

ILLUSTRATED **DANGER TRAIL** STORIES

ADVENTURE TRAILS



FEBRUARY

20c

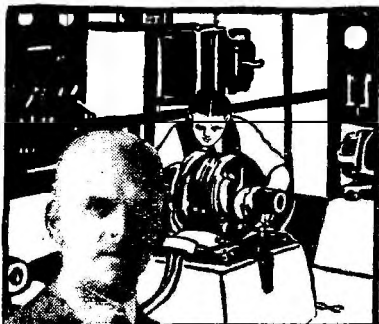
IN CANADA 25c

The Might of the Scorpion
A Novelette of Mexico
By
SEWELL PEASLEE WRIGHT



Missing Page

Inside front cover



M. Hughes, 1656 Second Ave., Terre Haute, Ind., makes \$12,000 a year



Automotive Electricity pays W. E. Pence Box 921, Palo Alto, Calif., over \$9,000 a year



C. H. Hubert, 460 Cherry St., New York makes \$100 a week



Electrical Experts Are in Big Demand I Will Train You at Home To Fill a Big Pay Job

FREE SAMPLE LESSONS and JOB TICKETS to prove how easily you can learn ELECTRICITY

The coupon below will bring you some sample lessons and the famous Job Tickets, through which thousands of men have stepped into big-pay electrical jobs.

It's a shame for you to earn \$15 to \$20 or \$30 a week, when in the same six days as an Electrical Expert you could make \$60 to \$100 and do it easier—not work half so hard. Why then remain in the small pay game, in a line of work that offers no chance, no big promotion, no big income? Fit yourself for a real job in the big electrical industry.

Be an Electrical Expert Learn to Earn \$3,000 to \$5,000 a Year

Today even the ordinary electrician—the "screw driver" kind—is making money—big money. But it's the trained man—the "Electrical Expert"—who is picked out to "boss" the ordinary Electricians—to boss the Big Jobs—the jobs that pay \$60 to \$100 a week. Get in line for one of these "Big Jobs." Start by enrolling now for my easily learned, quickly grasped, right up-to-the-minute, Spare-Time Home Study Course.

Age or Lack of Experience No Drawback

You don't have to be a College Man; you don't have to be a High School Graduate. I know exactly the kind of training you need, and I will give you that training. My Course in Electricity is simple, thorough and complete, and offers every man regardless of age, education, or previous experience the chance to become an "Electrical Expert," able to make from \$60 to \$100 a week.

Six Working Outfits—No Extra Charge

With me, you do practical work—at home. You start right in after your first few lessons to work at your profession in the regular way and make extra money in your spare time. For this you need tools, and I give you six complete outfits.

Your Satisfaction Guaranteed

So sure am I that you can learn Electricity—so sure am I that after studying with me, you, too, can get into the "big money" class in electrical work, that I will agree in writing to return every single penny paid to me in tuition, if, when you have finished my course, you are not satisfied it was the best investment you ever made, and back of this agreement stands a two million dollar institution, thus assuring to every student enrolled, not only a wonderful training in Electricity, but an unsurpassed Student Service as well.

Get Started Now—Mail Coupon

I want to send you my Electrical Book. Sample Lessons and some Job Tickets, all Free. These cost you nothing and you'll enjoy them. Make the start today for a bright future in electricity. Send in Coupon—Now.

L. L. Cooke, Chief Engineer

L. L. COOKE SCHOOL OF ELECTRICITY

2150 Lawrence Avenue Dept. 142 Chicago, Ill.

FREE Lesson and Book Coupon

L. L. COOKE, Dept. 142, 2150 Lawrence Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Send me at once your big free book and particulars of your home-study course in Electricity, including your outfit, employment service and \$500 cash awards.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

The "Cooke" Trained Man is the "Big Pay" Man

Please mention NEWSSTAND GROUP—MEN'S LIST, when answering advertisements

ILLUSTRATED **DANGER TRAIL** STORIES
ADVENTURE TRAILS

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HARRY BATES, Editor

DOUGLAS M. DOLD, Consulting Editor



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That each newsdealer and agent is insured a fair profit;
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VOL. XIII, NO. 1

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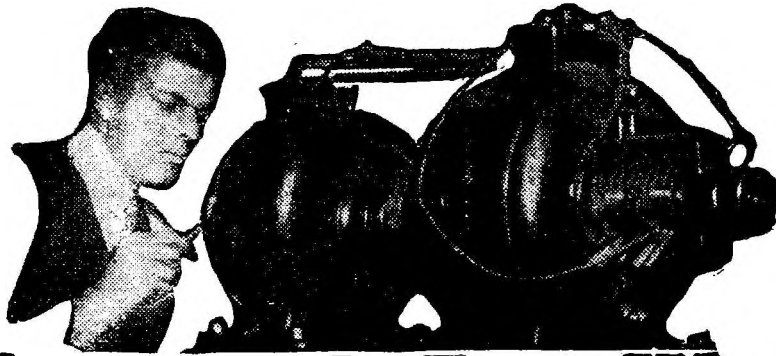
FEBRUARY

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Single Copies, 20 Cents (In Canada, 25 Cents)

Yearly Subscription, \$2.00

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Amazingly Easy Way to get into ELECTRICITY

Don't spend your life waiting for \$5 raises in a dull, hopeless job. Now . . . and forever . . . say good-bye to 25 and 35 dollars a week. Let me teach you how to prepare for positions that lead to \$50, \$60 and on up to \$200 a week in Electricity—NOT by correspondence, but by an amazing way to teach that makes you an electrical expert in 90 days! Getting into electricity is far easier than you imagine!

Learn Without Books in 90 DAYS

Lack of experience—age, or advanced education bars no one. I don't care if you don't know an armature from an air brake—I don't expect you to! It makes no difference! Don't let lack of money stop you. Most of the men at Coyne have no more money than you have. That's why I have worked out my astonishing offers.

Earn While Learning

If you need part-time work to help pay your living expenses I'll help you get it. Then, in 12 brief weeks, in the great roaring shops of Coyne, I train you as you never dreamed you could be trained . . . on one of the greatest outlays of electrical apparatus ever assembled . . . real dynamos, engines, power plants, autos, switchboards, transmitting stations . . . everything from doorbells to farm power and lighting . . . full-sized . . . in full operation every day!

NO BOOKS No Classes

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Here are a few of hundreds of positions open to Coyne-trained men. Our free employment bureau gives you lifetime employment service.

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- Sub-station Operator . . . \$65 a Week
- Auto Electrician . . . \$110 a Week
- Inventor Unlimited
- Maintenance Engineer, \$150 a wk.
- Service Station Owner, \$200 a wk.
- Radio Expert . . . \$100 a Week

etc. That's a glimpse of how we help to make you a master electrician, and fit you to hold big jobs after graduation.

Jobs, Pay, Future

Our employment department gives you lifetime service. Two weeks after graduation Clyde F. Hart got a position as electrician with the Great Western Railroad at over \$100 a week. That's not unusual. We can point to many Coyne men making up to \$600 a month. \$60 a week is only the beginning of your opportunity.

AVIATION ELECTRICITY

I am including my new Aviation Electrical Course to all who enroll now.



Students wiring and checking ignition on one of the late type Radial Aircraft Engines in our aviation department

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H. C. LEWIS, Pres., Dept. 29-66
500 S. PAULINA ST. Founded 1899 CHICAGO, ILL.

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Coyne is your one great chance to get into electricity. Every obstacle is removed. This school is 80 years old—Coyne training is tested—proven beyond all doubt—endorsed by many large electrical concerns. You can find out everything absolutely free. Simply mail the coupon and let me send you the big, free Coyne book of 160 photographs . . . facts . . . jobs . . . salaries . . . opportunities. Tells you how many earn expenses while training and how we assist our graduates in the field. This does not obligate you. So act at once. Just mail coupon.

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COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL, Dept. 29-66
500 S. Paulina Street, Chicago, Illinois

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Without obligation send me your big free catalog and all details of Free Employment Service, Aviation Electricity, Radio and Automotive Courses without extra cost, and how I can "earn while learning." I understand I will not be bothered by any salesman.

Name

Address

City..... State.....

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Men Who Work With Their Hands Make the Best DRAFTSMEN



and We'll Back Them With This Guarantee of a DRAFTING JOB and RAISE!



"Only one other man and I, of six taking California State Board examination for Architect passed. Then I realized the thorough and practical training given by American School. In 18 months I have gone from drafter to Chief Draftsman, in charge of all architectural and engineering work in one of the oldest offices here." R. L. WARREN, Los Angeles, Calif.



"When I started American School training in the Spring of 1916 I was working 24 hours a night, seven nights a week for \$1.53 a night. That fall I got a job in the Engineering Dept. of a large firm near here. Today I work \$5 a day a week and my salary is larger than I ever dreamed of when I began that course in Mechanical Drafting." B. H. SKAYRENS, South Bend, Ind.

We are looking for more ambitious young fellows with factory, building-trade or any other kind of mechanical experience to prepare for and help place in well-paid Drafting positions. Such men, we find, are unusually successful as Draftsmen, because they know how things are done, and that's a priceless asset to the man who makes the blueprint plans. For there's a great deal more to Drafting than "mechanical drawing" and reading blueprints. The real jobs, those paying \$50 to \$100 a week, give you a chance to cash in on your entire past mechanical experience. Get in touch with me and I'll tell you how.

DRAFTING is Logically YOUR NEXT MOVE!

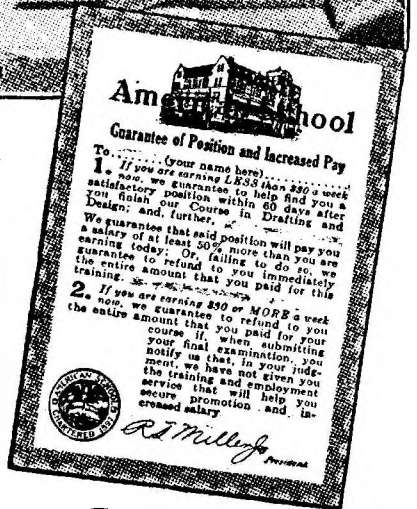
Of course you realize the biggest handicap to mechanical work is that you're limited in earning capacity to the output of your two hands, as long as you live. Even the skilled mechanic earning \$50 to \$60 a week has reached his limit. He can never earn more and when he gets old he will earn less. So I don't blame any man for wanting to get away from his futureless outlook. For wanting to get into something where he can use his head as well as his hands—where he will be paid for what he knows, instead of only for what he does. You know enough about blueprints to understand that PLANS govern every move in factory and construction job. The Draftsman who makes them is several jumps ahead of the workman who follows them. And so I want you to know that DRAFTING is a logical, natural PROMOTION from mechanical and building work—better-paid, more interesting—just the kind of work you'd enjoy doing.

Get My NO-RISK Plan

The way to a fine Drafting job for you—is easier than you think. It takes no "artistic talent" or advanced education. Thousands of men no smarter than you, with no more education or ability have learned it quickly and you can, too. With the co-operation of some of the biggest employers and engineers in the U. S. we have worked out a plan to prepare you for Drafting work in your spare time at home—to actually place you in a fine position and to raise your pay. Backed by the guarantee shown above to refund the small cost, if we fail. Mail the coupon and I'll be glad to tell you all about this life-time chance to get into Drafting.

The American School

Dept. D-266, Drexel Ave. and 58th St., Chicago, Ill.



3 Drafting Lessons Actually FREE

To Show You How Interesting
and Simple Drafting Is . . .

I wish I had the room here to tell you all about DRAFTING—how it has become the most important branch of every kind of manufacturing and construction work—how fascinating the work is—what a fine bunch of fellows Draftsmen are, the big salaries paid—how white Drafting is white-collar office work, it is closely hooked-up with big projects and big men. All that takes a 36-page book to tell and I'll be glad to send it to you free, and in addition I want to send you the first three lessons of our home-training so you can see how you'll like the work and how simple it is to learn. Coupon brings everything—mail it right away.

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Drexel Ave. & 58th St., Chicago, Ill.

Please send free and without the slightest obligation 3 Drafting lessons, 36-page book. Guarantee to get me a Drafting Job and a Raise.

Name:

St. No.:

City: State:

Age: Occupation:

Please mention NEWSSTAND GROUP—MEN'S LIST, when answering advertisements

LOW PAY.. LONG HOURS.. ROUTINE.. NO FUTURE



Always worrying over money. Always skimming and economizing—going without the comforts and luxuries that every man **DESERVES** for his family and himself.



The Time Clock—a badge of hawk-like supervision and The Rut. A constant reminder that one is "just another name on the payroll."



Human cogs in a great machine. No chance to meet people, travel, or have interesting experiences. A long, slow, tiresome road that leads nowhere.



Always wondering what would happen in case of a "lay-off" or loss of job. No chance to express ability—no chance to get ahead. **COULD** there be a way out?

I Said "Good-bye" to It All After Reading This Amazing Book— Raised My Pay 700%!



Where Shall We Send Your Copy . . . Free?

WHEN a man who has been struggling along at a low-pay job suddenly steps out and commences to earn real money—\$5,000, \$7,500, or \$10,000 a year—he usually gives his friends quite a shock. It's hard for them to believe he is the same man they used to know . . . but such things happen much more frequently than most people realize. Not only one, but **HUNDREDS** have altered the whole course of their lives after reading the amazing book illustrated at the right.

True, it is only a book—just seven ounces of paper and printer's ink—but it contains the most vivid and inspiring message that any ambitious man can read! It reveals facts and secrets that will open almost any man's eyes to things he has never even dreamed of!

Remarkable Salary Increases

For example, R. B. Hansen of Akron, Ohio, is just one case. Not long ago he was a foreman in the rubber-curing room of a big factory at a salary of \$160 a month. One day this remarkable volume, "Modern Salesmanship," fell into his hands. And from that day on, Mr. Hansen clearly saw the way to say, "Good-bye" forever to low pay, long hours and tiresome routine! Today he has reaped the rewards that this little volume placed within his reach. His salary runs well

into the 5-figure class—actually exceeding \$10,000 a year!

Another man, Wm. Shore of Neenach, California, was a cowboy when he saw for "Modern Salesmanship." Now he is a star salesman making as high as \$325 in a single week. O. D. Oliver of Norman, Oklahoma, read it and jumped from \$200 a month to over \$10,000 a year! C. V. Chammon of Danville, Illinois, raised his salary to over \$10,000 a year and became President of his company in the bargain!

A Few Weeks—Then Bigger Pay

There was nothing "different" about any of these men when they started. None of them had any special advantages—although all of them realized that SALESMANSHIP offers bigger rewards than any other profession under the sun. But, like many other men, they subscribed to the foolish belief that successful salesmen are born with some sort of "magic gift." "Modern Salesmanship" showed them that nothing could be farther from the truth! Salesmanship is just like any other profession. It has certain fundamental rules and laws—laws that you can master as easily as you learned the alphabet.

City and traveling sales positions are open in every line all over the country. For years, thousands of leading firms have called on the N.S.T.A. to supply them

with salesmen. Employment service is free to both employers and members and thousands have secured positions this way.

FREE TO EVERY MAN

See for yourself WHY "Modern Salesmanship" has been the deciding factor in the careers of so many men who are now making \$10,000 a year. Learn for yourself the **REAL TRUTH** about the art of selling! You do not risk one penny or incur the slightest obligation. And since it may mean the turning point of your whole career, it certainly is worth your time to fill out and clip the blank below. Send it now!

NATIONAL SALESMEN'S TRAINING ASS'N.
Dept. B-791 N. S. T. A. Bldg. Chicago, Ill.

National Salesmen's Training Ass'n.
Dept. B-791, N.S.T.A. Bldg.,
Chicago, Ill.

Without cost or obligation, you may send for your free book, "Modern Salesmanship."

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Are _____ Occupation _____

Please mention NEWSSTAND GROUP—MEN'S LIST, when answering advertisements

WIN Buick Sedan

or **\$1875⁰⁰**
CASH!

\$6500⁰⁰
in
Prizes

5 Cars
Given

FIND THE TWINS

Here is a new puzzle that will be fun for you. In fact, you may win a Buick Sedan and \$555.00 in cash, total \$1,875, if you find the twin John Aldens and send your answer promptly. Eighteen of the pictures are exactly alike, but "two," and only "two" are different from all the rest. See if you can find the different pictures—they are the twins. If you do you may win a Buick Sedan and \$555 cash extra, or \$1,875 in cash. Hundreds have already won prizes; Lillie Bohle won \$1500, Fred Selinger won \$3000, Mrs. R. T. Frederick won \$1000, Robert F. Spilman won \$1000, and many others. You may be next. Everybody taking active part rewarded. You get your choice of Buick Sedan or \$1875 in cash. Answer quickly—You may be the one who will see this ad and solve it.

And WIN BUICK SEDAN Or \$1875 CASH

\$555.00 check sent you at once as an additional prize as below if you answer quickly

As a reward for quick action—we send you check for \$555 to add to First Prize Buick Sedan if you win, and directions for getting a 4-door Master Six Buick Sedan. Send answer at once. Costs nothing. No tricks or chances.

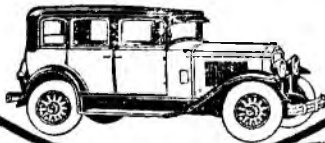
5 Cars Given—No More Puzzles to Solve

I will give a beautiful Buick Sedan, also a Chrysler Sedan, also a Nash Sedan, also an Essex Sedan, and a Chevrolet Sedan—5 Cars and a large list of additional costly Prizes—over \$6,500. Every Car has four doors and will be delivered FREE to winners by nearest auto dealers. Many have already won Prizes and now to advertise our business you can get this new Buick Sedan or \$1,875 Cash.

\$555.00 Extra for Promptness

Be prompt. Just find the "twin" pictures of John Alden that are different from all the rest. Look carefully. They all look alike, but two of them are different. Send me the numbers of the two that are different with your name and address at once, then we will tell you how to win the Buick. That's all. Send no money. All who answer can share in Cash and Prizes. In case of ties, duplicate prizes will be given those tying. If you can find the twins send me their numbers right away. Hurry! \$555 Cash for promptness.

**L. M. STONE, 844 Adams St., Dept. 346
CHICAGO, ILL.**



\$555⁰⁰
for
Promptness!

Send
No Money
Answer Today!

LEARN AUTOS

New
Easy
Way
to

**Earn UP TO
\$100 a Week**

Say goodbye to low pay. Get into the Auto Business, where big pay—extramoney—raises come quick! A brilliant future awaits you in the World's Biggest Business. If you're earning a cent less than \$60 a week, clip that coupon. Learn how \$50—\$75—even \$100 a week is possible for you now! Find out about this training which boosted Yancy of Perla, Ark., from \$30 a week up to \$90!

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Common Schooling All You Need

Men between 15 and 60, with very little education, are becoming Garage Owners, Superintendents, Foremen. Whether you have had years of Auto Experience, or never touched a car before, send for this Free Book Now. I'll show you the quick way to get in line for real success in the Auto Business.



AT HOME!

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I'll Help You Get a Good Job

My Employment Department will help you get a good Job whenever you want one. You don't have to wait until you have graduated to use this service. No sir, as soon as you have shown that you know enough about Autos to hold the Job I'll give you this help whenever you ask for it! What is more, you can use it as long as you live!

Get All the Facts!

Send for my new Free Book now! See what "Job-Way" has done for hundreds. See what it can do for you. Learn all about my legal money-back agreement—and the many added features. Clip coupon now!

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Chicago Motor Training Corp.
1916 Sunnyside Ave., CHICAGO

AVIATION COURSE

and many other valuable features included FREE of any extra charge to you NOW, if you act QUICK! Mail coupon below today!

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My Money-Back Agreement gives you absolute protection. You must be satisfied or "Job-Way" Training costs you nothing.

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Send me your Book, "Auto Facts", Free of charge.
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and of "JOB-WAY" Training. This obligates me
in no way whatever.

Name.....

Address.....

Town..... State.....

Age..... Occupation.....

Big Story Magazine

Something New in the Magazine World

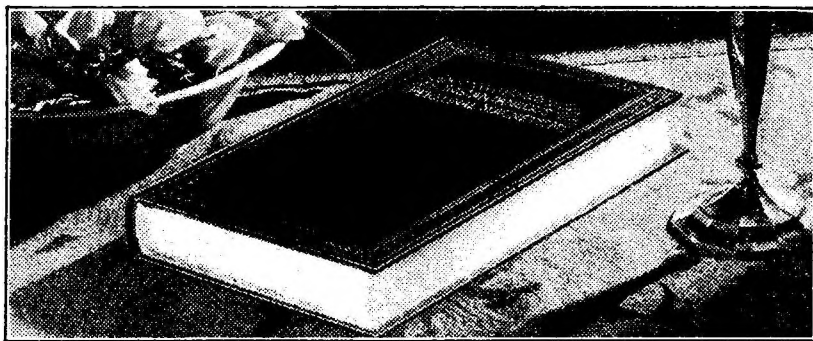
ONE long story complete in each issue—no more waiting from month to month—no more harrowing nights spent in wondering if the heroine fell off the fatal precipice or whether the hero was true to his old love. ? ? ? ? ?

Now, for twenty-five cents, you will know the whole story. You will buy a complete book-length novel, a tale of love and adventure to make your heart stand still. ?

BIG STORY MAGAZINE
*is on the newsstands the third Thursday
of each month.*

This Singular Book Wields a Strange Power Over Its Readers

Giving them a **MAGNETIC PERSONALITY** almost instantly!



Will You Read It 5 Days FREE—to Prove It Can Multiply Your Present Income?

A STRANGE book! A book that seems to cast a spell over every person who turns its pages!

A copy of this book was left lying on a hotel table for a few weeks. Nearly 400 people saw the book—read a few pages—and then *sent for a copy!*

In another case a physician placed a copy in his waiting-room. More than 200 patients saw the book—read part of it—and then *ordered copies for themselves!*

Why are people so profoundly affected by this book?—so anxious to get a copy? The answer is simple. The book reveals to them for the first time how any one can develop a Magnetic Personality *instantly!* It explains how to gain *overnight* the personal charm that attracts countless friends—the self-confidence that insures quick success in any business.

It tells how to draw people to you at once, irresistibly—how to be popular in any society—how to over-

come almost at once any timidity you may have—how to be a magnet of human attraction, well-liked wherever you go.

Best of all it tells you how to accomplish these results *instantaneously!*

Whence Comes this Uncanny Volume?

Forty years ago, Edmund Shaftesbury, student of the human mind, set out to discover the secret of Personal Magnetism. He applied his discoveries to his friends. Results were astonishing! His methods seemed to transform people into *entirely new beings!* Shaftesbury's fame spread. Great men came to him. His students and friends embraced such names as Gladstone, Queen Victoria, Edwin Booth, Henry Ward Beecher, and Cardinal Gibbons.

Until recently Shaftesbury's teachings have been available only to people who could pay \$25 or \$50 each for instruction books. Now, his wonderful teachings have been collected into a single volume, at a price *within the reach of all!* And furthermore, Shaftesbury has consented to reveal hundreds of new discoveries never before put into print.

Strange Effect on Readers

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Is it any wonder that thousands of men and women say that they are *overjoyed* with the results they have received? One enthusiast said of this volume, "Things I have read there I would never have dreamed of." Another wrote, "I would not give up what Shaftesbury has taught me for \$100,000!"

In your everyday life—in social life—you will find this book of immense value. You will learn to fascinate people you meet—to attract new friends—to gain speedy promotion in business.

Read this Book 5 Days Free

Merely mail coupon below and this remarkable volume, with cover in handsome dark burgundy cloth, gold embossed, will be sent you for free examination. If you aren't stirred and inspired in the 5-day free period, return it and it costs you nothing. Otherwise keep it as your own and remit the Special Price of only \$3 in full payment. This volume was originally published to sell at \$5—but in order to reach many readers—it is being offered at reduced price. You risk nothing—so clip and mail this coupon NOW. Ralston University Press, Dept. 207-B, Meriden, Conn.

RALSTON UNIVERSITY PRESS
Dept. 207-B, Meriden, Conn.

All right—I'll be the judge. You may send me the volume "Instantaneous Personal Magnetism" for 5 days **FREE EXAMINATION** in my home. Within the 5 days I will either remit the special low price of only \$3, in full payment, or return it without cost or obligation.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____

Special cash price \$2.00 if payment accompanies coupon. This saves heavy book-keeping and clerical expense. Money refunded if dissatisfied and book is returned within five days.
(Customers from outside U. S. and Canada must send payment with order.)

Book Tells You

- How to develop a Magnetic Personality
- How to use certain Oriental Secrets
- How to gain perfect nerve control
- How to read people's feelings by watching their mouths
- How to read people's thoughts by watching their eyes
- How to develop a magnetic eye
- How to make your face appear 20 years younger
- How to control others by a glance
- How to use Magnetic Healing
- How to end awkwardness and timidity
- How to attract the opposite sex
- How to get ahead in your business or profession
- How to make your subconscious mind work wonders
- And dozens of other vital topics.

Please mention NEWSSTAND GROUP—MILN'S LIST, when answering advertisements

I Will Train You at Home to Fill a Big-Pay Radio Job



**Here's the
PROOF**



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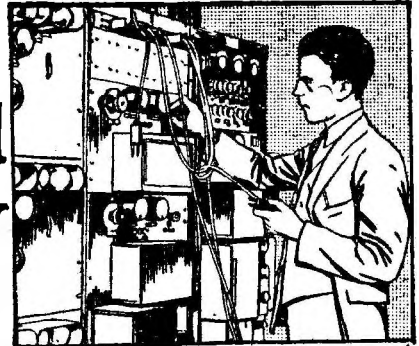
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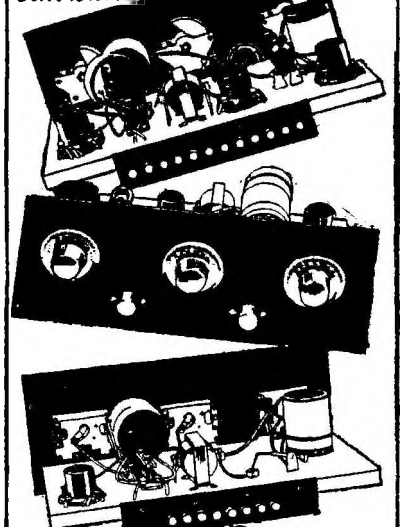
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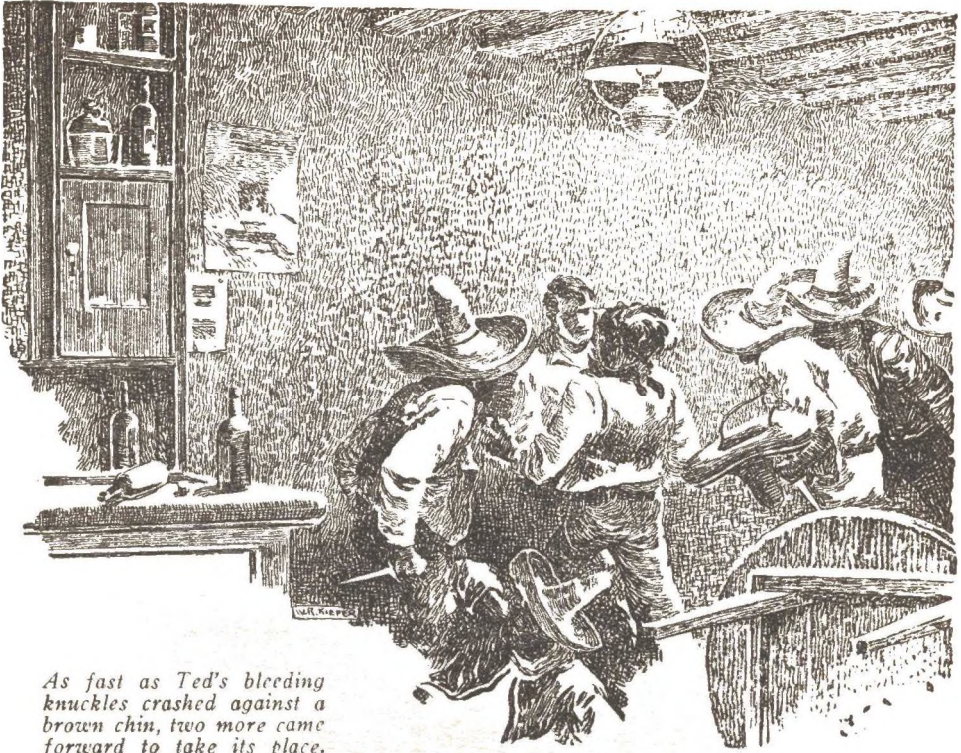
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As fast as Ted's bleeding knuckles crashed against a brown chin, two more came forward to take its place.

