other.

The African deserters, seeing that the fleeing Carthaginians wanted no part of them, figured that they might as well go back to their own camp. But the Syracusan camp, seeing the deserters coming, mistook them for attacking Carthaginians. The Syracusans, in turn, fled in wild panic, leaving the puzzled, still friendless Africans masters of the field.

mont corrected the aim, opened fire again full blast.

But this time, one of the occupants saw the dirt flying before his face, turned around, understood where the murderous volley came from. He was out of the hole in a flash, racing for the next one, howling. Fremont sought to bring him down, but he dove headlong into the pit, and all the others ducked from sight.

Meanwhile, one hundred and fifty yards of the defense line was completely out of action. Well trained troops are quick to sense anything of the sort, and the Legionnaires came galloping into the safety zone.

They were so near that the artillery had suspended fire. Their first grenades started to burst very close, and one of the men with Fremont lifted himself into the open, hands raised, shouting, "Friends! France!" and the Legion section swerved, doubled toward the gateway of the fortress.

"Take this over," Fremont ordered the man next to him.

He emerged from cover, ran after the Legionnaires. Brief as his delay had been, the portals had been blown in, the Legionnaires were under the arcades, spilling into the yard. Fremont caught an officer by the arm.

"No grenades on the right—building held by special group!"

The other tore loose and ran on without looking at him. It was Hallez, his own lieutenant. Fremont sought for a man with a red cross arm-band, located one. "There's wounded officer up on the wall. Come along, I'll show you."

He was four or five minutes locating Jacot. Then he descended to the ground again. There was fighting throughout the buildings. The natives, trapped within by the unexpectedly quick final rush of the soldiers, had no thought of surrender. According to their tradition, when there was a battle, a man won, escaped or was killed. It is unlikely that after finding the yard strewn with French troopers' bodies, the Legionnaires offered them much opportunity to yield alive.

DETONATIONS echoed under the vaulted passages. Bodies were tossed to the yard from terraces. Captain de Kolloch was standing in full sight in the center of that yard, directing operations. When his ex-sergeant addressed him, he turned calmly, then started.

"Fremont—"

"At your service, Captain."

"Thought you dead." De Kolloch interrupted himself to shout orders, indicating with the light bamboo cane he carried in his gloved left hand. Then he turned to Fremont again. "Chaps in building said you dead. Fallen off wall, or such silly rot. You perfectly alive. Guarnec thinks you dead. Absolutely crazed. Weeping. Really, weeping. Stubborn man, fine soldier. Shall cite him."

"Where is he?"

"With Third Section." The cane lifted, straightened. That way. Third Section, eastern wing, eastern guard-path. Careful —still fighting."

Fremont ran into the building. The stairways were swarming with men, slippery with blood. Isolated shots still thudded in some of the rooms, as hidden natives were discovered and dispatched.

"Third Section? Guarnec?"

"Over there. Don't know—first right turn—"

Fremont raced from one hall to another, in and out of rooms turned into shambles, shouting the same questions. Some obscure instinct spurred him—he must find Guarnec before harm came to him!

Forgotten were the events of the past few days, the fight, the special group and the adventures of the morning. His comrade, his brother, was grieving for him, crazy with rage at his death. Scattered corpses in a room, and a single Legionnaire there, a German kid, not nineteen, who had rested his bayonetted rifle, blade dripping blood, against a wall and was being comfortably sick.

"Guarnec?"

"In there." The boy recognized him and added: "Sergeant."

Fremont hurtled through a door, stumbled over a body. There were others, scattered on the thick rugs.

In an angle, seated on a leather cushion, elbows on knees, face between his hands, was Legionnaire Guarnec. Yves-Marie-Joseph. He was moaning and weeping. His rifle, with a broken butt and a twisted bayonet, was on the floor, and his thick-soled boots rested in a pool of blood. It

was he who had laid this room waste, slain the people in it, in one of his magnificent rages.

He looked up as he heard Fremont approach.

"Hello, kid," he said. "You here so soon?" He seemed dazed as he said that, Fremont was to recall. "You're here, but nothing has changed."

He wiped his cheeks with the back of his hand, then offered his fingers for the shake. His grip was nerveless.

"They told me you'd heard that I was dead."

"Oh. You aren't? I understand. One of the guys who was with you said he had seen you popped off the rampart, fall down."

"Somebody else."

"I guess so." Guarnec was silent for a time. "I wanted to see you, tell you I used a dirty trick to lick you. Maybe you're good; maybe I'm not what I was. But straight fighting, you were getting me. Captain Hirschauer called me in, when they let me out of the can, and he talked to me tough. Showed me where I'd been a slob, a hog. I think he's cock-eyed, kid. But if it looks that way to anybody, I agreed to cut it out."

Fremont leaned down and put his arms around the big man's shoulders.

"Don't worry, Yves. There's no harm done. If I want to go back into the company, I can. I got Zurn. That should be good for something. I suppose I looked like a conceited fool, with my chevrons and my worry. I lost them, and I didn't die. Listen, I'll take you around to my new captain, Jacot. We'll be together awhile, that way. And after—" Fremont faltered. After? It would be the same thing all over again. What was he going to do? Ask Guarnec to be his orderly?

"After nothing," Guarnec said shortly. "There'll be no after."

"Why?"

"That guy, over there, with the funny knife—" Guarnec indicated one of the bodies, a lanky, white-bearded warrior, who still held in his hand what Fremont recognized as a *yataghan,* an antique. "He was spry for such an old duck, and he sure could use that slicer. My butt was already bursted, so I guess I was kind of clumsy, too. I gave him a low jab, to bring that guard down, then straight. I got him, but he got me."

"Bad?"

Guarnec chuckled mirthlessly.

"Ripped me from the groin to the navel. A kid Legionnaire who came in stuffed bandages into my pants and put my sash over it. Then he went to get a doctor. But it's no use, when I stand up, my guts will drop out. The blood's leaking through. Look at it—"

He indicated the floor. Fremont shuddered, realized what had make the young soldier so white, so ill.

"They fix those wounds now," he said, nevertheless.

"Not this one, they won't," Guarnec said simply. "Stick around until the doctor comes, eh?"

"I'll stay with you—" Fremont started to say.

"Sure, I get it," Guarnec nodded. "Won't be so long, at that. I feel a little foolish though, about the guy being old." He looked up into Fremont's face, and his voice changed. "Listen, kid, don't let this throw you. I'm getting a break, getting a chance to talk. I was praying for that, just a chance to talk. To you. You be a good guy, like Hirschauer. That fellow knows what's what. De Kolloch is all right, but he's like—like a floorwalker. I'm thirsty, but I better not drink anything. Got any cigarettes?"

Fremont put one between his pale lips, lighted it.

"There isn't much more to say. I thought there was a lot more. You're all right, kid." Guarnec, whose hours were numbered, Guarnec, who was to die, looked thoughtfully at the tip of his cigarette, and resumed in his normal voice: "You should never have fallen for that trick. When a guy falls, watch if he protects his face when he drops. If he does, watch out..."

Fremont sat on the floor, smoking, and listening intently. You must take these things calmly, Guarnec had taught him long ago. If your heart was wrenched, you joked. It would be all one a century ahead. Meanwhile, if this was the way Guarnec wanted it, thus would it be. For the big man had nothing to will away, nothing—save his knowledge of fighting.

"Get it, kid?"

"Sure . . . *Go on, Guarnec!*"

THE LONGEST FIFTH OF A MILE

A FACT STORY

The thin, cold air burned with every gasp as they plodded upward, like souls in some frigid hell.

By ED DIECKMANN, JR.

"We are the lonely, who strove with Olympus,
We have been gods—how can we be men
Rooted to earth, to a peace-ridden valley?
Better to die than live earth-bound again!"
—E. C. Tovey

THE climber braced himself against the relentless wind. Though the squall of snow and sleet had blown over, the savagery of cold and wind at 26,000 feet was like the fury of a ravaged god.

Then, as he topped a crag, the mists cleared and he saw the summit of the mountain—three thousand feet above. And there on the ridge, less than 800 feet from that final pinnacle, he found what he sought: a human figure, black and tiny against the sky.

As the man stared, the figure moved slowly but strongly toward the tower of rock that loomed like a giant step between it and the slope to the summit. Then, while the tiny dot paused in the snow, a second figure appeared, fighting its way to the rock tower.

But suddenly, with the abruptness of a dropped curtain, clouds swept the scene from view. It was the last that N. E. Odell, or any other man, ever saw of those who strove for the peak. For the climbers on the ridge were two Englishmen named Mallory and Irvine; the giant they challenged was Everest, highest mountain in the world.

Even to this day the fate of dynamic George Leigh-Mallory, Cambridge lecturer, and of Andrew Irvine, young and powerful Oxford oarsman, is veiled in mystery. Though there are many who think they made it to the top that 8th day of June, 1924, only to fall on the descent, the answer is hidden somewhere on the gale-swept slopes, or glacier-locked 10,000 feet below.

Yet in that very mystery lies their immortality. For of all men who have grappled with Everest, Mallory and Irvine alone penetrated what has since become known as *"the longest fifth of a mile"*—the last thousand feet of the mountain the Tibetans call *Chomolungma*, "Goddess Mother of the World"!

It is this last thousand, and the invisible line that marks it, that stands like some magic wall blocking the way of those who would dare push their insolent strength on Everest. Only four other human beings have ever touched the "wall" that Mallory and Irvine passed, only to stumble down again, beaten and half conscious!

What is the sinister influence of this mountain the lamas of Tibet spin prayer wheels to? And what is it like—that last thousand feet that only two men have entered—never to return?

MOUNT EVEREST, as all the world knows, lies to the north of India, super-giant among the giants that make up the backbone of Asia: the Himalayas.

A massive bulk of granitoid-limestone, it once lay beneath the sea. One of a mighty breed, Everest was spawned to the earth-wrenching convulsion that even today is

still raising mountains and disturbing the seismographs of men.

The shape of Everest is that of a pyramid with three ridges sweeping downwards from the summit in vast buttresses. Twenty-nine thousand, one hundred and forty-one feet it looms, five and a half miles up into the sub-stratosphere!

Even the approach to this mountain, whose height was discovered in 1852, requires a pilgrimage as difficult as any that man has undertaken.

First, there is the month-long trek across the barren plateau of Tibet to the Rongbuk Monastery, twenty miles north of Everest. There, at a Base Camp already higher than the highest peak in Europe, an army of Sherpa "Tiger" porters from Nepal is organized.

Then, one early morning, the trail up the snout of the East Rongbuk glacier begins. Starting with Camp One, on the glacier itself, there will be six camps, the last and most vital of which must be as close to the summit as possible—somewhere around 27,000!

These bivouacs, each a day's journey apart, are, in the words of George Mallory, "like the steps of a ladder, each rung supporting the strength of the whole."

It is Camp Three that brings you to the key to the mountain; a 1500 foot wall of snow and ice called the North Col. Up this avalanche-infested nightmare the best climbers and "Tigers" must go. For the North Col is the connecting link between the glacier and the only practicable route to the top, the northeast Ridge.

From Camp Four atop the Col—23,000 feet above the sea—there are two ways of tackling this northeast Ridge. One, known as Mallory's Ridge Route, follows the knife edge up and over the rock towers forming the first and second steps. It was just above the second step that Mallory and Irvine were last seen.

To climb the Ridge Route means bucking the full blast of winds that hit with a force of up to 140 miles per hour, while snow cornices wait like cunning traps beneath your feet. On your right the mountain drops away 10,000 feet to the East Rongbuk glacier, on your left to the greatest sheer drop on earth: 14,000 feet to the Kanchung glacier of Nepal!

The second route, and the one generally preferred, is Norton's Traverse. Cutting diagonally across the northeast face, it has the advantage of lying to leeward—out of the wind. It also boasts the dubious virtue of having a maximum of less than two miles to fall, instead of the nearly three-mile plunge possible from the Ridge.

Taken by Norton's Traverse, the "trail" consists of limestone slabs planted in overlapping shingles like the tile of a roof. Usually powdered with snow or ice, these slabs jut downwards and out at an angle anywhere from thirty to forty degrees, making the climb "against the grain."

Once across, numb from cold and lack of oxygen, you meet the Great Couloir, or gully Like a devil's slide it is, sweeping down from the base of the final pyramid and onto the glacier far below. But when you've crossed the Couloir you have reached the last thousand feet. Above is nothing but a "layer-cake" buttress; beyond that, mere yards away, a snow-free slope rises easily to the summit. You are at the height that only two men have passed, and only four have reached before you. Then the demon of Everest clamps down: the oxygen-lack, the cold, the sapping exhaustion of Chomolungma!

Seven expeditions, two of them reconnaissance, all covering the years from 1921 to 1938, have assaulted the ramparts of Everest. Of these, only two, those of 1924 and '33 have placed men at or beyond the last thousand.

Three days before Mallory and Irvine disappeared into the clouds, Doctor T. Howard Somervell, medical missionary from India, and Lt. Colonel E. F. Norton launched an attack that will live in the annals of mountaineering.

Striking out from Camp Six at 26,800, and with none of the cumbersome oxygen cylinders later used by Mallory and Irvine, the two men took the Traverse, following the band of yellow that runs diagonally across the brow.

Though Norton and Somervell were protected from the direct fury of the wind, the thin, cold air burned with every gasp. Upward they plodded, like souls in some frigid hell. Ten breaths to a step, each dozen steps broken by a two minute "rest." This, for five straight hours! Until Somervell sank in a fit of coughing, knowing it was death to go on.

For one hour and a hundred feet more, Norton struggled on. To the Great Couloir and across. Then, hugging a ledge on the other side, he stopped. Mouth wide open to gulp the vacuum air, only half conscious, crazed by double vision and a heart that felt as if it would explode, he had just enough judgment left to know he was through. For a minute he looked up at the summit, aloof and uncaring a thousand feet above. Then he turned back, too exhausted to feel disappointment.

On that day in June, 1924, Colonel Norton set a high climbing record that has never been surpassed. *Twenty-eight thousand, one hundred and twenty-six feet!*

FOR nine years Everest was left to the storm, and the prayers of the monks of Rongbuk. Then, in 1933, the Ruttledge expedition sailed from England to renew the attack.

L. R. Wager, professor of geology, and Wyn Harris, of the Colonial Service, made the first assault.

Like Norton and Somervell, they disdained oxygen, depending on slow, camp-by-camp acclimatization to condition their hearts and lungs.

Attacking from High Bivouac at 27,400, fully 600 feet higher than in 1924, they followed the Yellow Band to where it merges with the Couloir. Then, unroping, as a rope was useless where one climber could not possibly hold the other in case of a slip, they crossed over. To the ledge! To the exact spot reached by Norton nine years before! And there they stopped. It was as though a malignant power crushed their wills with every breath. When they lifted their eyes to the plume of Everest, streaming off like volcanic vapor, it seemed as remote as though it lay on another planet. Then they started down, exhausted and half dead.

But the men of '33 were not yet beaten! Two others, experienced mountaineers with the look of Vikings, were to try for the top: Eric Shipton and Frank Smythe.

Both Shipton and Smythe made good progress until they reached a point on the Traverse in line with the ridge-mass of the First Step. There Shipton suddenly collapsed, convulsed with stomach cramps. Like Norton leaving Somervell, Smythe went on—alone.

Though the slabs were powdered with loose snow, and the rock just beyond the Couloir once crumbled to nothingness beneath his feet, the quick use of his ice-axe saving him, Smythe made it. He finally crouched at the same mark near the culminating pyramid where three others had stood before. But the booming of the wind was muffled by the beating of his heart. In the clear atmosphere he could make out individual stones on the summit! But he had to turn back.

The roster reads like a roll-call of heroes: *Norton, Wager, Wyn, Harris* and *Smythe!* The men who know Everest and that longest fifth of a mile!

Though certain cynics compare climbing Mount Everest to the Quest for the Holy Grail, there are those who wait with the patience of conquerors for the chance to try again—even if only to help other generations of climbers reach, then pass, the magic wall.

The only real division among them is the question of oxygen versus non-oxygen attempts. Those who favor "English Air" point to the fact that Mallory and Irvine were equipped with it. And they stress the inescapable: that of the four who reached the wall without oxygen, truly a superhuman feat, *all* were stopped at the same wrinkle in the brow of Everest! This, they believe, indicates the level where oxygen-starvation under exertion reaches the saturation point.

Yet even the most die-hard oxygen enthusiasts are loath to have "their" mountain fall to a mountaineer in an oxygen mask. They want the stuff for the final dash, but solely for recuperative support. The reasoning is not that a man couldn't mount the summit without it, but simply that, once there, he'd be too blind exhausted to make it down again!

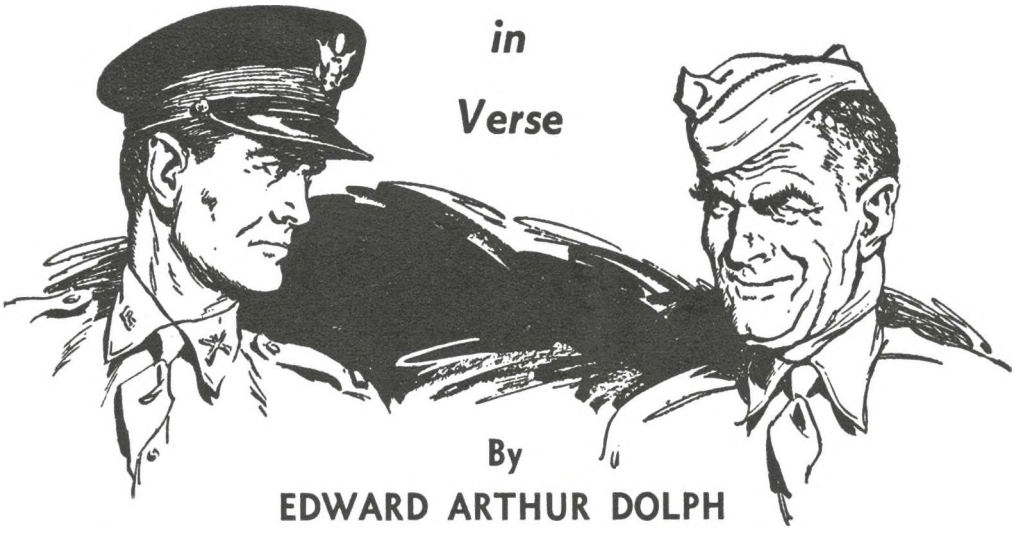
ONLY the incredible Sherpa porters could tread the summit and make it back unaided. They lack but one thing: The fire, the drive, the sheer will to conquer this mountain simply because, in the words of Mallory himself, *"It is there!"*

And of course the Tigers have a legend.

(Continued on page 113)

THE BAMBOO POLE

A Short Story in Verse



By
EDWARD ARTHUR DOLPH

No better man than Casey ever learned the soldier's trade,
Be it serving guns in battle, or a-marching on parade;
But once Recall had sounded over old Corregidor,
Sure, he liked to lap a beer or two—or even three or four.

Yes, the ranking duty non-com, Casey knew his business well,
But on payday, in Manila, faith, he'd raise a bit of hell
With his Irish tenor wailing that "Owld Soldiers Niver Die!"
And his mighty fists a-flailing, keeping all the M.P.'s shy.

Now, the captain's hair was graying and he'd learned a thing or two,
In the fifteen years he'd waited for promotion to come through,
Of the ways of Irish sergeants (finest soldiers in the land!)
When a payday thirst is on them, and their pay is in their hand.