The Might of the Scorpion

A NOVELETTE OF MEXICO

By Sewell Peaslee Wright

Ted McKay extracts the venom of a deadly Scorpion.

I

THE BLUE-EYED MEXICAN

TED was in Scaja strictly on business; the business of getting some dozen or so peons to accept jobs at the mine he and his partner owned. But that did not mean that he could not indulge in a little social affair like taking a drink after a hard day's ride.

Of course, he had no business going into Raymon's cantina. No gringo was welcome there, and Ted McKay knew it. But he wanted a drink, and being rather used to taking care of himself he ducked through the low doorway of the dive and strode up to the crowded bar as carelessly as though he did not know that fifty pair of black, malignant eyes were fixed on him.

He gave his order, paid for it, and tossed off the potent tequila with a wry face and a quick shrug. As he turned to leave the place a half-drunken Mexican with squinting eyes and a thin-lipped, leering mouth deliberately trod on Ted's foot, at the same time bumping him violently, so that the American nearly went sprawling on the littered floor.

There was an instant's hush, and then an amused murmur of approval rose on all sides. The tall Mexican, encouraged by the applause of his countrymen, swept his ragged sombrero from his head and bowed mockingly and somewhat unsteadily to the glaring American.

"A thousand pardons for stepping on that foot!" he exclaimed with mock contriteness. "A thousand pardons, señor!"

Ted glanced at the man sharply.

"We'll let it go at that, then," he said quickly.

"Ah, the señor accepts the apology!" grinned the tall Mexican. "It is true I am sorry I stepped on that foot; it was *this* one upon which I had intended to trample!" And he trod heavily upon Ted's other foot.

So quickly that nobody saw exactly how it was done, Ted sent the Mexican spinning against the bar. When his body struck it sank to the floor like a wet rag.

The approving hum changed instantly to an angry buzz. The door was only a few feet away, but it was blocked by half a dozen angry Mexicans. Ted tore into them, taking them by surprise. The first two he sent crashing to the floor with a pretty right and left that would have done credit to a professional. He dodged a wild but powerful blow aimed at him by another of the raging group, and caught the would-be smiter off balance. The Mexican catapulted backwards to the floor, his outspread, clutching arms taking two of his comrades down with him.

It was pretty work, but as fast as Ted's bleeding knuckles crashed against a brown chin, two more came forward to take its place. Slowly he was backed up against the wall.

He was tiring rapidly; in a few minutes he would be unable to keep them at a distance and one of those grinning, black-eyed devils would get close enough to use one of those damned knives. He renewed his onslaught so fiercely that the semi-circle drew back.

Suddenly a streak of light shot from one side. Ted caught it out of the tail of his eye, and dodged instinctively. A heavy-hilted, slender blade of shining steel chugged into the wall an inch or so from Ted's left shoulder. It had been intended for his heart.

As though it had been a signal, a dozen knives flashed into view, and Ted was just tensing his muscles for one last tremendous effort, when a sharp, imperious voice from one corner of the room froze every Mexican in his tracks.

"*Stop!* Let the gringo go in peace!"

A MURMUR of protest arose, and there was a sudden movement in the corner whence the commanding voice had come. A small, smartly dressed young Mexican, with flashing eyes, strode angrily to the center of the room.

"I said stop! Cease this grumbling at once! Must I give orders twice? Back. I say!"

Like mangy camp dogs the Mexicans slunk back against the bar, most of the hate in their eyes turned to fear.

The lithe young Mexican turned his attention to Ted. "Go!" he said. "And next time, do not come where you are not wanted, gringo!"

Ted stared at the little dapper Mexican who had undoubtedly saved his life. What sort of a man was this? There was not a sign of friendliness in the imperious, determined face beneath the expensive and elaborate sombrero; only an impatient antagonism.

"Will you go, gringo?" snapped the little Mexican, as Ted did not move. "Can't you see you are not welcome here?"

"It was mighty plain a few minutes ago, now that you mention it," grinned Ted, coming forward. "If it hadn't been for you, I guess it would have been even plainer!" As he spoke, he extended his hand to the man who had saved his life, but the young dandy returned only an arrogant stare. "Won't you please leave—at once?" he repeated.

With a muttered oath, and the consciousness that he was cutting no heroic figure despite the several battered and unconscious Mexicans who lay sprawling on the dirty floor as mute witnesses of his prowess, Ted swung on his heel and strode out of the cantina. He filled his lungs with the clean, cool sweet air, and looked meditatively at the stars, glancing back now and then towards the cantina to make sure that he was not followed. There was a puzzled smile on his lips, and a wondering look in his eyes.

"Save a fellow's life, and then insult him!" he muttered. "That's a hell of a way to do a man!"

But even this wasn't the main reason

for the musing frown between his brows. He had looked the slim young Mexican dandy full in the eyes back there in the cantina; full in the eyes—and those masterful, impatient eyes were *blue!*

II

A CALL TO SERVICE

IT was almost unprecedented, but the next day another gringo rode into Scaja. He was a small, compact little man with a tanned face and a mustache sunburned to a sickly yellow. The first thing he did when he struck town was to ask which trail to take to the At Last Mine. Somebody told him that Ted, one of the partners, was in town, and immediately the little man sought out the tall, blond young miner.

He found Ted striding briskly into Scaja from his camp on the outskirts of the town.

"McKay?" he questioned expectantly, thrusting out a powerful, sun-browned hand.

"No other," nodded Ted, sizing up the man with approving eyes, and gripping the proffered hand.

He could hardly repress a slight start as he shook hands with the little man with the faded mustache. With his little finger the man had pressed twice, gently but unmistakably upon the palm of Ted's hand. *The secret sign of the service!*

Casually, Ted gave the proper response, letting his thumb slide across the back of the little man's hand in an arc approximately a quarter of a circle.

"I'm Wilson," said the little man, nodding approval. "Lucky to meet you here; damn lucky. Saves me two days, maybe more. Walk down the street with me. We can talk as we stroll."

Wonderingly, Ted obeyed. What could the chief want of him? It had been three years and more since he had even heard from the bright-eyed, white-maned man in Mexico City who knew more, perhaps, of what went on beneath the surface than any man in all Mexico.

And Wilson. It must be something im-

portant, for Wilson, who ran a big importing house as a blind, was the chief's right-hand man, one of his most trusted and valuable lieutenants. Ted knew him well by reputation.

"Come all the way from Mexico City to see you, young fellow," Wilson was saying in his jerky, abrupt fashion. "Ought to feel complimented. I'm getting old for that sort of thing. Chief's got a job for you."

"A job for me?" repeated Ted wonderingly.

Wilson nodded briskly.

"Yes. You were one of his best men. Hated like hell to lose you, the chief did. More money in mining though, eh?"

"Some," admitted Ted, smiling.

Wilson stopped by the corner of a deserted, tumble-down 'dobe house near the end of the street.

"Well, the chief wants you to help him out this time, anyway. Says you are just the man for it. Right here on the scene, know the country, all that sort of thing. Listen.

"Chief's got an idea—and you know he generally has things pretty straight—that there's trouble brewing up here. Something pretty serious. Reds mixed up in it. Some sort of a big secret order being organized. God knows how far it's gone already. Anti-foreigner stuff, you know; the old line to rouse the natives. Got to be stopped. Promptly.

"The Government is just beginning to stabilize itself. This thing, if allowed to grow, would set us back ten years. Must be nipped in the bud. Must be. And the chief says you're the man for the job, old man."

"The chief must be off this time," replied Ted, shaking his head. "I haven't heard or felt a thing. Everything is as quiet and contented and sleepy—"

"That doesn't mean a thing, and you know it," cut in his companion quietly.

"True; but I can't believe there's any mischief afoot," replied Ted thoughtfully. He paused for a moment and thought it over. "You go back and tell the chief I'll take the job—*what the devil!*"

WILSON had darted suddenly around the corner of a 'dobe hut near which they were standing, but came back in a moment grinning ruefully.

"Too quick for me. An eavesdropper. Evidently somebody's recognized me, or else guessed why I'm here. Or perhaps just curious on general principles to know what the gringos are talking about. Hard to say which. Chief thought I could get by with it; too bad. That's why he didn't write you; knew that the letter would be opened and read, and you two haven't any code fixed up. But you were saying?"

"I think your imagination is running away with you, Wilson," chuckled Ted. "These greasers are just naturally curious, that's all. Besides, you were speaking in English, and they don't savvy that. I was saying, though, that you can tell the chief that I'll take the job if I see any signs of that being necessary; right now we're busy as the devil, and frankly, I think the old boy's having a nightmare."

"I can't persuade you differently?" asked Wilson.

"Not a chance, I'm afraid," Ted assured him. "I'd gladly take it on, if only to protect our own interests here, but—well, I'm right here on the ground, and I think if there was anything going on, I'd hear about it. Sorry!"

"So am I. The chief'll be sorry, too. But of course—" He waved a hand vaguely. He could not command.

"When you starting back?" asked Ted, anxious to change the subject, for it made him uncomfortable to have to refuse the request of this quiet, abrupt fellow-countryman who had ridden so far to see him. "If you aren't in any hurry, we'd be glad to have you ride out to the mine and spend a few days. My partner and I—Scotty Leonard, you know, who used to work with me—have got things fixed up pretty nice, considering, and we'd all be glad to have you stay as long as you can. White people from civilization are rather welcome, you know."

"Sorry," replied Wilson, and there was real regret in his voice. "Got to hurry right back. Things are rather restless,

and the chief has two jobs for every man. Give the mare a rest and buy a few things, and start along the back trail. Sunup tomorrow, probably."

"You'll beat me, then," laughed Ted. "I've got to pick up a bunch of hands here to take back to the mine; the turnover is something fierce, and you have to keep about a hundred per cent more than you need on the payroll because half of your help is drunk all the time."

"I know how it is," nodded Wilson. "See you later, then, perhaps."

Ted walked slowly down the one dirty, narrow, unpaved street of the town, thinking over the message Wilson had brought.

If it were true, it was indeed serious. Yet he could not believe that the rumor was well founded. He would have heard something; he was sure of that. And yet, he had never known that old, round-shouldered, gray-headed chief to be mistaken in a case of this sort.

III

THE VOICE FROM THE DARK

TED made his way back to his little camp near the edge of town, cooked himself a simple but satisfying meal, and leaned back contentedly against a tree to fill and light his pipe.

By that time, the enveloping Southern night had wrapped itself around the camp, and the glowing stars of the tropics gleamed softly in the sky, undimmed by any moon. From the forest behind came a thousand night sounds, and faintly Ted could hear ribald, masculine laughter and a woman's maudlin soprano.

"Lots of excitement, but no peons for the mine," mused Ted. "At this rate, I'll be a month getting a dozen men together."

A sharp click, as of one pebble striking another, came from the direction of the trail. Taking no chances, Ted sprang for his carbine, which lay across his saddle only a few feet away. But he was not quite quick enough.

"I *wouldn't!*" snapped a voice. "Stand where you are, and don't make any sudden moves if you value your life. I have

you covered and—I am a very good shot, gringo!"

Ted stared in the direction whence the voice had come, but could see nothing. His tiny campfire had died down until its faint glow was barely discernible, and the light of the stars served only to fill the night with vague shadows. He dropped suddenly flat on his stomach, at the same time reaching for the carbine. Ted was not the man to lay down a hand until he was sure his opponent had the edge.

A sharp crack split open the night and the carbine, which Ted had just grasped, jerked from his hand. A shrill whining over the tree tops marked the flight of a ricochet. The American swore softly under his breath and slowly elevated his hands.

"I told you I could shoot!" chuckled the voice. "There! That's much better," it said, as Ted raised his hands.

"What do you want?" growled Ted.

"I want you to change the answer you just gave the gringo from the capital!" came the surprising answer, and the voice that a moment before had contained a chuckle was now a hate-filled snarl. "Do you promise?"

Ted's eyes opened wide with wonder. Change his answer to Wilson? Promise him to do what the chief wanted him to do? But why? A sudden understanding dawned on him. There really *had* been an eavesdropper, then! It had not been Wilson's imagination. He recalled what he had been saying just before Wilson had interrupted: "You go back and tell the chief I'll take the job. . . ."

The eavesdropper had not heard the rest, and supposed that Ted had accepted.

A grim smile played around Ted's lips as he answered.

"You want me to promise to change the answer I gave Señor Wilson?"

"Yes."

"What assurance have you that I will keep my promise?"

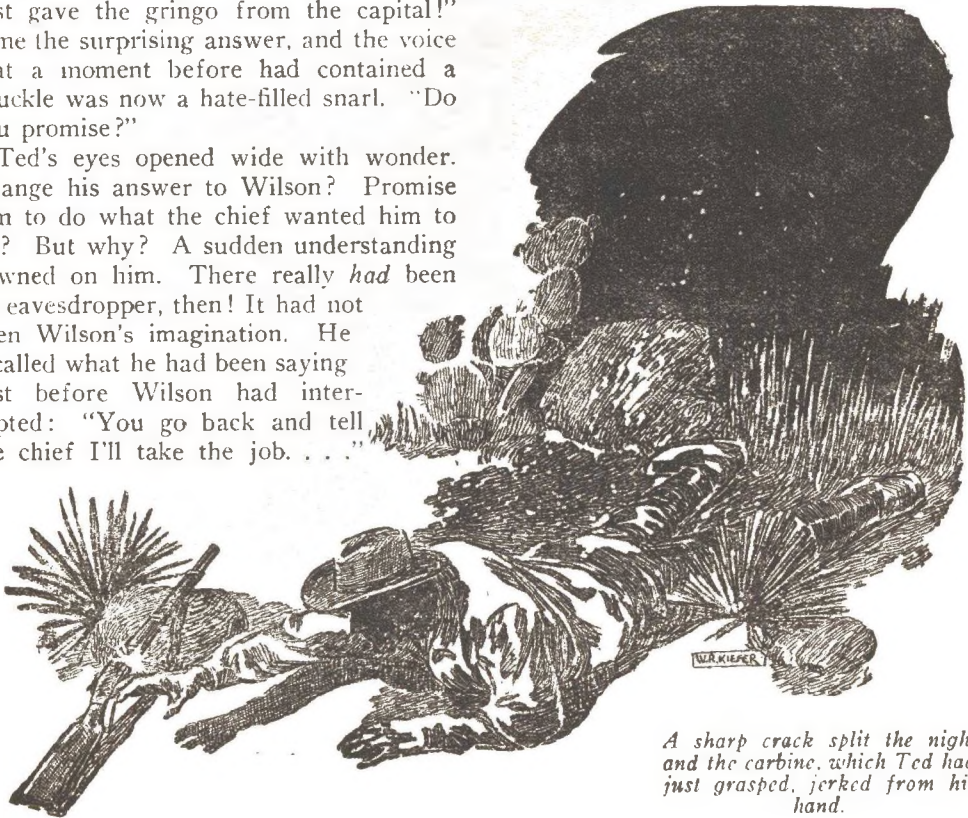
"Even a gringo will keep his word of honor, I presume?" came the cutting answer.

"What if I will not promise?" asked Ted curiously.

"I think you will," replied the voice calmly. "But enough of this talk! May I have your word of honor?"

"I suppose there is no other way out of it," shrugged Ted, and in the dark the smile around his lips grew more grim. "You have my word of honor that I will change the answer I gave Señor Wilson."

"Good. I thought you would: you



A sharp crack split the night and the carbine, which Ted had just grasped, jerked from his hand.

gringoes value your precious hides most highly."

THERE was a moment of silence, for Ted could think of nothing to say. The derisive tone of the voice sent an angry rush of blood to his head, but a man with his hands in the air is not a heroic spectacle.

The sharp clatter of gravel down the trail towards the town came faintly to his ears, and with a muttered exclamation Ted lowered his hands. For an instant he stood glaring down into the dying embers of his fire, and then he grinned sheepishly.

"Ted, you're still sensitive in the pedal extremities, I guess. What a downright tenderfoot you showed up to be, hombre! Now you've got to go and change your answer to Wilson." The smile lost something of its humor, and the glint of the stars above was warm compared with the light that flashed for a moment in the blue eyes of the American.

"Yes, sir, you've got to change the answer Wilson's going to carry back to the chief.

"This time it'll be just 'yes' without any qualifications whatever." He stared down the trail in the direction of the town, and again the cold blue light flickered in his eyes. "And don't forget you asked for it yourself, my peculiar friend!" he muttered softly.

He started whistling softly, under his breath, a trick of his when very thoughtful, and got ready to turn in. All traces had left his face now, and only a slight frown between his brows marred its serenity.

"Peculiar! Darned peculiar! Last night you saved my life; to-night you threaten it. What a country! What a people!" he exclaimed.

Ted had recognized the voice in the dark with the first word uttered. He knew that he had made no mistake in his instant identification of the man who had exacted his promise.

It was the soft, youthful voice of the slim young blue-eyed Mexican.

A. T.

IV

THE FIRST CLUE

VERY early the next morning Ted broke camp and looked up Wilson, whom he found ready for the trail.

"Changed my mind, old man!" he remarked smilingly, making sure that there was no one around to overhear the conversation. "I'm taking the job."

Wilson was too old a hand to ask questions. He merely nodded approvingly and extended his hand.

"I'm glad of that," he said quietly. "I think you'll find the chief is right, and he'll be glad to hear you're on the job. He thinks a lot of you. And now I'll say so long; it's a weary trail I've got ahead, and I'm not so young as I was! Good luck!"

Ted watched him out of sight, and then turned his horse's head the other way and trotted slowly down the north trail out of Scaja.

He was going back to the mine without a single one of the men he had come for, but he felt that he had something more important to attend to. The little incident of the night before had convinced him that there was something serious in the air; an invisible menace, yet one that was at the same time all too real. If his aroused instincts were right, there was no time to be lost.

Steadily he jogged along the rough, barely discernible trail, winding, twisting, first up and then down, over and around the heavily wooded foothills. It was an all-day ride to the mine, and he could not push the horse too fast. By noon he had made better than half the trip, which was good. He would reach his destination before dark.

He stopped for a few moments to eat, letting his horse drink a little from a little stream that dashed madly down the hillside. A corn husk cigarette, dextrously rolled, topped off the meal. He was just about to apply a match to his creation when the clatter of hoofs coming down the trail galvanized him to instant action. His carbine was across his knees when

the riders came in view: two very ordinary Mexicans with greasy, dirty clothes and flashing white teeth.

THEY looked at Ted with friendly interest, and after a moment's low-voiced consultation rode up to him smiling engagingly.

"Eet is the señor who wishes men for work in the mine, yes?" asked one, speaking in abominable English.

Ted nodded, keeping his eyes fixed on their every move. Tricky devils, greasers.

"A frien' he come from Scaja. He tell me you look for men to work een mine? So?"

Again Ted nodded. An idea was taking shape in his mind, and he studied the two men speculatively.

"My frien' here and I, we might work for you. How much you pay, señor?"

Ted told him, making the price attractively high. He wanted these two men. He spoke slowly, and in English.

The two smiled broadly, and they answered in a torrent of rapid Spanish. Ted understood every word, of course, but an impatient frown was the only answer he gave them.

"Talk English, can't you?" he snapped. "Do you want the job or not?"

"The señor will excuse, please. We have forgot the señor do not spik our language. We weel take the job."

"Good. I'm riding that way now. You fellows ride on ahead, and I'll catch up with you shortly."

They nodded comprehendingly, and with a courteous gesture and a flash of white teeth, rode on down the trail.

"Maybe they're not hep to the fact that I speak their lingo," mused Ted as he mounted. "That being the case, it's just possible that I'll be able to get a line on this business that's worrying the chief so. Greasers will talk, and if they think I can't understand them—*quien sabe?*"

FOR a long time Ted jogged along just behind his new employees, but their talk was mostly of their conquests, the weather, the last fiesta, the present régime.

A. T.

Meditatively he turned over in his mind the hectic series of adventures which had befallen Scotty and himself when they had been in the secret service of Mexico in the tumultuous days following the war. Then Scotty had married, and—well, that rather broke up the combination that had been so nearly invincible. They had taken up mining, and had done well.

Ted had been quite contented, but now he could feel the old fever of the chase mounting to his head, the lure of danger and the unknown. For there was danger ahead if the chief were right, and the chief made few mistakes.

Ted stopped his idle musing abruptly and pricked up his ears. One of the Mexicans had just remarked that the wages offered them by Ted were mighty good, and that he would now buy a certain Lolita many pretty things.

"It is good money, yes: but the damned foreigners are getting rich by bleeding us, just the same!" snarled the taller of the two.

"I have hear, however, that it will not always be thus," remarked the other softly.

"You are right! And the time is not far distant," replied the other with grim satisfaction. "The sting of the Scorpion will drive them all from the land!"

"I have heard you speak of that before," said his friend curiously. "What do you mean? The Scorpion? What is this Scorpion of which you speak?"

"The Scorpion is—the Scorpion," replied the other mysteriously. "And the Scorpion is abroad in the land. Some day, and soon, his power will be felt. He will lash his tail, and his sting, and then—*quien sabe?*"

"You speak in riddles!" protested the other person. "This Scorpion, is he a man?"

"Sh-h! He is a man, yet more than that, I think. It is better not to speak of him, for the leaves and the stones are ears for him."

"No man can be more than man," argued the other stubbornly. "The padre says—"

"I have seen this Scorpion," cut in the taller Mexican sharply. "I have seen him, and felt his power, and I tell you—" instinctively he lowered his voice, and his black eyes flashed around as though he half expected to see the dreaded face of him of whom he spoke—"this Scorpion is more than man.

"The Scorpion is a devil from the pit, my friend! I have seen. I know!"

V

TED EVENS THE SCORE

THAT night Ted told his partner the whole story, and Scotty listened with a serious frown on his usually smooth brow.

"It looks as though the chief had made no mistake, Ted," he said slowly, when Ted had finished.

"It sure does. And to think, Scotty, that I nearly sent Wilson back with a refusal to look into the matter. That shows how dull an old dog's nose becomes, doesn't it? Think how quick I used to be to scent trouble!"

"We all make mistakes," consoled Scotty. "But the beautiful irony of the other outfit forcing you at the point of a gun to get on their trail—that's what tickles me. Who do you suppose that little Mexican dude with the blue eyes is? I never saw or heard of him before, did you?"

Ted shook his head.

"Whoever he is, though, he must be quite a power, somehow. You ought to have seen those murdering greasers fall back when he strode up, there in the cantina. You'd have thought he was the lord of creation!"

"And this Scorpion business. What do you make of that?" asked Scotty. "Evidently he's the ringleader of the thing."

"I don't know what to think," replied Ted thoughtfully. "I'll give whoever's back of it credit for picking a name that would appeal to these ignorant cusses, though. They know their natives, all right.

"I'll admit I can't figure it out yet. But

the chief said the center of things was right in his district. And the chief generally knows what he's talking about. That being so, I promise you I'll know the secret of the matter before many moons, or dine off my new sombrero."

"What's your first move?"

"To get on the scene of action. That's always been our plan, Scotty, and I don't see why it isn't the best one here."

"Where do you figure the scene of action is?"

"Somewhere in the Devil's Playground country, near the Twin Peaks. That's the most likely territory, I'd say. There couldn't be a much better hiding place. What do you think?"

"That sounds about right," nodded Scotty thoughtfully.

"I'm starting to-morrow at sunup to look over the Playgrounds, anyway," answered Ted grimly.

Noon the next day found Ted high up on one of the peaks of the Twins. Spread out below him he could see the rocky, tumultuous badlands known as the Devil's Playground, but there was no visible sign of life.

"Still, I don't think I am far off the trail," mused Ted, rolling himself a cigarette. He had just picketed his horse, and was getting ready to prepare his lunch. "I've passed four greasers to-day, all tough-looking characters, armed to the teeth, and all headed in this general direction. It's dollars to doughnuts they are mixed up in this affair somehow. Four men, all headed the same way, are too many to meet on a trail like this in one forenoon, unless something is in the air. One a day would be a high average. The headquarters of this outfit must be around here somewhere, and with a little quiet scouting around I ought to locate it without difficulty."

TED had just finished his meal when he became conscious of somebody or something behind him. A shadow fell across his shoulder as he wheeled.

"It is me again, gringo!" remarked a familiar voice, and Ted turned to look

down into the scornful eyes of the little Mexican dandy who had saved his life back in the cantina!

"So I see," remarked Ted calmly. "Have you any particular business with me, that you pay me such unexpected visits?"

"Yes. I paid you one visit—doubtless you recognized me—regarding the matter involving your word of honor; perhaps you recall? And to-day I find you—*spying!*" The word cracked like a blacksnake, and the cold contempt in the voice cut like a lash.

"But—" began Ted.

"Cease, gringo! Your explanations cannot interest me." A gold-mounted gun with mother-of-pearl handles flashed from a beautifully carved holster, and Ted noted that the hand that held it was as firm as a rock. "I gave you a chance, and you broke your word of honor. Now you'll come with me!"

Ted stared down into the muzzle of the menacing gun, and then suddenly his gaze shifted to a spot immediately behind the Mexican. Like a flash his hand went to his holster, and as the weapon flashed into view he leaped sideways. The Mexican's gun roared angrily, and Ted's Colt spat a hasty answer. The bullet struck where Ted's gaze had been fixed a moment before, and something writhed there in the dead grass.

"Got him!" remarked Ted calmly. "A coral snake. You stirred him up; he'd have got you in another second, I think." He slipped his smoking gun back into its holster and stood watching the little Mexican.

He had gone strangely pale at the sight of the deadly reptile from whose fatal fangs Ted had just saved him. A quick shudder shook him as his eyes lifted from the snake to Ted's face.

"You killed him—pulled your gun when I had you covered at such close range?" he asked unbelievably.

"There was no time to explain," shrugged Ted. "In another instant he would have struck. I took a chance, that's all. You missed me by inches."

"I was startled. But I cannot understand—you, a gringo, did this, for a Mexican!"

"Oh, we're not as bad as we're painted!" chuckled Ted at the wonderment in the little dandy's voice.

The Mexican stared at Ted for a moment, and the shadow of a friendly smile stole across his comely features. Then the look of hatred settled down swiftly, and a grim, contemptuous light grew in the Mexican's eyes.

"But you broke your word of honor! You are like all your kind. All gringos are alike!" He slipped his gun into its holster and whistled for his horse, which came trotting up.

"But you saved my life to-day, gringo," he said as he swung into the saddle with the easy grace of a vaquero. "I cannot forget that, so I am riding away, and I shall forget that I have seen you. But I warn you, this is not a healthy part of the country for gringos!"

"Thanks for the advice!" returned Ted grimly. "If I saved your life to-day, you undoubtedly saved mine back there in the cantina, you know. That makes us even up!"

"That makes us even, gringo!" nodded the Mexican grimly. "Adios!"

VI

THE HAUNT OF THE SCORPION

TED watched the young Mexican ride away in silence. Now what? They would be on guard; perhaps they would move to some even more remote hiding place, and his work would be made more difficult than ever.

"The tooter the sweeter!" decided Ted. He climbed to an outjutting rock that commanded a wide sweep of country, and sat down, propping his elbows upon his drawn-up knees.

With his powerful field glasses he began a systematic survey of the country. It was a slow process: long years of experience in the open had taught Ted that a rapid flashing of glasses showed one nothing.

For perhaps an hour he swept the landscape as with a fine-tooth comb. Finally he exclaimed exultantly. A faint bluish haze curled above a dense patch of tropical verdure on a distant slope. He glued his eyes on the scene, and in a few minutes was rewarded by the sight of a lone rider approaching. Near the edge of the clump of trees he drew rein, and a moment later what was evidently a sentry, crossed cartridge belts upon his chest, came up to the rider. After a brief conversation they both disappeared into the green.

"Gotcha!" exclaimed Ted. He studied the terrain carefully, both through the glasses and with his naked eyes, and at last slipped the glasses into their case with a little sigh of satisfaction.

"By taking it easy, I can make it by dusk. Then with a little reconnoitering I ought to get near enough to listen in and pick up some valuable information."

He had figured it out just about correctly, for just as the long shadows of the mountains started stretching across the country, and the cool breath of evening was beginning to make itself felt, Ted reached a spot so near the grove of trees in which he believed he would find the headquarters of the organization he was to stamp out that he decided to dismount and go the rest of the way on foot.

At first he slipped along on foot, dodging from cover to cover quickly and silently, but when he began to hear the faint sounds of voices he abandoned this method for the still more quiet approach of the snake.

Flat on his belly he writhed along, gaining only a few inches before stopping to listen and look about him. It was a dangerous proceeding, for the long grass and the rotting vegetation were abiding place of numerous insect and reptile enemies, but he had to take the chance.

FINALLY he won through to a position just behind a large boulder, around the side of which he could gain a fair view of his quarry.

It was undoubtedly the place that he sought. A space under several of the

larger trees had been worn bare of grass by many feet, and several smaller trees had been cut down to make a semblance of a clearing. Fires of carefully dried and selected wood flared here and there, sending up scarcely perceptible spirals of faint blue smoke.

Around the fires were gathered a motley assortment of Mexicans. There were old men there, with blankets thrown across withered shoulders, and young caballeros with bravely colored garments of dashing cut. Some of them were the very lowest type of mountain Mexican; some were representative of the more prosperous merchant class. From the anxious looks which they all cast from time to time in one direction, it was evident that somebody of importance was expected.

Ted looked carefully, but he did not succeed in locating the little Mexican with the blue eyes. He strained his ears to hear what was being said, but could only catch occasional snatches.

"If I'm going to get much good out of this little trip, I've got to get close enough to hear what it's all about," he decided, and slowly and with infinite care he started wriggling nearer.

Suddenly, in the very middle of a movement, he stopped and stared unbelievably. Coming slowly into the light of the glowing fires rode two figures: the first, the little Mexican of the cantina and the several other episodes, and a squat, heavily bearded figure with malignant features and evil, searching eyes.

The bearded man wore, instead of a sombrero, a tight-fitting black cap, with a golden band running around its circumference. The front part of this band rose to a sort of crest, and balanced on the point of the crest was a life-size, jointed model of a scorpion, done in shining metal, and fitted with jeweled eyes that flashed with evil red light as the horribly lifelike scorpion nodded and swayed.

Nor was this all. The huge, powerful figure was clothed in a long robe of some soft gray stuff, split front and back so that he might ride, and falling on either side to his stirrups. A great peaked hood,

like a monk's cowl, lined in blood-red silk, hung down in back, and the throat of the garment was caught with a pin mounted with a stone that glinted redly with every movement. On the breast of the garment, embroidered in red and golden silk, was a huge, rampant figure of a scorpion.

"Good God!" muttered Ted, staring at the terrible, impressive figure. "I've found him! *The Scorpion himself!*"

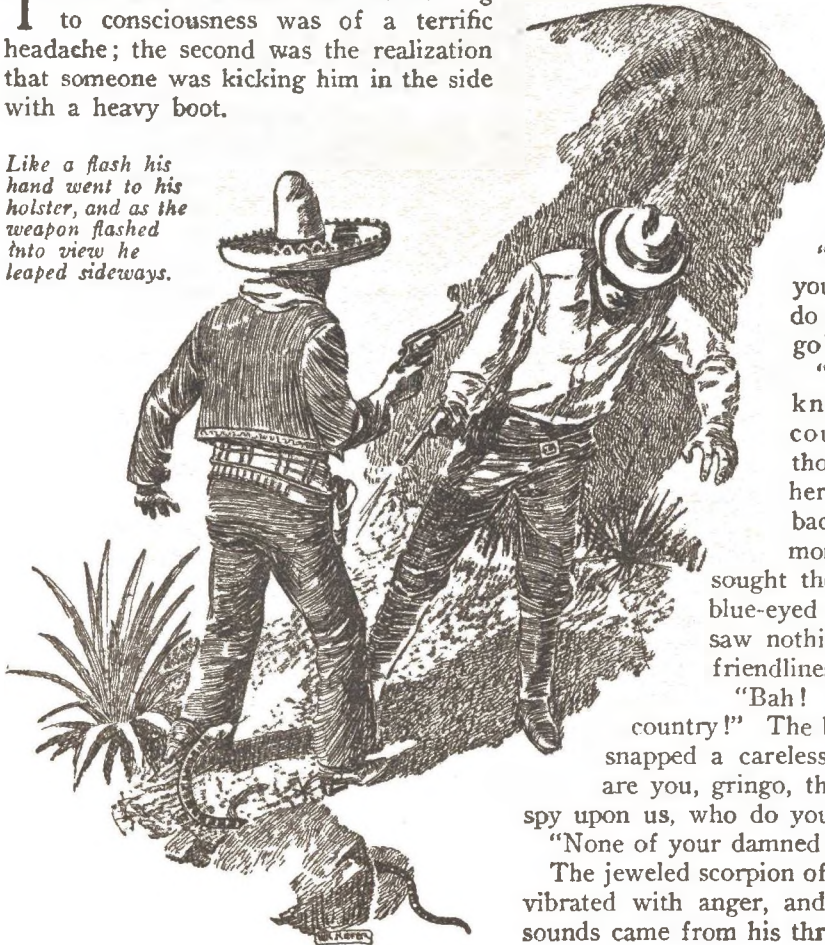
And just at that instant a crashing blow that sent the whole world reeling back into darkness descended upon Ted's head, and with a startled grunt he crumpled on the ground.

VII

THE JUDGMENT OF THE SCORPION

TED'S first sensation when returning to consciousness was of a terrific headache; the second was the realization that someone was kicking him in the side with a heavy boot.

Like a flash his hand went to his holster, and as the weapon flashed into view he leaped sideways.



He swore under his breath, struggled to a sitting position, and glared around him.

He was in the center of the encampment. Ranged around him in a semi-circle were all the Mexicans he had seen gathered around the fires; across from them, still mounted, stood the Scorpion and the little Mexican dandy. Beside Ted, with fixed bayonets, stood two grinning Mexican soldiers.

"Get up, gringo!" commanded one, with a savage dig of his toe. "Come! Do not keep the Scorpion waiting!"

Ted rose dizzily to his feet, and stared defiantly into the leering face of the bearded monster who glared down at him with ratty black eyes that were as merciless at death itself.

"Who is this gringo?" rumbled the swarthy horseman.

"Sir, he was spying on the camp. I do not know who he is," replied one of his captors, saluting.

"A spy, eh? Do you know what we do with spies, gringo?"

"And do you know what my country does to those who murder her citizens?" flung back Ted. For a moment Ted's eyes sought those of the little blue-eyed Mexican, but he saw nothing but cold un-friendliness there.

"Bah! That for your country!" The bearded monster snapped a careless finger. "Who are you, gringo, that you come to spy upon us, who do you no harm?"

"None of your damned business!"

The jeweled scorpion of the man's brow vibrated with anger, and little rumbling sounds came from his throat.

"If you will permit, I can tell you who the gringo is," came a voice unexpectedly from the group of Mexicans ranged around.

"Well?" thundered the Scorpion. "Speak up!"

"It is the gringo who, with a friend, operates a mine not far distant."

"So! Is that the truth, gringo?"

Ted threw back his head defiantly, and looked his persecutor full in the face.

"Who are you, to question me?" he asked boldly.

For an instant the bearded figure hesitated, and then with a commanding sweep of his arm, he motioned the two guards to take Ted away. "Bind him! Guard him carefully! And then to-morrow, when the sun rises, I shall teach him what is the authority of the Scorpion!" he shouted furiously, and before Ted could utter another word he was bound, gagged, and lashed to a tree that grew near the middle of the little clearing.

Abruptly the Scorpion and his dapper companion wheeled their horses and disappeared into the shadows from whence they had come.

"See, gringo, you are facing the east!" chuckled one of the guards. "Is that not thoughtful of us? You shall see from here your last sunrise. And if you look just above you, you can see the very limb from which we shall presently hang you. Good night, gringo!"

And so they left him.

VIII

THE DEATH-DAWN

SLOWLY the camp quieted down. The chatter and subdued laughter merged into the silence of the night. Hardly a sound was to be heard save the soft pacing of Ted's guard and the heavy breathing of the sleepers around the fires.

To Ted, the minutes dragged by like hours, like weeks. Every instant of every second his mind, preternaturally active, lived a thousand thoughts. Not that he was afraid to die, because the last two years of the war Ted had looked death

in the face too many times to blanch at the sight once more. It was the waiting.

A hundred times he thought he detected the first faint tinge in the eastern sky, and as many times he realized that not for hours would the first rays appear. He tried to divert his mind by working savagely to free himself from his bonds, taking a certain delight in the agony caused by the rough ropes biting into his flesh. But it was a useless task: the stiff ropes would not give in the slightest. He stopped and felt the warm blood from his champed wrists trickle down the palms of his hands and drip from his finger tips to the ground.

Perhaps two hours after the last man had rolled into his blanket Ted was startled by a soft whisper from behind his back.

"Stand still! Do not look around. I am in the shadow of the tree, and the guard must not suspect." It was the voice of the slim little Mexican with the blue eyes!

Ted nodded slowly, understandingly, and the anxious whisper went on.

"I could not bear to see you hung. You saved my life; that I cannot forget, even though you are a gringo, and a breaker of your pledged word." Ted heard the soft snick of a sharp knife cutting through the taut ropes that bound him to the tree, and felt the blood pour painfully into hands and feet as the impinging bonds loosened.

"Presently I shall walk up to the guard and engage him in conversation. I shall tell him that I cannot sleep and am restless. Watch, and when you see that he is facing away from you, go as quickly and as quietly as you can—and go *up* the trail, not down.

"When I see you are gone, I will myself spread the alarm, claiming I saw you disappear into the shadows beside the *down* trail. Later, after the search has ended—say in a day or two—you can make your way down again. Understand?"

Again Ted nodded; the dirty rag that served as a gag had not been loosened,

and so he could not express his gratitude. Perhaps it was just as well, for the sentry was only a few yards away.

A MINUTE later Ted saw the little Mexican stroll casually up to the guard with some idle remark. The guard glanced carelessly at the prisoner, and then grounded his rifle with a bored expression that told just how important he thought it was that a tired hombre should be broken of his rest just to guard a trussed-up gringo. A moment later he and the slim young Mexican who could not sleep were deep in some interesting controversy.

In a few minutes Ted saw his chance. The guard had turned his back, and was deep in the midst of what was evidently a heated exposition, although they talked in such soft voices, for fear of arousing the nearby sleepers, that Ted could not catch its drift.

Quickly and silently, keeping in the shadows as much as possible, but overlooking no opportunity to make time, he slipped around the edge of the clearing towards the trail that led upwards. Two or three times he almost stepped on sleeping bodies, and once a sleeper turned and groaned and Ted's heart skipped a beat as he waited, poised there in the dark.

Just as he reached the trail, a sudden shout woke the camp into amazed, tumultuous life.

"The gringo! See! He is escaping; there he goes down the trail now! See him?" It was the voice of the little blue-eyed Mexican who had that night once more saved Ted's life.

The camp behind him was a bedlam, and Ted no longer wasted time in trying to keep his movements quiet. Like a hounded deer he leaped up the trail, slipping now and then on round, loose stones, crashing into trees with terrific, breath-taking force when the trail made a sudden, unexpected turn, but putting every second more and more distance between himself and the camp.

At last he had to slow down; the terrific pace and the steep incline sapped his

endurance. But even then he did not stop; he kept on at a tired, shuffling dog trot, the trail getting narrower and rougher with every step, it seemed, until at last it disappeared entirely.

Panting, Ted flung himself flat on the ground. Through the trees in front of him a faint light shone; a light that grew slowly brighter and brighter until Ted could see the sharp, serrated horizon sharply outlined against the pink glow.

It was the death-dawn—but he was free!

IX

THE MESSAGE

IT took Ted the greater part of two days to make his way around the mountain on which he found himself, and down on the other side. There was no trail, and the going was rough, precipitous and difficult. In places the stones were so loose and so sharp that walking on them was almost impossible, and later, as he made his way farther down the mountain, the creepers and shrubs made progress a long, continuous, strength-sapping battle.

All the food Ted had was what berries he could find, and there were not many of them that he was familiar enough with to dare eat. There was plenty of water, however, in the mountain streams, and so, while he was savage with hunger, the water served to keep him going. A man hardened to outdoor life can go on a long way without food if he has water enough.

Reaching the base of the mountain, Ted swung around until he struck the trail that led to the camp from which he had made his escape. He followed it cautiously to the place where he had left his horse, but the beast was gone. No doubt they had run across the horse in looking for him after his escape.

Ted sat down and thought the matter over. He must have a horse. He must have weapons and food. The only near source of supply was the camp, but that was too heavily guarded for him to attempt to raid it. The only thing to do was to lay in wait along the trail, and

hold up some lone rider either from or to the camp.

But how? He was unarmed, and weak from his strenuous trip and the lack of food. And the Mexicans were all armed, with both knife and gun. He turned the matter over in his mind until the solution came to him, and then, with a grim smile, he made his way back to the trail.

Half an hour later a sour-visaged Mexican with a frayed sombrero came clattering rapidly down the trail from the direction of the camp. He swore at his horse and pricked the nag's skinny sides with his huge, jingling spurs. The horse quickened his speed, rounded a sharp turn and passed under the spreading branches of a gnarled, stunted old oak that grew beside the trail.

JUST as horse and rider swept beneath the tree something dropped from the tree to the saddle. Startled, the horse leaped forward, and his rider, thrown off his balance by the hurtling body, fell heavily from the saddle with Ted on top of him. The Mexican's head hit the sharp edge of a ledge that cut diagonally across the trail at that point, and his body went suddenly limp.

Ted, suspecting a trick, slipped his hand over the Mexican's heart. There was no movement; the man was dead.

Quickly, lest other riders come along, Ted dragged the body into the bushes and destroyed all traces of what had happened. The Mexican's horse, which had trotted on a few yards and then turned to watch with curious eyes the fate of his late master, was easily caught up and also led out of sight.

The Mexican's revolver and cartridge belt were appropriated at once, and then Ted started searching the man's pockets for food. He found it, and likewise something that caused him to straighten up with a low whistle of astonishment. The Mexican had been a messenger; and this was the message he had borne:

The girl is beginning to ask too many questions. Two nights ago I

think she helped a Yankee meddler to escape, and no doubt he will bring the Government hornets buzzing about our heads shortly.

To-day the girl became insistent. We shall have to do away with her after she has served our purpose. I fear.

It is a good thing that the meeting is planned for to-night. It is none too soon. Eslava's idea of holding it at the hut where that old fool, her father, lived and died, was indeed a clever one. It will help my play-acting wonderfully. I will set fire to the fuse to-night, and it will take but an instant for the spark to run up to the powder and ignite it.

Then, when these fools have incurred the enmity of all the foreign powers that have built up the country, we will strike a blow for the Red Flag, and strike hard. We cannot fail now!

Yours in the Cause,
Jarnoff.

The letter was written in French, but Ted had more than a smattering of that language, picked up overseas. He had no difficulty in translating the letter.

"So!" he smiled when he finished it. "It is señorita, not señor, eh?" The letter explained the secret of the soft, youthful voice and the slim, graceful figure. But what was the secret of her authority and her importance to Jarnoff, who was evidently the Scorpion—and why the blue eyes?

"Whatever the mystery threatened would evidently break loose to-night, Ted reflected as he stood looking at the letter.

He did not stop long to cogitate, however. There was much to be done: he had to see to it that the Scorpion did not reach the meeting, there to "fire the fuse" that he spoke of in his letter. He tucked the letter in his breast pocket, made sure that the Mexican's gun was in good condition and loose in his holster, and then, swinging onto the dead man's horse, he headed up the trail towards the camp.

X

THE TABLES TURNED

TED rode along slowly, eyes and ears alert to detect the first trace of danger from any source, yet his mind busy with other matters.

First of all, who *was* the girl? What was her connection with the Scorpion, and why was she essential in helping him put over his share of a plot that was evidently international in its scope? And why had she jeopardized her cause by helping Ted? It was evident, the letter proved, that she was not entirely in accord with Jarnoff's plans; that she was becoming, in fact, an obstacle.

It was all too confusing, and at last Ted gave it up. Just one thing was sure, and that was that Jarnoff, or the Scorpion, must not attend the meeting at which he intended to incite the superstitious, impulsive, easily led Mexicans to strike against the gringos. Just how he was to detain Jarnoff he was not quite sure, but if his guess was right it might not be difficult.

"It's about time luck played in my hand!" he mused grimly as he dismounted and led his horse off the trail. "Now that everything's coming to a head, this rendezvous will no longer be needed, and they'll probably be breaking camp and scattering. They'll be afraid of me bringing the rurales swooping down on them, too, although it's a hot chance I've had of doing anything of the sort!"

A sound from up the trail attracted his attention, and a few minutes later a little group of riders came into view. They were laughing and chatting, and passed by Ted's place of concealment without even a glance. A moment later two other riders appeared, and Ted chuckled to himself.

"Luck's turned!" he exulted. "They're breaking camp right now. The old boy will be the last one to go—won't leave until the others are safely out of sight. Too much familiarity would breed contempt, sure enough, in this case. His prestige depends upon his ability to keep in the shadows. I'll bet he never allows himself to be seen except in the mysterious

night. I'll just creep up close to the camp, where I can watch things, and wait until friend Jarnoff shows himself. Then—well, this high-handed business of forcibly detaining people is a little game two can play at!"

Silently, cautiously, he approached the camp. It was nearly deserted, and the two who were there were on the verge of leaving. In three quarters of an hour the camp was utterly deserted.

Still Ted waited. Twenty minutes, a half hour went by. Still there was no sign of the Scorpion or his companion. Ted began to wonder if he had taken another trail out when suddenly the Scorpion and the girl, still dressed in her vaquero's costume, came into sight.

TED worked his way close to the trail along which they must pass and hid himself behind the massive bole of a century-old tree. As they came abreast of him, he stepped quietly into the trail confronting them, his revolver menacing.

"Just a moment, please! Put them up, both of you!" Ted commanded grimly.

The bearded rider swore furiously under his breath in some foreign language that Ted did not understand—but he obeyed the silent command of the revolver. Watching Ted curiously, the girl too, lifted her hands to the level of her shoulder.

Quickly Ted took possession of their guns, and then, with the rope that hung at the horn of the girl's saddle, he made the cursing Scorpion fast to a tree some distance from the trail.

"And now, señorita," he said to the girl, "I would speak with you."

She flushed when he addressed her by the feminine title, but she merely nodded and stood watching him curiously, a faint, contemptuous smile on her lips.

Ted led her a short distance away, where Jarnoff could not hear what was said. At first she listened with a deaf ear, her imperious, scornful head held high, but at length Ted saw interest kindle in her eyes.

"You say this Jarnoff is fooling me,

fooling my people?" she blazed at last, her blue eyes snapping.

"I say it, and I can prove it," said Ted quietly. "I do not understand what part you play in the plan, but I do know that he is playing you as a pawn which is very shortly to be sacrificed."

"You said you could prove that?" asked the girl.

"Do you read French?"

"Yes."

"Then it is easy to prove." Ted glanced over to where his prisoner was tied, saw that he was safe, and then drew the girl out of sight behind a screen of dense foliage.

He drew then from his pocket the intercepted message, and handed it to the girl without a word, watching her intently as she read it.

He saw her lips work angrily as the full meaning of the letter sank into her brain. When she had finished she folded up the letter and returned it to Ted.

"I will tell you everything!" she replied, her eyes flashing, her face pale with repressed anger. "I will show him that he cannot use me to further his selfish, horrible ends. This note makes much clear to me.

"It is not my country that he is interested in—it is his Red cause. I know of that, and—ugh! it is horrible! And to think he would dare to make me a party to his plans! I will tell him to his teeth—" She flung out from concealment, starting for the writer of the revealing letter, and stopped short with a little cry of dismay.

"He is gone! Escaped!"

It was true. Somehow the Scorpion had exerted his terrific strength to loosen the ropes with which he had been tied, and in the few minutes that Ted and the girl had been out of sight, he had taken the best of the horses and disappeared.

Ted said something under his breath. The words he used were not nice words. But they relieved his furious feelings somewhat.

"I'll put a trig in your wheel yet!" he swore. "I've still got an ace up my sleeve!"

XI

WHILE THE CLOUDS GATHERED

"DID Jarnoff tell you where you were going?" asked Ted as they rode down the trail.

The girl shook her head.

"He never told me anything—more than he had to."

"Well, then, we still have a good chance of beating him," decided Ted. "Provided you know where this hut is, to which he refers."

"It is not far," said the girl very softly. "It was where my father lived for many years. I—I don't know why I tell you this, a gringo, but I feel the bottom has dropped out of things. That what I have been taught is not proving true. Those I have been told to love and trust have proven untrue and unworthy; those I have been taught—to hate. . . ." She looked away, leaving the sentence unfinished, and Ted saw there were tears in her eyes.

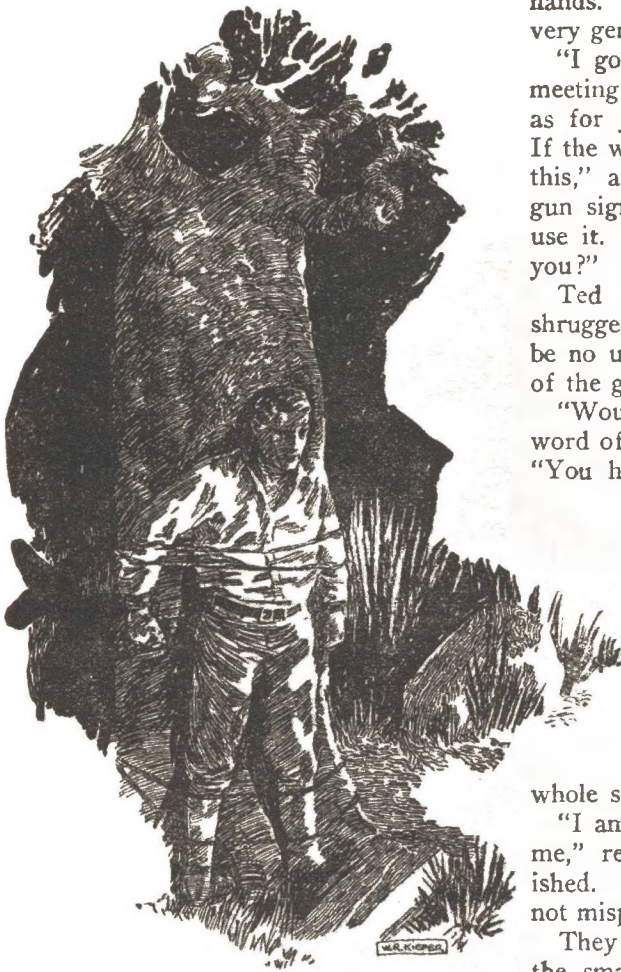
"I understand," he said quickly. "Not everything, but enough. Let's not talk of those things any more. Later. . . ." Ted also left a sentence unfinished. He felt that now was no time to even suggest the things he knew he would want to say to this girl—later.

"If Jarnoff didn't tell you where you were going to hold the big meeting, he'll feel perfectly safe. He doesn't know his messenger was intercepted, and will have no idea that we know of his plans.

"I shall attend that meeting—and I think Mr. Jarnoff will meet with some rather unpleasant surprises about that time!" he finished grimly.

"But it would be as much as your life is worth to go there!" exclaimed the girl. "You do not know the feelings of these people. Their hate for a gringo is a terrible thing. And Jarnoff will stir them—he is a wonder at that sort of thing. His personality, his great voice—I tell you he can set fire to them, as he promised to do. You must not go!"

Ted smiled. It was good to know that the girl cared what happened to him. But he shook his head stubbornly.



"Stand still! Do not look around! I am in the shadow of the tree."

"Desperate situations require remedies," he replied gently. "And I think I have an idea which may work. And there is no time to loose. It must be now—or never! Once he sets fire to his powder train, it will be too late."

"Then I—I go also!" said the girl proudly. "I have played no small part in helping Jarnoff in his work, thinking I was working for the good of these poor people. I will help to undo what I have done."

"You must not," argued Ted. "There will be danger. And if things go wrong, you—you must not be left in Jarnoff's

hands. I'm afraid that he would not be very gentle."

"I go, or I do not tell you where the meeting is," said the girl quietly. "And as for Jarnoff, I am not afraid of him. If the worst comes to the worst, I have—this," and she tapped her gold-mounted gun significantly. "And I know how to use it. Is it a bargain? Do I go with you?"

Ted hesitated a moment, and then shrugged his shoulders. He knew it would be no use to argue. The determined set of the girl's chin was unmistakable.

"Would you not be afraid to take the word of a gringo?" he asked whimsically. "You have accused me of breaking my word once, you know."

"I would not let you explain," she replied after a moment's thought. "There is an explanation; there must be. I know that now."

"Thank you," said Ted, a deep note of feeling in his voice. "There is an explanation." And he told her the

whole story, freely.

"I am glad to see how much you trust me," replied the girl when he had finished. "Believe me, your confidence is not misplaced."

They proceeded cautiously, keeping to the small, obscure game trails, although they lost many a weary mile by so doing. Several times they had narrow escapes from running into parties of peons, all apparently headed in the same general direction. Only their alertness, and the loud talking and laughing of the natives saved them.

They talked, when they could safely talk, of many things. They remembered at last to introduce themselves, although the girl already knew Ted's name, it seemed. Jarnoff, who knew everything, it appeared, had told her.

The girl's name was expressive of the mingled blood that flowed in her veins: Nora de Arteaga. And with the name, bit by bit, Ted learned the girl's story.

Her father, Lucas de Arteaga, had been

a captain in the army. A proud, fiery young chap, of pure Castilian blood. He had swept little Nora Wiley off her feet in a breathless, hot-headed courtship, married her out of hand, and settled down with her almost before she knew what was happening. The De Arteagas, it would seem, were like that.

Unpromising as the match might have seemed, it turned out ideally well. Nora and Lucas de Arteaga were a pair of love-birds, and the whole romantic city knew and loved the dashing pair of lovers. The baby came, and still there was no rift in the utter, delirious happiness of the pair.

Then, one day, while the young matron was out driving behind the high-spirited De Arteaga bays, a rattling, snorting, chugging contraption came up from behind, and a grinning Yankee in a tight black derby was sitting on the ridiculous seat of the thing.

It was the first automobile the De Arteaga bays had ever seen or heard. They cast one terrified look at the thing, and their eyes rolled until the whites showed wildly. Then, despite the shouting and the desperate efforts of the driver and the screams of the two women in the victoria, the frightened beasts tore down the street, bits between their teeth, nostrils flaring redly, eyes wild with terror.

Then the swaying victoria crashed against a lamp post. There was a scream of agony, and it was finished. The Señora de Arteaga, the heart of De Arteaga's heart, was dead. Dead in the first flush of living. Dead, because of a hellish gringo contraption. Dead . . . his Nora . . . dead!

Captain de Arteaga resigned. He disappeared. And with him went the little Nora. He became a recluse, a broken thing with only one thought in his brain: his hatred of the gringos. The little Nora he sent to a far distant school.

During vacations she visited him at his little hermit's hut in the wilds. It was from him that she had learned to hate the gringos. It was through him that she had met Jarnoff, for Jarnoff also had a hatred of the gringos.