For there's many things in soldiering never learned in any book,
And old Casey knew the answers, and he had just what it took
To outfox the quartermasters and the ordnance men as well,
And to make a field inspector think that everything was swell.

So when Casey, tonsil-cooling, would arouse the provost's ire
Captain Ransom, diplomatic, would pour water on the fire
By reciting Casey's virtues—militarily a host!—
And restricting Sergeant Casey, "Ten days limits of the post!"

But the looey's bars were shiny, his commission crisp and new,
And at West Point they had taught him all the things that he should do;
So with bearing military he most righteously would frown
At the way the captain handled Casey's payday sprees in town.

Then one day the graying captain went on leave to Moro-land,
Leaving young Lieutenant Miley as the "Acting in Command."
Soon his order harsh was grating on old Casey's outraged ear:
"No more passes to Manila, and no after-duty beer!"

At the Club a grizzled major counselled, "Son, you're riding high!
Take a tip from older heads, lad, and you're likelier to get by.
For you'll find his daily ration keeps the sergeant on the beam,
But a pent-up thirst in Casey generates some dangerous steam!"

"Casey's thirst," said Miley smugly, "soon will cease to need control,
As my careful daily routine keeps him strictly up the pole."
"Routine, hell!" the major snorted. "You can stick that in your eye!
I will lay a hundred pesos you can't keep old Casey dry!"

"Just a babe in arms!" sighed Casey. "Hardly dry behind the ears!
But this loss of daily lager ain't the worst of all me fears!
Sure, I've gotta make that shindig when, on Occupation Day,
Vets of 'Ninety-nine are lapping up free booze Manila way!"

"So I'll see me owld-time buddy, Sergeant-Major Tim McLear,
And he'll set a bee a-buzzin' in this young lootinint's ear.
Standin' gun drill competition will be held that day, I'm told.
If me gun crew could just get there, sure, I'd lick me problem cold."

First the looey hesitated, then he laughed with childish glee:
"Coast Artillery beating 'red-legs!' What an honor that would be!"
He would show the grizzled major that he knew a thing or two!
He'd keep Casey sober, lick the Field Artillery, too!

So he ordered up a field gun from the landing by the dock
And old Casey set to drilling for the "honor of the Rock."
(Not to mention Johnny Walker and that good Ayala Gin
He'd be lapping at the shindig if his gun crew chanced to win.)

Soon the sergeant's snappy drilling and his staying "up the pole"
Set the looey smugly smiling, raised such hopes within his soul
That a Field Artillery classmate who was serving 'cross the bay
Quickly lured him into betting just an even one month's pay.

("Saints be praised!" cried Sergeant Casey. "Now me fish is really hooked!
If we lost that competition, how the looey would be rooked!")
"There's a lass or two a-waitin', so a pass that day in town
Is the spur," he told young Miley, "that we need to win the crown."

"Well, uh, well—" the youngster stammered, black fears gnawing at his soul,
"If you promise me sincerely you'll stay strictly up the pole—"
"Don't ye worry, sorr!" said Casey with a sanctimonious grin,
"For your stern but kindly trainin' leaves no taste for beer or gin!"

Came the day in old Manila of the long-awaited test.
Hopes and fears were mingling wildly in the young lieutenant's breast.
And old Casey meant to win it, for his pride was riding high,
Till an old-time bunkie met him with a tempting quart of rye.

"Well, a trickle, now," said Casey, "sure would energize me bones,
And another drop would vocalize me military tones,
And a teeny, weeny snifter might well do me crew no harm
As we battle for the honor of the Coast Artillery arm."

But the cross-hairs don't show clearly in the panoramic sight,
And a trail-spade's not set smartly if a gun crew's slightly tight,
And a gunner can't be slamming home his highly polished shell
If his fingers in a breech-block have been mangled all to hell.

So, "A hundred pesos, Miley!" snapped the major, stern and grim.
'Don't forget to send your pay-check!" jeered his classmate, neat and trim.
Roared the colonel, "Send that gun crew to the transport at the dock!
And then see me in my office in the morning on the Rock!"

Casey's pass was in his pocket, so he took a hasty leave
When he saw young Miley coming; with the "Vets" he'd find reprieve.
So with gin and Johnny Walker he was primed from heel to ear
When at last the "Pee-rade" started and the crowd began to cheer.

High above the blaring tumult, on the A and N Club roof,
Perched the High Brass, stern and lofty, stars on shoulders, spurs on hoof,
As the Vets of Occupation, "Cits" and "Khaki," marched as one—
All, that is, but Sergeant Casey! He *was comparable to none!*

Naked as the day God made him, save for gee-string dangling down,
Filched from Igorrote warrior, lured from hills to see the town,
Casey stole the show completely, beamed and bowed at buddies' jeers,
Pranced while wild, hysteric laughter shrilled above the patriots' cheers.

Need you ask the final story? Can't you hear the bombs that fell
As an apoplectic general gave our red-faced colonel hell?
Can't you hear the searing sizzle as the colonel, late that day,
Burned the young lieutenant's hide off in the good old Army way?

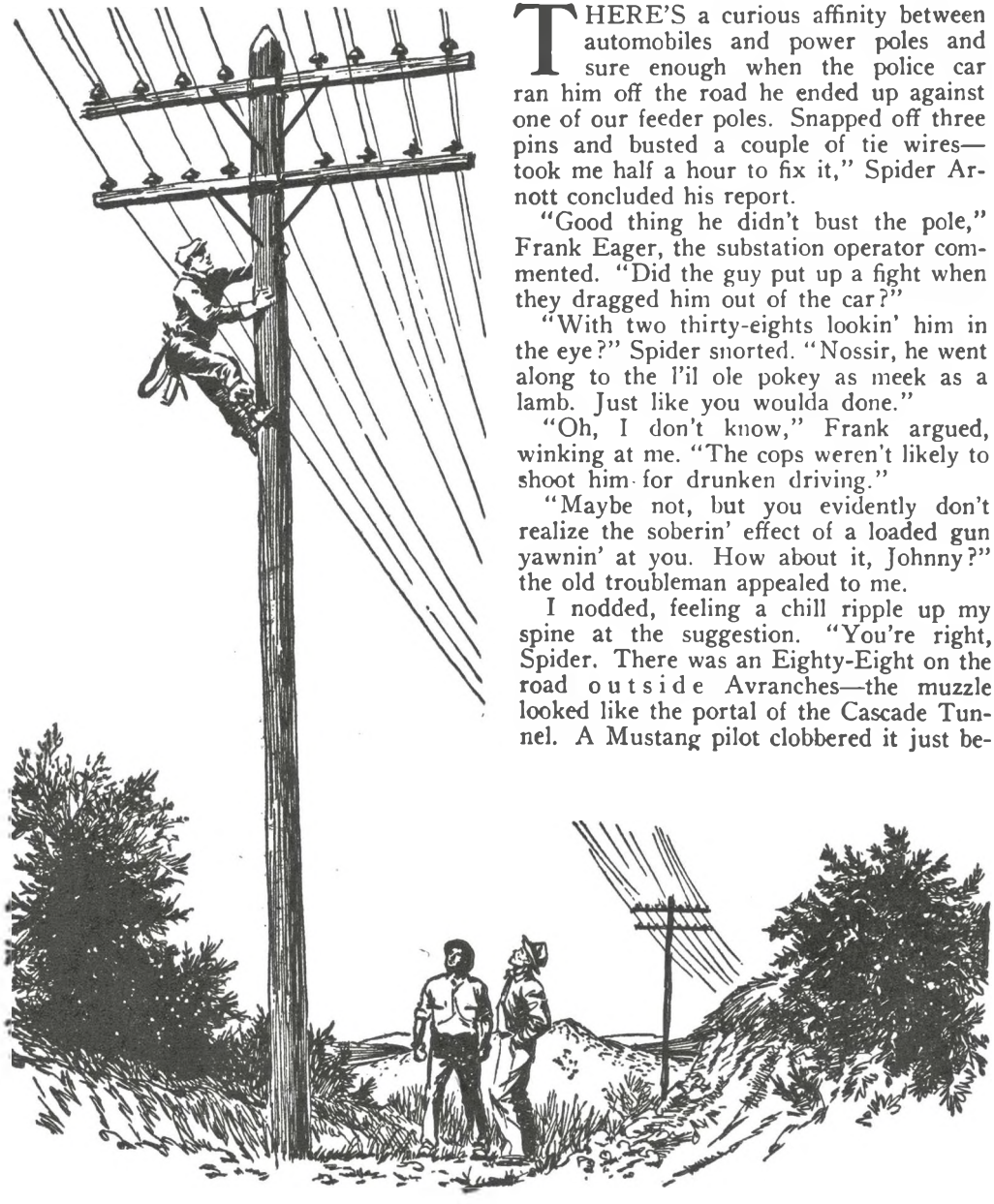
Can't you see Lieutenant Miley, wild with anger and chagrin,
Up at Reveille next morning as M.P.'s brought Casey in,
Filled with grim determination that he'd wring an answer true
From the sergeant, still befuddled with a belly full of brew?

In the presence of the colonel, with the provost close behind,
And old Casey slumped in misery of body and of mind,
"Now then, Sergeant!" roared young Miley, stern in prosecutor's role,
"Did or did you not assure me you'd stay strictly up the pole?"

Casey bowed his head contritely, then he raised it, grinning sly,
As he straightened, military, looked the looey in the eye.
"That I did, for sure, Lootinint, but it's needless now to point
To the fact the pole was bamboo, and I stopped at ivery joint!"

LIVE WIRE

By ROBERT J. McCAIG



THERE'S a curious affinity between automobiles and power poles and sure enough when the police car ran him off the road he ended up against one of our feeder poles. Snapped off three pins and busted a couple of tie wires—took me half a hour to fix it," Spider Arnott concluded his report.

"Good thing he didn't bust the pole," Frank Eager, the substation operator commented. "Did the guy put up a fight when they dragged him out of the car?"

"With two thirty-eights lookin' him in the eye?" Spider snorted. "Nossir, he went along to the l'il ole pokey as meek as a lamb. Just like you woulda done."

"Oh, I don't know," Frank argued, winking at me. "The cops weren't likely to shoot him for drunken driving."

"Maybe not, but you evidently don't realize the soberin' effect of a loaded gun yawnin' at you. How about it, Johnny?" the old troubleman appealed to me.

I nodded, feeling a chill ripple up my spine at the suggestion. "You're right, Spider. There was an Eighty-Eight on the road outside Avranches—the muzzle looked like the portal of the Cascade Tunnel. A Mustang pilot clobbered it just be-

I made it a point to see how Logan made out on the job the next morning. The minute he buckled on his hooks, I knew he was a lineman.

fore it swiveled our way, or I wouldn't be here tonight."

"You bet, and even a handgun has the same effect," Spider pressed home his point.

"How did you get to be such an authority?" Eager asked in a tone of asperity.

"Don't forget, my fine-feathered friend, I served in the Rainbow Division in the war—the Big War, I mean. But the time I'm thinkin' of was a long time after that, and not many miles from here. You wanta hear about it, or you wanta argue some more?"

I watched Eager struggle to restrain a grin. "No, go ahead, Spider," he said, having succeeded in his strategy. We settled back, knowing the troubleman had grown up with Northern Hydro. Now, waiting out his pension, he could narrate tales of the electric business by the hour, if you could get him started.

Spider eased himself to a more comfortable position on the workbench, glanced at the telephone as though to command its silence, and began.

THIS happened about fifteen-sixteen years ago, time we was building the Skamit-Lost River tie line. Forty-six miles of hundred Kv. line, four-ought copper on fifty-five foot bridge type stations. You maybe seen it, Johnny, in your travels. She's rough country through there, from the Lost River plant to Skamit Switchyard. Not fit for much except the original inhabitants, which was ticks, coyotes, jackrabbits, and rattlers. And I was roddin' the job.

It wasn't any picnic. It was early August, the weather was scorching. Miles from anywhere, tough gettin' in the material over the cow-tracks they called roads. We was usin' a rolling camp, cookwagon, two bunk cars, and an office car where me and the timekeeper flopped our bedrolls and kept maps and records and small tools. We was makin' fair progress, though, buildin' power line.

That is, we built it when we had a full crew. Which was seldom. They're a vanishin' breed, Johnny, but in them days your construction men was mostly boomers. The Company would sign 'em on in Marston or Skamit, they'd show up and put out a good brand of work until they got the wrinkles out of their bellies, and then, after a week, two weeks, a month, they'd come in some night and say, "Write 'er out. I'm pullin' the pin." And they'd be gone like a puff of dust.

So we was raisin' line with the proverbial three crews, one comin', one at work, and one goin'. Lucky I had a core of regular Northern Hydro men that stuck with me, because the rest of the six to ten men was boomers whose faces changed from one day to the next. But Frenchy LeBeau, Tip Marcus, Gunner Borgeson, Beefy Ellis the cook, I could always depend on. Why, I even had trouble keepin' a pencil-pusher until I got Smitty.

When the former timekeeper's personal pink camels and purple peacocks got the best of him, I sent him in to Kelcy with Tip Marcus in the pickup. And Tip comes back with Smitty. When I seen him get out of the truck, I crossed my fingers, betting he wouldn't last a week. But I missed it. He took to the paper work like a teal to a tule slough, and as you know, Johnny, I always hated paper work. So I was willing to put up with Smitty's idio-syn-crasies, as the man says. And he had plenty of 'em.

This Smitty—Leland Percy Smith to you—had the damnedest headful of book-learnin' of any man I ever seen. He was from the east, and I suspect he was raised by hand by two old-maid aunts. Never seen a man with such an amazin' education who managed to stay such a complete idiot as far as the world went. Still, when I got to know him, I liked the kid.

He was built like a beanpole, long and lean and stoop-shouldered. His hatchet face was topped with a bristle of cottony hair like a mangled chrysanthemum. He always peered at you, stooped and peered through thick glasses. But he had a nice, easygoin' way, kept grinnin' whatever happened. Asked questions all day long in a soft, persistent voice.

Just to show you—part of his job was to run errands in the light truck, bring supplies and mail from town, things like that. Well sir, you could have knocked me over with a diggin' bar when I found out he couldn't even pilot a car. In this country, where you see ten-year old kids ridin' a D-6 cat ahead of a twenty-foot gang spread, you take it for granted that drivin' any piece of motorized equipment is a born instinct. But not with Smitty—I

hadda let Gunner take a day off to learn him how to handle the little truck.

Howsoever, he applied his natural brain-power to the problem, and in a few days he was gallivantin' all over the place, proud as a baby with a new rattle. We'd see him coming out to the job with a load of material, his long nose gleamin' like a beacon in the sun, from the zinc ointment he plastered it with. He was always sunburned—I think he peeled off seven layers of hide that summer.

So in spite of my expectations, Smitty fitted into the gang fine. But in an unexpected way. The boy was a born goat, a natural fall guy. Gullibility was bred into his brain and bone. He'd swallow anything, gulp twice, and come back for more. By the third day, he'd fell for the striped paint gag, the left-handed wrench, the skyhook with the four-inch blocks. As a kid, he woulda painted Tom Sawyer's fence. Today, a milkweed umbrella would be a flyin' saucer to Smitty if you told him so.

The boys wasn't mean about him, but they loved him. Instead of gripin' about the job and the weather and the grub, they spent all their natural deviltry thinking up gags on Smitty. And the glorious thing to them was the certainty of it. No matter how outrageous, how far-fetched a thing they made up, he would swaller it without a sign of bellyache. I never seen the like.

Just between you and me, though, I wasn't kicking. One clown in a camp crew, one honest-to-God fall guy, is worth two first class linemen. Don't ask me why. It's that funny thing called morale, I guess. But regardless of what the books say, or the efficiency wallopers tell you, it ain't always the man that works the hardest that gets the most done. Blackie Ford had a grunt over in the Western Division for years—but that's another story.

Well, anyhow, the gang was building line. Smitty kept the papers straight, Beefy Ellis kept the grub coming, and I grinned to myself, at the possibility of a nice fat bonus come Christmastime. Specially when we got past Kelcy and out of the worst of the hills about two weeks ahead of schedule. I should of knowed better. Things can't go smooth very long in the line game.

We had a pretty fair crew by now; I'd weeded out the worst of the boomers. Then Tony Cormac had a relapse of his old trouble, bottle fever, and I had to tie a can on him. I sent an S.O.S. to Kearney, the general super, for another lineman, hoping that all the scissorbills and clumb-somes was gone from this neck of the woods. Maybe they was, because he sent me Harry Logan. And damn near wrecked the Skamit job.

He came from Kelcy with Smitty in the pickup. When he got out, he watched Smitty scuttle into the office car, and then, grinning, strolled over to me. "You the push on this job?" he asked in a harsh voice. "I'm Logan, here to do some climbing. Where do I park my keister?"

I LOOKED him over—fellow about thirty-five, strong built, with a face chipped out of a granite boulder. Heavy black hair, heavy stubble of black beard, dark eyes as expressionless as two chips of Sand Coulee coal. A hardcase if I ever saw one. But if he could climb, I didn't care. I thumbed him toward the bunk car. Later, at supper, he wolfed his grub without sayin' ten words all through the meal.

I made it a point to see how he made out on the job the next morning. The minute he buckled on his hooks I knew he was a lineman. He chunked his way up a fifty-five foot pole like he'd been there before, and flipped the end of his scarestrap around it with the ease of long practice. The grunt ran up a six unit string of ten-inch insulators, and Logan reached out and hooked them on without wasting a motion. I watched a few minutes and then moved on down the line, satisfied.

Which showed how much I knew about the score. It wasn't three days before I realized the whole job was slowin' down, and I began scratching my skull figuring out the reason. I didn't have to look far for the answer. Harry Logan was putting the whole Skamit job on the fritz.

Not that he wasn't a cracking good lineman. He held up his end of the work, and maybe a little more. But before, we had a satisfied gang, all of 'em pitching in, kidding, joshing, working together. Now they'd got silent, suspicious. They begun worrying about taking a station more than the other guy, arguing about whose turn it was to climb the next pole. They stalled

longer in the morning, tapered off quicker at night, took five oftener for a blow and a smoke. And at the bottom of it all was Logan.

I never seen a guy just like him, and if I don't it's too damn soon. The guy was poison, plumb poison. He had a mean streak that run clear through him. And he enjoyed his meanness. It was a hobby with him, he worked at it, never let a chance pass to give it exercise. Whadda you call these guys that love cruelty, Johnny? Sadists? That describes Harry Logan.

Why didn't I fire him offhand? Not only because I needed him, but the bird was so infernal clever in his meanness. Never seemed to do anything wrong himself, but he had a devilish way of working on a man's weak spot and getting his goat. F'rinstance, Frenchy LeBeau and Tip Marcus had been pals for years. Logan worked on them with his sharp needle, and at the end of the week they wasn't speakin' to each other. Multiply that kind of thing a dozen times, and you can see why the job slowed down to a walk. But I just couldn't seem to put the finger on Logan.

The one I felt sorry for was Smitty. Logan ran him ragged. Before, he had been the goat for the whole gang, but it was always good-natured. Now Logan singled him out for his special victim, and the gang left him alone. And there was no kindness in Harry Logan.

He used to ridicule him in front of the men. One target was Smitty's college education. "Four-Eyes," Logan would say, "give us your expert advice on this—how would you set a holddown station in the bottom of a thousand foot canyon?"