TWO years before, the broken heart of Captain de Arteaga had at last ceased its thankless task. Jarnoff had sought out Nora, and offered to be of assistance to her in any possible way. Her father had left her a small sum; not a great deal, but sufficient. But she was ignorant of the world's ways, and Jarnoff was wise.

Jarnoff taught her to hate the gringos anew. He pointed out miserable villages of natives, toiling in the mines of the gringos for a few pennies a day, while the gringos lolled back and drank and smoked and grew rich. He showed her other things, also, and—

"Well, I have said the blood of my father is hot blood," she explained. "The De Arteagas were known for their impulsive dispositions.

"I went around with Jarnoff, talking to the working people, trying to get them to unify themselves. All they needed was a leader, and in Jarnoff they had a leader such as their ignorant, romantic, superstitious minds needed. Oh, he knows them, this Jarnoff!

"*The Scorpion! Ugh!* But we did what we set out to do. We aroused the villages. We appointed lieutenants in all the various districts. It is these lieutenants who are meeting to-night for the final word; the complete plans.

"And we worked quietly, with circumspection. We made sure there was no smoke to show where we had set our fires. How it was discovered, I do not know. A traitor, perhaps."

Ted shook his head.

"I do not know. The chief—you just can't fool him, that's all. He *knows*. But go on."

"There isn't much more. It's been a long story already. I began to think a little for myself. I saw that the hated gringos did much that was good, although there were bad men among them, as there are among all people. I saw a degree of cleanliness where the gringos were that I did not see elsewhere. I saw better living condition. I began to doubt—a very little.

"And then—I met you."

SHE looked up at Ted, and her blue eyes were clear and unafraid.

"You taught me much about the gringos," she said. "I doubted more than ever. Then, when I saw Jarnoff's note, I saw things suddenly without prejudice. Saw them as they are. And so—to-night I am going to help you, as much as I can, in undoing the damage I have already done."

"I don't think—" began Ted earnestly, but the girl stopped him with a quick gesture, her eyes appealing.

"Please don't debate the matter with me," she begged prettily. "Just ahead—see, through the trees, that little clearing in the valley between the two peaks—is the meeting place. We have no time to lose in talking; the sun is already low, and we will have to approach carefully, for they will have guards out."

"I think I know a way. I will lead you to it, and then I shall let you plan what we shall do. Only you must not ask me to turn back. I am strong, and I am armed. I can shoot as well as most men. If there is trouble—and there may be trouble, for Jarnoff is very shrewd—I can stand back to back with you and fight it out. I think,"—and her blue eyes were shining now—"I think in many ways I would like that. The De Arteagas are a race of fighters!"

Despite the gravity of the situation, Ted could not repress a broad grin.

"Shure, an' a coleen who comes honestly by the name of Nora would have fighting blood in her, De Arteaga or no De Arteaga!" he chuckled. "Let's go!"

XII

THE SECRET SIGN

IT was more than dusk when they came close to the scene of the meeting. It was dark, and the darkness was peopled with a thousand dangers.

Directly ahead, perhaps two hundred yards distant, they could see the little cabin in which Captain de Arteaga had lived his last days. In front of the cabin, and some distance from it, was a big fire,

and a great crowd of people were gathered somewhere close, for the sound of a subdued chattering came faintly to their ears.

"We'll have to get into the heavy shadow behind the cabin," decided Ted. "From there we'll plan our next move. I imagine that Jarnoff will make the cabin his personal headquarters; so it'll be guarded, and we'll have to watch our step."

They crawled slowly forward through the thick undergrowth, pausing every foot or so to listen and peer through the soft, warm blackness.

They were within a few yards of the cabin when they finally located the sentry they were sure must be there. He was lounging against the corner of the cabin, idly smoking a cigarette. They could see the red-hot tip glowing like a danger signal in the night.

Patiently they waited until he moved away. If, as they suspected, Jarnoff was in the camp, it would not do to have a struggle fairly against the walls of the place.

Luck was with them. The sentry strolled slowly towards them, rifle carelessly over his shoulder, flicking the ashes from his corn husk cigarette. Just as he was abreast of them, Ted straightened up slowly and quietly, poised himself, and at the right second gripped the man's throat from behind.

The sentry dropped his gun and instinctively tried to tear loose that throttling grip. He tried to cry out, but only a low, hacking cough came from him. Ted's strangling fingers did their work perfectly, and in a few seconds the sentry hung, a dead weight, in his grasp.

"Quick!" he instructed Nora in a whisper. "My handkerchief for a gag. That's it! Tie it tight. Fine! Now take a knife and slit his belt lengthwise. That'll give us enough leather to tie both hands and feet. He's only out for a few minutes."

The girl worked swiftly and silently, and in two or three minutes they had the sentry bound and gagged so securely that Ted felt sure there was no danger from

that source. If only they didn't relieve their sentries, now, everything would be fine. Ted felt quite sure they wouldn't bother changing sentries, since the meeting probably would not last more than an hour at the most.

"Now for it!" he whispered as they crept up into the shadow of the cabin. "Be sure your gun is loose, and, if you have to, don't be afraid to use it. Keep behind me, and—Sh-h-h-h!"

THERE was a muffled sound of voices from the cabin, and somebody opened the door and walked out, straight towards the great bonfire that blazed in the clearing in front of the cabin.

From where he was now, Ted could get the lay of the land clearly. The cabin was at one edge of a considerable clearing. About fifty feet in front of the camp the land fell away sharply, the remainder of the clearing being some ten or fifteen feet lower than the portion upon which the cabin stood.

This explained why they had been able to see the light of the fire but not the fire itself, and why they had not been able to see the crowd around the fire, although they could hear the chattering of the assembled multitude quite clearly.

The man who had just left the cabin was not Jarnoff. It was a tall, exceedingly gaunt and cadaverous man in the native garb. Ted was sure he was a stranger, although he could not see the man's face.

Confidently the gaunt Mexican strode to the edge of the little plateau and mounted an outcropping ledge of rock. The chattering died down almost instantly into an excited whispering, and then into utter silence.

Dramatically, the lone Mexican raised his right arm, palm forward, a sort of salutation that was evidently understood, for there was a great shout from the invisible spectators, and a rustling of clothes and shifting bodies as the multitude returned the greeting.

The man knew how to wring the last drop of value from the situation. He

waited there, hand raised high, head slightly bowed in acknowledgment of the greeting that was returned him. Then, as silence settled down again, he slowly lowered his arm. The silence was the utter silence of death itself.

"My friends—my countrymen!" The deep, resonant voice was rich with emotion. "You are here to-night for a reason. You are here to hear a message—not from me but from another. One whose name is fraught with significance; one who is known as a power throughout this great country of ours; one feared and revered by all of us here and all those thousands we represent in this council. For to-night we are to receive the long-promised message of—*the Scorpion!*"

A long, quivering sigh went up from the throats of the invisible throng, and as though the sound of his name had been a signal, the Scorpion himself, arrayed in all his weird panoply, emerged from the cabin.

Jarnoff stood motionless by the door a moment, and studied the silhouette of the speaker. Then, quickly, he dropped to his knees and started crawling, in very undignified fashion, towards the invisible multitude.

HE had gone but a few feet when Ted reached out a long arm from the surrounding darkness and jammed the muzzle of his revolver into Jarnoff's ribs.

"Not a sound, or you're all through!" whispered Ted tensely. "Now, out with it—what's the game?"

"Damn you!" snarled Jarnoff in a sibilant whisper, evidently recognizing Ted's voice. "I'll see you in hell before—"

Ted dug the muzzle of the gun into the Scorpion's ribs with a force that brought a grunt from the man.

"Quiet!" snapped Ted. "Another break like that and I'll be likely to unload this gun in you. I mean that, Jarnoff. Now, what's the game? Quick, before it's too late!"

In sharp, sullen, snarling whispers, Jarnoff explained, details coming at times only after a sharp prodding. But at last

Ted knew all he wanted to know, and he realized his time was getting short. From the tall Mexican's words and voice he knew his speech was fast coming to a close.

"Nora," he whispered into the blackness, "if the tall gent there comes this way, try to make a prisoner of him, if you can without any risk. Jarnoff and I are in a hurry; be back soon. Stay right here at the camp."

He turned to Jarnoff. "Now hurry; the show's just about due to start. Quick, now!" Jarnoff grunted nastily, and with Ted on his heels hurriedly crawled to the edge of the little plateau. Then he crouched

this crucial point in our country's history we must turn to the master, to him whose clarion call has brought us here, to no other than that dread figure—the Scorpion!"



Startled, the horse leaped forward.

As he flung forth the last words, crying them out with dramatic intensity, he made a quick move with one foot.

There was a great burst of white light from the rock behind which crouched Jarnoff and his captor, a terrific puff of searing heat, and a gasping cry of amazement and terror from the assembled crowd; and on the instant following the flash, Jarnoff leaped to his feet and stood poised on the top of the rock, his arm raised high in the sign of greeting.

XIII

THE STORM BREAKS

THE excited murmuring of the crowd died down instantly, to be followed by an intense, expectant silence. Slowly, majestically, Jarnoff lowered his arm.

behind a low, flat-topped rock on the edge, some twenty or thirty feet from where the tall Mexican was winding up his speech in a blaze of patriotic fervor:

"... down-trodden country shall not suffer this blight, I say! Shall not go down into oblivion, patriots; shall not, since the blood of men is red, and in the red blood of our manhood there is hope and salvation!

"But it is not my task to point out the way of our salvation. For guidance at

"Patriots," he said slowly, his voice throbbing with the semblance of a great compassionate feeling. "My friends!"

He stood there, a dramatic, even weird figure, lit by the leaping red light of the fire, clad in his symbolic trappings; stood silent after his opening words, as though speech had been drowned by a flood of thought.

"I have called you here to-night," he continued at length, and his great vibrant voice rolled out as majestically as the lower register of a pipe organ, "to give to you a certain message. I have told you, or some of you, that I have come to lead you up from your present predicament; from the poverty and the wretchedness and the unhappiness which is now your lot.

"Some few of you have seen my power. One or two of you,"—and the majestic voice was cold and very grim—"have felt that power. That it lies within me to show you a way, I trust not one of you doubts."

He paused, serenely confident of the answer. It came: a fluttering whisper of assent.

"Good! You are loyal; I have your confidence. Listen, then, to the message which is the message of the Scorpion!"

Knowing the superlative value of suspense, Jarnoff waited a moment before going on. Crouching behind him, gun unwaveringly pointed at the bulking figure of the Scorpion, was Ted, and just at this instant, by way of impressing upon the speaker the fact that he should weigh his words carefully, Ted audibly cocked the revolver.

Almost imperceptibly, Jarnoff started and winced. It is not a pleasant feeling to have a very grim-eyed, determined, desperate young man crouching behind you with a cocked and accurately aimed .45 bearing on the small of your back.

"You have come here with hate in your hearts," continued Jarnoff just a trifle hastily. "My lieutenants and myself have selected those of you whose hearts were most filled with hate, because you above all I wish to reach.

"That hate you carry with you, that your heart distills into every drop of blood that courses through your bodies, is not hatred of each other. It is not hatred of your country. It is not hatred of God. It is hatred of—the gringos!"

A wild shout, unrestrained and brutal with savage feeling, rent the air. Jarnoff raised his hand in an angry, commanding gesture, and silence fell on the instant.

"Cease!" he commanded. "When the Scorpion has spoken, then, if it be your will, shall you shout. But now listen to the word of the Scorpion.

"This hate you have is poison. It strikes at you insidiously, like a snake in the darkness. You must spew it out, you must rid yourselves of it, or else your condition of to-day is but a gentle foretaste of that which is to come. The Scorpion has called you here to hear his message. The Scorpion—has spoken!"

FOR a moment there was utter, astounded silence. Then, like a wave rushing for the shore, growing larger every instant, there rose an incredulous whisper, shot through with angry mutterings.

Someone, bolder than his fellows, cried out harshly: "To hell with the gringos!" and a loud, excited cheering greeted the words. There was the sound of a great commotion, and Ted, watching Jarnoff with unwinking eyes, wondered at the coolness, the effrontery, of the man.

"Cease!" shouted Jarnoff again. "Do you dare debate the wisdom of the Scorpion? Ha! Some of you have short memories—some of you who have before now seen the will of the Scorpion done in the gray light of the dawn! Perhaps there be some among you who feel the Scorpion has lost his stinger? If so—let him stand forth! Let him stand forth and say to me that he defies the Scorpion and debates the wisdom of the Scorpion's message!"

Jarnoff delivered his challenge in a rolling, thunderous voice that fairly shook the earth with its power. His great body towered to its fullest height, his hideous, bearded face was thrust forward, the

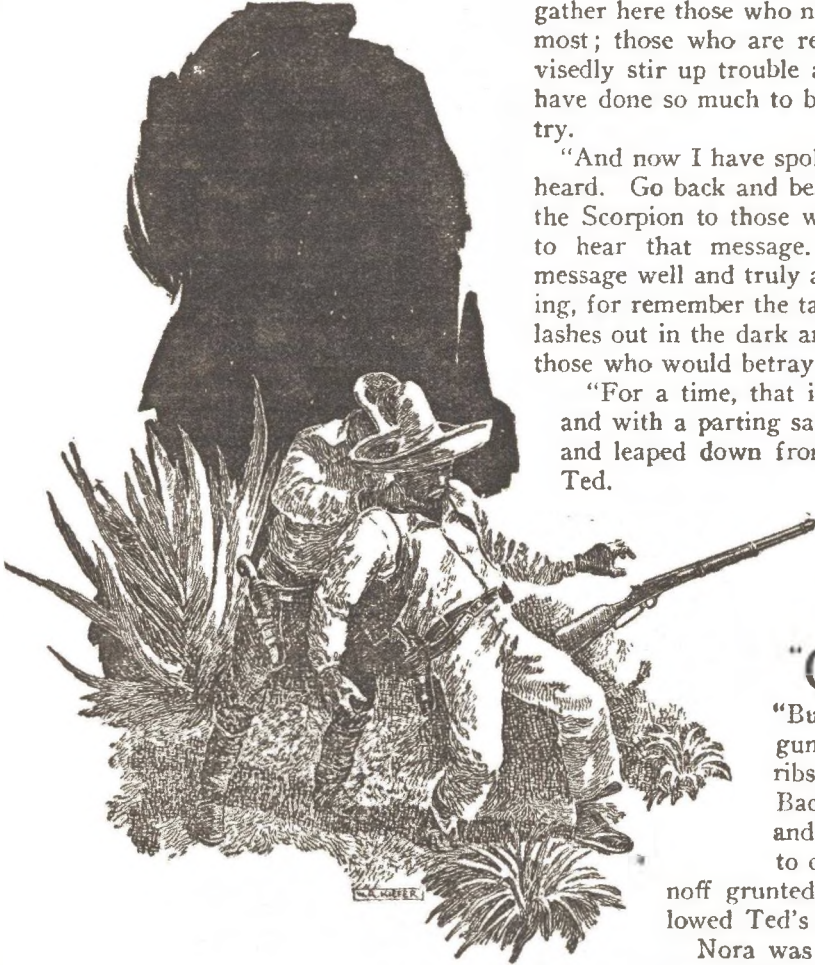
jeweled scorpion on his head-dress danced and glittered in the red light of the fire. "What a man! What a man!" muttered Ted admiringly. "And what a nerve! He's turned the trick—he's got them

the words—"the power of the Scorpion.

"That my message came as a surprise to you, I know full well. I have let it be believed that my message to-night would be a different one, because I wanted to gather here those who needed my message most; those who are restless, and ill-advisedly stir up trouble against those who have done so much to build up our country.

"And now I have spoken, and you have heard. Go back and bear the message of the Scorpion to those who sent you here to hear that message. And—bear the message well and truly and without coloring, for remember the tail of the Scorpion lashes out in the dark and brings death to those who would betray him.

"For a time, that is all. Farewell!" and with a parting salutation he turned and leaped down from the rock beside Ted.



Ted's strangling fingers did their work perfectly.

"GOOD work!" whispered Ted. "But don't forget this gun is right in your ribs, and still cocked. Back to the hut now, and we'll decide what to do with you." Jar-

noff grunted angrily, but followed Ted's instructions.

Nora was waiting for them just inside the shelter of the hut, and beside her, safely bound and gagged, was the tall, cadaverous Mexican.

"Oh, I'm glad you're safe!" breathed the girl. "I was so afraid."

"I hold them in the hollow of my hand," spoke up Jarnoff contemptuously. "I can mold them as one molds wax. There was no danger."

"I give you credit," admitted Ted. "You had them going, right enough. But—you're through with them, you know. Lost your face forever. And so—I'm going to let you go. If you know the natives as I

bluffed cold. They'll do anything he says."

Ted was right. The angry muttering died down to silence—a sullen silence, but one which acknowledged the might and the leadership of the Scorpion.

Jarnoff waited perhaps ten seconds before he continued; waited there with his great figure poised, his flaming eyes searching the faces below him.

"Ah, my friends," he went on then, in a conciliatory voice, his whole manner changed, "it grieves me that you should have doubted the wisdom of my message and"—with just a touch of grimness in
A. T.

think you do, you'll clear out of the country just as fast as it's humanly possible. To-night, due to the effect of the flashlight powder and your make-up and good acting, they swallowed all that, but after they think it over a bit they'll realize you sold them out. And they're very fast and quite accurate with the cold steel. I'd clear out *quick*, Jarnoff!"

"I have my horses and supplies not far off. I can take care of myself," shrugged Jarnoff, but the confidence had gone from his voice. "I can carry on without advice from you, thanks."

"Very well. Only don't let your trail cross mine again," nodded Ted curtly. "I'm tying you up and gagging you to hold you here ten or fifteen minutes, until we can get safely away, before you start making any fuss. You'll find one of your guards trussed up just behind the hut; let him go, too, after you get free."

He turned to Norah, touching her arm. "Ready?" he asked softly.

"Ready," she whispered, and together they hurried off through the gloom to where their horses were waiting.

"I hope, for Jarnoff's sake, that Manuel, the man who introduced Jarnoff, doesn't get free first," said the girl a half hour or so later, as they were riding quickly and quietly along a deserted moon-lit trail. "He was murderous when he heard Jarnoff. A real fire-eater, Manuel."

"We'll probably never know the outcome of this night's work," said Ted thoughtfully. "I'm afraid my report to the chief will be pretty sketchy in spots—but satisfying, in the main points, at that. The chief, as a rule, isn't much interested in details."

"Details—such as I?"

"Er—exactly!" replied Ted. "The chief leaves the details for his men to settle."

"Oh!" said Nora de Arteaga thoughtfully.

XIV

AN ENDING—AND A BEGINNING

THE way Ted's eyes lit up the first time he saw Nora in real woman's clothes—some that were loaned her by

Betty, Scotty's wife—told Betty as plainly as words that Ted's days of single blessedness were numbered. Provided, of course, that he had anything to say about it. And from the happy sparkle in Nora's eyes, when Ted came in sight, it seemed likely that what Ted might have to say would weigh heavily.

"Gosh, but you're pretty, Nora!" exclaimed Ted. "You—you—" Somehow he couldn't think of anything more to add to his first statement—at least, not with Betty looking on quizzically.

"You poor, stuttering thing!" exclaimed Betty with mock sympathy. "Can't you be more original than that, Ted?"

Ted grinned and turned dark red under his heavy tropic tan.

"That's all right, Betty; Nora and I understand each other, don't we?"

Nora looked up at the tall, sunburned gringo, her blue eyes very serious.

"I think we do," she said very softly, and to this day Ted and Nora both contend that that was the only proposal and the only acceptance that passed between them.

If so, it was certainly adequate, because it was only a little over a month later that they were married—the grizzled old chief himself performing the civil ceremony, which is, legally, the vital part of a Mexican marriage.

After the ceremony was over the chief managed to get Ted aside for a moment—and it was not the easiest thing in the world, for even the groom is a man of some importance in a Mexican marriage celebration.

"I thought that perhaps you'd like to see this," he remarked, drawing a wrinkled, flimsy bit of paper from an inner pocket. "Came in a couple of weeks ago." Upon the sheet, which Ted recognized instantly as a copy of a report from one of the chief's under-cover men, was type-written the following:

55279-C3 This had no bearing on matter entrusted to me but might be of interest and perhaps of importance.

Yesterday I found the body of a man lying just off the trail. Papers found on him seemed to identify him as one Jarnoff, a Red (see enclosures), and some mention is made of a "Scorpion," evidently a figure of some power, perhaps some friend of J.'s.

The man had been shot from behind, once through the chest and once through the head. I buried the body, marking the spot, and can easily find the grave if desired.

—C3

Enc: 9

"From which I gather that some of the Scorpion's old admirers turned on him," said the chief when Ted had finished reading.

"Manuel," nodded Ted. "The tall, cadaverous chap who introduced him that

night. He is a hot-head and a real trouble-maker. I've been sorry, since, that I didn't take the time and trouble to bring them both in."

"It does not matter," replied the chief in his grimly quiet way. "You have just read what happened to Jarnoff. This Manuel we have known for some three years. He was shot for treason—two days ago. So, if he did kill Jarnoff as you suspect, the Scorpion's death was not long unavenged.

"I think," he added, not without a certain amount of professional satisfaction, "that that rounds out the case from every angle."

"From your viewpoint—yes," agreed Ted, and then, as Nora's clear voice came to his ears, calling his name, he glanced at the chief and grinned a bit sheepishly. "But from *my* viewpoint, certain aspects of the affair are just beginning!"

In the Next Issue

Shark Gotch

A Novelette of this greatest of South Sea Adventurers

By Albert Richard Wetjen

Soldier of the Legion

A Yarn of the Foreign Legion

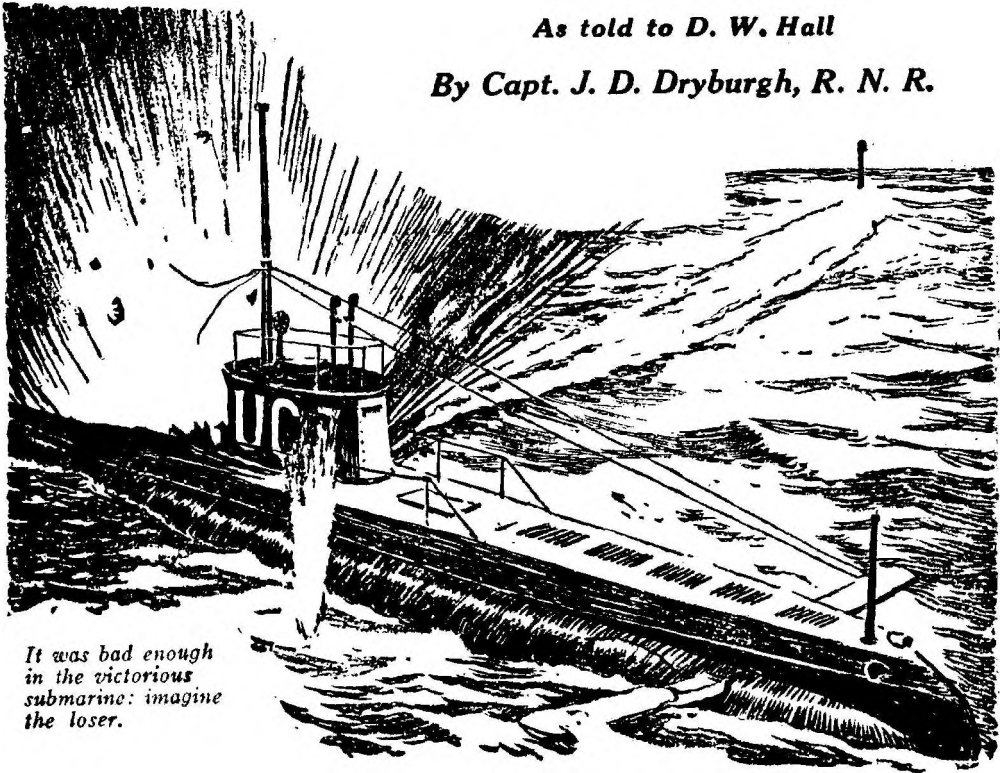
By Theodore Roscoe

Through the War on a Submarine

A THRILLING SAGA OF THE UNDER-SEAS

As told to D. W. Hall

By Capt. J. D. Dryburgh, R. N. R.



It was bad enough in the victorious submarine: imagine the loser.

THIS is the second of a series of articles in which are related the amazing adventures and narrow escapes of Captain J. D. Dryburgh, Navigator of the British submarine *G-10* during three years of the World War. Few men have traveled a more extraordinary adventure trail—and seldom have the adventures of these men been as excellently recorded. Everything here is authentic; even the illustrations, many of them, have been made from snap-shots taken at the time.* It is a real pleasure to be able to offer this series to you.

CHAPTER VI

A HAIRBREADTH ESCAPE

IHAD come through the first trip! I had evaded the jinx of bad luck which almost sank us! I had passed through a mine field, through the attack of a Zeppelin, and here I was, ready for my reward of three days' leave in war-time London!

* Editors Note—At the request of the British Admiralty the names of the chief characters have been changed, and the sequence of episodes, in several instances, been altered.

Three days away from the war, away from submarines, from torpedoes, from the grease and the oil, from the smells—three days away from the whole darned thing! I could hardly hold myself back; I wanted to burst from the calm old parent ship right there and then, and catch the first train for London. But even as I thought this, down in my cabin, my eye caught a hideous reflection in the mirror. It was impossible to leave right away, for the hideous reflection was me.

My uniform was black; it clung to me like a drowning cat, sticky and wet, plastered down by the muck and oily refuse

on it and my body. As I've said before, my face was covered by a bristling crop of wirelike hair; and, peering into the glass, nothing stood out so glaringly as my weakened, blood-shot eyes. I was a wreck; what I wanted was a steaming, soothing bath, and a trowel with which to scrape off the layers of filth.

During all my submarine service, the hot baths which I got, upon coming in from patrol, were the high spots of my existence. Well, yes . . . I always managed to have a good time during leave—but nothing approaching the great feeling which came to me when lying in half-boiling water, right after staggering off the dirty old *G-10*. It made a new man out of me every time.

Hurriedly peeling off, tearing off, my slimy, stinking clothes, I threw them far from my sight and skipped down the alleyway with a beautifully white towel—which was soon to change—towards the bathroom. Arriving at this rendezvous, I found Ransome and Bradley, my fellow officers, already sweating away in their tubs, and I soon followed their example. Once again I experienced the delightful sensation of water—hot water—on my crusty body; once again I knew the extraordinary delight of being clean. I read my mail while lying there, and soon was through; then I relapsed back in the bath and ruminated on leave in London.

During the last patrol on a wild night in a mine field, expecting to be blown up every minute, Ransome and I had agreed that, if once we got out, we'd raise all hell in London for three days. And he hadn't forgotten.

Before long I heard his cheery voice calling to me.

"Well, Dryburgh, what about this hell-raising expedition? When do we leave this blasted ship?" he shouted through the clouds of vapor.

"First train for me, old horse," I yelled back. "You coming, Bradley?"

"Hell, no," said our sober commander. "I'm off home for a rest."

So that was that.

You all know, I suppose, of the reputa-

tion Paris acquired for herself during the war. And you've all heard stories of what men on leave used to do there. Probably some of them sounded pretty bad, and hard to believe. Well, they're all true. During those wild days, a carefree, don't-give-a-damn spirit was bred that lured us into scrapes I hate to even think about now. "Eat, drink, and be merry—for tomorrow we die!" The sky was the limit when on our scanty holidays, and we touched it pretty often. And why shouldn't we?

For no one knew better than ourselves how terribly slim our chances of pulling through were. We of the submarines were a legion of the condemned, and had to have our safety valve. We offered our lives, and, in exchange, got—three days' leave in London.

So I won't go into that first leave of mine. We had vowed, Ransome and I, to raise hell. We did. We accomplished everything that sailors away from their ships are supposed to accomplish, and it calmed us down.

The three hectic days went by like wild-fire; and finally we got back to the parent ship once more in a normal frame of mind and thoroughly satisfied with our lot. We were ready for the long ordeal; ready for the cramped quarters, the scummy drinking water, the moldy bread, the awful food, the stinging, ice-cold seas; ready for our patrol on the submarine *G-10*.