Smitty, bein' an eager beaver, would go crazy figuring and finally come up with some cockeyed solution. Logan would lead him on into the trap, and then he'd say, "For God's sake, Four-Eyes! I ain't got no college education, but I know better than that. If you got a thousand foot canyon, what do you need a holddown station for?" Smitty would realize then the ridiculous impossibility of the problem, and look at Logan like he was going to cry. Logan's rasping laugh would follow him as he turned away.

The kid began to wear a haunted expression, and lose weight from his skinny frame. I would have stepped in and put a stop to it, but Smitty, the dope, kept coming back for more. There ain't lot of ways you can protect a man from himself. But I tell you, I was getting pretty fed up with Mr. Harry Logan. Sometimes, line or no line, I was on the point of letting him go.

Now, I been around enough to know that situations like that are like carbuncles —sooner or later they come to a head and bust. This one took quite a while to reach that point, but when it did, it really erupted, and I ain't forgot it yet.

LOGAN had been with the crew about a month, and the job was to hellangone behind schedule. Kearney come out, and he gave me a real eatin'-out, which I had coming. But it wasn't any easier to take for all that. Him and me was standing alongside the big truck, a little ways from the crew, and after Kearney drove away, it didn't make me feel any better to see Logan step deliberately from behind the other side of the truck, the sarcastic grin on his mug showing he had heard the whole thing. I went back to camp ready to bite nails.

Smitty had brought the mail out from Kelcy, the nearest town, though it was now well behind us. In the mail was a letter for Logan, which was odd because it was the only one I could remember him getting since he come on the job. He went away by himself to read it, and when he come back, he had a smug, satisfied expression. After supper, some of the boys was going in to town in Gunner's old wreck of a car. Logan asked Gunner for a ride in, real nice about it, which surprised all of us.

When the bunch came back about midnight, Logan wasn't with 'em. Gunner had looked all over town, but couldn't locate him. "I s'pose he'll be madder'n a cockeyed coyote, but I couldn't stick around all night," the Swede said. I told him to forget it and go to bed.

The next morning the gang went out on the job, but there were some requisitions and payrolls to make up, so Smitty and me stayed in the office car. 'Round nine o'clock, I heard a car drive up, stop, and then drive away again. Somebody hollered, but it kept on going. I didn't pay much attention, figuring it was the farmer delivering the milk. Then the door

bounced open, and Harry Logan came in, big and ugly as ever.

He stood teetering in the doorway, leering at me and Smitty. He must have had a big night, because all the effects weren't wore off yet. "Well, if it ain't my buzzum pals, Spider and Four-Eyes!" he cracked. "Spider, you spavined old jaybird, gimme my time. Hooks Lorgan is pulling the pin." He lurched over to the desk, big shoulders hunched, eyes red-rimmed and bloodshot. He smelled like a condemned distillery.

"Who?" I asked.

"Me—Harry Logan. Guess I got my tongue twisted. Write 'er out, buddy."

"With pleasure, Logan," I grumbled. "I shoulda done this a long time ago." I reached for the timecheck book.

"And don't forget my overtime," he added. I looked at him surprised; none of the crew had overtime the past pay period.

"Overtime, Spider," he insisted, his eyes narrow slits. "Got in a little crap game last night, and lost my travelin' money. And I gotta travel, the boys sent me the word they got a job lined up. Need dough to get me to Rock Springs, then I'll have plenty of my own. Put down about eighty hours, and double it."

I slammed my hands flat on the desk, palms down. "Are you nuts? You won't get—" Then I shut up. Out of thin air, he brought the biggest, bluest forty-five automatic I ever seen. The barrel looked like a highway culvert, and I sat there, my eyes buggin' out, lookin' down it.

"Get humping, Arnott," he grated. I grabbed a pencil, figured, and started writing the check for two hundred and ninety dollars. My handwriting looked like hen tracks, but I signed it, ripped it out of the book and handed it to Logan. He folded it with his free hand and slid it into a coat pocket, that howitzer pointed at me all the time.

Then he straightened up. "So now you'll see the last of Harry Logan, alias Hooks Lorgan," he said with a cold grin. "You know, Arnott, there ain't any better place to lay low and let the heat cool off than in a line gang. Nobody looks for a heist guy in hooks and belt at the top of a cedar stick. I know, I used the dodge more than once. If I hadn't got cleaned out in that game, I just would have dropped out of sight, neat and quiet, and went to meet my pals. Them dice, though, made complications."

HIS voice hardened, and I saw his knuckles tighten on the butt of the automatic. "Which reminds me, I let my big mouth cause some more complications. Seems I let slip where the boys is waitin' for me." He shook his head in mock sorrow, and raised his gun. "It is very sad indeed, and it's goin' to boost the heat, but I don't see no way out. I can't let you and Four-Eyes talk."

In spite of all the sleet jobs and hot circuits I've worked in my day, I don't suppose I was ever any nearer the lineman's paradise than that minute. He meant every word he said, and I knew from his cold and bitter eyes that he would shoot the two of us like dogs, and enjoy doing it!

Then from Smitty came a roar of laughter, and the barrel of the big gun twisted. We looked at the kid—it wasn't hysterics, but guffaws of honest amusement. The kid's lean frame was almost doubled up as he snorted and chortled, laughing his fool head off.

"What's the joke, Four-Eyes?" Logan snapped, swinging the gun barrel suspiciously.

"This is the best one yet, Mr. Logan!" Smitty whooped. "I guess I'm dumb, but you and Mr. Arnott put it on so good I nearly fell for it. Gosh, you fellows go to a lot of work to put over a gag!"

"So you think it's a gag, kid?" Logan asked, his voice dangerous.

"Of course it is," Smitty answered, wiping his streaming eyes. "Just look at it. Your driver left, so how you going to get into town, walk? Gunner's car has two flats. If you took the pickup, you have to go through Marston, and you would be recognized in a minute, and picked up. On top of that, you're new in the crew, you couldn't get that timecheck cashed in the bank at Kelcy. But most of all, as for doing anything to us, the crew could get on the Company phone line, and there would be a statewide alarm out so fast a lizard couldn't get out of the county. Oh, it was a nice try, but the build-up was too elaborate to stand up against logical thinking."

Logan stood tense and quiet for a long

minute, thinking. Then he relaxed a little. "Maybe you got something there, Four-Eyes. Plans is changed. You guys are coming with me."

He motioned with the gun, and Smitty strutted out, grinning at his own cleverness. I followed, braced for a chance to jump Logan, but it never came. He got his grip and we squeezed into the pickup, with Smitty at the wheel.

The kid prattled nonsense all the twenty miles to Kelcy, but neither Logan nor me said a word. We jolted over the last of the rutted road, and Smitty pulled up with a flourish at the bank, on the main street of the little town. Logan, a lot closer to sober now, opened the cab door and slid out.

The gun was in his pocket, but we could see the bulge of it ready for action.

We walked ahead of him into the bank, me with eyes wide open for a possible break. But none came. With the two of us to vouch for him, Logan cashed the timecheck without difficulty, and stuffed the bills into a side pocket. He herded us back to the street without anyone in the bank giving a second look.

Then I heard that damn fool Smitty chuckling again. "Well, both of you should have been ham actors, you played that nice. You're sure carrying this one a long ways, but so far it's a perfect scenario. And say, look there, another perfect touch—" He pointed to the street. A sleek coupe braked to a stop, the driver got out and strode into the bank, leaving the car's engine running. "If Logan really wanted to get on his way in a hurry, with no questions asked, all he would have to do is step into that nice fast car, and he'd be out of the country before—"

But he was speaking to me alone. With three quick steps, Logan had reached the car, tossed in his keister, slid into the seat, and gunned the motor. The car shot into motion, he horsed it around the corner and was gone. For a few seconds, the sight of the empty street, the terrific relief from the threat of that yawning gun-barrel, was hard for me to believe. Then I ran to the corner and stuck my head past the end of the building. The coupe was a dark dot far down the highway toward Marston, and getting smaller every second.

I lit a cigarette with shaking hands, and walked back to where I had left Smitty. He was sitting on the curb, his head bowed. When he heard my step, he looked up at me. His face was chalk-white and streaming with sweat.

"What's the matter, Smitty?" I asked quick.

"I'm kinda sick, Spider," he replied, grinning weakly. "I guess it's from imagining those forty-five caliber slugs tearing through my guts, every minute of the last half-hour!"

SPIDER ARNOTT leaned back, and started to build a quirly.

"Quick thinking on Smitty's part," I said admiringly. "From what you say, Logan, or Lorgan, was close to shooting when Smitty steered him onto another track. Did you hear any more about Logan?"

"That we did, Johnny," the old troubleman said. "We passed the tip, and officers were alerted in the Wyoming country. When the gang tried to take a small-town bank down there a few weeks later, the law got all four of them. The gang had already killed the cashier, and Logan wounded two more members of the posse before they filled him full of lead. And that was the end of a genuine hard customer."

"That Smitty was an odd one, though," Frank Eager commented.

"Yeah, but plenty smart," Spider said. "He knew Logan was jittery, and wild to be on his way. When he spotted the convenient car with the motor running, he played his hunch, and said just the right thing to prod Logan into grabbing it. And it worked. I guess you would call it practical psychology."

"But smart thinking like that doesn't fit in with Smitty swallowing all the corny gags of the line crew," I objected.

Spider chuckled. "That's easy. You know he's the Smith that's in our head office now—he's got a fine job and is slated to move up. I asked him about that very thing one time. He says, 'Spider, after I got out of college, I got fired off the first job I ever had, because I thought I knew everything, and the men hated me. So I swore if I got another chance, I'd be the dumbest guy that ever came down the pike, until I really learned the ropes.'

"And damn if he wasn't!"

Hell on Horseback

By

GEORGE C. APPELL

DESERT drums and prairie runners and smoke telegraphs were busy during the last year of the Civil War, spreading the word from Manitoba to Mexico, from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, that the long battle for red or white supremacy of the West had started. And it was all the fault of one man, a white.

There had been skirmishes before this; the Forty-niners had been beset, General Harney had concluded a lop-sided treaty; New Ulm, Minnesota, had been ransacked in the first year of the War. But the main event was yet to start, and the man who rang the bell was J. M. Chivington, renegade preacher of The Gospel, self-appointed Messiah of peace, Colonel of Colorado Volunteers. To him belongs the singular and sanguine honor of having by a lone act so encrazed the Indian against the white that no amount of arguing, explaining, promising or treaty-making could stay the war axe and the arrow for the next twenty years. There were lulls in this battle for supremacy, but they were the lulls of temporary exhaustion, not waning of purpose. Chivington had thrown the rock into the pool, and the ripples of their own momentum must spread until there was no more strength left in them.

It is interesting to consider what might not have happened, if it were not for Chivington, for we know what did happen because of him.

You can see plump Harney and saturnine old Cump Sherman and gaunt Henry Carrington making their pacts and sucking the rancid peace pipes. Their ideas were good and the tribes would have held them in agreement . . . but for Chivington. Their ideas centered around three great wagon roads connecting the States with California, the roads to cross Indian Territory at specified intervals.

Inevitably, of course, the population drift from the east would have overflowed the Indian lands and emasculated such treaties as that; but the event would have occurred without the wild bloodshed and insane hatred which ultimately did accompany the inevitable. It is necessary to remember that the Indian was never regarded as a national menace, never was a national menace; wished only to live at peace with himself and enjoy an occasional war with a neighbor or two. Hence the three roads theory, which he was willing to support.

The roads, however, were not to be started until 1865, after the War; and J. M. Chivington uncorked the wrath of an entire race in November, 1864.

Had he not done so, there might have been but a series of running skirmishes with Jerome—Geronimo, in the Spanish tongue. Sitting Bull would have had no popular support necessary to his particular type of mysticism; and perhaps, after all, Crazy Horse would have gotten his brothel. He demanded it during a treaty trip to Washington City following one of the conflagrations rising from Chivington's massacre. The peace makers, in order to soothe him, took him to a brothel. Next day, Crazy Horse demanded one for each reservation, complete with staff. The conference was drawn out for weeks as a result of that; but the government was making no concessions.

Had not Chivington smashed plans for peaceful collaboration for empire, it is likely that George Armstrong Custer would have been retired as an obscure lieutenant-colonel of cavalry, left to sit on his porch and drone on about Civil War exploits. American taverns would have had to find some other lithograph to hang over the bar, and Custer's troopers would have lived out their natural lives.

So would countless thousands of other men, women and children, red and white.

LET'S take a look at this Chivington: a man of immense frame with a high-cheeked face ambushed in a black beard, his electric eyes sparked a fanaticism that he found it impossible to contain. In 1850, as a Methodist minister, he moved from Colorado to Missouri where the anti-slave movement was boiling, and where he could find a fight. He joined Jim Lane's Free State guerrillas and had a glorious time in the border wars. In 1861 he was presiding elder of his church in Denver; the outbreak of the Civil War saw him preaching fire to barrack-bound soldiers. He was offered a chaplaincy and refused it, demanding that he be allowed to fight. He got a majority, and shortly won his colonelcy.

In November of 1864 he commanded about 700 men, most of them serving out 100-day enlistments. They were odd-lots —elements of the First Colorado Volunteers, most of the Third, and a handful of irregulars up from New Mexico. He was determined to win a war, no matter how small. How large it would become, he could not foresee.

Sometime in the middle of November he kidnapped young Jack Smith, son of John Smith, trapper and explorer, and a Cheyenne squaw. Chivington lashed Smith's pony's reins to a trooper's pommel and put the gun to him with this explanation: "Take us to the Sand Creek camp."

Smith refused.

Chivington cocked his gun. "If you don't . . ." The colonel meant it.

Smith led out north of Fort Lyon, dazed. Everyone was at peace, the camps were hunting camps; the soldiers were all east, most of them, having their own war. Treaties were about to be drawn up and signed; there might be a trip to Washington to see The Grandfather. Presents would be exchanged.

In the big bend of Sand Creek, and about 30 miles from Fort Lyon, were 300 Cheyennes representing three villages—those of Black Kettle, White Antelope, and War Bonnet. They were stalking buffalo, they were making tepees against winter; they were storing food.

Three months before, Black Kettle himself had told the Agent at the fort, "We're all holding councils for shake hands now. The Cheyennes, Kiowas, Comanches, Arapahoes, Apaches and Sioux . . . Build your three roads, let us hunt."

The agent, Major Colley, had transmitted this information to Chivington.

Chivington said, "I am not authorized to make peace. I am making war."

Colley protested. "There's one hell of a risk in what you plan to do. A lot of government trains are traveling unprotected and so are a lot of homesteaders. If you do this thing, they'll all be wiped out."

Chivington: "They'll have to protect themselves." Fanatics think only of their causes; they can see the terrain ahead, but are never curious about horizons.

ON THE afternoon of November 28, Black Kettle—Mo-keta-va-ta to his people—was watching his squaw stitch the flags that the village had been given. One was a white flag and the other was an American flag and both were to be run up

in case of danger. With Black Kettle and his squaw was a white trader who was stopping awhile in the village. Although the sunshine was cold, the people were warm, for hunting had been good that year.

A plump, brown three-year-old girl was poking sticks into the stream, imitating a fisherman. Black Kettle's squaw warned her to be careful.

Across the sterile monotony of burnt sage and brown crust came the column, Jack Smith in the lead with a gun aimed at his kidneys. The men were in good humor, canteens were sweet to the cork with whiskey, and there was little discipline. Colonel Chivington remarked to his second-in-command, "Nits make lice, so we'll get all the kids too."

The second-in-command, Major Downing, approved that. Major Downing was the man who had spent most of the summer capturing lone Indians and "toasting their shins over little fires to open their mouths." What information he got, no one ever knew.

The major said, "Here comes hell on horseback, eh, Colonel?"

Chivington's eyes brightened.

The icy dawn found them tired, saddle-sore, and partly sober. They topped a rise and saw the village dumb and gray in a trance of slumber. The pewter trace of Sand Creek glinted along its snaky course.

A squaw awoke and mistook the soft thunder of hooves for a herd of buffalo coming upwind to take water. Her call brought eager braves; the white trader yawned and turned out. He took one look at the attack that was rolling down the rise and yelled for the flags. Black Kettle himself sprang to his tepee and raised them.

A shot took the trader through the neck; the ragged charge chopped him to pieces.

And then J. M. Chivington smashed plans for peace on the plains to matchwood and left them scattered in a smoldering ruins of lodgepoles and robes and bows and bodies. He dug the graves of thousands of people—some yet unborn—with spade-sharp thrusts of sabers and savage swings of gunstocks. Carbine smoke mixed with morning frost as irregular shooting blasted the life from squaws, infants, men. A tepee bloomed orange under a torch and two children dashed out. They were blown full of holes.

A detachment of troops plunged down-creek and cut off the pony herd and turned the lock on any door to escape. The women and children were caught between them and the wall of warriors who were standing to protect the withdrawal to the ponies.

Old White Antelope, ignoring Black Kettle's entreaties to run, stood with arms folded and sing-songed his death-chant. He never finished it. He was punched to pieces by bullets and mutilated where he lay.

A plump, brown three-year-old girl with a fishing stick stood horrified. A corporal aimed, fired, missed. A private shouted, "Lemme get the little—"

He got her.

Half a mile up-creek, the surviving Cheyennes dug pits and made a stand. What men of Chivington's weren't looting, ravaging or scalping rushed over and chewed at the poorly-armed Indians with muskets, carbines, handguns. Then Chivington brought up his surprise package: two howitzers mounted on wagons. The shells exploded like some elemental upheaval and broke the line and sent the last of the warriors limping north. They were pursued, ridden down, murdered, and mutilated.

Toward mid-afternoon, Chivington reorganized his command and camped in the village for two days, gloating. He never buried the rotting dead, nor would he allow anyone else to. No one ever did.

The colonel reminded Major Downing: "I said 'All Indians' to be shot." He pointed to frightened Jack Smith, the half-breed who had been kidnapped to lead the command to Sand Creek at gun point.

Even Downing demurred. "He took us here, why not let him go?"

Chivington: "I have given my orders, and have no further instructions to give."

Jack Smith was forced to his knees, whimpering. A bullet through the back of his head tore his face open.

And now J. M. Chivington collected the two women and five children he had retained as prisoners and with almost three hundred scalps marched them to Denver, one hundred and fifty miles away. His losses were twelve killed and forty wounded. And when the self-styled "conqueror of the Cheyennes" returned to Denver, he exhibited for a fee the scalps—in a theater, between the acts.

Black Kettle, who escaped, played one

more part in this opening act, though a passive one: he was killed in 1868 during a raid on his camp by George A. Custer, who himself was killed in 1876 by three of Black Kettle's then sub-chiefs. It is ironic, through the focus of hind-sight, that Custer might better have decorated a porch in retirement and obscurity than have become caught up in the rumbling fires that Chivington set.

THERE would be no peace now for more than twenty years. There would be no three roads, no more great migrations to California; no planting, tilling, and reaping. No treaties at all. There would be murder and fire, torture and horror.

Already, as people gaped at the clotted scalps in that Denver theater, a party of Cheyennes was jogging north and west and south, offering the pipe of war to Sioux, to Kiowas, to Arapahoes; to Apaches and Comanches and Northern Cheyenne. Even as an embarrassed Washington government was hastily offering indemnities to Black Kettle, he was plotting his great coalition—one which after his death would be managed by Sitting Bull, by Gall, by Red Cloud and Crazy Horse. The offer of indemnity was ignored.

And it was the year of Black Kettle's death, four years after Chivington's horrible blunder, that a government commission examined l'affaire Sand Creek and produced this report: "It (the massacre) scarcely has its parallel in the records of Indian barbarity. Fleeing women, holding up their hands and praying for mercy, were shot down; infants were killed and scalped in derision; men were tortured and mutilated in a way which would put to shame the savages of interior Africa. No one will be astonished that a war ensued which cost the government $30,000,000 and carried conflagration and death to all the border. During the spring and summer of 1865 no less than 8,000 troops were withdrawn from the effective forces engaged against the Rebellion to meet this Indian war."

(In 1891 another government commission produced yet another report reviewing hostilities to that date; the sums mentioned totaled more than $100,000,000 and the number of lives listed as lost was an indefinite figure, but one hovering near the forty thousand mark.)

* * *

Thus did the hand of J. M. Chivington pitch a rock into the pool, and thus did the ripples spread outward borne by desert drum and prairie runner and smoke signal. Peace would come only with complete exhaustion, with decimation of numbers, with loss of hope. And it would be a peace bordered with plowed fields and reservations and cemeteries, not the hunting lands through which three roads were to pass at specified intervals.

As for the rest. . . .

Major Downing got his hell on horseback, right enough. He was trapped near Julesburg a year later by a hard-riding band of copper-skinned avengers. Sometime afterward, one of his naked feet was found—coyote-nibbled and shrunken. It was but a tiny spark in the immense furnace that would consume the west and so many of its people for almost a generation to come.

But what of the man who held the match? What happened to J. M. Chivington, renegade preacher, self-appointed Messiah of peace, Colonel of Colorado Volunteers? What happened to the 700 men who rode with him to Sand Creek that night, drinking and laughing. Most were 100-day volunteers who left the militia shortly afterward; a few went back to New Mexico. Not one was ever accused, tried, or punished.

Chivington himself quit the Army at the end of the War, returned to Ohio where he'd been born, and started a small newspaper.

In 1868—how that date does crop up!—he ran for the State Legislature. But the recriminations that were fired at him, the reminders of his past that were shouted from platforms, so discouraged and worried him that he withdrew from the campaign, abandoned his newspaper and scurried back to Colorado.

He was last seen alive in a small hamlet in the Rockies, scrabbling for a living as storekeeper.

He was last heard from when the final shot of the Indian Wars echoed across the empty distances of the west and was gone forever.

HARD WON

By

DALE CLARK

Pete lurched along into the storm. He stayed on his feet, stayed alive, knowing he was doing no better than that.

MORE experienced folk would have sensed omens of the disaster. Spring had come too soon, too warmly; the prairie was green already, while water trickled from the snow tatters on the north slopes. The humid air pressed motionlessly upon the land; the blue-eyed grassflowers opened to the blue mid-March sky; only on the north horizon was a paler, steely gleam. An Indian would have known but no Indian had trod Sherman Township since the Outbreak of '62. Probably the prairie animals knew, for on this last morning Pete Arvidsen came in from his trapline empty-handed.

Knut had finished milking, and in the sodhouse the brothers ate their last, shared meal. After breakfast, Knut brought his team from the pole-and-straw barn. Pete loaded a bale of muskrat pelts, an axe, and a bucksaw into the farm wagon.

"Good-bye, sod shanty," said Pete gaily. "Farewell, homestead." But because he

spoke in the Tromso dialect, Knut pretended not to hear.

Since October, Knut had been deaf to the Norwegian tongue. An ocean and half a continent of silence spread between the brothers as they mounted, side by side, to the wagon's spring seat.

They drove off, up a plowed slope toward the low ridge that marked the boundary of Knut's claim. They drove silently, Knut weathered and stooped; the younger, taller, fairer Pete holding himself erectly, as straight as a pine mast in his close-woven, gilt-buttoned seaman's coat. The prairie hadn't aged him, or bent his shoulders to a plowman's stoop. The prairie never would. Pete was going home; was Norway-bound.

HE could look back, now, with a cheerful smile; but a year ago, Knut's homestead had been a shock. Knut had emigrated in '67, before the railroad reached Sherman Township, when one could claim land by staking it. To be sure, Knut wasn't exactly a first settler! The Civil War veterans from Wisconsin and Iowa, and a good many German immigrants were first, came earliest and, naturally, staked the choicest quarter-sections. Knut's farm fell away below its sod buildings to swale grass and open water and rounded muskrat mounds—the muskrats inhabited more than half his holding.

"Never mind," said Knut. "It will be drained. It will be the richest land in the county some day."

"Yes, but when?"

"Fifteen years, maybe twenty."

Fifteen or twenty years appalled Pete. He thought of Else Lydscrift, in far-off Tromso; he knew that handsome, spirited Else could not wait so long for a suitor to make his fortune.

"You might go into the Dakota Territory, and prove up a claim of your own in five years."

Pete thought of Else; he thought of the *fylke*-sheriff's dashing son, likewise; no, he dared not spend five years away from Tromso. It was his intention to earn one thousand American dollars as speedily as possible. The money would buy a fishing boat. Master of his own boat, no longer a mere laborer in the Lydscrift yards, he could boldly and openly pay court to Else.

"Best of all," continued Knut, "stay here. Help me work this and the Caraday farm."

"And the wages?"

"Where land is cheap, money is dear," said Knut. He couldn't pay wages, only a share of the crop; Knut was himself tilling the adjoining homestead on shares; the young widow who lived there hadn't any cash, either.

It hadn't been such a bad bargain, Pete thought as the wagon topped the ridge and came down to the Caraday place. Here was a white, frame house, a barn, haystacks, a yardful of machinery. Janice Caraday opened the house door. Inside, on the kitchen floor, rested Pete's blue-painted, rope-handled emigrant's chest. Janice had washed and ironed and carefully repacked the clothing in it. In return for the brothers' chopping and hauling firewood from distant Jack Creek, she had done their mending and baking through the winter. She was resolute and unafraid, as a woman must be to survive in this new land, alone but for a two-year-old daughter.

Pete and Knut carried the chest out to the wagon. Around the house corner came Sheila Caraday, waving and gurgling. "Good-bye and good luck to you, little one," Pete said in his stiffly careful English. Janice stood in the doorway, watching. "Good luck to you, too," Pete said.

Her eyes were dark, regarding Pete widely, as big as the crocuses opening on the spring-warmed hillsides. This was wrong; crocuses ought to have reminded him of blue-eyed Else Lydscrift. It was very wrong. He oughtn't let himself think of these two, Janice and Else, in the same breath.

"Wait," said the young woman. "I've put up a bit of lunch for you."

Pete took the package, wrapped in a weeks-old Estherville, Iowa, *Vindicator*. Janice Caraday said softly, "Part friends, Pete. You may never see Knut again."

It was true; he felt a dull ache that came of being involved in ill-feeling with Knut.

"I wish you happiness," Janice said, and held out her hand. The pressure of her fingers was quick and warm and final.

He was happy to be going back to Tromso and to Else; but there was also a sharp-

er ache that came of being involved in any way with Janice Caraday.

"Be happy," Pete blurted, and turned hurriedly, climbing to the wagon seat beside Knut.

"I'll be back with the wood before dark," Knut called. There was only an armful of sticks left in the woodpile at the house corner; Janice had burned her fuel prodigally, doing all that washing and ironing. It did not seem important, on this day so warm that the prairie seemed to steam, exhaling spring scents of earth and young grass.

THE wagon passed a fall-turned field that Pete had first broken the previous April, trudging behind a sodbuster plow. Janice had helped with the field work, sowing the new land to flax, a tall, deep-bosomed girl with an arm outflung in the immemorially ancient gesture. Afterward, Knut harrowed the wheat and flaxseed into the ground. A passion of husbandry possessed those two; but Pete was simply plowing an interminably long furrow, with Else at its end. It was the same with the harvesting. He followed a swath in the stubble that led to Else. Then the blow fell. His share of the crop, hauled to town, brought barely four hundred dollars—at this rate, he would be three years in America.

The fact was, he came to realize, crops were a secondary concern with Knut and Janice. They were hanging onto the land, seeing the railroad grant sections already being offered at ten dollars an acre, reading in the Estherville paper that Janice's parents mailed from Iowa of improved farms fetching three thousand dollars.

The wagon pulled atop another ridge, onto a mile-wide section of the railroad grant tracked with wheel ruts left in earlier years. There wasn't a graded road or a fenceline within miles; back in Illinois, Mr. Glidden was only now inventing barbed wire. People traveled by trails following the higher ground, above the hollows that were snow-choked in winter and gumbo mud during the spring thaws. Long after the roads and Mr. Glidden's fences came, men of Knut's generation would lower the wires and take to the hilltops, detouring drifts and mudholes.

A mile south of Janice Caraday's homestead, other trails converged, at the church that had been built last fall along the railroad right of way, the builders saying that a church added value to their acres. They had even, hopefully, staked out a townsite around the church; Pete, for a week's labor of carpentry, had been offered a townsite lot in payment. He had taken a dollar a day cash wage instead.

Beyond the church, the wagon bumped over the railroad tracks onto another open section. Knut broke his long, bleak silence:

"You are just a foolish, blind numbskull!"

He might have meant the refused lot. Pete didn't think so. He suspected Knut meant the October basket social, to raise funds for the church bell. The ladies of the neighborhood brought lunch baskets that were auctioned off to the men. Twenty-five cents was a fair bid, half a dollar a handsome one. Janice Caraday's basket was put up, and young Hans Steinbrugge from Duck Lake Township called, "A dollar!" Now, heaven knew what came over Pete. Hans was just such a fellow as the *fylke*-sheriff's dashing son, perhaps that was it! "Two," said Pete. "And a half," called Hans confidently. "Three," said Pete. "And a quarter," grumbled Hans, not so surely. "Four!" said Pete Arvidsen.

The thing was, afterward the men sat down to eat with the ladies whose baskets they'd bought. A pink glow of astonishment stained Janice's cheeks. She bowed her head over the lunch basket, embarrassed, but pleased, too. Pete stared at the dark hair, rippling in loose waves and caught at the nape of her neck in a scarlet ribbon. His throat filled chokingly, bursting; he tried to think of Else's tightly pleated, golden braids, coiled about Else's head in a shining helmet. It came to him, frighteningly, that three years was a long time; maybe when next he saw Else, he would be reminded of this dark-eyed, dark-haired young widow.

Pete jumped up and strode out of the church, stumbling home across the prairie under a full, flooding moon. It was no use trying to explain matters to Knut. Pete said—it was perfectly true—that he didn't know enough English to converse with Janice Caraday; he could only sit there like a gopher on its tail.

"In that case, it's time you learned."

Knut, when he left Norway, had shipped on an English freighter; had learned the hard way; was teaching himself to read English from borrowed copies of the *Vindicator*. "There will be no more Norwegian spoken under this roof," said Knut sternly.

"Ge'tup!" cried Knut now. The land fell away in a long slope, down to the willow-and-cottonwood fringed bed of Jack Creek. The brothers stopped, and until midday they worked, sawing and splitting the wood, piled for Knut to pick up on his return. They drove on, unwrapping and munching their lunch, neither observing a rusty scimitar of color that rose above the northern horizon, behind them. The motionless air remained muggy, as before. Southwest, a grain elevator appeared, dimmed in a summery haze. They turned onto a township line road, and so came to the village. There was a red-painted railroad station, surrounded by a raised plank platform. Knut pulled up at the platform, and the brothers unloaded the chest, the bale of muskrat skins. And they looked at each other, at last, eye to eye.

"FAREWELL," said Pete. "Be good to yourself, brother."

Knut's face broke up, the long furrows into tiny lines, quivering.

"Don't go," Knut said. "It's crazy, it's throwing away the best chance you'll ever see—" but it had all been said before, argued vainly. Knut stopped, helplessly. "Well, then, good-bye," he said, and sprang to the wagon seat, slapping the reins onto the horses' backs. He drove off, down the township line road. Pete stood stock still a while; indeed, until the wagon became indistinct. He became aware, suddenly, that he was seeing it against a cloud-mass that reached halfway up the northern sky.

"Rain?" he wondered, thinking of the piled wood. It was still a warm day, with water seeping from winter snow that remained under the platform. Pete picked up his muskrat skins and walked up the wooden sidewalk toward the village's dozen, straggling buildings.

Mr. Fierstadt, the blacksmith, sold traps and bought furs. Mr. Fierstadt was Norwegian, from Alesund. It would be a pleasure to loiter in the smithy, gabbing in the Old Country tongue.

"The year's been good to you, Pete," Mr. Fierstadt said, when he had counted money into Pete's palm. "You've earned enough to set yourself up farming."

A muskrat's prime pelt brought forty cents, a mink skin was worth two or three dollars. The trapline had paid better than wheat and flax; yes, that slough of Knut's had turned out to be Pete's salvation.

"The price of a fishing boat," Pete said, pocketing his wallet.

Mr. Fierstadt said a curious thing. "Maybe you had too good a year."

Pete couldn't make sense of the remark. He frowned, puzzled.

"The grasshoppers cleaned out Knut's first crop, but of course you know that," Mr. Fierstadt said.

He hadn't known; Knut had never mentioned the calamity.

"Easy come, easy go," said Mr. Fierstadt, "but hard bought, lasts longest. Excuse me—" A plowshare had come to a cherry-red glow in the forge. The blacksmith transferred it adroitly to his anvil. "This fine, early spring—the work won't wait."

Pete's lips tightened, knowing how that share had come to be dulled. There was nothing easy about turning a sod furrow, nor in following a trapline in below-zero weather. A little displeased with Mr. Fierstadt's lack of perception, Pete moved away, stepping through the open doorway into the sunshine. He got a sharp, tingling shock. For all the sunshine, a chill had come into the day, and he would have sworn the temperature had dropped twenty degrees in the time he had spent selling his muskrat furs.

Automatically, Pete shoved his hands into his pockets as he started along the board sidewalk. He hadn't taken ten steps before the wind struck him its smashing, face-on blow. Distantly, beyond the railroad station, the sky was a billowing curtain of a dirtied, flannel cloth texture. It reached up, swallowing the sun. The wind became a river of ice-chilled, rushing air.

Pete heard Mr. Fierstadt's yell. He looked around and saw Mr. Fierstadt, his face distorted, struggling to haul shut the smithy door. Words, torn from the blacksmith's lips, never reached Pete, but fled

the other way, like debris on the torrent of frigid wind. Pete pulled his hands from his pockets, shielded his face inside an extended, bent arm. He ran, bending into the blast. He was jackknifed double by the time he reached the station platform.

Standing, eyes squeezed half-closed against the searing cold wind, he peered up the township line road. The storm curtain looked a surprising way off, still. A dot that jiggled on the prairie was Knut's team and wagon; Knut was driving, on a dead run, toward the nearest clump of farm buildings. Pete caught up his emigrant's chest by one rope handle and dragged it, bumping, along the platform.

The station-master had the door open; Pete stumbled inside. He puffed for breath, and the wind had brought tears.

"Telegraph went out twenty minutes ago," the station-master said in a queerly hushed voice.

A sound like sandpaper on glass was a snow flurry striking the window at the room's end.

Pete wiped the back of a hand across his eyes, and walked to the window. Beyond the tracks, the prairie smoked with snow flurries, streamers of gray-white that ran before the advancing cloud curtain. Dust and chaff, sucked from under the grain elevator's driveway, went whirling by.

"They're snowbound up the line," the station-master said. "I got that much, before the wire quit."

The cloud curtain was an onrushing wall, a mile-high mass of turbulence. Daylight dissolved before it, into Arctic murk. It was a cloudburst of snow. It was a cold-boiled cauldron of powdered, flying white, swallowing the station. The gale struck like a sledgehammer, and the building shuddered to its foundation. The eaves raised an unearthly, terror-attuned scream.

"I never bothered building a fire, a day like this was." The station-man stood at his sandboxed, pot-bellied stove, looking dazed.

"It can't keep up like this." Pete didn't see how it could; there didn't figure to be that much sustained violence in the world. And, as a fisherman, he had seen the great storms that burst upon the Lofotens.

He had yet to learn that once or twice in a man's lifespan, the Northwest brews a catastrophe more fearful than any storm at sea. There engulfs the prairie all the violence of a tropical hurricane, more terrible than a typhoon because it has a heart of far below zero cold.

The station-master turned from his stove, stood with Pete watching the unleashed fury. The blinding snowstorm emptied itself on the window. Granular snow, as fine as flour, was forced under the sash and spread a film on the sill. At the eaves, the shrieking cry ran up-scale. The wind came on with a harder and harder pressure.

"No wire and no trains running. I'm closing up," the station-man said at last, abruptly. Since the railroad quartered its employees in its depots, this was surprising. "The wife and kids went visiting her sister—I hope they're still there, not trying to get home alone through this."

Pete thought of Janice Caraday.

The scant armful of wood entered his mind, appallingly. Of course, Janice could burn hay—first settlers had managed with no other fuel—but hay was consumed almost instantly in a stove. Bringing it from the ricks would be an endless labor, and no job for a woman. The storm gave no sign of easing, and Pete knew well enough Knut couldn't force his team into such a gale. Even if horseflesh were willing, a driver couldn't find his way across the roadless prairie. At this stage of reasoning, Pete had already raised his chest's lid.

From under the fresh-laundered garments, he dragged a buffalo coat. The coat was a shaggy, graceless, prosaic thing—but he had hoped that to Else, in Tromso, it might have the glamorous allure of far-off places. The *fylke*-sheriff's son didn't own a buffalo coat, matching mittens, and a muskrat cap. Pete put on this armor of hide and fur.

HE plodded along the roadbed between the steel rails. The storm swallowed the station behind him. Ahead, he couldn't see fifty yards. Wind-driven snow burst like surf on the raised embankment, throwing a powdery, frozen spindrift into Pete's face. A man could not walk into the gale. He waded against it. But the rails led by a direct line to the country church, and that was within a mile of the Caraday farm.

familiar ground when he reached it. Meanwhile, he couldn't loose his way, and he needn't search for landmarks.

It was—at first—simply a test of endurance, solved by doggedly putting one foot in front of the other.

The cold lashed his face, and after a while his front teeth and his forehead were benumbed, aching. The cold found its way into winter armor, at sleeve ends and under the buffalo coat's skirts. Wrists and knees and hands ached and stung and grew perilously unfeeling. He pounded one hand on the other. He walked backwards, at intervals, shielding his face from the wind. He warmed a hand inside his garments, and held that hand to his face. He kept moving. It had been cold on the trap-line, too; worse was the snow forming drifts on the lee of the embankment. Reaching rail level, these drifts made blocks behind which the snow piled. There were long, snow-swamped stretches. Pete couldn't find the rails under the snow, and went floundering off the rail grade, into hip-deep drifts.

It was still, though, in the main a matter of endurance. Pete slogged on. The torrent of wind and snow buffeted him, and he bucked into it, and inside the imperfect insulation of buffalo hide and muskrat fur he developed a mental insulation. His mind shut out thought of the cold and the wind. He concentrated on putting one foot in front of the other. He was an automaton capable only of that single movement; this thought dulled and blurred the blades of gale and frost.

This helped enormously, and eventually . . . very much later . . . a horrible misgiving came.