FOR seven days we were busy with overhauling and general routine work. But on the eighth the summons came. We tumbled out of our bunks at dawn, clambered down to the waiting conning tower, shivering in the cold morning air, looking out dismally to the mysterious, gray horizon, and wondering whether we'd ever see land again. I descended into the old *G-10*. The crew was already there, thirty-five of them, ready. Ransome and Bradley soon showed up, and we moved out into the dawn, bound we knew not where.

For in those days every precaution was taken to preserve secrecy. We were not

allowed to open our orders until thirty miles from the home port. High officials alone knew our destination; we were their pawn in the big game of war.

The news was a big disappointment when Bradley finally tore open the long envelope with our instructions inside. We had been commanded back to our old position: a patrol of a forty-mile channel in the Kattegat, which German U-boats were reported to be using as a getaway to the North Sea. The work could not have been harder, or more monotonous. We would rather have been ordered to attack a flotilla of destroyers than drag out sixteen days in weary patrol work, practically certain of never sighting either friend or foe. But somebody had to do it—and we were the goats.

I was sure, I repeat, that there'd be no action. And I never made a bigger mistake in my life.

AFTER hearing the orders, I laid off the courses for our trip: one of my jobs as navigator. When finished, I climbed up the conning tower to take over my watch. I stood alone awhile, absorbed in gloomy thoughts, and wondering whether my old friend, the coxswain, would still be assigned as my partner.

I heard somebody coming up, grunting and cursing, and I looked around to see who'd stand watch with me. A red and well-known face struggled up from the depths: Cox and I were together again. He regarded me for a second, then, spitting into the ever-ready sea, started out:

"'Ave a good time, sir?" he asked pleasantly. "'Ow did the women treat yer?"

"Pretty well, I guess, Cox—though of course I don't know much about such things."

"Nah—not much," he replied lightly. "W'y, I can see from yer very face—"

"Tell me about yourself, Cox," I broke in hastily. "How did you get along with your old woman?"

His jaw took a drop, and he looked bitterly down at his feet. Then raising one, and kicking the conning tower smartly, he swore.

"Blimey, sir, if I don't 'ave the bloom-in' luck! O' course I arrives 'ome on washin' day, with the 'ole place in a mess, and one of the kids raisin' the devil with 'oopin' cough. First think y'know, I was set t' nursin' the brat, and when I'd finally quieted 'im by tellin' 'im that unless 'e quit 'owlin' and screechin' I'd lick 'ell out of 'is stern, why, wot do yer think! The old lady," he said heavily and bitterly, "actually wanted me to 'elp wash the bloomin' clothes! Blow it h'all, I don't know what women's comin' to, I don't!"

I told him that it was pretty bad, and beyond all bearing. "But," I went on, "did you wash the clothes finally?"

"Gor blimey, sir," he said, startled, "what d'you take me for! I'm a self-respectin' man! I don't keep a dog and bark meself!"

He scowled at the horizon. His leave, apparently, hadn't been of the happiest; he was content to be back in the comparative calm of a submarine loaded with torpedoes. His troubles were none of my business, so I pried no further.

But he wasn't through yet. He stood for a while in silence; then, positively overflowing with self-pity, treated me to a little of his philosophy:

"Ain't it 'ell, sir; ain't it 'ell? We comes to sea on this bloomin' boat, and we fights the bloomin' 'Un to a finish. When we gets a few days' leave, why, wot the 'ell does we do with it? Goes back and fights the missis! Life don't seem right, some-'ow; it just don't seem right, sir."

I smiled, for in those days I wasn't married. It appeared to satisfy him, for he turned away, and didn't speak for the rest of the watch.

WHEN we had left port the sea was calm, although oppressive air had hung over it that warned of nasty weather farther out. Sure enough, now, when some miles away, an easterly wind sprang up; a wind that went right through our heavy sweaters and coats to chill our very bones. It whistled around us and tormented the sea, cutting white caps on the top of every surging wave, and blowing

from them long strings of knifelike, stinging spray. The old *G-10* groaned and pitched in protest as she plowed along, occasionally receiving a particularly heavy blow that made her reel and heave as if she would toss off her tormentors. The whole of the conning tower dripped with numerous wettings; the narrow deck whereon we stood precariously grew slippery and shiny; and we gripped the slender railing with our numb hands and held ourselves firm. But it was torturous work, for our unprotected faces had to bear the full brunt of the cruel wind and the sheets of tingling spray which it hurled along. The buffetings mercilessly reduced us to our customary condition before the end of the watch—thoroughly drenched, cold, miserable, and cursing everything we laid eyes on. The voyage was starting properly.

At last it was over; our relief made their way up with a shiver, and we were free to go down. I descended the conning tower into the sickly warmth of the submarine. The heavy smell of oil and grease, as usual, pervaded the air, and, combined with the sharp pitching, worked havoc with Saunders, our cook. He, you'll remember, although an old sailor, was cursed with a weak and fickle stomach. It was acting up now; he was more than busy with his bucket, and yielding an awful harvest. Hardened seaman as I was, with my years at sea, even my appetite had disappeared, and I kept my mouth shut tight.

I couldn't stand the sight of food, so I decided to get to sleep instantly. Humanely and hastily assisting the violently erupting Saunders to remove the repast he had dished up, I pushed in the leaf which served as table, threw down my mattress, and stretched out on it.

It was damp, hard, and smelly. But it didn't affect me. I was accustomed to these obstacles, and soon dozed off.

You're always so glad to get a chance to sleep on a submarine that there's no question about not sleeping peacefully. A dreamless, heavy slumber enveloped me for two hours, and would have, I suppose,

for two hours more—but something was going on above.

SUDDENLY and violently a great lurch of the submarine threw me bodily against her side. The roar of an explosion which almost split my ears stunned me. I lay there, dazed. But only for a few seconds. Partially grasping my wits, I leaped madly to my feet and—collided nicely with Bradley, who, in a state of nervous alarm and anxiety for his ship, was rolling off his mattress. His mattress, above the table, was four feet higher than mine.

Well, you can see what had to happen. Gravity was helping Bradley down at a considerable clip, even as I got away to a snappy start in the opposite direction. The combined impact of these forces was enough to send us both rolling to the deck, cursing mightily, and convinced that the ship was done for. My neck was almost dislocated, as it had met abruptly the seat of Bradley's trousers.

He got much the better of the exchange—my face acting as an unwilling cushion for his downcoming. It was a rude awakening, and the whole world seemed to have gone upside down. It reeled around me as I pulled myself to my feet.

Bradley hadn't waited for my reactions; he was off like an arrow, dashing through the startled crew, and I staggered drunkenly after him. I heard his voice above, demanding an explanation from Ransome.

Nothing serious seemed to have happened. I followed my commander up the conning tower, and found Ransome, with a sickly grin on his face, trying to pacify the irritated Bradley. He was explaining rapidly.

While I was sleeping, evidently, the weather had grown calmer, though still rough enough to pitch the *G-10* uneasily. Ransome, always fidgety when on watch, staring fixedly at the tossing waters around him, had sighted three little rolling balls, which rose up and down with the waves. On coming nearer, they turned out to be drifting mines. This pleased Ransome highly, for it meant action,



which would liven up the dreary watch.

For you must understand that when the weather made it possible, it was our safety-first habit to sink such dangerous breakaways by rifle fire. When punctured, they sank to the bottom in harmless condition. In order to blow up a mine, the horns, which are clustered on top, must be broken. If a mine has parted from its moorings, however, and starts to drift, even the horns are considered harmless—and usually are.

In spite of this theory, we made it a custom (Bradley was the safest, sanest, and most cautious man I have ever met) to keep at considerable distance, in case of that one chance in a thousand coming true and causing an accident; but the impulsive Ransome had set off the mine here a mere fifty yards away from us. This was what agitated Bradley.

*Ransome held
in his hands the
vital, all-important
electric pistols.*

AS I poked my face up somewhat hazily, he was berating Ransome heavily.

"What the devil!" he demanded angrily; "don't you know that you risked the whole ship? Why didn't you keep yourself farther off, when you've got the whole ocean to choose from?"

"Now, listen, sir," remonstrated Ransome in a pleading tone; "just listen to reason. Look at the boat—feel her. She's jumpin' like a jackrabbit with a shot of

lead in his stern. I thought I was damn lucky to hit the mine at this distance—hell, I patted myself on the back for a wonderful shot! And how was I to know the blasted thing was goin' to explode? Y'know yourself we've sunk acres of them and never had one blow up on us yet! What the devil, I was all right! Reason it out for yourself!"

"That's all right, that's all right," came back Bradley sharply; "but even all that doesn't justify you in risking the vessel. At this minute she's worth more than her weight in gold; you know yourself she can't be replaced! This is war, man; this is war!"

Ransome, with a slight grin on his face, gazed around sceptically. "Well, I suppose you're perfectly correct, sir," he observed, "but God knows she's an awful-lookin' wreck, and the most uncomfortable tub afloat!"

Bradley went red in the face, and I, feeling it my duty to put in an oar, started forward.

"Come on, come on, break it off, break it off," I said testily. "Let's get to business. How about puncturing the others? It's a cinch no more'll explode on us in this way, anyway."

Ransome, still sore, spoke in an irritated voice: "Sink 'em yourself, Dryburgh; sink 'em yourself. I can't hit those blasted things at two hundred and fifty yards—let alone five hundred."

I turned towards the two remaining mines. They were quite close together and some distance away. Under Bradley's cautious handling, the *G-10* had edged off to a good five hundred yards.

I called for a rifle, and steadying myself as much as possible on the swaying conning tower, was soon shooting away merrily at the two targets. The short, throbbing waves pitched them up and down unceasingly; they bobbed uneasily, and were never still. It was a long range and a hard one, and I shot for some time unavailingly.

For a while Ransome watched me, pretending to be cool and aloof; but soon it was too much for him—he simply could-

n't resist. Oh, hell, let's go!" he said, and took up a gun, and we both wasted ammunition. But no luck; the little spurts our bullets ripped up didn't come near the mines. The *G-10*, growing more and more restless, was rising and falling in sharp, sudden plunges, making it a hard job for us to even hold our feet on the slippery deck, let alone shoot. "We'll be here all night," muttered Ransome grimly. The mines seemed to be the size of peas—peas dancing around in a hot frying pan, for it was only the tops of them that we could see.

WE went on with our fruitless marksmanship. "I don't want to start a fight," said Ransome coldly, "but if you want us to smash these blighters before Christmas, Bradley, you'll move in closer!" Under this stimulation, the person addressed became slowly convinced that only a chance shot could hit. He wasn't anxious to waste time—we were bound for an important patrol—so finally he yielded. Slowly going forward, the *G-10* came in to a hundred and seventy-five yards or so—still a pretty good range.

"If you fellows are any good at all," said our commander, "you'll hit them now. But get a move on!"

"I reassured him. "Don't worry," I said confidently. "I'll have 'em down in a second."

"You've got a hell of an opinion of yourself, Dryburgh," remarked Ransome patronizingly. "I'm a bum shot, and I'll admit it; but I know damn well I'm better than you any time—and I'm positive that I can't hit from here!"

"Run me down all you want," I told him, "but I'm willing to bet that I get one first."

Ransome was always a sportsman. "Name your bet," he said instantly.

Being fairly sure of myself, I decided to make the occasion an outstanding one for the young lieutenant.

"Done," I said weightily. "If I pot one first, you'll parade the parent ship at noon the second day we're in, dolled up as a chorus girl."

"Right-o!" came back the undaunted Ransome. "That'll be just too delicious; besides, I've always fancied the stage. But if I win, my friend, you will do penance by crawling around the ship on all fours, dressed in that snappy suit of underwear you've got. And don't try to get out of it!"

This terrible possibility inspired me afresh, and it seemed to do the same for Ransome. Taking careful aim, and waiting for a comparatively quiet moment, we both fired simultaneously.

THEN the unexpected burst upon us. There was a terrific explosion, twice as bad as the first. It defies description. The sea appeared to rise heavenwards in a mingled, frothing, seething mass. It hung suspended, threatening and awful in its raging bulk, for a terrible second before crashing down with a deafening roar. Shrieking fragments of careening steel shot by us; the *G-10* lurched and tossed and groaned frightfully, as if she had received her death wound—and for all we knew, she had. The sea was a turmoil, a maelstrom, a hell. The submarine was tossed about like a match-stick. Taken by surprise, Ransome and I were both thrown from our feet, and only the slim railing prevented us from being hurled to our death in the boiling sea. Bradley, his hands gripping the rail tightly, stared in horror-stricken amazement, his mouth wide open. For a second we lay there, stunned; then, even as we struggled on the insanely pitching deck, Bradley yelled:

"Look!" he cried. "My God, look there!"

We struggled, worked up hastily, staggered for a second, and then gazed wildly towards the direction in which his shaking hand pointed.

And immediately we saw it.

Slowly rising from the foaming surface, streams of disturbed water running in cascades from its sides, a huge and majestic conning tower, inexpressibly awesome, with periscopes rearing high above, revealed itself to our startled stare. A leviathan of the deep, she roused herself

sullenly and came up in an impressive bound. Gigantic, foreboding and terribly mighty she looked, and plainly visible on her shining side was the proud German U, which identified her.

That was enough. For a hushed fraction of a second we gaped, then sprang to action. The Klaxon alarm horns shrieked out their raucous warnings in the bowels of the ship as Ransome and Bradley tumbled madly down the conning tower. Escaping air roared from the tanks; I snatched a last quick glance, and saw the enemy disappear as ominously and gradually as she had risen. I clanged down the conning tower lid, and the hungry surf foamed and fought over us.

OPEN bow caps! Prepare bow tubes for action! Up periscope! Full ahead both motors!" Down below, Bradley's terse commands rapped out, following each other in rapid succession. He spoke to a crew and a ship that was ready; the first blare of the Klaxons had jerked each man to his station; they stood tense, watchful, and prepared for all emergencies.

But we, the officers, were busy. Bradley alternated between the controls and the periscopes. I made a hasty survey of the boat, looking for damage; the fragments from the mines might have ripped through our shell of steel. But, with her customary luck, the old lady appeared to have come through unharmed, except for one small leak at a seam, which was unimportant.

We had not time to puzzle out the overwhelming mystery of the whole business in those vital seconds. Why did the drifting mines go off? How had we managed to hit them? What was the U-boat doing there? Why had she come up at all? There was a strange coincidence about the matter. These questions reeled in my head; they flashed around and around and bewildered me; it was all too deep, too complicated, and I shoved them from me, ignored them, and attended to duty.

Ransome, as "torps" officer, was stationed in the forward torpedo flat, and

when I had completed my short inspection, I hurriedly took my designated position, assisting Bradley with the periscope.

He had eased the motors, and we were trying to stalk the enemy. Silently the *G-10* crept along, forty feet below surface. I kept shooting the periscope up and down, peering hastily into the glass in an effort to locate Brother Hun's tube.

We were entering a submarine duel, the most dangerous, sudden, and final type of underwater conflict. It is seldom that they are fought to a successful conclusion; seldom that either of the conflicting submarines is able to either torpedo or ram its opponent. But when they do—it is finished. There are no half blows struck. Kill—or nothing. It is a game of utmost patience, utmost deliberation; quiet, steady scheming; a battle of calm perseverance—for minutes, for hours, or more—but then, at the end of the ordeal, there is a fiery, intoxicating second, a fierce moment of triumph—or defeat—when the word "Fire!" is spoken.

ONE must have luck to win a submarine duel. And, in this case, the fickle dame of fortune favored us.

My first cautious glances revealed nothing, but it did not make me bolder; it made me more timid. For remember, I could not hurry the game; we had to be mightily careful, for the U-boat was looking just as eagerly, just as hopefully, for us. He, too, had his torpedoes ominously ready; he, too, had a torpedo officer breathing quietly, highly strung, straining at the leash. Our periscope slid through the water to disturb that on top time and time again, but I gazed forth upon a barren sea, the cold gray waves leaping endlessly, and concealing our foe.

The outlook was not encouraging, but I expected better things soon. You see, I knew that the German was having trouble with his trim, which was our term denoting that he was out of balance. To explain: When a submarine is below the surface, she should be exactly the same weight as the water she displaces, depending on the planes and the driving power of

the engines to raise or lower her at the will of the commander. When she is "out of trim" it signifies that she is either lighter or heavier than the displaced water, or that the balance is unsymmetrically distributed. For instance, should the bow be light, and the stern heavy, the bow will rise, and often all that the crew can do with the diving rudders will not prevent the ship from breaking surface, as the whole hull then acts as a plane. On the other hand, if his bow is heavy she will plane to the bottom. Now you understand.

It is a big handicap, and an irritating one; a fatal one sometimes. Something like it was troubling Fritz: a submarine does not keep her periscopes elevated when she comes up; she lowers them first. On this U-boat's first sensational appearance the two tubes were high above: he gave himself away, revealed himself, unwillingly. It was easy for me to see that.

And so I rather hoped that the same thing would happen again. And it did. As my eye swept around the horizon, gazing for one telltale sign, just forty degrees on our port bow his long slender periscopes suddenly shot up, piercing the bare water to a considerable height. This was enough: but a second later they were followed by the very conning tower itself, as on the first occasion. It surged through the broken waves quickly, like a huge gray porpoise in the midst of its lunge. Dripping and streaming, up it came—a mechanical monster from the deep—and the duel was practically over.

SHE destroyed herself. The position was ideal, for she made a perfect target. Broad as a barn, sheer and defenseless, that steel wall loomed before me, slowly gliding on her course, which was at right angles to ours.

The sight stung me into action. "Here he is!" I cried to the waiting Bradley. He started, came anxiously forward, and took the glass from me.

For a second he gazed, intent and calculating.

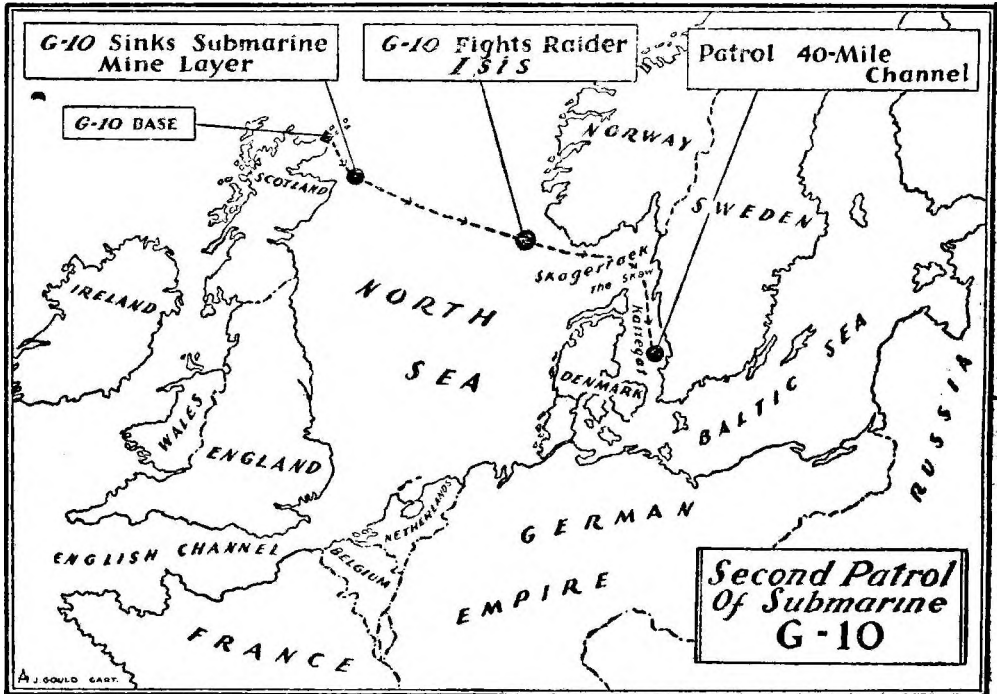
"Starboard ten," he called out. His

voice came quietly, but it had a steely ring. "Stand by."

It was only a matter of moments, but it seemed an eternity. In spite of me, my mind turned to those poor devils in the other boat—desperately aware that they

a second, this way or that, a nervous little jerk, an unpremeditated tremor of the key finger a moment too early or late—would mean life or death to our prey across the water. Ransome was a central figure.

Torpedo attacks, as a rule, are worked



were on the fatal surface, fully revealed to us; knowing, sensing, expecting momentarily our torpedoes; making a last minute attempt all the time to get below; thinking their last thoughts. I really pitied them.

But it was war. They had placed themselves in our hands. They were our enemies. There was only one course to follow.

A foreboding hush settled over the *G-10*; everyone strained forward. The reaction of the crew, the ponderous spell cast upon us, was always the same in a highly dramatic moment. Ransome, doubly aware of the crisis in which he meant so much, held in his hands the vital, all-important electric pistols that released the bow torpedoes. A fraction of

out with mathematical precision. Speeds, courses, and distances are figured and calculated to a nicety. If the reckoning is wrong, the torpedo misses; if correct, a hit is scored.

We had no time here to trifle with such minute details. We depended solely on Bradley's eye and judgment. Those few heavy seconds were all that was necessary for him to get his range. He was sure of himself. Suddenly his command ripped forth.

"Fire!"

Ransome's hands tightened slightly; a shudder passed through him: there was a venomous hiss of compressed air rapidly released, and two shining, deadly tubes of steel leaped with a spurt of speed from their sheaths into the water outside.

A GAIN the full silence, portentous, and broken only by the rapidly receding roar from the whirring propellers of the two torpedoes. Forty knots was their speed, and the range was short—but hours went by in waiting.

God, would the suspense never end? Would we stand like this, listening, taut, and expectant, forever? Had the foe evaded us somehow? Would we hit, or would we—

An all-consuming thunder of deafening proportions clove into my thoughts. I tottered, shook, but recovered and held myself steady. The tremendous shock seemed sufficient to split the hull of the *G-10*. A shudder that jarred every inch of her ran lightning fast through her complete length. She trembled, reeled; the strain was awful—but we knew that we had won the duel. It was bad enough in the victorious submarine; imagine the loser. Suddenly swallowed up in a fiery furnace, a sheet of crumbled steel and smoke rent by livid bursts of flame—and then the all-enclosing, silent, merciless down-crushing walls of water. . . .

Splintered glass lay about our feet; several of our globes had been fractured; but otherwise the staunch old boat had weathered the explosion. No other damage was done. And an extraordinary loud report had come from the impact of our torpedoes with the U-boat—a much greater shock than we had expected. We were soon to learn the reason.

A sigh rippled through the ship. Bradley left the periscope and mopped his brow—a single sign of agitation. Ransome cursed softly. I sprang to the high-powered glass and looked through, eager for the sight. What I saw was significant. A patch of seething foam, angry and disturbed, tossed as if in a furious attempt to upset the placidity of an ever-widening circle of oil that surrounded it, and which contrasted oddly with its turbulent center piece.

“Surface,” said Bradley. I left the tube and ascended the conning tower for my position of first man on deck. The *G-10* rose slowly.

IT was less than fifteen minutes since first that magnificent conning tower with the U on it had risen, out of trim, to send us crashing full speed below. Yet in that short space of time she, a first-class enemy submarine, apparently new from the yards, and worth a cool five million, had been blown to oblivion, together with her crew—a victim of chance. It was quite evident to me that, had the German not been handicapped so severely, there would have been a different end to the story—very different. How near we came to taking the place of the U-boat was to be made apparent to us.

On the conning tower I was joined almost immediately by Bradley and Ransome, both silent with the unexpectedness of the whole business. We did not speak, but were content to watch the surface closely as we cruised over the oil-covered grave of our late foe, in the faint hope of picking up some survivors. But not a thing, not a single relic, came gliding up to disturb the sinister placidity of the oily scum—oil on troubled waters. That glistening, once sable mask hid tranquilly the grim depths below; transformed the ever-lurking monster of the deep into a thing of strange beauty, for the sunlight flickered on the mirroring curtain of oil, and spun from its drabness a thousand colors that flashed in their reflection. The peculiar odor arising was the only mark left of the wrecked vessel and her men that lay shattered below.

The illusion of the sun on the oil somehow fascinated me, hypnotised my brain, and made it sluggish: I fell into a kind of spell. I was still new to the game—my second trip out—and sudden death affected me even yet. Would I some day meet with the same fate that had claimed those broken bodies below? What lay in store for me? Gloomy thoughts surged in my mind, when, finally breaking the awed hush we had all fallen into, Bradley turned to me and spoke.

“We’ve been here for half an hour,” he said. “There’s not much use staying any longer. Dryburgh, it’d be a good idea to get our position, make out a report, and

have Jenkins wireless it in." (Jenkins was our petty officer telegraphist.)

This wise and sane suggestion stirred me and jerked me from my trance, and, without further ado, I went down to the control room, glad of something to do.

ONCE at the charts, it didn't take me long to find our position. I was surprised to find that my hands trembled and shook, making it difficult to handle the instruments. Gee, I thought, nerves are getting me down: must pull myself together. It worried me for a few minutes, until I reflected that in a quarter of an hour we'd gone through enough to make a nervous wreck out of a first-class elephant. Nerves are not of iron; they, too, suffer from the abnormal stress that comes from a submarine duel.

I got the position, and made out our message.

"Submarine *G-10*," I put down, "sunk U-boat, number unknown, thirty miles north, fifty-eight and a half degrees west of rendezvous 'Q.' No survivors. Two torpedoes. Proceeding on voyage."

Taking it in my hand, I climbed above to the deck, and handed the message to Bradley for his O. K., remarking as I did so that the depth was only twenty fathoms, 120 feet, and that we were over one of the shoal patches in the North Sea.

I didn't give another thought to what I'd said—it was quite casual to me—but the information seemed to strike a hidden chord in Ransome. Looking at me intently, his face brightened suddenly.

"Sure of that depth?" he asked.

"Of course!" I said positively.

"Then, by God, I've got it!" he yelled. "I've got the whole damned thing!"

"Got what?" I asked, as Bradley surveyed him coldly.

"Hell, it's as plain as a pikestaff! Can't you see?" he continued excitedly. "That Hun was a *submarine mine layer*, and we got him in the middle of his dirty work!"

"JUST how do you manage to figure that?" I asked dubiously.

"Some people are dumb!" retorted Ran-

some with a snort. "It doesn't take any Sherlock Holmes to reason it out, and it explains everything. Now listen: he'd just laid three eggs, and was below getting rid of some more on that shoal when we hailed by and upset everything.

"Well, well, well—doesn't that sound fine!" observed Bradley, turning sarcastic. "Magnificent work, old fellow! But why were the mines on the surface if he'd just laid them?"

Ransome, highly wrought up, and stung by Bradley's tone, now launched into a brief but forcible lecture on the action of a mine immediately after being discharged.

"Damn it, can't you see?" he roared. "Have I got to go into every little thing? Do I have to think for you? When he released those eggs, they went to the bottom. But, after hitting, their sinkers let go and the mines came to the surface, instead of remaining at proper depth. Guess the hydrostatic valves stuck—or else they'd have been twenty feet under. So there they were, all ready and waiting, still attached to the sinkers, still deadly, but on top. That's why the blighters blew up!"

"Ye—ah?" muttered Bradley slowly. "Well, I'll have to admit it sounds possible."

Encouraged, Ransome went on.

"And here's why Fritz broke surface twice. He'd just let go of some more eggs, and hadn't compensated properly. The loss of weight brought him to the top a second after we'd touched off the first of his spawn. He'd probably seen us approaching and reckoned it out that we were headed exactly for his little nest—those mines were right in our path. But he didn't know they'd miscarried. You know how things happened then: The second time he came up he was still out of trim, and couldn't help it. But we were waiting for him; we potted him; blew him up with all his high explosive on board. There was a hellish crash, and—well, there you are! The whole damned story all reasoned out and everything! No kidding, I don't know what you fellows'd do without me!"

There was no argument about it; he was evidently right. There wasn't any other way to explain the thing: we'd had Dame Fortune on our side and won out. The streak of bad luck was enough to cause the U-boat to hand in her checks—and all I can say is, that if those drifting mines had been below where they belonged, I wouldn't be telling this story.