Maybe he had long ago passed the church! He stared around, seeing the rushing walls of snow darkening into shadow, white turning into gray, and gray becoming black. This was nightfall. He had lost track of time, blotting out the hours with the rest. Pete turned his back to the wind, tore off his mitten, plunged a hand inside his buffalo coat and his seaman's jacket. His watch said four o'clock. But there it was, darkness already closing upon him. He hadn't thought to look at the watch or at the station clock when he started, and had no notion of how long or how far he had struggled through the storm. He was still on the railroad line, but at no determinable point on it.

Endurance and dogged effort weren't enough. He was betrayed into panic, spurred to a stumbling, frightened trot. There was, at least, a clear stretch of track ahead. His head turned, Pete's straining eyes searched the gathering gloom. Tripping on an unexpected empty place between the cross-ties, he lurched and fell.

Falling, he twisted, from lost footing and the wind's thrust. His outflung hands found nothing but feathery, yielding stuff, and what checked his plunge was the cross-tie's end. The wooden beam smashed through the buffalo coat and the seaman's jacket. Hurt flamed—a rib bruised, maybe broken. Awareness of his surroundings came to him. He lay sprawled over a trestle on the railroad bridge that spanned Jack Creek. The creek was choked full of snow, level with the surrounding prairie. He still had two miles ahead to reach the church.

Pete groped erect, and carefully, swaying from the dizzying pain that a first, shallow breath brought, he picked his way across the trestlework. It felt like a broken rib, surely, but reaching solid roadbed again, he set his teeth and made his legs punch out into a dog-trot. He had to run, had to find the church before darkness sealed totally upon him.

The trot became a high-kneed, jerky run, slowed to a trot again, faltered to a walk. The ground rose in a ridge that the railroad had cut through. Here, for thirty yards, the snow had drifted in, shoulder deep. After that thirty yards, his best effort was a staggering, reeling totter. The gloom of premature twilight steadily darkened, and as it solidified, the gale struck harder. The cold deepened, to an edge that bit to the bone.

Pete lurched along. He stayed on his feet, stayed alive, knowing he was doing no better than that. He couldn't see twenty feet into the storm, and finding the church had become an utter impossibility.

He plodded, leadenly and cold-stunned. It was easier plodding on the railbed. It was a slow dying without hope. There came on the wind a *bong* of sound. He heard it again before he understood.

A miracle, simply a miracle. The thrust of the storm had set the church bell uneasily tumbling.

HIS head came up. Life, energy, returned. He plunged off the railroad, struggled through a ditch, waded a drift toward the sound. The church was very cold when he had forced open its door. The match Pete struck guttered away in draughts which had powdered altar and pews with powdered snow. In the metal-jacketed stove, paper and shavings and kindling lay thoughtfully for next Sunday's fire. He tossed in a second match, and the flame caught and leaped.

He was lightheaded with astonishment. It wasn't until he stood before the fully leaping flame, feeling the heat sting his frost-bitten face and hands, that he thought of Janice Caraday. She was certainly without a fire by now. She would not dare to leave the house, in fear of never finding her way back to it and her child.

Fifty feet from the door, she would be lost.

Pete was a mile and more away. He could not find his way, in this storm-tortured night, to the tiny speck of a house. He would be insane to try. There would not be a second miracle. He could only wander blindly, stumbling until he fell, getting up to fall again, dropping finally of exhaustion and exposure.

All the same, it was a miserable thing for a man to linger by a warm stove. Pete hated it, and himself, and his helplessness. The bell tolled its broken, despairing dirge. Under the wind's fury, the building trembled like a hard-pressed ship. *A ship*, Pete thought, and there was an implication that flung him around, careless of the pain stabbing from his cracked and maybe broken rib.

A ship could find its way across the trackless sea, Pete thought, and in extremity ship-masters had done so by dead reckoning: The mariner's trick was to find a latitude and run down a westing. Pete sprang into the church entry, and up the ladder into the bell-tower. When he returned to the fire, it was to unbraid the bell rope. What leaped in his mind was a dead reckoning based on a log-line cast overboard. Pete fashioned a landsman's equivalent—thirty-three feet, two rods, of cord, weighted at one end with the church stove poker.

He went outside, into blackness, groping his way along the sidewall to the building's windswept end. The night was all one black volley, Arctic gale and snow torrent. He faced it, estimating and calculating. The church stood compass-square to the world, and Pete decided the wind blew a bit, say a point, west of north. He spent a while gauging the gale's direction; it seemed constant; it was a gamble that it would stay so, for the north wind must be his lodestar. He dropped his poker and, head bowed, taking the blast on both shoulders equally,

he bored into the storm until the cord tugged taut from his hand. Two rods. He hauled in and dropped the poker and bunted again into the tempest. Five times, and he had made ten rods, on a course barely west of north.

There are 320 rods in a mile.

At fifty, he fought over a knoll, blast-swept with a wind deluge. He staggered. He reeled. He floundered, at eighty, into a hollow armpit high with snow, packed. He lurched. He threshed. One hundred rods felt like a mile. The cold pierced and paralyzed. The cold was a band, tight drawn on his bursting skull. Had he lost count of the rods? He butted on, stumped on, legs lamed, feet no part of him. The drifts grew. Up the rising faces of the drifts, the gale shrieked and twisted.

There are 320 rods in a mile; he ought to be on the railroad grant ridge above the Caraday farm; unless the wind had changed. He turned, shoulder and cheek to the storm's thrust, and began running down his westing. He did not run, or walk. He stirred in snow now to his hips, now to his waist. He crouched, burrowed, pawed into the snow. The snow burned his cheeks. His eyelashes clung, freezing. He counted twenty rods, and forty. He knelt, pawed, and found plowed land. Pete whimpered, gladly, knowing this fall plowing. Its furrows ran east-west; he had a check on his directions. Ten rods, twenty, and it wasn't plowing under the snow.

The buildings faced the plowed field; whether left or right, Pete couldn't guess. He fought down haste; a man might die in the barnyard, aimlessly groping. He tramped out a slow circle, around his two rod length of cord. He beat out a second circle, and a third. Pete was spent. His breath sawed, grated on the bruised or broken rib. He stumbled against a wagon tongue, tore away a sideboard for fuel, and was another ten minutes, circling, until he reached the house.

He came onto a dim glow of lanternlight that wavered, smoking, before he forced shut the door, almost by falling against it. "Pete!" Janice Caraday's voice said, distantly and incredulously. "Pete Arvidsen," she said, and pressed to his buffalo coat's front, sobbing.

"I'm all over snow," said Pete. "You better sit down a minute—"

"There's nothing to sit on. I've burned the chairs, the table, everything." There was no fire left, nothing but the glowing lantern shedding its faint warmth on the baby's bed. She had made the baby a nest of blankets on the stove top, for the little heat the metal could yet yield. He'd not come too soon, Pete thought. And looking down into Janice's luminous, wondering eyes, added, and not too late, either.

ON the third morning, they heard a train's whistle; a while later, Knut advanced toiling over the great curving drifts, his face set in a wide grin from the moment he sighted the silvery twine of smoke telling of twisted hay fuel. Knut brought the mail. There was the Estherville paper, and the Estherville editor had bestowed a strange, new name on this storm. He called it a blizzard.

There was something else, a letter Knut reluctantly handed to the younger brother. Pete looked at it for moments, at the spidery downhill, feminine handwriting. There had been only one earlier letter from Else in the whole year. Three days ago, it would have meant so much; and now the meaning was gone, and he could discover no feeling in himself except an embarrassed annoyance. He moved, stiffly and favoring the bruised rib, to the window—not really for better light, but to stare out across the prairie. The blizzard had made the difference. Holding the letter in his hand, he looked out over the hard-won land, knowing that a man doesn't walk away from a conquest bought with the strength of his youth. Then he broke the envelope.

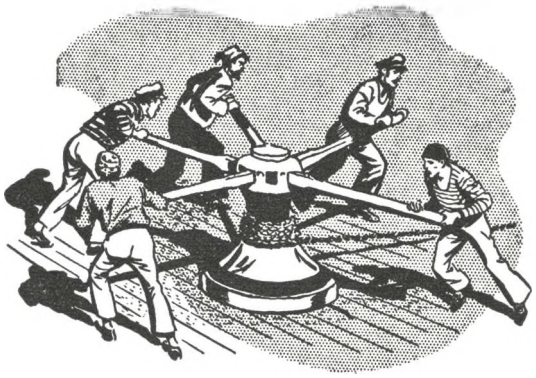
"Why, she's married," Pete said.

"To the sheriff's son?" Janice asked, and watched Pete's face closely.

"No," said Pete, "the mayor's son." It came to him that he had been enormously mistaken about Else. She had seemed a beautiful and remote prize, and he had been stirred by the challenge of attaining the distant and difficult. Because the mayor's son was a callow and moon-faced youth, Else obviously hadn't been hard-won at all; her price was a man's position, or his father's.

"You are laughing!" cried Janice.

"I am happy," said Pete. "I am happy about everything."



SONGS OF THE SAILORMEN

By
CARL D. LANE

OF ALL the songs of industry none are as picturesque nor as durable as the sea chanteys of the sailorman. Little is known about their beginnings, some authorities ascribing their origin to the rowing galleys of ancient Rome and Greece. Certainly a chant of sorts must have been sung by these hard-working slaves as they toiled endlessly at the oars; some "beat" must have been used to time the stroke, fast or slow as required by the navigator, and it might well have been a song of the chantey type.

Sea chanteys as they are known today came from the golden age of sail, the middle eighteen hundreds. In most cases they were actually devices for keeping time as some chore of working ship was being done. The watch heaving on the main brace as ship was brought about, the walk around the capstan as anchors were taken in or the haul on the topsail yard tackle; all had their songs peculiar to the operation. Very seldom did the sailorman do anything as one of a working party without a chantey to help him along.

A good ship had a chantey man, his value to morale and spirits recognized by the quarterdeck. If he could play that grand old forecastle instrument, the accordion or "slide piano" so much the better. The chantey man was often ordered by the mate to start a song. This meant freedom from work for him and enthronement upon the capstan or on the file-rail of the mainmast, abaft of the pumps, where he led the chantey—a line by himself and the chorus or response by the watch. Sometimes, too, he presided over the grog bottle, waving it to keep time, urging the men to cat the anchor quickly or pump her dry and come and share it.

Chanteys fall into four main classes as follows:

A FACT STORY

The short-drag. This type was distinctly a work-song, used for short chores such as swinging up a halyard or altering the "set" of a sail by bracing or sheeting it. A good example of the short-drag is the chantey "Boney."

Bo-ney was a warr-i-or
(Chorus) A-way ay-yah
A war-rior an' a tarr-i-ser
(Chorus) John Fran-SWOR!

At the last syllable of each chorus came the haul or pull in unison that "swigged her home."

Halyard Chanteys. Such a chantey was for hoisting sail, catting the anchor or sending a yard aloft; for the longer tasks aboard ship. An example of this is "Blow the Man Down" which follows these paragraphs.

Windlass or Capstan Chanteys. This type was used for work of a continuous nature requiring the aid of the capstan or brake-windlass of the old wooden ships. The chantey man always led with his verse and as he sang the last word the watch broke with the chorus and a heave. Then, on the last word of the chorus, the chantey man again repeated the verse, to be taken up on its last word by the last chorus, usually longer than the first chorus. Here is an example.

C.M. A Yankee ship on the Congo river
Chor. Blow, boys, blow!
C.M. A Yankee ship on a Congo river
Chor. Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Forecastle Song. In this classification appears the sea ballad which was pure entertainment. They ran to scores of verses, every chantey man adding or changing as he wished. They were mainly concerned with the three subjects always on the sailorman's mind during his long lonely voyages—drink, women and home—and many of them, in the concluding verses became so ribald as to be unprintable. Many of them, too, were narrative and shed much light upon the history of the sailing days and life upon strange waters. Here is an American one:

We're rolling ho—me,
Rolling ho—me!
To dear New Eng—land
Rolling home.
To the land we love.

Chanteys were sung on ships of all nations but peculiarly they were all sung in the English language, very few foreign words or expressions appearing in them. Chanteys are no longer sung on the mechanized ships of today and they are fast disappearing as the mark of a sailorman. They have, however, been preserved between the covers of several books and have taken their place with other American folk music and songs of industry, along with the Negro cotton songs and railroad songs.

Here is the famous chantey "Blow the Man Down," giving two of the many versions. It is interesting to note, however, that the tune always remains the same.

BLOW THE MAN DOWN

I

Chantey Man: Oh, blow the man down, laddies, blow the man down,
Crew: Way, aye, blow the man down!
C.M.: Oh, blow the man down, laddies, blow the man down,
Crew: Give us some time to blow the man down.
C.M.: Come, all ye young fellows that follow the sea,
Crew: With a yeo-to! blow the man down!
C.M.: And please pay attention and listen to me
Crew: Give us some time to blow the man down!

C.M.: On board the Black Baller I first served my time.
Crew: With a yeo-ho! blow the man down!
C.M.: And in the Black Baller I wasted my time.
Crew: And give us some time to blow the man down!

C.M.: *'Tis larboard and starboard, you jump to the call*
Crew: *With a yeo-ho! blow the man down!*
C.M.: *When kicking Jack Williams commands the Black Ball*
Crew: *Give us some time to blow the man down!*

C.M.: *There were tinkers and tailors and sailors and all,*
Crew: *With a yeo-ho! blow the man down!*
C.M.: *They shipped for good seamen on board the Black Ball*
Crew: *Give us some time to blow the man down!*

II

Oh, blow the man down, bul-lies, blow the man down!
To me way—aye, blow the man down.
Oh, blow the man down, bul-lies, blow him right down!
Give me some time to blow the man down!

As I was a-walking down Paradise Street,
A pretty young damsel I chanced for to meet.

She was round in the counter and bluff in the bow,
So I took in all sail and cried, "Way enough now."

I hailed her in English, she answered me clear,
"I'm from the Black Arrow bound to the Shakespeare."

So I tailed her my flipper and took her in tow
And yardarm to yardarm away we did go.

But as we were going she said unto me,
"There's a spanking full-rigger just ready for sea."

That spanking full-rigger to New York was bound;
She was very well manned and very well found.

But soon as that packet was clear of the bar,
The mate knocked me down with the end of a spar.

And as soon as that packet was out on the sea,
'Twas develish treatment of every degree.

So I give you fair warning before we belay;
Don't never take heed of what pretty girls say.

"GIT THAR FUST

OF ALL the military leaders to emerge from the thunder and carnage of the Civil War—that conflict which produced so many notable and colorful general officers—by far one of the most interesting, judged by any standard, was Nathan Bedford Forrest.

A successful businessman and planter who lifted himself from abject poverty to great wealth, he enlisted at the age of 40 and without previous military training was the only individual on either side to rise from private to lieutenant general. In brief, Forrest was that hardy type of individual who, by intelligence, courage, honesty, and a lot of sweat, is a success at anything.

A FACT STORY

WITH THE MOST"

By

ROBERT H. RANKIN

Forrest gave the man a solid slap on the side of the head, which knocked him sprawling into the muddy river.

Entirely without formal education, his rise to military fame was no fluke. His tactics made the most of speed and mobility and he was a hard fighter. General George Patton, of "blood and guts" fame would have understood him perfectly and there is little doubt that the two of them would have enjoyed each others' company.

Many of his commands and expressions, given in the frontier idiom, which was the only language he knew, sound humorous and illiterate, yet they are models of brevity and often contain a wealth of sound principle. His classic, "Git thar fust with the most," given as the answer to the question of his continued military success, is still a sound bit of advice.

After hearing some of the fast double talk used by a few of the modern brass hats, it is indeed refreshing to note that Old Bedford always found it possible to get along with a minimum of words. For instance, at the battle of Brice's Crossroads, he ordered one of his brigadiers to "Tell Bell to move up and fetch all he's got." There is not a word wasted in this order, yet it contains everything necessary. Then there is the famous endorsement which he made to a request for leave. One of his captains forwarded, through proper channels, a perfectly worded and phrased request. Upon receiving it, Forrest penciled on the back, "I tol' you twice, goddammit, no." It's quite evident that the general had no difficulty in making himself quickly and clearly understood at all times.

FORREST was born in Middle Tennessee in 1821 and during his early years lived the rough and tumble life of any lad on the frontier, a life which made him a fighter but also gave him a great sense of justice. It is recounted that, as a lad of some thirteen years, he routed, with a pair of tailor shears, a gang of toughs intent on wrecking the shop of a relative.

Life was fast and hard in his native hills. Later, while visiting an uncle, he got into a scrap with four planters who were embroiled in a dispute with the old man. Coming to town with the express purpose of having a showdown, they ganged up on him. Bedford quickly went to his uncle's rescue, whereupon one of the planters made a fast draw and started shooting. The first slug missed the youth but struck the old man killing him instantly. The four antagonists then concentrated on young Forrest, but before they could unlimber their guns there were two staccato barks from his pocket derringer and two of the planters dropped in their tracks. Then drawing his Bowie knife he charged the other two, but by this time these worthies were so surprised and confused they decided they had more important business elsewhere. They started off for the tall timber, but not before the youth had slashed another one into insensibility.

Although the death of his father left him, as a mere lad, responsible for the support of his mother and family, he worked their small hill farm with energy and it wasn't too long before he was on the high road to success.

By the time he was 29, he owned a thriving business, was married and had settled down in Memphis—at that time a young, rough reckless, overgrown river town. Whisky was cheap, tempers were short and "honor" was easily offended. It took a good man to get along in such a place, but Forrest soon acquired a reputation for fearless honesty and citizenship. On the side of law and order, he had no time for backwoods brawls and river rats and he became the champion of the law-abiding God-fearing element in the town. By the time the war clouds broke, pitting brother against brother and plunging the nation into a holocaust which stopped just short of national sucide, he had built a fortune of nearly a million dollars, was city alderman, and was known and respected throughout the state for his high character and native leadership ability.

An ardent and sincere believer in states' rights, he could see no other course than to volunteer his services to the South and although forty years old, enlisted as a buck private in Captain White's Tennessee Mounted Rangers. Such a natural leader was much too valuable to be lost in the ranks of a volunteer company and it logically followed that it wasn't long

before Tennessee's Governor Harris asked him to raise and take command of a regiment of cavalry.

Characteristically, he not only raised the outfit but he fully equipped it, going as far north as Louisville, Kentcky to purchase some of the arms and equipment, including 500 Colt Navy pistols and 100 saddles. The Federal authorities got wind of his activities and immediately set about to cut off his return to Tennessee. However, with an outfit of some 75 Kentuckians who came to his assistance, he easily eluded the enemy and got his supplies safely home.

From the very first of his military career, he demonstrated his complete understanding of the important military factors of mobility, security, surprise, secrecy, concentrated striking power and leadership—all so necessary to successful combat planning and execution.

WITH his regiment he joined the force defending Fort Donelson, in February, 1862, and when that fort was surrendered he led his men through a sheet of icy water and around the Federal lines to safety. He then joined Albert Sidney Johnson and distinguished himself at Shiloh, where he took a painful wound. Not out of action for long, he embarked upon a series of successful movements which soon caused him to be considered one of the best cavalry leaders on either side and earned him his promotion to brigadier general.

Thoroughly disappointed with the Confederate failure to follow up the success at Chickamauga, at which action he again distinguished himself, he tendered his resignation from the service. This was not accepted and, instead, he was promoted to major general.

Welding his troops into a seasoned body of invincible fighters, known as Forrest's Cavalry, he fought a series of successful and brilliant actions in Tennessee and northern Mississippi. In one exploit he outfoxed General A. J. Smith, played complete havoc with Federal communications and transportation and captured a host of garrisons and supply depots. He added a fillip to this episode by the capture and destruction of $6,000,000 worth of supplies and an entire Federal gunboat fleet. This was perhaps the first and only time a cavalry outfit ever heard the command, "Dismount and prepare to fight gunboats."

Another of his remarkable actions was the capture, after five days' forced marching and hard fighting, of an entire Federal cavalry brigade, under the command of Colonel A. D. Streight near Rome, Georgia.

During his campaigning he had at least 29 horses shot from under him and he, himself, took a number of painful wounds. He hated cowards and once pistoled the color-bearer of a stampeding infantry regiment, turning the men back to the fighting front. On another occasion he leaped from his horse, seized a retreating trooper by the throat and soundly thrashed him until the soldier broke away and went back to the front to escape the punishment.

From the very first of his military career, he adopted an informal attitude toward his enlisted men, but he enforced discipline and when the occasion arose could be as strict as any man. A firm believer in military etiquette, he required its strict observance on the part of his officers, but at the same time he insisted they bear a hand to help the men if the situation required it.

This gave rise to an episode of considerable interest while his command was making a river crossing in northern Alabama. Swollen by continual rains, the river presented a formidable obstacle, rendered all the more hazardous by the fact that a Federal cavalry regiment and a blue coated infantry column were converging on him. For two days a number of small boats were used to ferry the troops across the raging waters, Old Bedford taking an active part in all the work. On the last trip, dog tired, dirty and worried, he was heaving to on a long pole when he noticed a young lieutenant standing in the bow of the boat, doing nothing. In short order, the general asked the youngster why he didn't lend a hand. The lieutenant replied that he was an officer and didn't feel he should be called upon to do such disagreeable tasks as long as there were enough enlisted men to do the job. Holding his pole in one hand, Forrest

gave the man a solid slap on the side of the head, which knocked him sprawling into the muddy river. The shavetail came to the surface to hear the general shout, "Now damn you, get back in this boat and go to work. If I knock you out again, I'll let you drown."

To say that Forrest was unorthodox, would be putting it mildly, for he had no use for tradition and policy if he couldn't use them to help him win battles. A minor, but nevertheless indicative, example is to be found in his saber. Early in his campaigning he appropriated a captured officer's saber. In common with all officer's blades, it was dull and was to be used more for ornamentation than anything else. Old Bedford found a grindstone and ground it himself to a razor edge. Several ex-Regular Army officers protested that this was contrary to all military precedent and tradition. To this he replied, "War means fightin' and fightin' means killin'. I'll keep it sharp."

For all his good qualities, he had a quick and oft-times terrible temper which he had considerable difficulty in checking and caused him no little trouble.

A YOUNG artillery captain in his command was accused of abandoning his guns under fire. Forrest took a mighty dim view of the affair, spoke his mind freely and to the point, and had the officer transferred to another command. The officer, a Captain Gould, took the transfer as an official censure, regarded it a direct reflection on his courage and character, and refused to accept the humiliation without protest. He camped on the general's trail until finally he was given an interview. With two hot tempered individuals arguing a point of honor, fireworks were bound to happen. They did!

Unable to control his temper over what he considered a personal affront, Gould drew his pistol, thrust it against Forrest's side and fired. Reeling from the shot, Old Bedford grasped the man's pistol hand, pulled a small Barlow knife and stabbed him in the stomach. Whereupon the junior officer broke free and ran, while Forrest stumbled to the surgeon's office. Upon being told he had received a fatal wound, he sprang up in a red rage and ran in search of the captain, shouting, "No damn man can kill me and live."

In the meantime Gould made his way to a small shop where the general found him lying on a bench, surrounded by a crowd of soldiers. With a roar, Forrest charged the group, shouting, "Get out of my way. He's mortally wounded me and I aim to kill him before I die." In spite of his great pain and weakness, the young officer managed to pull himself erect and stagger through a rear door. Thinking the man was escaping, Bedford blazed away at him with a cavalry revolver, but overcome by weakness the captain dropped to the ground and the bullet missed its mark. Seeing the man so badly hurt, Forrest calmed, became rational, and ordered the artilleryman carried to a nearby hotel. There both of them lay in a serious condition for many days. Then it became apparent the captain would die, while Forrest would recover. Upon hearing the news, he had himself carried to the man's room where they exchanged apologies and they were friends when the young officer died.

Let it not be thought for one minute that Forrest vented his wrath on subordinates alone. Nothing could be farther from the truth. On numerous occasions he blew his top to superiors and a classic example was his face-to-face denunciation of his commanding officer, General Braxton Bragg, commander of the Department of Tennessee.

Then only a brigadier, Forrest wrote him in no uncertain terms protesting an order turning over the bulk of his troops to General Wheeler. He followed up his letter with a personal visit to Bragg and received assurance that at the close of a projected raid his troops would be returned to him. However, two days after this meeting with Bragg, Old Bedford received an order taking away the rest of his command and placing him under the command of Wheeler. Previously on record as absolutely refusing to serve under that officer, Forrest decided to have a personal showdown.

Proceeding to Bragg's headquarters, he dismounted and strode grim and silent into the commanding general's tent. Bragg arose and extended his hand in friendly greeting to the brigadier. Forrest ignored

the greeting and immediately launched into a scathing rebuke. "I'm not here to pass civilities or compliments with you, but on other business," he told Bragg. "Ever since Shiloh you've been at your cowardly and contemptible persecution of me, and you've kept it up well. You did it because I reported facts and you report damned lies."

He then accused Bragg of robbing him of his command in Kentucky and of giving it to one of his own favorites, adding that when he would not toady to him, Bragg had reassigned him to command a green and unequipped brigade and sent him off to Tennessee. Accusation followed accusation, as he charged his superior of taking advantage of his official position to continually humiliate him and rob him of commands which he had raised and equipped at his own personal expense.

Calling Bragg a damned scoundrel, Old Bedford threatened to slap him and finished his rebuke by telling him not to give him any more orders for he wouldn't follow them, adding that in event an attempt was made to court martial him it would be at the peril of Bragg's life.

In all justice, it should be noted that General Bragg was one of the really tragic figures of the Confederacy. No soldier was more devoted to a cause nor more willing to sacrifice for his country and it is well to recognize that he showed great understanding and forbearance in not pressing charges against Forrest.

Shortly after his session with Bragg, Old Bedford was called to Montgomery for a conference with President Jefferson Davis. No record exists as to what transpired at this conference, but a few weeks later he was assigned to the District of North Mississippi.

LATER, during the twilight of the Confederacy, he was placed in command of the rear guard of the army during its retreat from Nashville and his display of heroism and leadership excited the admiration of friend and foe alike. Finally he was promoted lieutenant general and given the responsibilty of guarding the Confederate frontier from Decatur, Alabama, to the Mississippi River.

In passing, it can be related that General Forrest was not the polished soldier of Lee's type, nor did he have any of the human warmth and kindness of Albert Sidney Johnson. Certainly he had none of Jeb Stuart's dash and splendor. He was simply a hard fighter and a good leader.

It is significant that Lee considered him one of the greatest of his general officers, stating that Forrest did far more with fewer troops than any leader on either side. William T. Sherman was frank in admiration of Old Bedford's ability and said so several times. Looking back in retrospect, it is evident that had he been given a free hand in the very beginning of the war, he would have seriously taxed Grant and Sherman in the western theater of operations.

An insight into the man's own character can be seen in his farewell message to his troops, in which he said, "In bidding you farewell, rest assured that you carry with you my best wishes for your future welfare and happiness. Without in any way referring to the merits of the cause in which we have been engaged, your courage and determination, as exhibited on many hardfought fields, have excited the respect and admiration of friend and foe. And I now, cheerfully and gratefully, acknowledge my indebtedness to the officers and men of my command, whose zeal, fidelity, and unflinching bravery have been the great source of my past success in arms.

"I have never, on the field of battle, sent you where I was unwilling myself to go; nor would I now advise you to a course which I felt myself unwilling to pursue. You have been good soldiers; you can be good citizens. Obey the laws, preserve your honor, and the government to which you have surrendered can afford to be, and will be, generous."

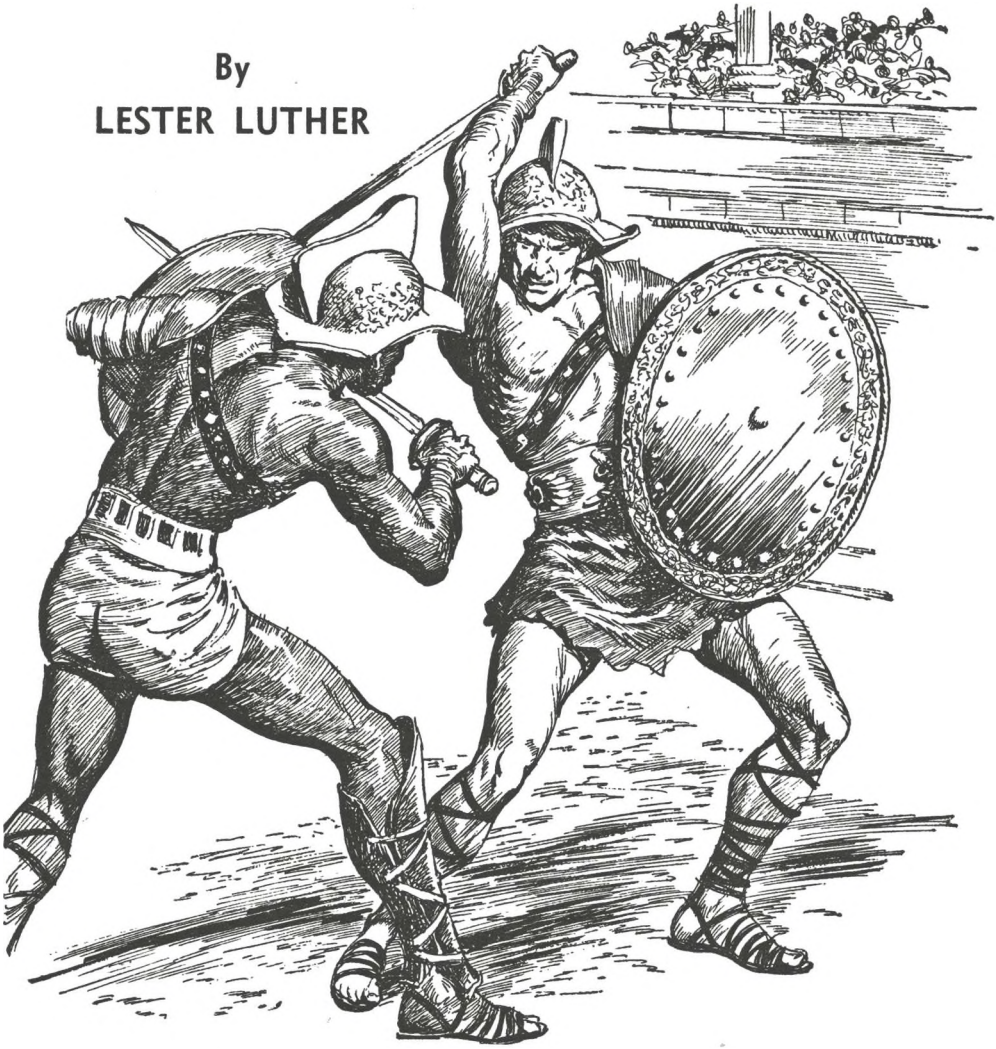
BLOOD FOR CAESAR

By
LESTER LUTHER

IT WAS the reign of Gaius Decius, the Illyrian emperor of Rome.

The empire was ripening for conquest. Luxury and pride made the nobles corrupt, and the burden of taxes embittered the populace. Generals turned to treachery and soldiers became renegades. The threatening Franks and Goths gave courage to the restless provinces. Verily, the Roman peace had vanished, yet Rome struggled to retain her old pomp and glory. Fear was everywhere and escape was sought in debauchery.

There were the beautiful courtesans whose bartered love perverted the few remaining virtues in pagan Rome. There were banquets with flowered wine and spiced food for the stomach and feathers for the throat. And the Mistress of the World exemplified her position in the



The champion from Brigantes fought like a whole legion. His sword was everywhere, cutting and slashing, thrusting and lunging.

Flavian Amphitheatre. There the followers of the Christus were persecuted unless they renounced their faith. The end of Rome's majesty began with the advent of Christianity.

Rome was divided and it was achieved by a cross.

Gaius Decius, a capable ruler, sought unity in the persecutions and a return to imperialism and when this failed he turned to the wars in Thrace. But faraway battles and legions in outposts of the empire came to mean little to pleasure loving Romans.

Only the great festivals highlighted by gladiatorial combats retained a small semblance of the Imperial Period. The gladiator was a national hero, if victorious, and was heaped with countless rewards. If a slave he might be granted his freedom and poets, like Martial, sang his praises while noble ladies contended for his favors. He was given chains of precious stones, jeweled helmets, and his portrait painted on gems, lamps and vases. He was envied and imitated, feared and respected. In Rome only the emperor enjoyed greater fame.

Romans never dreamed they would see another Spartacus—the gladiator who rebelled during the Consulate of Cicero. But the people found themselves a hero in the person of a giant Negro. He had been captured by a centurion in Central Africa and brought to Rome while still a lad. He claimed to be a prince of his tribe and this was believed, for he had character and strength, pride and courage. Reared and trained in the trade of the gladiators, he proved himself invincible by meeting and defeating all challengers.

His name was Flamius, but he was known throughout the empire as the Black Flame!

The powerful black fought two hundred battles and two hundred men were killed at the command of a turned down thumb. One contest included a duel with a fierce Amazon whom he refused to slay, announcing dramatically to the emperor that he would fall on his own sword before he harmed a woman. And how could Rome forget the day he slew six fighters in one engagement! But even the mighty Flamius could be wounded. There were many scars on his body and the most recent was a horrible gash across his stomach inflicted by the trident of Garsites the Greek, who was then swiftly decapitated with one sweeping blow. Still the Black Flame was challenged and to avoid being branded a coward he must meet all comers, who envisioned fame and wealth if they conquered the champion. Flamius met them all—tattooed Britons, Thracians, Moors, Africans, Romans, captured Franks and Goths. The latest challenger was the champion from Brigantes, a Roman soldier named Scarus.

THIS was the day Romans waited for. Flamius had not appeared in the arena for many months, due to the furious fight with Garsites. And Scarus, that swaggering warrior, boasted openly that he would smother the Black Flame. There were some who wondered, for the soldier was a lordly looking fellow. It was said he alone had killed sixty Britons in one battle, and had been decorated by numerous generals for bravery in the fields of Hibernia, Brigantes and Boresti. There was some gossip that Scarus was the bastard of the ambitious Gallus and a Gothic harlot, but the soldier's hatred for the general refuted this lie. Few Romans could measure up to the standards of Honorius Galerian Scarus.

The Amphitheatre quaked with a hundred thousand pagan souls. Never in the memory of Romans was the arena reserved for one single contest. The babbling audience cheered lustily when Scarus entered from the vaults. He was a splendid figure of a man. Tall and nimble, he walked straight to the Podium. His gallic armor gleamed above his great muscles. Cold, fierce eyes were set deeply in a stone face marked with lines of hardness. Arms and legs, back and chest looked as though they belonged on a bull. He stared boldly at the emperor and raised his sword which brought silence to the crowds. His voice belonged in his fighting frame, for it was a fearless roar that carried throughout the Amphitheatre:

"O Cæsar!" he thundered. "This day you will name a new champion. Flamius was born for my sword. This night I shall drink his blood!"

The cheers that followed his words were skeptical but hearty. Rome needed more of his kind—but even as the spectators commended him their attention was suddenly diverted to the far end of the arena.

In one simultaneous motion the audience arose and shouted the magic name:

"FLAMIUS!"

The massive gladiator walked toward the Podium. Towering and broad, his black skin had been oiled till it shone. Despite his savage bearing, he had handsome features. Wide, alert eyes accented a face of high cheeks and a straight thin-lipped mouth. His skin was taut over mountains of muscle. Scarus was impressed as he measured the Negro from the corners of his eyes. He looked like a god and walked like a king. Then the gladiators faced each other.

"So you are the great Flamius," said Scarus with half a smile. "Killer of men, I greet you."

Scarus was astounded at the return compliment. It was a kind voice, cultured, and so low that it sounded as though it came from an opening in the earth: "Noble Scarus needs no words of praise from the Black Flame. Yet, I greet you, warrior of warriors."

They clasped each other's arms and for a moment there seemed to pass between them a feeling more of brotherhood than of hate.

"Decius grows impatient," said Flamius. "Let us salute him and begin."

"Is there to be any quarter?" Scarus asked grimly.

"None."

"Then fight hard, great Flamius, and die slowly for our Cæsar."

Flamius mocked him gently: "You will have to use your sword, noble Scarus, not your tongue."

They raised their swords in salute to the emperor. Decius wondered at the braggadocio of the Brigantes champion, but he was more concerned with the Black Flame. The emperor and Flamius were known to be friends and so it was simple for him to detect a change in the famous champion. The Negro's head was still held high, but gone was the arrogance that marked his step.

"Centurion!" roared the emperor. "On with it!"

A MAILED arm was raised as a signal to the trumpeters. The horns blasted a long single note that echoed through the amphitheatre, chilling the audience. There was hardly a sound as the two gladiators squared off.

Scarus was in a crouch behind his shield. Flamius stood erect. They moved slowly in a large circle, watching for an opening, waiting for a thrust. The emperor leaned forward, resting his chin in cupped hands. There was anxiety in his eyes, which were usually filled with indifference. Decius was worried about his favorite, who always began the combat with a savage cry and a wild charge. The Cæsar hoped he was wrong, for he believed caution to be linked with cowardice. Scarus must have thought even as the emperor, for he suddenly lashed out with an attack that would not be denied.

And lo! mighty Flamius withdrew before the violent onslaught.

The champion from Brigantes fought like a whole legion. His sword was everywhere: cutting and slashing, thrusting and lunging—high and low, wire and deep. There were few feints, for Scarus knew his foe was no fool. The soldier cursed as he attacked without pause. His was an offense never before seen in the arena. On and on he came like a wild devil. Gradually the spectators began cheering his efforts, but they were blind to the real situation. Flamius was in retreat, but he was cool and calm. It might be a trick, thought Scarus, or a new style he has perfected. Only the emperor was quiet as he watched the excellent though unexplainable defense of Flamius. Could it be, Decius pondered, the Black Flame had smoldered to an ember?

The defensive battle was dull to those unschooled in the art of gladiatorial combat. The majority of the crowd saw only what they wanted to see—a brilliant offense met with an "adequate" defense. Some wondered if Flamius was toying with Scarus.

A few thought it must be a trap and that the tide would soon shift when the Black Flame found his opening. Whatever the cause, Flamius was losing favor with each retreating step. Impatient for blood, the throng changed from cheers for Scarus to jeers for Flamius. Was this their great champion? The Black Flame fought like an old woman. The Amphitheatre rumbled with gibes. One phrase developed into a rhythmic chant. Even the emperor laughed as he tapped the beat on the thigh

of Anelda, his courtesan. It grew deafening as it thundered:

"Born of a mudhen, raised in dung,
Smells like a Christian's rotting tongue."