After this interlude, the voyage continued soberly. Bradley remained on watch whilst Ransome and I went down for a sleep. But I felt like congratulating my partner, although he didn't need it. If it hadn't been for his deductions, one of the most hectic afternoons I've ever spent would have remained a mystery.

CHAPTER VII

A BUCKET—AND A GERMAN RAIDER

"DAMN this weather! Ain't it ever a goin' to let up?"

An unusually heavy sea, wet, slimy, and cold, had just broken over the whole submarine, leaving us gasping.

"I'm just about tired o' sittin' lashed on this 'ere bloomin' rail: it's as sharp as a knife. I'll be sunk if it ain't cut a furrow two inches deep across my stern! It's me for the new boats when I gets back—if I ever does! To 'ell with bein' crucified on a blarsted periscope! I'm a valuable man: I'm not goin' to be pounded to death up 'ere! They've gotta shift me soon! *I'll be damned if I don't!*"

CRASH!

A huge wall of water, sweeping completely over and battering us into a state of numbness, cut short the bitter monologue from the muffled figure behind me. For a minute I kept my eyes closed, striving to escape the horrible rawness which comes from consistent plunging in salt water. The boat rolled as if in torment; then, as soon as things had cleared away a bit, I turned my head towards my companion. A stream of indistinct but obviously vivid curses was flowing from his lips: all I caught was the end.

"Damn this stinkin' job! Gord, but I swallowed 'arf the bloomin' ocean!"

. . . But perhaps I'd better explain.

The scrape with the mine layer had brought a load of bad luck onto our heads. For two days after we had been driving into a heavy head sea—an irritating, uncomfortable, unsettling condition—and, for the last few hours, the wind had worked itself up steadily, enraged at our stubbornness, until now it was blowing a full, shrieking, insane gale. Things would have been smoother below—comparatively calm—but, as it was imperative that we get to our patrol, we had remained on top so as to make better time.

Even in the hell which the sea had become, watch was maintained on the conning tower. There was no protection. A flimsy canvas screen, which previously had guarded us to a certain extent, had long since surrendered before the pitiless beatings of the mighty seas, and not a shred of it remained. It was an impossibility to stand watch on the tiny deck, for long waves, feet high, and driven with terrific force, were ceaselessly submerging it, drenching it. Thin railings alone held themselves sturdily against the berserk water: we, whilst on watch, retired to another haunt, doing the next best thing.

ON the tower itself were two casings, five feet high, through which the periscopes ran. A narrow steel bar, an inch and a half in diameter, connected these casings, and gave us a slim resting place, a cruel, inflexible, bitter resting place. For in bad weather we climbed onto the bar, raised the periscopes slightly, and lashed ourselves to them. Two men could thus be securely held, one by the forward tube, one by the rearmost. The tremendous waves couldn't throw us off, try as they might, but each one drove us down with devilish cunning on that unaffected little bar, which stood pat and bored right into us—from another direction. Try sitting on an inch and a half rail yourself for a couple of hours, and see how it feels—cuts, rather. After a while you'd swear that you could slice a loaf of bread with it. It gets gradually sharper, and you're the grindstone.

I was on the forward tube; my old pal Cox sat uncomfortably and complainingly on the other. For over an hour we had not spoken: each was occupied by his gloomy and somber thoughts. Besides, conversation was impossible, owing to the mad screeching of the wind, the deep rumbled growls of the sea, and the sudden groans of the boat as she worked, lurched, and tumbled crazily through the turmoil. Suddenly, however, there had been an ominous lull, and, as often happens, two or three mountainous billows had piled upon us in rapid succession. We were driven, as the boat tore relentlessly on, through solid banks of biting, pulling water—all of which had urged Cox to make his formal protest just quoted.

The old *G-10* was a staunch and sturdy craft, as I've often said, but she didn't give a cuss for the men who manned her. The vicious gale had whipped up a colossal sea; the sub, after gallantly clambering up the dancing slope of one gigantic billow, would shoot down recklessly, with terrific momentum, into the deep valley following, and plow squarely into the face of the next wave instead of rising over it. Flung heedlessly by the cold and uncaring steel to which we were bound, at times we found ourselves with ten feet of solid water above our heads, and wondering if ever again we'd get air.

We could not have been lonelier, or in a more isolated condition. If jerked loose, it meant death: the sea was a raging, untamed beast. The conning tower lid was kept tightly closed to exclude it, and a long ventilating pipe was put up to admit air to the boat and its engines. Even with this protection, water poured down the slim pipe at frequent intervals, and to counteract the inrushes, the pumps were kept working.

Again we were suspended, breathless; again plunged down into the sudden salt abyss which yawned for us. We dove on, and another wave swept by, grasping at us savagely and almost ripping the soaked clothing from our numb, unprotected bodies. Clenching my teeth, I waited for its fury to pass away; when it did, I ex-

pected a fiery outburst from Cox. But only a weary groan came.

I shouted back at him: "Never mind, old chap; it'll soon be over." For our relief was due.

He didn't hear me, didn't care to hear me; poor old Cox had just about given up the ship. But, luckily, a second after I had spoken I heard a noise below. I looked down and saw, in an overwhelming feeling of thankfulness, the lid open, and two shivering figures dash out in a frenzy of speed.

QUICKLY I undid the lashing, shouted, "Thank God you've come!" to my relieving officer, heard his curse come back in reply, and tumbled down the tower. Cox had been even faster: he was before me. I clanged down the lid, and not a minute too soon, for another huge sea burst upon it instantly. And so it kept up.

But we were free from its torment for a spell, at least: when again our shift came around, perhaps the weather would be better. Conditions, however, weren't much better below. The pipe connecting us with the wild scene above barely admitted sufficient air to run our engines, with the result that a partial vacuum was created—a pulsating vacuum which pulled at our ears, made our eyes bulge strangely, and often brought blood from our noses. In a way, we fought with the engines for air. Every breath was a great effort, an achievement.

To repeat, the storm had raged for two days. Naturally, other things were clamoring for attention; clamoring violently and unceasingly. Bound in the steel hull as we were by the tyrant gale, there had been no opportunity to dispose of the inevitable accumulation of garbage—garbage from the meals of the thirty-five men aboard. Our only receptacle was a large, obliging tub, which sat placidly at the base of the conning tower. Two days in the already foul air of the submarine had caused this mess to decompose and putrefy: the stench was abominable. It was enough to turn the stomach. And, added

to this, a certain amount of salt water had entered our battery tank, and, of course, was now forming chlorine rapidly. It, a dangerous gas, worked havoc with our men, as anyone who has been through an attack from it on the Western Front will know only too well. Our faces assumed a fantastic greenish tinge, and, even worse, our vitality was sapped. . . . We grew listless, uncaring.

You'd think that such obstacles would be enough to keep any man awake, but in spite of it all Cox and I were soon asleep on coming down. Heavy, dreamless sleep; a trance that effaced all the toil and the trouble we had been through, and did its best to prepare us for the strain of another long watch.

At 4 A. M., true to the second, we were rudely awakened by a steady jerking from Saunders: again our time had rolled around. Sleep, work, sleep, work—that was our set routine; and a second later we were climbing up the conning tower to resume our watch. But we didn't crawl forth into the teeth of a gale; there had been a vast improvement in weather.

THE wind had gone entirely, having blown itself out in impotent anger, and all that remained of the gigantic sea was a lazy rolling swell that the *G-10* rode easily. The whole scene looked more cheerful, for the sun had risen well above the horizon: we were in northern regions, and dawn comes early there. Our clothing had dried to a certain extent; the air was warm; and we even dared to look forward to a more enjoyable watch, the calmer sea making it no longer necessary to sit on the knife-edged bar which had been our perch for two black days.

I breathed in great draughts of the fresh morning air, just warm enough and just cool enough, and it revived me rapidly. After an hour in its invigorating freshness, the garbage-filled tub down below rose like a hideous specter before me, and I grew to hate the bare idea of descending again into the thick atmosphere, polluted by that stinking swill. Why not get rid of it now, once and for all?

A. T.

"Say, Cox," I said to my companion, "how about chucking that darned garbage?"

His face brightened. "Yes, *sir*," he replied with emphasis, "that there bin smells worse'n a fish factory, blimey if it don't! The sooner the better for *me*!"

I turned to the voice tube and gave instructions that the second coxswain be called and the garbage cleared up. It was a long, but not necessarily a hard, job, for it was our habit to string a bucket to a rope, fill it from the bin down below, and haul the whole business through the conning tower from above to be thrown over the side.

I was in a hurry to get the work done, for you could never tell when we'd have to submerge suddenly, leaving the garbage with its smell untouched. So when ten minutes had elapsed without signs of action, I became annoyed, and yelled down for an explanation. Of course, in their usual fashion, they had been unable to find the bucket: it must have been lost in the turmoil.

I looked around the serene horizon. Only one thing was visible, and that unalarming. It was a harmless passenger boat, flying the neutral flag and bound on a course which would take her a good four miles from us at the nearest point. She had probably sheered off a bit, anyway, on seeing us slowly cruising in the sun; for the fear of submarines was, in those days, a universal fear that none was free from.

I WAS bound to get rid of that garbage. Two men were supposed to be on the conning tower, but in this case—

"Better go down and sort things out down there, Cox," I told him. "I want to get this stuff up before I'm relieved, and those poor idiots'll take till doomsday."

"Don't I know it, *sir*, don't I know it? What they wants is a good man with a good voice at their 'eels," he remarked as he made off.

Down he went, with a dignified grunt, and soon I heard him roaring around impatiently. Things stirred. In less time

than it takes to tell, a bucket was attached to the rope which had been sent along beforehand.

I was stiff from long inaction, cramped from close quarters; what I needed was exercise, and plenty of it. That, of course, was impossible, but now I had a chance to get in a bit of action. Although not my duty I decided to get busy with the garbage detachment.

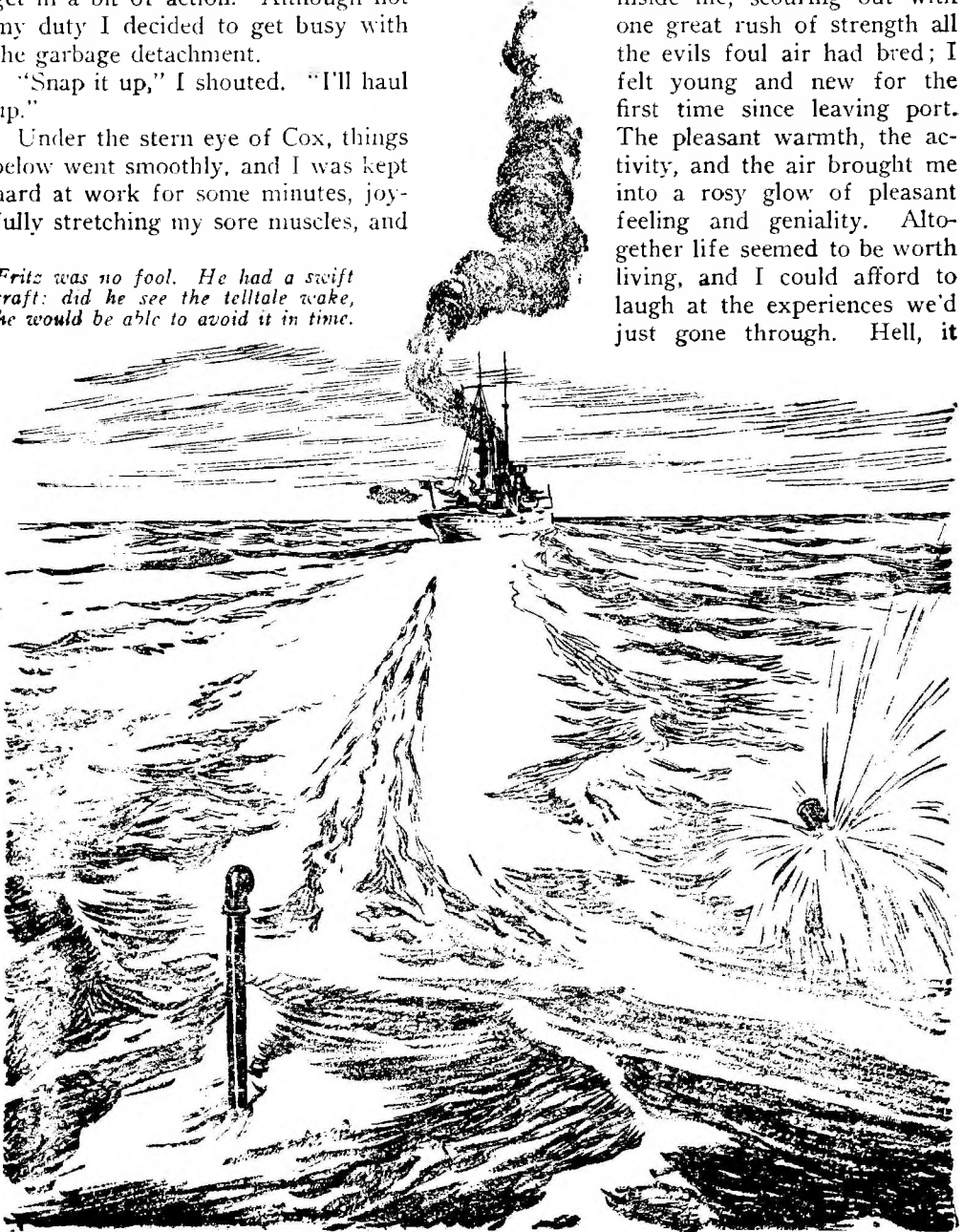
"Snap it up," I shouted. "I'll haul up."

Under the stern eye of Cox, things below went smoothly, and I was kept hard at work for some minutes, joyfully stretching my sore muscles, and

Fritz was no fool. He had a swift craft: did he see the telltale wake, he would be able to avoid it in time.

hauling with unnecessary vigor and energy.

The sea by now was practically calm; the sun came down in a warm deluge that flooded the *G-10*; the glorious morning air was clean and fresh with a healthy tang swept from a thousand leaping wave tops; I took great breaths, and it swirled inside me, scouring out with one great rush of strength all the evils foul air had bred; I felt young and new for the first time since leaving port. The pleasant warmth, the activity, and the air brought me into a rosy glow of pleasant feeling and geniality. Altogether life seemed to be worth living, and I could afford to laugh at the experiences we'd just gone through. Hell, it



wasn't such a bad war! Not a damn bad war at all!—Z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z—Z-Z-Z-Z-Z—ZUMP! ZUMP! ZUMP!

Even as I straightened up, stunned with noise, the heavy report of gunfire followed the shells' venomous hiss as they shrieked over me. Three great spouts of water shot up magically from the sea, and reached their feathery plumes of seething water high in air. The spray from one surged down on the boat. Close . . . close; but a miss was as good as a mile! Automatically my hand closed on the alarm-signal, and I spun around to look for our assailant.

JEE-RUSALEM! She wasn't hard to see! She had played a cunning game. Even in the few minutes when my back had been turned as I concentrated on the bucket job, that "harmless" ship flying a neutral flag had sped up to almost a mile from us. She was crashing along with surprising swiftness, and as I looked, amazed, three more angry tongues of flame spurted menacingly from her side; another salvo was coming. High at her peak fluttered the imperial eagle of Germany, cruel and disdainful in its black majesty, and I realized that we were up against a German raider, quite evidently one with powerful armament aboard.

Those next three shells missed by pure luck: I know that at least one of them ricocheted over our lower hull, after striking the water slightly short. But her marksmanship was getting better; they were closer than the first lot; and I knew that she'd get off some more before we could submerge.

"Hard-a-starb'd!" I shouted, intent on turning the stern of the *G-10* towards those guns. In this way they would have the smallest target possible.

We went down in record time; but the raider was equally quick, and before the water swirled safely over the conning tower I had seen nine shells rip into the sea close by us. Luck—pure luck—again saved the submarine.

We shot to forty feet. Then, slamming full speed on our motors, we altered

course ninety degrees. She was charging straight for the *G-10* (where she had been on the surface) at a high rate of speed, so we reckoned on this maneuver to take us out on his beam, from which position we hoped to get in a couple of torpedoes as she passed over the spot where we had last been seen.

Steadily we kept on for about two minutes. We should now, by calculation, be at least five hundred yards from her track. "Have a look, Dryburgh," said Bradley, and I cautiously raised the periscope.

IMMEDIATELY the raider flashed into view. She was a fine sight, almost directly astern of us. Her speed had been even greater than we'd estimated; her bow was slicing through the glassy waves like a knife, and great billows of spume and foam leaped away from it. Then, staring closely while I had the chance, I made out two surprising things.

The first of these was the raider's name, written in tiny letters on the bow. It was hard to decipher, but slowly I spelled it out . . . *I-S-I-S: Isis*. This stuck in my brain; but the other thing quickly attracted all my attention. Tossed aside madly on the great wave cast up by the *Isis'* speedy course, I saw a small white object. For a second I wondered what it was, then suddenly it dawned on me. The dancing speck was our unlucky bucket, which I had chucked away on being fired at, and which was, indirectly, the cause of all the trouble.

But why did it float? Why didn't that great wave sink it? Later I found out: Cox, rummaging around for any sort of a receptacle, had stumbled upon a papier-mâché bucket, used for carrying acids, etc., and without another thought had passed it up to me.

The commander of the raider no doubt was patting himself on the back to think that we had left behind such a telltale mark to show our whereabouts; thinking, of course, that the *G-10* was somewhere very near her lost bucket. On this supposition he staked a big throw.

As I watched, he put over his helm and

the *Isis'* bow swung in a sharp curve away from us; but even before I had time to tell Bradley, an entire series of tremendous explosions rolled through the water to deafen us completely. The sharp cracks thundered out one after the other, making the sub shiver. The noise was terrific. Bradley countered immediately by shooting us to eighty feet below.

The ear-splitting reverberations followed us; they carried on for what seemed to be hours—really about thirty seconds—until our heads rang with the humming that resounded through them. We all knew that the raider was dropping depth charges by the dozen in one grand effort to blow us from the depths, but as she had circled away instead of towards us, we were perfectly safe.

The great booming echoed and re-echoed. Finally, by shouting, I was able to tell Bradley what my last glance through the periscope had revealed. We were still proceeding at full speed away from the scene. Bradley, convinced that no harm had been done, and with eight torpedoes lying aboard, decided instantly to have a shot at getting some of his own back—make the *Isis* pay for her insults. Easing the motors, we ascended to forty feet; and Bradley took the periscope himself.

THE raider had completed her circle and was now showing us her whole broadside. She, although having slacked her speed, was a difficult target—a long shot and a hard one—and I wondered what course Bradley would follow. Our stern, of course, was towards the German, and our commander's terse order "Prepare stern tube for action," showed me clearly what he intended to do.

In some ways the grimy old *G-10* resembled a scorpion, in that we carried our heaviest stinger in the tail. We seldom used it, so mighty and precious was its power. Snugly ensconced in a long tube was a huge, grim twenty-one-inch-diameter torpedo which, once released, could speed a full five miles under its own volition. It was a terrible thing: fifty thou-

sand dollars had gone into its makeup; its tremendous force made it the most deadly weapon invented for submarines; its striking power would tear a ship in two pieces. So intent was Bradley on getting the *Isis* that he had finally decided to use his trump card.

He steadied himself at the periscope. Never releasing it for a second, his firm order shot forth, bringing everyone to the highest possible pitch, effecting a tense hush throughout the boat.

"Stand by!"

Ransome, poised and ready, strained forward with the pistol in his hand. A second elapsed.

"*FIRE!*"

With a hiss and a whirl the magnificent thing leaped, shining and awful, from its sheath. Its double propellers spun into action and shot their load mightily on its path; their buzz, rapidly receding, told us that we would not have long to wait. Should the torpedo strike, the *Isis* and all her crew were doomed.

Bradley kept his eye glued to the periscope. A breathless silence, heavy with expectancy, reigned—but not for long. Again the enemy struck—even while our blow was speeding at him.

"*PLOMP! PLOMP-PLOMP!*"

She had sighted our periscope, and was firing steadily at it. But her chances of hitting were infinitesimal. Even had she scored, no great damage would have been done. But she told us plainly that her eyes were trained on us—so she stood a good chance of evading our great weapon. For it left a creamy track of bubbles, easy to discern on a calm surface, behind its trail.

Fritz was no fool. He had a swift craft; did he see that telltale wake, he would be able to avoid it in time. We would know soon, anyway.

We'd sunk a German mine layer already—and this time our luck was out. For no answering explosion crashed through the intervening water to greet our eager ears. Our explosive, most valuable missile, had missed its mark. With apprehension, we awaited the probable outcome.

"HARD LUCK!" said Ransome, while even the sober Bradley broke down his reserve by cursing quietly and methodically. Many of the crew did so, too. But I was thinking of other things.

"Suppose we'll get another load of depth bombs on us now," I observed cheerfully. Bradley started, and replied with three quick orders that tumbled us as far beyond danger as possible.

"Hard-a-starb'd. Full ahead both. One hundred feet."

Our speed increased; the driving rudders tilted, and the *G-10* slid easily to the required depth. Two more commands held her.

"Ease your helm. . . . Steady as you go."

We were repeating our former maneuver, in hopes of avoiding the expected rain of high explosive. Would we be equally fortunate? Would the Hun get us yet?

Silently we waited for sounds of the *Isis'* attack. But nothing was audible except the roar of her propellers at high speed—and, to our amazement, they seemed to be retreating instead of approaching. They became softer; grew dim in the distance. We rose quickly, and shot up the periscope. I was surprised, on looking through, to see our friend the raider showing us a clean pair of heels, and making her best time away.

For a minute we were nonplussed. Why should she leave now? Soon, however, an explanation dawned on us that revealed the whole thing.

The *Isis* was a raider. Everyone knows of the *Emden*, and her daring, heroic deeds. The *Emden's* long-continued safety was due to a number of things: a clever captain, trusty staff and crew, good ship, cunning tactics—but chief amongst them was the fact that whenever she was sighted, she took care to speed quickly away from the spot. Allied ships, then, never knew where she was, and had a terrible time finding her.

The commander of the *Isis* had the same idea in his mind. He was bound, no doubt, for the open Atlantic; and the main thing was to get there without being

spotted. Fresh from the yards, equipped really for the destruction of merchant vessels—not submarines—in the ordinary course of events she would never have dared to disturb us, but been only too glad to get by without a rumpus.

But we presented, that bright and peaceful morning when I was busy emptying garbage, such a tempting target that it was apparently more than the commander's soul could resist. Should we get away, he knew that he'd have to do the same thing, as we would report him immediately. So he took a big chance; missed, to his amazement; then staked another throw. He let off every one of his depth charges, and even these failed to get us up. As we had got by, he was aware that a torpedo would soon be forthcoming; so, after three more shots at our periscope, he decamped and hit out for home.

I might mention here that this raider was never heard of again during the war. The *Isis* is a false name, of course; but a German armed ship answering her description was never seen again. She evidently got home and stayed there. And the old *G-10* was the doughty submarine that scared her away!

That was the last we saw of Fritz, plowing it up for the horizon. In a short time we came to the surface, and started again for our destination.

ALL these events, strange as it seems, befell us while on our way to the patrol area. It began to appear as if we'd never get there. Yet only three days had elapsed since first we put out from the home port; three days, every one chock full of danger, excitement, and bitter suspense. They had been like months to us—but now the sun was shining. . . . why worry? We, like all other sailors, forgot our troubles and found ourselves in a cheerier mood. And we'd done a lot of good work: sunk a mine layer, and scared away a raider.

Nothing further hailed by to give us battle, and before dawn of the next day we were submerged on our patrol grounds. Now the real grind—the worst thing of

the whole business—set in. It was a merciless monotony. Eat, sleep, and keep watch; eat, sleep, and keep watch. . . . So we lived, only glancing around the horizon with the periscope every fifteen minutes, to see—nothing. Nothing but the bare line of sea and sky's meeting place; drab, gray, and utterly barren.

The first day on duty conditions weren't so bad, generally speaking, for we were more than ready for a good quiet sleep. But as the second, the third, and the fourth gradually dragged by, affairs became worse, and steadily we lapsed into that deadly mood which is the eternal bane of submarine patrol. Without one scrap of exercise, and breathing the fetid air, unspeakably foul through having been used again and again by thirty-six men, livers grew sluggish, and tempers testy. A tremendous desire to lay down everything attacked me, as I am sure it did the others; the atmosphere, made hot from the sticky odor of oil, seemed to crash in on me; life was a living hell. Put yourself in our position: twenty hours below in the cramped space of the submarine, with never a chance to reoxygenate the air, and never a cigarette to console us. Smoking was absolutely forbidden; we needed desperately all the oxygen we had to keep the precious spark of life glowing, however feebly.

Being addicted to tobacco, I longed passionately for a cigarette, my desire being increased by the fact that it was prohibited. So one day I crawled up into the conning tower, intending to put one over on the others and have a couple of draws, anyway. Carefully striking a match, I waited tensely for the flame, ready to suck feverishly. But the whole business was a fizzle. Although the phosphorus turned black, there wasn't even a spark. I tried three or four, with the same result. Then it burst upon me. There was insufficient oxygen to support combustion. I climbed down, therefore, feeling worse than ever, and sick of my existence.

The horrible vigil went on and on. Not a thing came to enliven the strain; we were as in a prison, shut off from activity

and life by an insurmountable barrier—miles of gray sea. We stared at each other; became more and more grouchy. Conversations were a thing of the past.

THEN Saunders took a drink.

I say it in this fashion, for it has heavy meaning.

He, just awakened, had drawn the supply for our dinner from Cox, as was the custom. We were on a very meager allowance, and he, being a thirsty soul, decided to reward himself with a long pull.

He did. The results were awful.

The first inkling of the tragedy that came to our ears was a very audible series of racking groans which we finally tracked to Mr. Saunders, cook. He sat, rocking dismally, by his hot plate, on which our evening meal was in a suspended state of development. A slight, all but perceptible shade of pallid green, faint through layers of grime, made eerie his face; he looked the picture of misery. Even as we gazed, awe-struck, he fell to erupting with an energy which amazed us, as it surpassed easily all his earlier, rough-sea records.

Ransome watched admiringly. "What's the big idea, Saunders?" he asked finally. "Hell, you can't be sick to-night! It's as calm as a mill pond!"

A rich groan trickled forth as reply. He went on unabated, then, during a slight lull in the proceedings, drew himself up for an effort at speech.

"Water!" he gasped. "Water!"

Something serious, it was plain, had happened to him. I seized the water can, put my arm around the cook's back, and tried to help him to a drink. But my generous measures were rudely received. He shuddered, and, with a sweep of his arm, dashed the can to the floor.

He looked at me appealingly. "It's poison, sir," he choked.

An idea came to me. Getting some more water from Cox, I tested it gingerly. It was vile and indescribable. My face soured, and I spluttered the stuff out quickly. Without more ado I started investigations, and found, ultimately, that we had not come unharmed through our

adventures. Finally, we unearthed the whole cause of the damage.

The fresh-water tank was next to the battery tank, separated only by a thin steel plate. After we had set off the mines, I knew that the sub sprung a slight leak, but I now found further trouble. Some of the battery cells had been cracked, causing acid to run into the tank. This in turn had gradually eaten away the plate, and continued on into the fresh water. Our entire supply was foul. Fortunately, Saunders' much abused stomach had come to the rescue, and prevented the crew from being laid out.

We could fight through every other obstacle—we had—but this was too much. "Only one thing to do," said Bradley grimly. Coming to the surface, we set our bow towards home, and crashed on with full speed from the engines.

A DEVIL of a prospect we had before us: three days of hard journeying, and no water. But it might have been worse. We went over our supplies with desperate care, and found—a life saver—some tinned soup, the cans old and rusted with age—but still tinned soup. Well, perhaps there'd be consommé, turtle, asparagus, and other dainty flavors: we'd live in good fashion. But of course every one of the darned things held tomato. Tomato, tomato, tomato. After draughts of tomato soup, and nothing else, for three solid days, I felt that I never wanted to look one of the big red things in the face again. Bradley, Ransome, and the crew—especially Cox—were with me, too.

Sick, miserable, aching in every joint, covered with grease and oil, unshaven, dirty, my face bristling, my eyes red (my condition at the end of every patrol), I stood on the conning tower, thankful for the cool breeze, and waiting eagerly for the few remaining hours to pass before again we'd sight home. I gazed fixedly at the horizon as in a trance. The day was dull; visibility was poor—but I didn't care. I was sure nothing would torment us now—this close to port. Then suddenly a slight movement far away before me

spurred my weary mind to attention. Just for a second a long, low, black object appeared, to lift itself above the steely rim where sea welded with sky. It wavered a moment and then sank back into mystery once more. Hell! It could only be one thing—a submarine. Cursing it, my hand closed over the alarm signal, and with a swish and a gurgle of displaced water we slid below, forty seconds after the alarm.

COMING down, I reported "sub right ahead" to Bradley. He looked troubled. "Which way's he going?" he asked.

"Couldn't tell," I told him, "but he seemed to be beam onto us."

"Damn it all—damn it anyway!" growled Ransome surlily standing nearby. "Have y' ever known it to fail! Right near home, and I'd be willing to bet we'll be sunk! Why don't these damned Huns leave us alone—hell, we're peaceful enough!"

We crashed on full speed on our old course, hitting straight for the enemy. This was going to be decided quickly, whichever way fate turned. For a few minutes I looked out unrewarded upon a sea devoid of any sign. Had the other spotted us, too? The devil! But suddenly, right ahead, the stranger again slid into view.

Staring intently, I could not make him out. He had no bulk, nothing but a slim black line on the horizon; there wasn't the bulge of a conning tower. "Look at this!" I said to Bradley. He took the tube.

"That's no submarine," he murmured after a moment, "unless they've brought out a disappearing conning tower. I'm damned if I know what it is."

We weren't taking any chances in spite of his opinion: we approached cautiously below waters. The other evidently was standing still. On we edged, until within full view of the "enemy." And now the puzzle was revealed to us—a sad tragedy of the sea.

My "U-boat" had once been, from what we could see, a beautiful, magnificently large liner. Caught by some German, a

torpedo had torn into her hull, dealt out her death wound, and left her floating bottom up, a rare and a strange sight. There was something silently pitiful about her: once, in all her glory, she had breasted the waves, and ridden the seven seas; now she lay forsaken, a dumb, tomblike monument to war's ravages. Our duty was plain enough: we had to sink her. Had we come on her in the night, a collision would have ended our story; other U-boats ran the same chance. She, once open to the dangers of derelicts, now was a derelict herself, a menace to every sailor.

She was a wonderful target, and we would've liked to have given her a torpedo, but this method was far too expensive. We accordingly broke surface, manned our three-inch disappearing gun, and soon had a dozen shells inside her.

It didn't take long. Air whistled, screamed, from the shell holes; and soon the climax came. Her bow rose impressively in the air; for one last second of might she defied us and her distant conquerer; then, in a quick, awful dive, she slid from the view of all men.

Well, that's that, we thought—and, thank goodness, it was. We didn't have any other adventures; it was the last incident of our too full voyage. We had blown up a German submarine mine layer, almost been sunk ourselves by a raider, barely escaped wholesale poisoning from an unknown leak, subsisted for three days on tomato soup, and then, to cap the trip, had ridden the whole ocean of an outstanding peril.

We felt entitled to our short share of rest: let's forget the war for a week, we all thought—and I know the old *G-10* joined us as she slid to her moorings alongside the complacent parent ship.

But more was to come before we got out again.

* * *

Next month in this place you will read of the strange premonition of death that came to one of Captain Dryburgh's brother officers—and its uncanny fulfillment. Also, there is an exciting account of a desperate duel between the *G-10* and an enemy seaplane. Order your *ADVENTURE TRAILS* early!

HUTS OF THE DIAMOND DEALERS

A PRIMITIVE street of ramshackle huts is one of the world's most important diamond marts.

Here in the heart of the alluvial diamond fields of Grasfontein, South Africa, millions of dollars' worth of the precious stones are regularly bought and sold. The shacks that look like shelters on a poultry farm are the offices of the brokers. Once a month or oftener, if the yield of the fields is unusually rich, they are opened for business.

The diamond brokers travel to the exchange by train or automobile across the desert from Pretoria and other South African cities. All transactions are made in cash and the brokers bring with them usually from \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 in currency. It is the boast of the region that the man carrying this wealth needs no special protection and that hold-ups are unknown.

The primitive brokerage offices are built of corrugated iron sheets, since there is not a tree for hundreds of miles to supply lumber. Each shack is furnished with a table, a chair or two and a pair of scales, and nothing more.

On the arrival of the brokers a flag is flown above the shanty. The miners who have been

accumulating diamonds for the previous month thereupon bring their wares to the offices, where they are weighed and bargained for. The rough stones brought in this way later are sorted and appraised, and ultimately find their way to the diamond cutters in European and American cities.

The famous alluvial deposits of Grasfontein have been the scene of one of the most picturesque diamond rushes in history. A mushroom town sprang up in a few hours which became a hive of activity.

The wild excitement of the rush was largely due to the fact that the great wealth of diamonds in these fields lay virtually on the surface, to be picked up by the fortunate miners.

Work is still active, in progress in these fields and the output continues to be large. Diamonds from the new alluvial fields are rarely more than two or three carats in weight in the rough, and when cut weigh on the average less than one carat. Many of the stones mined here have a slightly yellowish cast. Large as have been the yields the demand for diamonds is reported to have more than kept pace with the supply and the alluvial diamonds have been quickly absorbed.



*"Little sparrow," he said,
"dance no more this night.
Go and sleep."*

The Spirit of France

By S. B. H. Hurst

She danced for Mohammedans, and she was white; and when Mergui boiled over with religious fanaticism—white she remained!

MERGUI is a dirty and most immoral town." Father Murphy, the stout, kindly missionary paused dramatically, "But hitherto we have been spared this—a white girl dancing for Mohammedans and Chinamen! You must do something, Bailey!"

The youthful English magistrate, who, with ten Sikh policemen and one white clerk, was administrator of the affairs of the little town and the district adjoining it on the Tenasserim strip of the coast of Burma, looked through the window of his office at the mud of low tide in the harbor. A puff of wind brought the reek of it. He sniffed, then answered testily:

"You know as well as I do, Padre, that I can do nothing. Until the girl commits a crime I cannot have her arrested. English law does not infringe on the rights of people to live where they wish. If she wants to live among the colored population, that's her business. Let her dance! I have received no complaints

about her. If you are worried about her morals, well—that's in your department, not mine!"

The priest sighed.

"Yes," he answered. "But the girl won't listen to me. She politely avoids discussion. Admits being a Catholic, too! Orphan. Daughter of some Frenchman who died up Indo-China way. I don't know how she drifted down here."

"Well, I can't help you, Murphy. I detest having a white woman of her occupation in the town—liable to stir up any sort of trouble. But you can find 'em all over Burma. We must bear our burdens, Padre. Good morning!"

The priest left the magistrate's office. The heat weighed heavily upon his huge figure. He felt, both physically and spiritually, depressed. This pretty child—for she was little more—who politely refused to worry about her soul's welfare! Father Murphy clenched his fists.

"If I have to use force," he said firmly, "I'll do it! I will break the law if need

be—the law that protects vice from the assaults of decency! I will break through that ring of Mohammedan and Chinese brutes who leer at her dancing. I may have to hit a few ugly faces, for which Bailey could have me arrested; but I will—for the good of that young woman's soul. It's my duty, and by the living God I'll do it! I'm Irish, and before I got so fat I could use my hands for other things than blessing people!"

He was spared this necessity. His walk had brought him to the tiny church he himself had designed and helped to build. In its quiet he would compose himself. He took off his large solar hat and wiped his streaming forehead. Then he dropped the hat in joyful astonishment. For the girl he had thought apostate was kneeling there, praying!

"Oh, Father, I thank Thee!" he murmured.

The girl looked up and saw him. She was vaguely disturbed. The priest, that massive man of intuitions, felt that she had timed her visit to the church to correspond with his absence. No doubt there were other visits.

"Daughter," he said, "I do not understand this!"

She smiled, mischievously.

"My Father, there is, ah, so verree mouch that ees hard to ounderstand!"

His voice became hard.

"I do not understand why you have refused to talk with me. I do not understand why you have come here when you knew I was away. And . . . I have known other women like you. But the others did not avoid the priest. Instead, they sought absolution!"

She shrugged her shoulders. The flash of her smile was of pearls. Her eyes were violet lakes in which dwelt mystery and delight.

"Perhaps they needed it!" she answered.

For a moment the priest was so angry at her pert reply that he could not answer her. She went on. But she no longer smiled, and the lids covered her provocative eyes.

"But I, what am so small, joost come 'ere because, maybe, God ees 'ere! Onnyways, if He is anywhere in Mergui He will be 'ere! And you know, Father, that there is times when every woman feel lonelee for God. So I do not come when you are here. Becos' I do not want to talk about my sins. Eet would take too much time. And the time I come 'ere is the time I 'ave give to God!"

Her eyes met his defiantly.

Murphy mastered his anger.

"Do you realize that God sees you when you are not in His church—when you are dancing and—and living with those horrible heathen men?"

She raised her small head proudly.

"I do not 'live' with ony man!" Her eyes blazed, her little hands clenched. "For what you 'ave said, but that you are a priest, I would strike you! I live wis no man! I 'ave never lived with ony man! And I have never even kissed ony man but my father—what is died!"

The flash left her eyes. Her head drooped. She sank down upon the wooden bench and sobbed.

Father Murphy was deeply distressed. He could not believe her, but. . . .

"My child! My poor child!" He laid a hand gently upon her shoulder. "But you must realize how your dancing for such creatures seems!"

"To dance is all I know," she sobbed. "I 'ave tried to dance for the white men, but they do not want me. They want women who will kees after dancing—who will kees and love for money. I must live! Mohamet Ali and his nasty bearded men 'ave never tried to kees me. Mohamet looks cruel, but he treats me square! And the Chinamen are afraid of him. The men for whom I dance know that if they try to kees me they will 'ave a long knife in their ribs. Mohamet is 'eathen, you say. Yes. But I would razzer dance for heem than for white men who do not want dancing as mouch as they want something else!"

"Some other way of making a living may be found," began the baffled priest.

She interrupted fiercely. "To scrub

floors, eh! I 'ave a right to live my own life. I love to dance!"

"I know you are French, of course, and you said you were an orphan; but you have not told me your name," the priest conciliated.

She answered with proud mischievousness:

"When I was leetle girl, my father called me 'Leetle Spirit of France,' because eet is the spirit of France to dance and sing—and to fight! So now I call my name, 'Spirit of France!' But you will say I am conceit—is it not?"

And she laughed and bowed and went out into the glaring morning.

Murphy sighed. A bit of human thisledown!

THE Mergui day dragged its festering way through the hours. Night came over the place with the stars peering dubiously through a velvet pall, with the bats and huge moths winging like evil souls visiting friends still incarnate, with phallic music throbbing feverishly. Sikh policemen stalked here and there, daintily contemptuous of the filth of it all.

In a small, low-lit courtyard danced the Spirit of France. Avid eyes glowed at her beauty, wondering how long Mohamet Ali would continue to bestow upon her his quite unusual protection. There were no Burmese there; only Mohammedan traders, adventurers from Northern India, with their co-religionists of Mergui.

The music throbbed and the girl whirled to it, abandoned to a sheer ecstasy of physical rhythm, borne upon the swell of the poetry of herself.

But this night the mood of her audience was different. Its sensuous absorption of her was sporadic. Piqued, she danced the more enticingly. The shadows of the place were gathered and twisted and festooned about her, but her audience was far from paying her its customary attention. Mohamet Ali and his nearest friends paid no attention at all. In vain she danced closer to him. If he looked at her at all it was an abstracted look that did not see her. Matters of great moment

seemingly engaged him. He talked in undertones to his friends. They smoked and drank their coffee, but the sensuality of their faces was sublimated to a fierce interest in the affair of their conversation.

The Spirit of France danced on, puzzled, irritated, vastly curious. About what thing were they talking? Their hairy faces were grouped together. They had even laid aside their pipes. . . . The Spirit of France changed the rhythm of her dancing. She moved like a leaf before vagrant puffs of wind . . . slowly. Pausing, and bending, and moving again. In sleepy cadence she danced before Mohamet Ali and his lieutenants. . . .

Fragments of words came to her straining ears. But she could not linger there. Burning with curiosity, she dared not wait for more. She whirled into allegro again, and the music caught her mood and ran with her.

But again and again she floated like a lazy leaf before Mohamet Ali, and the fragments of their words wove themselves into a baffling tapestry—a picture blurred, and without outline, yet vividly colored with significance. Significance of what? The Spirit of France danced on.

They were laughing now, those bearded men from the North. Grimacing, rather, much as tigers grimace. The Spirit of France shivered. But she fought the fear in her gallant heart and killed it before it could grow to terror. And she danced on.

But what were they planning? It did not seem to concern herself; they had hardly glanced at her for an hour. The Mohammedans of lesser parts had been beckoned into conference. The girl felt a premonition of death touch her soul heavily. Neither was it a new thing they planned. She felt intuitively that these fierce men were discussing something done before that was to be done again. Their minds were running in old, well loved grooves.

Mohamet Ali was looking at her! The Spirit of France danced the more merrily. He beckoned her towards him.

"Little sparrow," he said, "dance no more this night. Go and sleep."

"And I will dance for you to-morrow night?"

The heavy lids of the man flickered. The eyes of his companions became blank—a blankness that seemed overdone.

"Yes, you will dance for me again," said Mohamet gravely, "because you are under my protection. Sleep now. I will send for you when I want you. Here is your money."

SHE was dismissed. And she was racked with a problem. There had been something terrible about those men. Never before had they been like that. But Mohamet had not been lying—he really meant she should dance for him again. But what were they planning? Pirates, robbers, fierce men of the North. What did they plan? The few words she had gleaned made darkness—darkness fraught with something terrible. It was three hours past midnight.

As she began to undress she heard footsteps along the narrow street. There were two men. One spoke to the other as they passed her window. His voice was like the hiss of a snake.

"Let them cry for help! We have cut their talking wire!"

"And the girl?" muttered the other.

"Nay, Mohamet Ali says that he himself will slay the man that so much as touches a hair of her head!"

They passed on. But the Spirit of France knew! Crouched on her bed, shivering, hardly breathing, she knew.

The disconnected words. The cruel grimaces. Religious fanaticism, like burning oil, was to be poured upon the Christians. Four white men and ten loyal Sikhs in Mergui—and the telegraph wire to Rangoon had been cut!

But she would not be harmed. She had no doubts about that. Her safety was assured. Mohamet would rather die than break his word. And the man who touched her would surely die. Mohamet and his men had treated her decently. To do so was a queer freak in their cruel natures. But they had done so, and would continue to do so. And the white people—

the Christians—had reviled her. They had tried to make a prostitute of her. And the fat priest had called her one.

She writhed on her bed at the memory of it—at the memory of all her treatment at the hands of the Christians. She fought the problem. If she stayed in her room she was safe. If she warned the unsuspecting white men her doom was certain. It would be better, far better to kill herself than to fall into Mohamet's clutches again. If she warned the white men! . . . And what would the white men do for her if she did warn them? Continue to revile her, to offer cheap pay for her lovely body? She smothered a bitter laugh. For there would be no white men left to revile her, and she would be worse than dead. What chance had four Englishmen, with their ten fighting Sikhs, against five hundred Mohammedans, every one believing that Paradise waited the man who died fighting against an unbeliever?

She walked up and down the floor. This was an agony. It was horrible to think of those men being killed! But she was safe! And if she warned the Christians her fate would be more horrible than theirs! But—she might die!

The Spirit of France. Her little pet name of childhood. And the brave things her father had told her about the spirit of France—about the gallantry of that distant homeland she had never seen! The history of a nation seemed to be watching her. . . .

How would France face such a problem? . . . How would the glorious national spirit of France respond to such a situation? . . .

She was walking stealthily to the door, cursing herself. Valuable time was wasted while she dwelt upon her own safety.

"I am a disgrace," she muttered.

She crouched in the dark doorway. More men were coming along the street. She held her breath, her soul damning these men for detaining her from her duty. They passed, and her light feet were flying as they had never flown before. Like a leaf still, but now like a leaf before a hurricane, the Spirit of France

was running through the streets of Mergui.

A SCANDALIZED Father Murphy woke to her tearing away his mosquito curtains, to her fierce shaking of his arm.

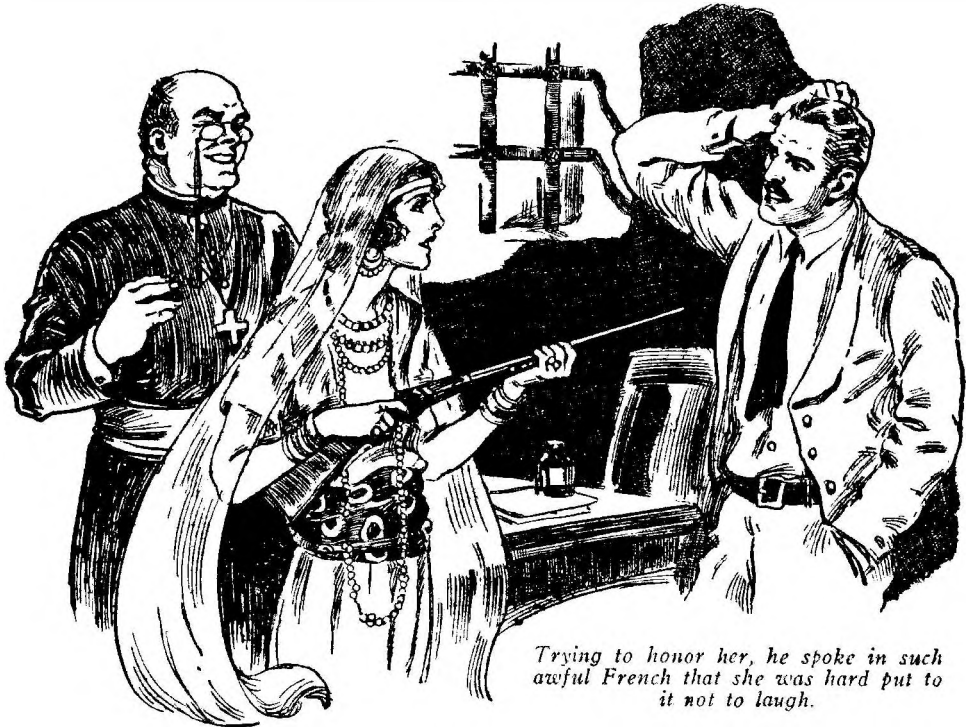
"Queek! Queek! Get up!"

"What! What are you doing here? Go

"There is not time!"

"Wait outside! I will not run through the streets in pajamas to save my life!"

She waited, feverishly biting her finger nails. Then, the hour before the dawn saw a heavily panting Father Murphy doing his utmost to run with the Spirit of France through the streets of Mergui towards the fairly stout jail and the magis-



Trying to honor her, he spoke in such awful French that she was hard put to it not to laugh.

away. George!"

He called for his servant—converted, and baptized with that familiar name.

The Spirit of France sneered. But she continued to pull fiercely at the furious priest.

"Your servant!" she laughed shrilly. "He weel 'ave run away—with all your other made-Christians!"

She pulled at the priest, swearing like a cat. And, somehow, she told her story.

"But such a thing cannot happen in Burma any more!" the priest exclaimed.

"Come! Come and see, foolish man!" she stormed. "They 'ave cut the telegram!"

"Go away while I put on some clothes!"

trate's office.

"Hurree! Hurree!"

"The doctor!" panted the priest. "We must wake Doctor Pelham!"

They roused the doctor, a calm and cynical person.

"I'm safe," he drawled. "I'm an infidel, and these chaps, you say, are out to kill the Christians!"

"Don't jest at this terrible moment," said Murphy severely.

"Not jestin'. How many times have you called me an infidel, Murphy? But I'm accustomed to being woke up at ghastly hours to go on unpleasant business. I'll go with you."

"Hurree!" cried the girl. "I 'ear 'em!"

"So do I," replied the doctor. "But there is time to get my bag. Somebody will need surgical aid—most of us, probably."

They reached the jail. In the yard were all the Sikhs. They had just wakened the magistrate, reporting "some sort of disturbance." The Spirit of France shrilled out the truth. The magistrate was sceptical. He could not know that this was the beginning of the riots of 1897.

"Telegraph Rangoon immediately," the magistrate told his white assistant.

The Spirit of France laughed wildly. Then she sat down weakly.

"Wire's down, sir!" reported the operator.

"Now you know I tell truth," the Spirit of France cried indignantly. "They are going to keel every Christian in Mergui. I 'ear them when I dance, but am not sure till they pass my window after cutting the telegram wire."

"So," said the young magistrate cheerfully. "Then we'll have to fight it out alone. Have to anyway, because it would be days before Rangoon could get help to us. But I would like to let the boss know who did this thing." He turned to the Spirit of France, and bowed. "I—I'm much obliged to you for what you have done. And now you had better go."

"Go!" She jumped to her feet. "M'sieu, many times 'ave I fired a gun. I fight joust so well as onybody!"

"Don't doubt it," responded the magistrate. "It isn't that. The point is that if you leave us now Mohamet Ali will not hurt you. He will just regard you as a frightened woman—liable to do anything. Run along, now. Cry, and say the noise has terrified you! Don't suppose Mohamet knows you roused Father Murphy and the doctor; so, good-by—and thank you!"

He held out his hand.

"I stay 'ere and fight for you!" she answered firmly.

"Do you realize," he said gently, "that there is little chance of any of us seeing the sunset—that we'll do well to last until noon? Do you know that if you stay here and help us Mohamet will give orders to

his men to take you alive? Do you realize what horrible thing will be done to you then?"

She laughed.

"Do you realize that my father was a Frenchman? He call me for pet name 'Little Spirit of France!' Do you realize Spirit of France—what eet mean? Give me a gun, please!"

The magistrate beckoned to Sergeant Ruttan Singh.

"Give the mem sahib a gun, Sergeant."

Then he turned to the Spirit of France. His voice shook somewhat. Trying to honor her, he spoke in such awful French that she was hard put to it not to laugh. But his words more than excused his accent.

He turned to the still heavily breathing priest.

"Padre, have you any scruples about pulling the trigger when the sight's on another human being?"

"Nöt a one—in this case!" responded Father Murphy cheerfully and with perfect conviction.

"Good! We will divide. You will take three Sikhs and defend the northwest corner."

"I was Irish before I was a priest. Give me a rifle!" answered Murphy.

"They are coming!" whispered the Spirit of France.

"We will be ready," replied the magistrate quietly. "Take the southeast corner, will you, Doctor? It's liable to be hot there while it lasts, but you're a first-class shot."

"Very good, General," drawled the doctor. "But won't my friends laugh when they hear of this! Old Pelham, the infidel, killed in a religious war!"

The magistrate grinned.

"All right, then. I will command at the northeast, and Mason and Ruttan Singh shall have the southwest corner. Now we are ready. Good thing we have lots of ammunition. Here they come! Steady now! Don't waste a shot! If they get over the wall, shoot; and keep on shooting as long as any of 'em are in the yard! And if a head shows let it have it!" He

walked across the room and whispered to the doctor, "If I go first, Pelham, and you see that we're done in, and the girl is still alive—keep a bullet for her."

The doctor nodded.

"And I'll tell Ruttan Singh to tell his men to do the same," the magistrate added.

AS it grew light the raging hundreds beyond the circling wall began firing their first broadside—of verbal filth, that hymn of hate which has sounded down the years, that way of honoring God peculiar to religious enthusiasts. Some scattered shots were fired which did no damage, and Mohamet Ali could be heard shouting to his followers.

"We have days of time, oh men of the True God! Haste not! Let the infidels shudder a while as death stares them in the eye. Let them die slowly!"

A mocking voice answered him.

"That hell-cat pet of thine was seen warning the fat mullah of the infidels, oh Mohamet Ali!"

"So, the woman, eh! A snake in my bosom!" Mohamet foamed down his beard, but realizing the probable effect on his followers, controlled himself. "So it was written, then, that she should furnish amusement for the Faithful! See that she is not killed! Catch the cat alive and unhurt. She asked me if she should dance for me again! She shall! But it will be such a dance as she has never dreamed of!"

He followed with unprintable threats. He gesticulated and raved about the fun to follow the killing of the white men. But he showed a little too much of himself. The doctor took a snap shot at him, and Mohamet Ali lost the greater part of one of his ears.

"Damn rotten miss," muttered that sarcastic medico. "Must have lost my temper at hearing such a septic creature call me an infidel. Can't shoot straight when my trigger hand itches to punch a chap's nose."

"Magistrate Sahib." Ruttan Singh saluted. "It is sunrise and the flag has

not been hoisted. Will the sahib give the order?"

"Rutah Singh, you know it is certain death to venture out of here into the yard?"

The big Sikh grinned.

"Death is at our elbows, sahib!"

"Yes, and there's something about the old rag that makes it more enjoyable to fight when it's flying; but we can't afford to lose a man. Sorry, Ruttan Singh, but we must fight this fight with the flag lying on the table yonder."

"Very good, sahib," replied Ruttan Singh regretfully, saluting and returning to his post.

The sun rose, and the besieging horde became suddenly quiet. It turned as one man towards Mecca, and said its morning prayer.

"Can't we rush 'em?" muttered the priest to the magistrate.

"No! It's tempting, but we've got to hold the fort! Never can tell what may turn up, you know; but if we rushed out on those praying people we'd all be killed in short order!"

"Religion is a fearful and wonderful thing!" remarked the doctor.

"I wish they'd hurry," whispered Mason.

"So do we all," answered the doctor. "But let's not show it."

The praying ended.

"Ready, everybody!" shouted the magistrate.

Forgetting, of course, Mohamet Ali's cautious suggestion that they let the Christians die slowly, and stimulated to paradisaical ardor by their prayers, the followers of the prophet leaped shrieking at the wall, and went over it like a brown wave.

THEN for some minutes there was very warm work.

Rapid, repeating bullets did not stem the wave. It broke it, but those unhit dashed with a truly terrible bravery at the bars of the jail windows. Shrieks, groans and monstrous blasphemies made a frightful din as they charged. The defenders

were for the most part grimly silent. Only the doctor muttered encouragingly.

"A little lower, young lady. These birds are flying low."

But the Spirit of France never heard him. Her mind was set on the fearful hairy faces against whom her soul raged, while a mockery of memory wondered why she had danced for them. She fought joyously. In her blood a long line of heroes surged. As she dashed the sweat from her eyes she saw with surprise that the yard was filled with dead men.

Such a stout defence was too much, even for such fanatics. The canny Mohamet saw that he was not getting value for his dead. He called his men to safety behind the wall.

"Lot of wounded out there," remarked the doctor casually. "But I have two minor casualties to attend to in here. Ruttan Singh has a bullet in his shoulder, although he won't admit it; and one of his men is hit. Ah! Hullo, General: close shave that!"

A bullet had grazed the magistrate's forehead, and he was bleeding freely.

"You attend to the men! Give me ze plaster for ees head!"

And the Spirit of France began deftly to bind the magistrate's wound.

"It may be inhuman," said the young man, "but those chaps out there will have to attend to their own wounded, Doctor. Do you think I should let them carry them off under a flag of truce?"

The doctor gave him a searching look. The magistrate's wound had shaken him badly.

"Take a big drink and don't be an ass," advised the doctor. "Good work, young lady. Now, before the charming enemy tries another charge, please help me bandage this fine sergeant of Sikhs."

But Mohamet Ali had thought of a better and more entertaining plan of campaign than charging across that death-strewn yard. And the one redeeming feature of a Mergui morning, the brief breeze from the sea, would aid the new plan. Mohamet disclosed his new and brilliant plan to his lieutenants behind the

wall. It was hailed with shrieks of approbation, delighted yells. It gratified the lust for cruelty of a mob maddened by primitive emotion. Hence there was a pause in the conflict.