The soldier found that the chant had an alarming effect upon his foe. The black face suddenly changed from a cold stone to a rising smile that brought a wild gleam to almond eyes. Flamius retreated no farther. Scarus paused a brief moment and in the next instant felt his sword and shield locked with those of his opponent. Straining muscles looked as though they would burst. Toe to toe they glared into each other's eyes. Flamius saw fear; Scarus read his own death sentence in the implacable stare of his foe. And then there was one great yell that forced every living being in the Amphitheatre to his feet. With impossible strength Flamius raised his rival from the ground and flung him several yards away, where he sprawled like a drunken patrician.

Scarus was dumbfounded, but he quickly collected himself. He was on his knees and barely regained his feet when the black man approached. Then began an attack that was invincible. It all seemed like child's play to Flamius, who laughed as his blade clanged merrily on his foe's armor. It was a welcome sound as it rang throughout the Amphitheatre. The crowds cheered wildly and Decius, in his joy, promised a thousand Christians on the morrow for the mouth of the arena. Wagers were made on how long the soldier would last. Everyone was ecstatic over the resurrection of the Black Flame. Only one was disturbed and it was he who faced the sword of Flamius.

Scarus was in swift retreat and had it not been for his warrior courage he would have turned heel and fled. Flamius charged like a bull, his attack tireless and brilliant. The soldier must have thought he was facing a dozen men, for all he could see was the flashing rays of a sword that cut the air with a whipping sound. Scarus defended himself desperately, but his pride and valor were no match for the Negro's terrible prowess. Scarus had but one choice: to wait for the blow and then look to the emperor for the sign. What a shameful end for a Roman soldier!

THE cheering spectators turned the Amphitheatre into a temple of hysteria. The show on the sands was reaching some kind of a climax and as dusk approached no one dared to leave. The two gladiators in their battle nearly covered the entire area of the arena. How much longer could they stand the pace? Perhaps Decius was wrong in pairing a seasoned soldier with a professional gladiator. Darkness might well bring the contest to an end, but the crowd hoped and roared for the only possible outcome: victory for Flamius, death to Scarus!

By the gods, why doesn't Flamius strike? The people begged for blood and even Decius was shouting commands to his favorite to bring this farce to an end. Scarus was bewildered at the tactics of his opponent, for countless times Flamius could easily have struck the mortal blow. And then—Flamius suddenly stopped as though he was turned into a rock. Scarus saw his chance and lashed out with his sword like a striking asp. It passed the Negro's guard and buried itself in his unprotected side. An eerie silence fell over the Amphitheatre. Scarus too was surprised, for he knew it was not his maneuver but Flamius' that caused the wound.

Now or never, thought the soldier as he closed in to strike the fatal blow. Again he thrust and again he was bewildered to find his foe waiting instead of defending himself. A brief cry of pain followed another sting of the soldier's blade as it pierced the left shoulder. Each cut, every lunge found its mark. Flamius retreated slowly, leaving a trail of blood on the sands. His black body became crimson as flesh hung from bone and muscle. The spectators were stupefied. Scarus, though he pursued skillfully, was not without emotion. He hacked away at Flamius hoping he would go down, for had he fallen he might have found mercy from Decius. Scarus grew sick of his ugly task, for he admired this noble fighter who could easily have run him through, but for some unknown reason chose the present course. The soldier withheld his mortal stroke as he paused a moment to plead, "Fall, Flamius, fall! You will find mercy!"

The gladiator heard, but did not answer. For one instant their eyes met. Scarus wondered at what he saw, but there was no

mistaking the contentment, the pride, the happiness in the other's expression. The soldier cursed. This was not glory, for he had become an executioner to a man who could have slain him with a quill. The fatal stroke now would be a blessing, for Flamius was a horrible spectacle of dripping gore. Beaten, but regal even in defeat, the gladiator smiled thinly as he nodded to his foe. Scarus recognized the sign as he had seen it many times before. Without pausing, the soldier struck violently. All Rome seemed to gasp together as Flamius fell, his head cleft in two. For a long while the spectators gaped in silence as though hoping he would rise, but the Black Flame was destroyed. He lay on his back peacefully, while his conqueror walked away with bowed head and weeping heart.

Scarus looked a last time at Flamius and then left the arena. And so it was with the thousands of Romans who filed quietly out of the Amphitheatre of the Flavians. Shadows from the high tiers were creeping over the sands and soon the black body was swallowed in darkness. Slaves bearing torches came into the arena. They picked up the dead gladiator and carried him off to be thrown in the drains. On their way, a small wooden object fell from the severed helmet. The little crucifix went unnoticed as it was trampled into the sands.

ACROSS THE FOAM

by BILL ADAMS

The old man said to me, "Look!" said he,
"Wot for i' the devil are ye goin' to sea?
I've sailed wi' thirty fine tall ships
From thirty diff'rent landin' slips.
I've starved, an' froze, an' baked as well,
'Neath tropic suns like the core of hell.
For a lad wi' sense the sea's no life;
Starvation pay, an' endless strife,
Wi' hardcase skippers an' mates as bad.
No! The sea's no life for a sensible lad.
Go stay ashore, me lad!" said he.
"Go sit wi' a gal upon your knee,
An' take your ease, an' sleep in peace—
To hell wi' ships an' the wind-whipped seas!"
So I said to him, "No. I've signed my name.
To go back now would bring me shame.
I don't give a cuss for grub nor pay,
And I'm not scared of what you say,
Not of hardcase mates, nor harder skippers.
What I want, old man, 's to sail with the clippers."
The old man grinned, and he spat his quid,
And said, "Lor' love ye, I knowed you did!
They warned me low, they warned me high,
They said I'd be luckier far to die
Than serve the ships; but now I'm old
I'd not swap what I know for pots o' gold.
It's a dog's life, son, but a man's life too.
—Let's have a beer an' join her crew."

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

FIGHTING the Fuzzy-Wuzzies.

Query:—I hope you won't mind answering a few questions on the Anglo-Egyptian War.

1. In what year did this conflict take place?
2. Who was the head of the army of the Fuzzy Wuzzies, Dervish and Arabs?
3. In what year did Sir Herbert Kitchener take command of the British Forces?
4. Can you give me a brief outline of the Campaign?
5. Where were the Dervish and Arab Army defeated, and in what year?
6. Can you recommend any books on the subject?
7. Where and in what year was General Gordon killed?

—Frank Black, Jr.
Pittsburgh, Penna.

Reply by H. W. Eades—During the 19th century, the Soudan territories were invaded and conquered by Egyptian armies. Egypt, during this period, was nominally under Turkish control. Previous to 1882, the British and French governments had intervened in the affairs of Egypt in order to prevent financial ruin of the country and the destruction of British and French investments. The Anglo-Egyptian War was provoked by a formidable rising under Arabi Pasha in 1882, as a protest against French and British interference in Egyptian affairs. France refused to take any active share in the suppression of the revolt, and victories at Alexandria and Tel-el Kebir led to the assumption by Britain of a veiled protectorate.

At this time, corrupt Egyptian officials had stimulated the slave trade and through graft had created great popular dissatisfaction in the Soudan. General Gordon (an Englishman) was made Governor-general by the Khedive of Egypt (nominally under the suzerainty of Turkey) and sent into the Soudan to restore order, with only a handful of native troops to back him up.

In 1883, the Mahdi, a Mohammedan religious leader, led his "fuzzy-wuzzies" and Arabs into the Southern provinces. The Mahdi, Mohammed Ahmed ibn Seyyid Ab-

dullah was a Dongolese, reputedly born in 1843. According to certain Moslem traditions, the true "Mahdi"—that is, the "God-directed"—was to make his appearance in the 1300th year of the Hegira, namely 1883, so that the stage was set for him. He purported to be the Mohammedan Messiah, the last of the Imams, who Moslem traditionists believe will reign in the last days, temporally and spiritually, and convert the world to Islam. There have been many claimants to be the Mahdi in all periods of Moslem history.

The Mahdi took Khartoum and there murdered Gordon and his assistant (the only white men). Thus Gordon (who was really in the employ of the Government of Egypt) and the Soudan were sacrificed to Gladstone's (British Prime Minister) policy of reform without bloodshed, in the year 1885.

In 1896, the reconquest of the Soudan was undertaken in order to check invasion of Egypt proper by the Mahdi's forces. Kitchener wiped out Mahdiism and the Mahdi at the battles of Atbara and Omdurman.

The Soudan at present is a condominium, administered jointly by Britain and Egypt, but Egyptian agitators now demand complete control.

Books on the subject: Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, 1908; the *Journals of Major-General Gordon at Khartoum*, 1885; *Mahdiism and the Egyptian Soudan*, Wingate, 1891; *Life of Gordon*, D. C. Boulger, 1896.

WAY down East.

Query:—Please send me some information about Maine, as we are studying its history, resources and government in school. Thank you.

—K. Kelley
South Windham, Me.

Reply by "Chief" Stanwood:—Many pages could be written on the history of this State, so will make a brief synopsis. The Red-Paint Indians were probably the first settlers, some eight hundred years ago, coming no doubt from Alaska. Many shell heaps and burying grounds are found here at Sullivan, Sorrento, Hancock, Lamoine, and many other places around Maine.

The first ship built in America was built at Popham Beach, in 1697. First Court held in Maine was at Saco, in 1636. York was the first city incorporated in Maine in 1641, Mt. Katahdin is the highest mountain, 6,273 feet above sea level. First free public library was established in Castine in 1801. Maine was admitted to the Union as a State in 1820 with William King as the first governor; the capital was established at Portland, and moved to Augusta, in 1832.

Maine has a coastline of 2,500 miles with 2,600 lakes and ponds. It has an area of 33,000 square miles. It is 320 miles long and 210 miles in width. Over 40,000 farms. Produces 70 per cent of the country's blueberries. Population, around 900,000. Maine was first explored in the 15th century. West Quoddy Head, on the Maine coast, is the most easterly point in the U. S. A.

IT'S A rocky road for a race-driver.

Query:—I have spent three years on the speedways trying to make good, but I couldn't get a car except once in a while, and they're only old ones that I would be lucky to make expense money with. I didn't mind that, as I knew I had to get some work on the track before I could expect to get a car to make me money. But the owners were all leery of my driving, even after I received a break with an owner who taught me everything I could learn without competitions. Then he put me in a couple of races, but he had to have his car for other fellows that he was helping out.

—Charles E. James
San Francisco, Calif.

Reply by Walt Woestman:—Breaking into the racing game isn't easy for a driver. If you should ask any driver how to do it his reply would probably be just that—"It ain't easy"—which about sums it up.

You could hardly expect an owner to trust a car, which might cost up to $10,000 to build, to an inexperienced hand, as much as we need new drivers these days. Many of the newer, and younger, drivers have gotten their start in the so-called hot-rods, but even these creations now cost several thousand dollars to build, so even that is probably out of the question.

With the advent of the "Jallopy" races, which are now quite a sensation on the Western tracks, my suggestion would be for you to buy an old car and join one of these associations. Then after running a few races you might be in a position to ask for a driving job in a regular race car. These "Jallopies" are merely old cars, most of them about ready for the junk yard, and nearly always consigned to the said wrecker after a few races. The customers apparently go, not to see races, but crack-ups, of which there are many. So far, no driver has been injured, and I have seen many terrific wrecks. As one requirement is that they must all be hard-top cars a driver is not easily hurt. Then too, the driver must be strapped in with the safety belt attached to the frame of the car and not merely to the seat, and all window glass must be removed. The cars, as you can imagine, do not attain much speed, so all in all it is probably the safest sort of racing.

I use the word racing with my tongue in cheek. While there is always a winner it is hardly racing as we have come to know it. I don't mean to imply that there is any "fixing" of the race and I am sure that the

(Continued on page 106)

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Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, P.O. Box 716, Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Chesapeake Bay and tributaries; inland waterways, New York to Florida*—COL. ROLAND BIRNN, c/o *Adventure*. **4** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C., S. C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, c/o *Adventure*. **5** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

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ON SALE AUGUST 17th

(Continued from page 8)

A NOTE from Bob Rankin anent his colorful fact piece on Nathan Bedford Forrest, the fiery Confederate general whose famous advice on military strategy forms the title of the article.

For my money, Old Bedford is one of the most fascinating characters to be found in the military history of any country. The General George Patton of his day, he believed in his men and he never lost confidence in his own ability to get a job done.

As is the case with most colorful leaders, a lot of nonsense and silly legends have been built up around him through the years. It seems that a lot of folks, wholly ignorant of the frontier idiom, can't refrain from kicking his expressions around until the old boy, himself, wouldn't recognize them. Worse than this, they have attributed a lot of stuff to him which he neither said nor did. Even the old veterans, whom I talked with when I was a boy, were inclined to color the facts to suit their particular fancy at the time. For that reason, I have included only those episodes which are factual.

IN THE days of its greatest glory, in the second century A.D., the Imperial Eagle of Rome had spread its wings over all of southern Europe, Britannia, North Africa, Egypt, Asia Minor and south of the Caucasus. But less than a hundred years later, the forces which would bring about the Empire's eventual collapse—corruption within; invasion from without—had already been set in motion. . . Lester Luther's story in this issue ("Blood for Caesar"—page 94) is a tale of that period, in the early days of the Decline, when a thrill-seeking populace sought amusement in the persecution of Christians—and gladiators met in mortal combat. The author writes that he was. . .

. . . born in 1921, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where I was also raised and married. Spent thirteen months in Army hospitals, during World War II, due to a rare blood disease called Infectious Mononucleosis. Attended the University of Wisconsin for three years as a G. I. Bill student. Presently employed in County Civil Service. Also active in dramatics, having done summer stock. Studied piano for sixteen years, composing some original ballads.

As to the story "Blood for Caesar," I was always interested in little-known eras of the world's history, and the age of Gaius Decius (201-251 A.D.) received considerable attention. Research for the story involved the examination of more than thirty volumes, interviews with veterans who had been in Rome, and study of travel folders, maps and charts. After the story was completed, I learned there was a Roman gladiator named Flamma, but the similarity to Flamius begins and ends with just the name.

AND BOB McCAIG—a power man himself—comments briefly on his yarn of the men who build the powerlines ("Live Wire"—page 67.)

As for the credibility of the yarn I hope to be where I can watch Hub Piggott, our transmission supervisor, when he reads it. Because I know it will take him back to a most unpleasant hour in a bunk car on the bare prairie west of the little town of Rudyard, quite a few years ago. According to the grapevine, the man behind the gun died a few years later in a St. Louis gang war, as violently as did Logan in my story.

I've been working on a long novel of Montana in the Seventies. Not cowboys and Indians, but other phases of frontier life, centering on the construction of a toll wagon road through the mountains. I'm having my troubles in the writing, but it's good experience as well as discipline. With these dilatory tactics, maybe it is just as well that I continue to depend on Montana Power for the grocery bill!

ARTHUR H. CARHART, *Adventure's* expert on Forestry and a widely-recognized authority in the field, has written a vitally-needed book on the conservation of our national resources. "Water—Or Your Life," published by the J. B. Lippincott Company of Philadelphia, is a dramatic presentation of a nation-wide problem of a most pressing nature. Hope you'll have a chance to read it.

IN THE notes which accompanied his Foreign Legion story ("Man-at-Arms"—page 26), Georges Surdez commented on the "volunteer" *groupes francs*—special groups of Legionnaires sent out on missions that must be accomplished with a neat efficiency in spite of being bloody and extremely dangerous:

It would be useless to seek the official records of the French Army for such an outfit as the *groupe-franc* mentioned in "Man-at-Arms." It is not a permanent, recognized formation, such as a regiment, a battalion, a company, but one assembled and trained for a special, particular purpose. The men in the *groupes-francs* continue to be attached officially to the various

corps from which recruited, wear their uniforms, numerals and badges. In theory, they are all volunteers.

I have heard of a *groupe-franc* formed in a company of Foreign Legion for night raiding, only eight men in strength, commanded by a sergeant. And of another one, in a Moroccan Mobile Group, which gathered over two hundred men and was commanded by a captain. Those outfits have no official history. The records of Moroccan Campaigns ordinarily include them with the anonymous mass of *supplétive* forces, irregular native units, local militia, etc., and seldom describe their activities at length. That is to be regretted.

Captain Jacot, in the story, is an ideal leader for such tactics. Whether the group is large or small, led by a sergeant or an officer, the commander must unite definite qualities—endurance, patience, calm, guts . . . and ruthlessness. I placed a brace of Negroes in the group, which may seem exceptional as African blacks as a rule are not at their best in the darkness, against Moroccans. But when a Wolof or a Bambara happens to be gifted for that job, he is likely to be very capable. I met one, over six feet tall, who handled two hundred and twenty pounds of body like a professional acrobat. I can imagine much more pleasing prospects than to have him crawl after me with a trench knife between his teeth.

The weight carried by Fremont across that plank thrown over the courtyard may be surprising. I argued with a "raider" once on that point and he made up a list, explaining: "It was on a long raid, due to last four to seven days. So you had to have a lot of junk along. And, usually, you tote around even more, because you can't leave rifles and cartridges behind when a guy gets bumped. The trick is to carry the stuff so it won't knock together and make noise."

Here is a tentative list. (A kilogram is 2.2046 pounds):

Light coat and shirt	1 k 200
Breeches	1 k 300
Puttees, turban	0 k 500
Light footgear	1 k 000
Tent cloth	1 k 000
2 musette bags	0 k 450
Canteen—two quarts of water	2 k 250
Mess-kit, tin cup, spoon, knife	0 k 500
Trenching tool	1 k 500
Rations (Sardines, Meat, Canned meat, Hardtack, Chocolate, Sausage or Cheese, etc.) Two or three days	2 k 750
Rifle, bayonet, scabbard	5 k 000
Rifle ammunition	3 k 600
Automatic pistol	0 k 800
Cartridges for pistol	0 k 600
Trench knife	0 k 600
Grenades	6 k 000
	29 k 050

Plus personal stuff, watch, notebook, etc. Plus group-equipment, signal pistol, and ammunition etc., distributed to men who carry fewer than ten grenades.

BEING in a mathematical mood this month (see first paragraph of this Camp-Fire session!), we figured out that 29.050 kilograms equals about 64 pounds—a pretty rugged load for a man who needs to move fast and save his strength for fighting. Wonder how that compares with the average pack and equipment of the American combat infantryman?—K.W.G.

(Continued from page 100)

best driver wins, provided that his car isn't wrecked before the flag drops. There appear to be no rules and it seems perfectly legal to ram a competitor and turn his car over, if you so desire. Personally I wouldn't hire a Jallopy driver to sit behind the wheel of a car of mine. He might forget that he was in an actual race car. The tactics used in Jallopy racing would most likely prove fatal if done with a fast racing car. But there are possibly some car owners who would take a chance. About the only other way I can suggest for you to become a racing driver is to either buy or build a car of your own.

As you say that you have had some little experience driving clunkers on a few tracks and that you were lucky to barely make expenses, I might add that making expenses is indeed lucky. There are many drivers and even more car owners who don't do that well even with fairly good equipment. The only race where real money is to be made is at the Indianapolis 500 mile race, or at some of the 100 mile championship events. If you should live close to a half-mile track, where races are held regularly, you should do well, but don't expect to get rich at the game. Those days are long gone. It takes a small fortune to build and maintain a championship car and if you get the lucky breaks you might make money, but for a beginner I can't recommend it.

If you have $5,000 to risk, and I do mean risk, I would suggest that you try the half-mile circuit in the mid-west. On the other hand, if you have $50,000 to risk—try for Indianapolis, but don't blame me.

BACK-PACKING without back-breaking.

Query:—Will you please tell me what you think I should carry in equipment, foods, etc. (a minimum list, so to speak) for both short and extended camping trips afield, most of which I will take alone—the short trips anyway.

Also, can you give me, or tell me where I can get, recipes suitable for outdoor cooking that are based on one meal for one person instead of the usual recipe for four or more people.

—Howard Kachlee, Jr.
Jersey City, N. J.

Reply by Paul M. Fink:—Assuming that your camping trips are of the back-packing type, the basic articles of equipment are:

Pack. Except for long trips with very heavy and bulky loads, probably the best for you would be the Norwegian or frame type, such as used by our mountain troops in the last war. These can be bought reasonably in Army surplus stores.

Tent. Shelter type for one man. Check with Abercrombie & Fitch or D. T. Abercrombie's in New York for very lightweight types for more than one person.

Cook kit. For one man the Boy Scout kit is hard to beat, as being both compact and lightweight. For larger parties a kit comprising coffee pot, two cooking pots, frying pan, cups, soup or cereal bowls, plates, knives, forks and spoons fills the bill.

Sleeping bag. Check with the Army surplus stores for these. For moderate climates the wool-filled is sufficiently warm; for cold climates the down-filled.

Axe. For any use save for cutting heavy timber for large all-night fires, the small or Boy Scout type is plenty large enough.

Knife. Sheath knife or better still, a heavy pocket-knife with several blades.

Compass and maps, first aid kit and small repair kit. Add to all these those other things you think desirable personally, such as camera, binoculars, extra clothing, rain shirt, etc.

I know of no one-man cook book, but the quantities given in the standard books should cause you no trouble. Simply divide the quantities named by number for which planned, and go from there. Or if travelling alone, simply cook a two-man sized portion for supper and heat up the remainder for breakfast. That has the added advantage of saving some time and work in fixing breakfast, too.

HOW to tan your own hides.

Query:—I wonder if you could give me any information about making buckskin from your own deer or moose hide. I am interested in making my own and as I have never done it before I know little about it.

—Alex MacLeod
c/o P T Mill
100 Mile House
British Columbia

Reply by Arthur H. Carhart:—Sure, you can tan your own buck and moose hides. Every time I had the urge to do it, and figured out all that had to be done to get a good piece of leather, I shipped deer or elk hides, and one buffalo pelt I picked up, to a commercial tannery. It seemed less messy and a saving of time and labor. Also I guessed I'd get better leather. But if you want to do it, here's how.

If you want to "Indian tan," save the brains and liver of the deer. Trim all flesh and fat off the hide. Soak the hide in water for several days. This may be all needed to loosen the hair so it will slip. If not, sprinkle wood ashes on the hair, roll up the hide, let it stand in a cool place for a few days more. The hair will then slip. Lay the hide hair-side up over a smooth log, and use a scraper to remove the hair and outer, dark surface of the skin, shoving away from you as you scrape. The inner

bone of a deer's front leg can be used as a scraper; it's just right. Also scrape the under side of the skin to get last grease or flesh off. Next make a mash of the deer brains, squooshing them through your fingers in warm water. You may boil the liver for an hour and mash it with the brains. Stretch the deer skin on a frame in a cool spot, and knead the brain or brain-liver mixture into it, very thoroughly. Then roll up the skin and place it in a cool place for two or three days. Then wash and rinse in fresh water, very thoroughly. Drive a 2x4 stake into the ground, solidly, or a three-cornered stake split out of straight grained wood and work the hide back and forth around it, as you use a cloth to shine shoes. If you do this right, you'll get a soft, flexible leather. Then, if you want a smoke tan, which helps close the pores, you can smudge it, but don't let it get hot. Injuns do this by making the skin into a tiny tepee.

Even though smoked this sort of tanning does not make so close a grained skin as skins put through a regular tannery. The hide isn't waterproof. Oil tanning in a commercial place, goes a long way toward getting a water-repellent skin—and that's a help.

A tannery method is to soak and scrape clean, then soak a bit more in water. Then put the skin in a solution made of 1 gallon of water, 1½ gallons of coarse salt and 20 cubic centimeters of formic acid. You'll have to get this at an apothecary's (drug store) and he can give you the measurement. Soak thoroughly for 3 days, being sure the hide is in contact with the liquid; no air pockets. Remove the hide and put in up to 5 cubic centimeters more of formic acid, according to the size of the skin. Soak a week or more, stirring it every day.

Take the hide out from the soaking solution, wash in clear water very thoroughly, and wring it out as dry as possible. Rub and knead into the skin a mixture of half sulfonated neat's-foot oil and half water. Work in enough of this to make the hide look damp. Hang it in the shade and work and work the hide, until the appearance is quite dry. You'll have a soft tanned hide if you do this.

Or you'll find regular tannery type of tanning chemicals offered by most fur or ranch type of supply houses with directions on using them.

I have some Indian tanned shirts, gloves and other garments, done by the method above outlined, and they are soft as satin. One shirt made by a Shoshone woman is white, with flashy beaded flower designs on it. But it soils easily, there is difficulty in cleaning it, and it isn't waterproof. Moccasins made are smoked, and while I've never gotten them wet they do have tighter texture. Another pair of old Arapaho moccasins I've worn, have been wet many times, but by working between my hands, they are as soft as originally. They were old when I bought them and I don't know

whether or not they were thoroughly smoked but presume they were.

Between first getting your deer or your moose, and then tanning the leather, this is a project that should keep you engaged for quite a spell!

QUALIFICATIONS for and duties of the Border Patrol.

Query:—I would be very much pleased if you would give me the following information: I would like to know how I can get into the Border Patrol, and what the qualifications are. Where can a man apply for this kind of a job?

—Cpl. Raymond A. Holland
A.P.O. 845 c/o Postmaster
New York, N. Y.

Reply by Francis H. Bent:—Applicant for the so-called Border Patrol must be a citizen of the U.S. between 21 and 35 years old, inclusive; of superior physical qualifications. Any structural or functional limitation or defect which tends to interfere with a high degree of physical activity will disqualify. There appear to be no actual limitations as to height. The duties require extremely arduous physical exertion under rigorous and unusual conditions. Physical training is similar to that given commandos during the war.

A written test is given which is intended to show the general aptitude of the applicant for learning and adjusting to the duties of the position.

Quoting from last announcement of examination: "Patrol Inspectors will be members of the Immigration Border Patrol, a mobile uniformed enforcement organization. The principal purpose . . . is to prevent the smuggling and illegal entry of aliens into the United States. Patrol inspectors patrol areas to which they are assigned along the international boundaries and their vicinity by automobile, on horseback, afoot, by boat, or as observers in aircraft, in search of aliens who have entered or are attempting to enter the U.S. unlawfully.

"In carrying out their duties they stop for inspection various kinds of vehicles in which it is believed that aliens are being brought into the U.S.; watch from concealment, crossing places on the international boundaries suspected of being used by persons engaged in illegal activities; make extended camping details in desert or woods, during which they must rely entirely upon their own ability and resourcefulness for sustenance and shelters; observe the border from 85-or 100-foot observation towers; and, in general, investigate violations of the Immigration laws . . . make numerous arrests, sometimes of dangerous criminals; and shooting affrays frequently occur."

Pay starts at $3,351.00 a year. This is sub-

ject to a deduction of 6% for the retirement plan. Position is under Federal Civil Service. Advance notice of all examinations is posted in 1st and 2nd class Post Offices. It is likely to be quite some time before another examination is held. You might write the Secretary, U. S. Civil Service Commission, Washington 25, D.C., and ask to have your name placed on list to be notified of examination for Patrol Inspector (Trainee).

A CANOE is as safe as a rocking chair —*if* you know how to handle it.

Query:—Could you refer me to any book or article written on the subject of canoeing? That is, the proper way to paddle, etc. Also, I wish to know if canoeing is a dangerous sport, as many seem to believe, in that a canoe upsets very easily and is hard to manage.

—William J. Allen
Fort Scott, Kansas

Reply by H. S. M. Kemp:—I don't know of any books written about the art of canoeing. There may be, but I've never heard of them. Moreover, I don't know what the book would have to say. For when you come down to it, the art of canoeing is merely getting into one of the things, grabbing a paddle and shoving yourself ahead. Just as simple as that. I might point out, of course, that you don't step into a light sixteen-footer like you would into a similar sized dory or scow. If you did, you'd step in on one side and take a header out the other. But if you grab BOTH gunnels, step in—in the middle—kneel down with a thwart supporting your rear-end, you'd be as safe as sitting down in a rocking chair. But you'd have to grab BOTH gunnels as you got in, thus distributing your weight evenly over the breadth of the canoe.

You ask is canoeing dangerous. I won't be academic about it. But I will say this: that I've handled canoes from little fourteen-footers to the big twenty-two footers in all kinds of weather, and in all kinds of water from calm backwaters to the ripping rapids of the Churchill River, that I haven't been dumped out of one yet, and that I don't want to get dumped out—on account of because I cain't swim. Which doesn't exactly prove that I'm the last word in a canoeman or that a canoe won't capsize, but it does mean—in my book, anyway—that for its size and weight, the canoe is about the safest craft on any man's water.

Take in the North . . . I once had to cross a sizable lake in a dirty cross wind with a considerable load. The load consisted of my wife and three kids, a trapping outfit, a tepee, a tent, pots, pans, kettles and four sleigh dogs—huskies. I had an outboard motor on a bit of a seventeen foot canoe, and with only two-three inches of freeboard, we shipped considerable spray. It

was touch-and-go, I was too far out on the lake to turn back, and late in the Fall, it was blamed cold. Anyone watching us with a glass from on shore probably wouldn't have given a plugged nickel for our chances; but the canoe being a canoe and sound, we made shore, even though we all —dogs and humans—were thoroughly wet to the hides.

Of course. experiences like that are duplicated every day in the North. And yet, how many drowning fatalities are there? I dunno, but it's a safe bet that for every drowning in the North of Canada there are a dozen in the civilized parts of it. Men in the North don't make a habit of drowning themselves out of canoes; they leave that to the odd goof who likes to go "cruising down the river on a Sunday afternoon" with a rowboat and his gal and then likes to give the gal a thrill by rocking the boat.

And quite often, she gets it!

So don't worry about the safety of a canoe. The way I've always seen it, when you ride in a boat, you ride *in it;* whereas, in a canoe, you become part of *it.* Like I say —you kneel down in the thing, half sit and half lean against a thwart, and as the canoe heels to the waves you heel with it—just like you would riding a horse.

I don't know what you'd pay for a good canoe in Kansas. I was through your country—your part of it—year before last, and while I saw lots of cawn and hawgs, I wouldn't have thought any of you Kansans had ever heard of a canoe. But if any store —any reliable store sells 'em, they'll be good. A canoe to sell has to be good. So get yourself a sixteen-footer and have lots of fun.

Regarding the paddling of it, I dunno again. I learned my canoeing from Indians in Indian country, from the Northern Indians, and I kind of feel slightly amused when I see white men paddling white-man style. Which, I also understand, is Eastern Indian style. That is, to paddle all on one side and hold course by a flick of the wrist. It seems to me that that flick of the wrist puts on a sort of a braking action which, while keeping the canoe on course, has a tendency to slow it up after every stroke. Our Northern Indians don't believe in that. They take a couple strokes on one side then a couple on the other and allow the strokes themselves to hold the canoe straight. The swinging of the paddle doesn't break the rhythm of the strokes, and, if you learn to do the job properly, it doesn't throw water down the bowsman's neck.

Moreover, as each stroke is a "driving" stroke, I figure it develops more power and, consequently, more speed. One of these days I'd like to match an Ontario or a Wisconsin Nitchie with his one-side stroke against one of our Northern boys and see who made the best time. I mean, for a whole day and not a burst to see who could churn the most water. But you

must please yourself about that. Once you get your canoe, it's a minor matter how you paddle her. Or don't bother paddling her at all. Run up a sail and have some real fun!

G-MEN and T-men for Uncle Sam.

Query:—How do you get into the F.B.I. or the Secret Service? Is the pay good? Thank you.

—Earl Ashcroft
East Ryegate
Vermont

Reply by Francis H. Bent:—An applicant for a position with the Federal Bureau of Investigation must be a citizen of the U.S.; between 25 and 36 years old, inclusive; willing to serve where directed; have at least 2 years of commercial experience in the legal, accounting or business fields; be a graduate from (a) a recognized school of law, or (b) a recognized school of accounting, and able to qualify on the witness stand and in the practical accounting field as an expert, or (c) have had extensive investigational or law-enforcement experience; be in the very best of health and physical condition; pass strict physical examinations; be well proportioned as to height and weight; have no conspicuous physical oddities.

Application must be in applicant's own handwriting to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

Applicant for the Secret Service Division of the Treasury Department must be a citizen of the U.S.; between 21 and 36 years old; have at least 1 year of full-time experience in high grade responsible investigational work, such as investigator in important criminal cases for reputable lawyers, or be a graduate from a recognized school of law with the degree of Bachelor of Laws; have no conspicuous physical oddities; be in the best of health and physical condition. These positions are filled from an eligible roster established after competitive examinations held by the U. S. Civil Service Commission. For advance notice, watch the bulletin board of any 1st- or 2nd-class Post Office—or write the Secretary, U. S. Civil Service Commission, Washington 25, D.C., and ask that your name be placed on file to be notified of any contemplated examination.

I do not have the present rate of pay for these positions. I believe, however, that they start at about $3700 per year.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

I would like to hear from anyone who has seen my brother, Y. Bramlett, last seen in 1938. 43 years old. His mother is getting old and would like very much to see him. Please write his sister, Mrs. Delia Bramlett Bivens, 2115 Lamar Ave., Paris, Texas.

Would like to get in touch with Art Duclose. Last heard from in 1940. At that time he was living in St. Louis. Anyone knowing where he might be, please notify Wayne Lewman, Rich Hill, Mo.

McNair or McNear, Robert, was MP stationed at Stout Field Air Base, Indianapolis, Ind. in '45-46. Possibly now on father's farm in Nebraska. Write to George E. Ziegler, R. R. 2, Box 178, Spencer, Indiana.

Sister and brother-in-law of Clyde Earl Johnson would like to hear from anyone knowing his present address. He was last heard from in April of 1945. At that time he was working on the railroad at Richmond, California. He usually goes by the nickname of "Pat." Send information to Ora M. Groom, P.O. Box 257, Glasco, Kansas.

Will anyone knowing the location, past or present, of Lt. Winfield Samuels, Co. B, 503rd Parachute Regt., who was wounded on Corregidor, please communicate with Lt. Jack Herzig, c/o Beetha, 37-15 81st Street, Jackson Heights, New York.

Would like to hear from anyone knowing the present address of my brother, Frank Grizzell. He has not been heard from in ten years. His last address was Baltimore, Maryland. Please send information to John W. Grizzell, Route 1, Ben Hill, Georgia.

I would like to contact Bryant Clontz. Lost track of him before World War I. I believe he was in the Marines. Write Gordon M. Clontz, General Delivery, Canton, North Carolina.

Would like to contact George A Rhodes, my father. Born in Chicago 64 years ago, had lived in St. Louis many years. Has three adult children. May be working as printing pressman or construction camp cook. Due to imagined difficulty may be using name Frank Miller. Eugene Rhodes, 5214 48th S.W., Seattle, Washington.

Leslie Londo, Lt., U. S. Army Air Corps, was stationed at Hamilton Field, California, in 1943. Later we lost touch when I went overseas to the C-B-I Theater and he, I understand, went out to a base in the Pacific Islands. If he, or anyone who knows him, should see this notice, please write to John Crane, P. O. Box 330, San Francisco, California.

I would like to know the whereabouts of Douglas Duff, possibly of North Carolina, age about 32-34. Anyone knowing his address or having information concerning Duff, please write to H. L. Manry, 1225 Palos Street, Athens, Tennessee.

THE LONGEST FIFTH OF A MILE

(Continued from page 63)

On the mountains, they swear, live the dreaded Snow Men with their long hair and ape-like fangs. These demons, Sukpas they are called, raid villages, killing men, stealing women and sucking the blood of cattle. And who should live on the crest of Chomolungma but the King of all the Sukpas?

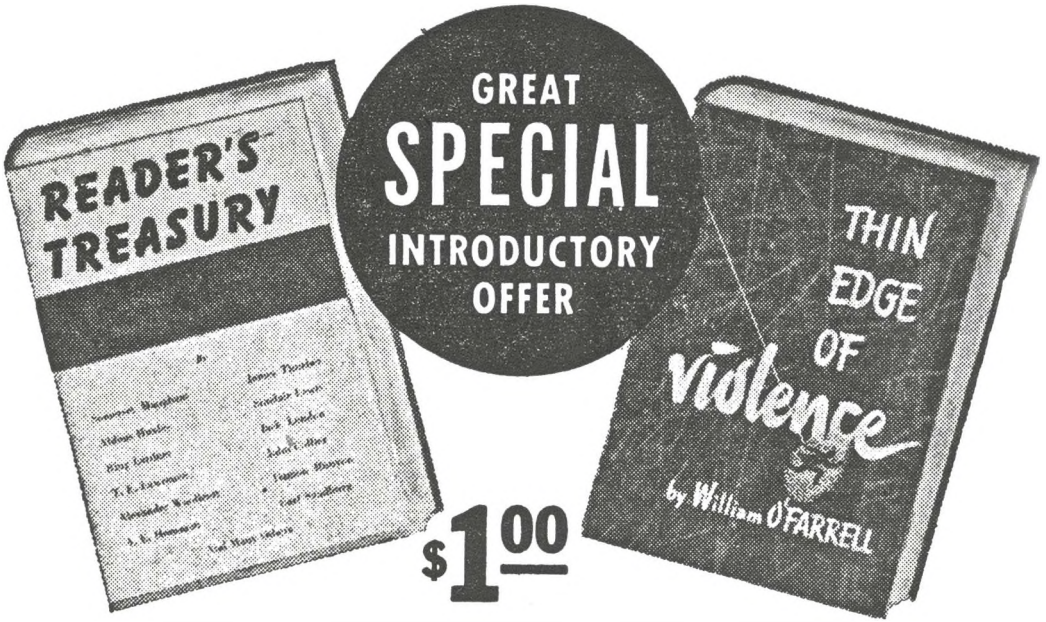
What profit it a man to climb the Goddess only to leave his corpse in the snow with the Mark of the Sukpa upon it?—the tips of the fingers, toes and nose—sheared off.

Until now Everest has been strictly a British mountain. Perhaps the day of triumph will come to an international force united in an adventure that can only find expression in a world at peace.

However it is climbed, oxygen or no, large expedition or small, some day a man will stagger onto the snow-plumed summit where the winds of the world are born. The Everesters can tell you that. For they remember Captain Geoffrey Bruce and the expedition of '22.

It was Bruce who, together with Captain Finch, was stopped at the then record height of 27,235. And it was Bruce who, with pounding heart and burning lungs, his leaden feet beyond control, looked to the summit where no bird has flown.

Then he muttered, between cracked and frozen lips, "Just you wait, old thing! *We'll get you yet!*"



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THIN EDGE OF VIOLENCE by William O'Farrell
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