"What now?" said the doctor. "Are the brutes saying their prayers again?"

"Not at this hour!" answered the priest.

"Well, I don't pretend to be an authority," retorted the doctor. "But I wish we could see over the jail wall! They are up to some deviltry! And they could bring up a dozen batteries along the side of the hill while we couldn't see them doing it!"

"There is no artillery they can get," said the distressed magistrate.

"That's right—there isn't," soothed the doctor.

The wait was nerve-racking—the wait and the impossibility of seeing what the enemy was doing. But the doctor had more than his suspicions. The yells of delight could mean only one thing. Yes, that would be it. A whiff of sea breeze confirmed his deduction.

"But I won't tell the others," he muttered grimly. "Bad enough when it comes, without having 'em suffer the dread of waiting for it."

The enemy had become silent. Then there was some chuckling borne on the breeze. It was followed by a great yell. The breeze became pungent and filled with acrid smoke.

"They are trying to smoke us out!" shouted the priest gamely.

"Yes," drawled the doctor. "Better tie wet towels over our faces!"

He turned away. He was very pale now. Should he tell his friends? What a mercy they didn't realize. But a short-lived mercy. Better let them know—they were brave men. He beckoned the priest and the magistrate.

"May as well tell you," he whispered. "They are rounding up cases of oil from the Chinese stores. They will pour the oil over the wall, and the fires will do the rest! The delay is caused by the Chinks. They don't want to supply oil for which they know they won't be paid—and they don't want to be mixed up in their affair.

The Mohamet Ali gang can run up country, having no property here to leave when our people get here—but the Chinks have stores they don't want to lose!"

He whispered this very gently:

"Hadn't we better shoot the girl and then rush out on them and end it?" said the magistrate now, with full hold on himself, as calm as the doctor.

"But . . . who will . . . shoot her?" whispered the priest. No one answered.

"Oh, hell, let's stick it out!" said the doctor. "The oil isn't here yet!"

THE wounded Ruttan Singh reeled to the magistrate. He saluted stiffly.

"Sahib, there is a steamer coming into the harbor!"

"Thank you, Sergeant!" the magistrate answered. "Don't tell anyone! It's one of those native owned coast boats, Mohammedan crew. There is one due here to-day. And while they perhaps would not help the enemy, they certainly won't help us. They couldn't, anyhow. When they see the row, they will run out of the harbor without discharging the cargo!"

The smoke became worse. The defenders peered through it as best they could, guns ready, but the Mohammedans kept their heads behind the wall.

Coughing, the doctor turned to the window.

"Hullo!" he muttered. "That isn't a native coast boat. Damn the smoke — I can't see!"

He wiped his eyes carefully, and looked again. The breeze blew more strongly. The doctor clenched his fists.

A. T.

"No," he said, and his voice sounded far away to him, and like an excited girl's. "No." his voice rose so that all heard him. "No! It's a small cruiser—flying the American flag!"

The magistrate gasped. He clapped his hands excitedly.

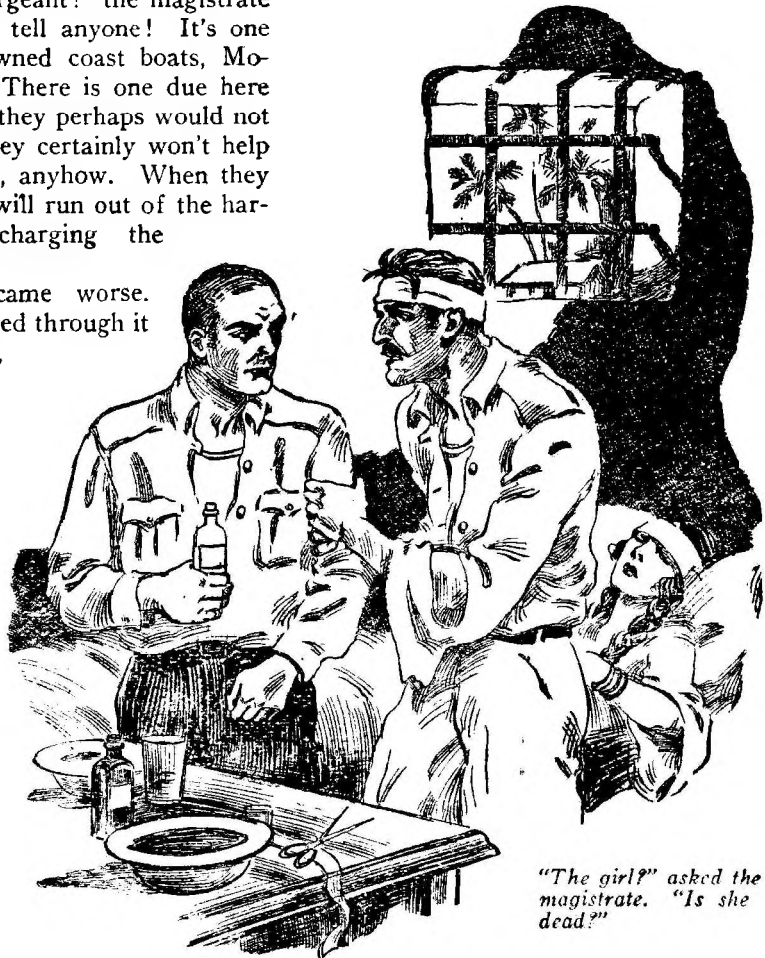
"Of course!" he shouted. "I forgot. The *Florida*, going to Rangoon for the governor's big tomashe! I had word she would call here. But—she's two days ahead of time! Hurrah! We're saved!"

"No chance," snapped the doctor. "Look! The oil!"

"But the Americans will help us!" the magistrate screamed.

The doctor gripped his arm.

"How's her captain to know we need



"The girl?" asked the magistrate. "Is she dead?"

help? Until it's too late? He'll find our ashes when he comes ashore! They are starting the oil! The captain will see the fire and hear the fuss, but how will he know what's going on? Unless he knows what's happening— It isn't his business to land on British territory to put out fires!"

"Oh, God," groaned the priest, "is there no way we can let that American captain know we need help?"

"Of course there is!"

IT was the Spirit of France who shouted. It was the Spirit of France who seized the flag lying on the table and dashed for the jail door. Understanding, the men tried to stop her—to do the work themselves. But she eluded them.

She dashed out into the yard—a Joan of Arc, undaunted among the flames and smoke. Mohamet Ali saw her.

"Don't shoot!" he screamed to his men. "Does she come to me for mercy? Don't shoot her—my mercy waits!"

The girl turned and dashed for the flagpole. Swiftly ran the Spirit of France. Her nimble fingers were at the flag halliards. The smoke beat about her. The red flame of the oil creeping across the yard struck at her like tongues of snakes. But—a long moment—and she was hoisting the flag! *Half mast and Union down—a signal of distress everywhere!* And Mohamet understood. Of the volley that broke around the girl he fired the first shot.

She was hit. She was hit again. But she managed to stagger into the doctor's arms, and he lifted her into the jail.

"Tear it down! Down with that signal!" screamed Mohamet Ali.

But his men could not obey! The flaming oil made a barrier of safety for the flag which even their fanaticism could not pass. And the flag stiffened in the morn-

ing breeze, and sent its message seaward.

The yelling besiegers redoubled their efforts. They were shooting the Chinese who wouldn't give them oil. Was there time? Surely, the American captain would understand! But was there time? If Mohamet Ali could get more oil quickly—

A shell from the American cruiser shrieked over the jail. A messenger!

A messenger of comfort and hope to tell the defenders their signal had been seen—for of course a bombardment of the enemy would have been dangerous to the defenders of the jail.

"Too late! Too late!" groaned the priest. "The oil will be upon us! Let us pray! That is all we can do now!"

But the doctor, cynical to the last, turned to the window again. His voice shook, in spite of his efforts to control it.

"A famous American phrase!" he shouted. "And thank God for it!"

"Phrase! What phrase? What do you mean?" shouted the magistrate, almost delirious with suffering.

"The Marines have landed!"

The doctor's throat worked like a girl's, choking back sobs.

And now the priest was yelling.

"American bugles coming up the hill! See the Mohammedans run! We're saved! Thank God, we're saved!"

"You might, also"—the doctor was himself again—"you might also thank the Yankee captain and those chaps coming up the hill at the double!"

"The girl?" asked the magistrate. "Is she dead?"

"No," said the doctor gruffly. "No. Badly wounded, but we'll pull her through!"

The Spirit of France opened her eyes.

"You won't die," said the doctor gently. She smiled.

"The Spirit of France will never die!" she answered.





Black Arrows

By P. S. Winton

A Northwoods trapper fights fire with fire.



WARNED by that weird extra sense that men develop on the lonely frontiers of the world, Jim glanced behind him into the shadowy darkness of the woods.

There had been no growl from his dogs, no crunch of trodden snow, no sight nor sound to warn him, yet instinctively he knew that something moved in the bush—something invisible, silent, and therefore unfriendly.

Even as he moved there came the keen sound of a plucked string, and something struck, with a sharp, ugly *crack*, the frozen trunk of a towering jack-pine, a few inches from Jim's head.

For a moment Jim squatted there beside his fire, staring with startled eyes at

the dead black arrow still quivering in the tree.

"Well, I'll be damned!" he said thoughtfully.

Coolly, without looking around, he reached forth and plucked the arrow from the tree, though not without some difficulty, for the iron-shod head was buried deep in the frozen fibers.

It was, as near as Jim could judge, rather an ordinary arrow, something less than a yard in length, with a barbed iron head hammered out of a piece of rusted scrap-iron, from the look, and feathered with black, iridescent quills. The shaft itself was carefully made, smoothed and polished, and either painted or dyed a sinister, dull black.

"But an *arrow!*" muttered Jim. "An ar-

row—in this day and age! Didn't know anybody but the Indian kids played with them any more. But this is no kid's arrow. Too long for a kid's bow—and it was buried too deep in the tree."

He had a terrible craving to look around, but he felt the eyes of whoever had sped the arrow were upon him. Somehow his instinct told him this arrow was not meant to kill. But if not—what was it? Not an accident. Not a joke. A warning? That seemed most likely. But of what? Well, that was the question.

"Black arrow," he said to himself. "The words sound familiar, somehow, but I can't get any connection. Black arrow. . . the black arrow. . . . Strange. . . ."

He stuck the arrow under the lashing-rope of the toboggan and knocked the coal out of his pipe. Time to turn in. To-morrow, on the trail, he could think more of the black arrow and what it signified. Perhaps he could find the trail of the skulking archer.

As he settled down in his rabbit-skin robe he was comfortably conscious that he no longer felt the invisible presence. Whoever his stealthy visitor had been, he had gone, leaving only the mysterious black arrow as a token of his call.

"Black arrow," mumbled Jim sleepily. "Heard that before. . . somewhere. . . long time . . . ago. . . ." And he dropped off into a heavy and dreamless sleep.

IT was not hard to pick up the trail of the mysterious archer who had shot the black arrow into Jim's lonesome camp. The trail led straight up from the lake to a point within perhaps twenty yards of the camp. It was straight down the wind, as the wind had been the night before. That was why the dogs had growled no warning. Whoever he was, he was shrewd.

He had evidently stood in one spot some little time, watching Jim. The snow was tramped down hard in one spot, and there was a black spatter on the snow where the watcher had knocked the dead ashes from his pipe.

Then the trail led straight back to the

bare, wind-swept ice of the lake again, where it would be impossible to follow it. Jim knew just as much—or little—as he had known the night before, save for one thing. The tracks of the mysterious caller *toed in*. An Indian!

He decided, as he started out on his own trail again, that the arrow had been meant as some sort of warning. If the skulker had wished to kill Jim, he would have tried again. And surely he would have used a rifle instead of an arrow, unless the arrow was meant to hold some peculiar and particular significance.

It was quite likely, Jim concluded, a case of mistaken identity, for while the words "black arrow" had a tantalizingly familiar sound, the slim, wicked-looking weapon itself conveyed no meaning whatever.

"I'll ask Pete if he knows anything about black arrows that come sailing into camps while a fellow's smoking a good night smoke and minding his own business," decided Jim. "Let's see. To-morrow's Sunday—or is it Monday? Well, anyway, he'll be at his headquarters camp to-night, most likely. I'll just go that much out of my way to find out about this."

Old Pete Miller would be able to solve the mystery if anybody could. Pete had been one of the first men in the country, had served for a long time with one of the numerous companies that had so bitterly contested the supremacy of "The Great Company," and was now pottering around upon Round Beaver Lake, trapping a little and waiting for the end to come, as he would want it to come, in the great silent bush he loved so well.

JIM came in sight of Pete's camp shortly after dusk, and noted with deep satisfaction that a clear, strong yellow light glowed cheerily from the one small, square window that faced toward the lake. That meant the old boy was home.

Old Pete's dogs set up a terrific racket, and the old man, roaring angrily, hurried out and silenced them.

"Hi, Pete!" hailed Jim. "You still alive?"

"Jou'!" "Jou'!" Pete returned the greeting. "It's you, is it? Those mangy pups of yours manage to get up here without help?"

Jim chuckled and tied out the dogs, boxing them playfully when they growled at Pete's surly brutes. Jim thought a lot of his dogs, which was the reason old Pete always derided them so. They were savage beasts, ugly as sin in both disposition and looks, and averaging a hundred pounds each of pure downright cussedness—and loyalty for the one man they called master.

The dogs set for the night, Jim followed Pete inside the camp, the black arrow concealed under his heavy fur *koulatang*.

"You et?" asked Pete invitingly. "Don't suppose you have. Squat and wait two shakes, and I'll have it all piled. Just gettin' organized when you come up."

"Good!" grinned Jim, slipping off his *koulatang*, for the old man kept his camp rather warm for Jim's taste. The arrow he dropped in the shadow under the table; the *koulatang* he flung in a heap on the bunk.

He watched the old man puttering around the stove, real liking in his eyes. Mighty fine old duffer, Pete, with his hawklike nose, and his piercing blue eyes under their hoary, scraggly brows. His rather close-cropped beard, coming to a point at his chin, gave him a waggishly professional look.

They ate, when the meal was ready, practically in silence, as is the habit of bushmen. When the enameled plates were clean, both men leaned back more comfortably and produced pipes and tobacco.

"Pete," said Jim slowly when both pipes were going good, "you been in these parts a long time, haven't you?"

"Since ten, twenty years afore you was born," nodded Pete, his eyes twinkling. "Why?"

Quietly Jim reached down and, unseen by Pete on the opposite side of the little table, retrieved the arrow from the floor.

"Then," he asked coolly, "can you tell me what this means?" and he dropped the black arrow on the table.

EXPECTANT as he was, Jim was amazed at the effect the black arrow had upon old Peter. The ancient drew back from the table as though the arrow had been a deadly reptile. His shiny, blue-veined old hands shook, and his pale eyes grew dark with sudden horror.

"Goddlemighty! The—the black arrow!" he whispered. "Where—where did you find it?"

"Back in the bush. Somebody shot it into a tree beside my head, just as I was taking my after-supper smoke. But what does it mean?"

As though drawn there by some horrible, irresistible fascination, the old man's eyes traveled back to the dead-black arrow on the table.

"It means," he whispered through fluttering lips, "it means—death!"

Jim looked at the old man curiously.

"Just what do you mean, Pete?" he asked quietly.

Pete shook himself, wrenched his gaze from the black arrow.

"I'm an old fool, Jim," he said after a moment. "I got to get a grip on myself. But it's been years since I seen one of those things—and that last one I saw was sticking out of the chest of one of the finest men God's earth ever grew. My father."

Jim's eyes widened in amazement, but he said nothing. After a momentary pause the old man went on, his voice growing firmer and steadier all the time.

"That was a long time ago. It was pretty wild up here then. The Injuns didn't like the idea of havin' us whites take their trappin' grounds. That's how it was some of the young bucks organized a sort of secret society, the name of which, translated, meant something like "Those Who Turn Not Back in the Trail." I forget the Cree of it, now.

"There was a big medicine-man at the head of the society. Un-i-kee-as-sin, his name was. Nothing was too cussed for them. Thunder Rock, that means. They were nervy devils, and I remember when a white man ventured too far into Injun country, he woke up one morning with a

black arrow sticking somewhere close. That was a warnin'.

"If he didn't take the hint, three days later there would be another black arrow plunk into something close to his head. That was the second—and last—warnin'.

"The third arrow came three days after the second; not always, but usually. As soon after three days as the red devils got a chance. And it was no warnin'. It got meat."

PETE fell silent, staring broodingly at the black arrow.

"But—after all these years, it sounds like a nightmare," protested Jim. "I've heard parts of the story, years ago—I remember now. But it was years ago; I'd almost forgotten. Surely the Indians would know better than to pull anything like that now. Why, half of them are educated; lots of them have been to college."

"There's the arrow," shrugged Pete in unanswerable argument.

"I know, but—"

"I tell you, Jim, the last time I seen an arrow like that, the feather part was sticking out of my father's chest. They got him right in front of our camp up on the Three Loon. He wouldn't pull out when he got the warnin's—and they got him."

"But this is 1929!" urged Jim, a hint of desperation in his voice. "There can't be such things going on now!"

"Then where did the arrow come from?"

Jim thought a moment, frowning. His long dead pipe clenched tightly between his strong teeth.

"Maybe somebody who knew about the whole thing is trying to scare me out," he suggested. "I've got just about as good country as there is in these parts, you know. I took three thousand out of there last winter, alone, and I'll do as well this year if my luck holds out. Maybe somebody's trying to run a little bluff."

Pete's eyes brightened hopefully, and he nodded.

"Might be it, Jim; might be it," he admitted slowly. "Don't know who it would be, but that might be. Injuns are

funny critters. And didn't you say it was an Injun that made the tracks you found?"

Jim nodded. "And besides, nobody but an Injun could shoot an arrow," he added. "Whoever whammed that arrow into that old jack-pine knew how to handle a bow."

"But even then, you're no safer than you was," said Pete. "If you don't clear out, they'll probably go through with the whole program."

"Let them try it," replied Jim grimly. "I can do a little shooting myself, if there's need of it. But I don't think there will be. They won't do any more than bluff. Why, they wouldn't dare to take up my territory—that would be just like confessing who did the killing, now wouldn't it?"

"Not at all." Pete shook his head. "One man does the killin'; another one, who can prove he wasn't away from a post or somethin' all winter, will take up your territory. Can't prove nothin' on an Injun, anyway. They're cunnin' as a carcajou, them red devils!"

"All right, let them try it," said Jim, and there was a sinister undertone of anger in his voice. "I'll be damned if I leave my territory, and anybody that tries to make me will be heading into *beaucoup* trouble. I'll match a .303 slug out of that old Ross of mine against an arrow, pink, green or black, any day of the week.

"Come on, Pete, let's do the dishes and hit the blankets. I'm dead on my feet!"

JIM had put up a pretty good bluff in order to quiet the fears of the old man, who was so evidently genuinely aroused over the danger confronting him. At the same time, the younger man was not quite easy in his own mind. He knew that Pete was a tough old-timer, and didn't scare easily. Anything that was sufficient to arouse old Pete as the black arrow had done was worth worrying about.

He felt safe enough at present, for there was still the second arrow of warnin', and that, according to schedule, would not be due until the following evening. But after the second arrow arrived—and Jim somehow felt strangely certain that

it would arrive—life would not be so pleasant. He began to realize how a deer feels when the howling wolves start to close their circle of death.

He munched on towards his own main camp, turning the matter over and over in his mind. He thought of plan after plan, but never once did it occur to him to run away. There was nothing of the quitter in the make-up of Jim Ritchey.

He crossed the river that separated old Pete's territory from that of Red Hardin, cut across the corner of Hardin's country, and came back into the territory he called his own, reaching his headquarters camp late in the afternoon.

It was a fine big camp, the ends of the logs neatly squared up at the corners out-

side, and the inside snug and clean, although utterly lacking the feminine touch that can make even a bushman's camp look like a home. Jim looked around the camp contentedly, and the thought came to him that perhaps he had not long to enjoy its comforts. He shrugged off the morbid idea, however, and started whistling as he laid and lit the fire.

As soon as supper was over, Jim brought in his Ross, and when it had warmed up a bit, proceeded to give it a through cleaning and oiling, going over the rather clumsy weapon with loving care. Putting the gun aside at last, he brought out and carefully inspected, one at a time, some fifty or more cartridges. They had originally been full metal-jacketed bullets, made to drill nice clean holes through Boches and Boche allies, but Jim had touched up the noses cunningly with a file, and had made dum-dums of them. A dum-dum is an exceedingly wicked variety of bullet, that expands horribly upon contact with even something as soft and yielding as human flesh. As Jim knew from personal observation in France, a dum-dum, when it hits, leaves no work for the surgeons. Just a messy job for the burial squad.

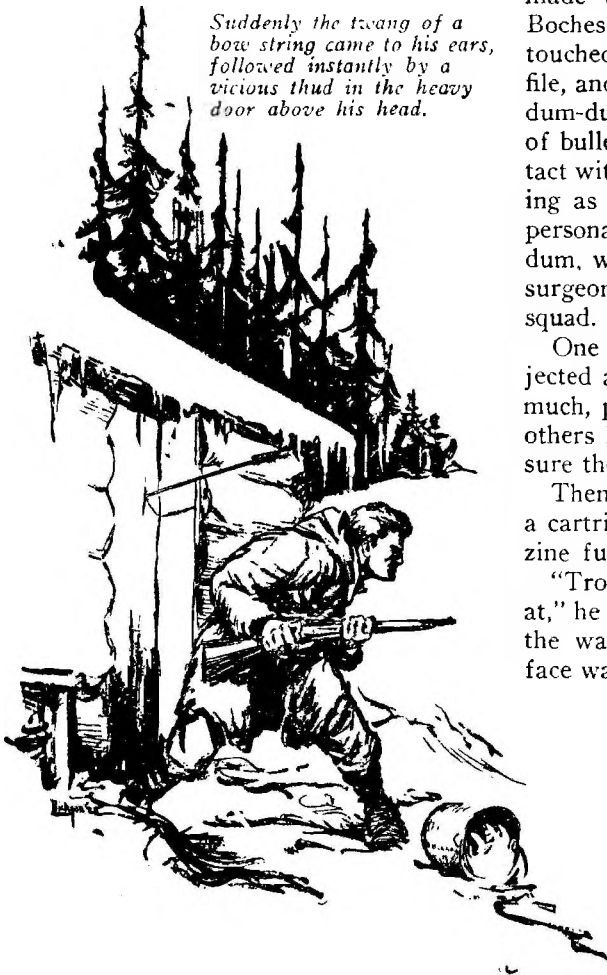
One or two of the cartridges Jim rejected as having been filed down a bit too much, perhaps. Dangerous, then. Several others he touched up a bit more, to make sure they did their work well.

Then he loaded the gun carefully, with a cartridge in the chamber and the magazine full.

"Trouble is a nice game for two to play at," he mused as he leaned the gun against the wall and prepared to turn in. His face was rather grim, and while he had no difficulty in going to sleep, his rest was broken by wild dreams, in which black arrows, alone and in whole flocks, played weird and bloody parts.

THE next day he stayed close to the camp, studying the surrounding bush

Suddenly the twang of a bow string came to his ears, followed instantly by a vicious thud in the heavy door above his head.



through tiny holes cleared through the thick frost on the windows. Alert as he was, however, he caught no sign of his mysterious enemy.

When he went out to feed the dogs, he took his gun along, watching the shadowy aisles of the forest with every sense alert. But if danger lurked there in the silent shadows, it did not make its presence known, and Jim finished his prosaic task without incident.

Just as he put his hand on the latch to enter the camp, however, he felt the familiar warning of danger behind him. He dropped like a cat, crouching, rifle ready, but he saw nothing. Then suddenly the twang of a bowstring came to his ears, followed instantly by a vicious thud in the heavy door above his head.

Nothing! He saw nothing move, search the bush as he might. Almost fearfully, he turned and straightened up, staring at the thing that had thudded so viciously into the door.

It was a slim, dead-black arrow, the mate to the one which had been the first warning, the third day before!

IT was the third night after Jim had received the second warning arrow. His camp squatted silently in the deep snow of the little clearing, and the tall, slim jack-pines crowded around curiously, as though waiting for something to happen.

Gradually the darkness fell, and the slight wind that had been stirring the powdery snow on top of the crust died with the sun. Inside the camp Jim stirred up the fire and put on new wood. A burst of fiery yellow sparks swirled around the top of the lean tin chimney, and then shriveled in the cold and fell lifeless and black upon the snow. Now and then his shadow moved, ghostlike, across the frost-panes of a window.

The bush was silent with the utter silence of death, but that did not mean that it was without life. Nigh in the swaying head of a jack-pine a raven slept, and innumerable tiny rodents skittered soundlessly over the crust.

Across the lake, far away in the bush, a wolf raised his muzzle to the thin clear rim of the moon and howled mournfully. A weasel, greenish white save for the black tip of his long tail, rippled across a little clearing. And now, in the shadowy heart of a thicket of small evergreens, a man crouched in the snow, silently waiting, his intent, gleaming eyes fixed unwaveringly on the door of the camp.

For perhaps twenty minutes he squatted there motionless, and soundlessly. Then, slowly and cautiously, he turned his head. Something—or somebody—was creeping up behind him!

The man in the shadows cursed silently as the moon sailed gaily behind a cloud, and darkness shut down over the bush. He gripped his gun tightly in one hand, and with the other quietly parted the fans of one of the trees and peered out into the surrounding darkness.

There was the sound of a sudden movement, startlingly close. A wiry arm shot out, coiled in a strangling grip. The man in the shadow grunted hoarsely, dropped his gun, useless in this tangle of young trees and muffling branches, and leaped upon his antagonist, at the same time tearing the lean, steel-hard arm from around his throat. They fell, squirming, with a force that broke through the crust and dropped them a yard or more into the powdery snow beneath.

The snow sifted in on top of them. It was like fighting in the bottom of a huge barrel half full of stinging, strangling snow. Both men spat the stuff from their mouths, and blew it, snorting, from their nostrils.

They fought silently, like wild animals, with only sharp grunts of savage anger or little gasps as some unusual effort strained their fiber to the breaking point.

The man who had been lurking in the shadow gradually but steadily gained the upper hand, and started in deliberately to beat his antagonist into insensibility. And just at this moment the moon, having caused as much trouble as it could, sailed free of the flying cloud.

"Good Lord!" whispered the man who

was winning the fight. "It's Pete!" A terrible suspicion flashed across his mind, but died almost on the instant.

"Goddlemighty!" gasped the other weakly. "*Jim!*"

They sat back in their snow crater and stared at each other.

"I thought you were the black arrow shooter," said Jim at length. "I was laying for him."

"So I noticed! An' I thought *you* was him.

"I came down to see if I couldn't help a mite, knowin' you wouldn't be sensible and clear out, and figurin' this was the night for the third arrow to come. And instead—"

"Instead, we may have made a mess of everything," said Jim in a whisper. "And maybe not. Get your gun, and watch the camp. My plan may work out yet."

PETE crawled out of the pit in which they had been fighting and retrieved his gun. Jim followed suit, and in a few seconds they were both in the shadow of the little evergreens, watching the camp. For some time they waited, crouched down in the snow. There was a huge curiosity in Pete's mind, but he had learned to control his curiosity. And in Jim's mind there was an anxious wonder.

Would it work? And would the killer be there, waiting? Would—

Jim's grip tightened on his gun, and he heard old Pete catch his breath sharply. His own heart started to thump madly. It was working!

Slowly the door of the camp was opening, pouring forth a blaze of yellow light. And in the door, sharply silhouetted against the yellow brilliance, was Jim!

At least, it looked like Jim, the familiar high-peaked hood of his *koulatang* drawn up around his head, one hand on the latch of the door, and a pail of dog food in the other hand.

The door swung wide, and for an instant the silhouetted figure stood there quietly, evidently looking out into the night to accustom his eyes to the darkness.

On the instant there was the sharp,

deadly twang of a bow, the sound coming from the other side of the clearing, and the hand of the silhouetted figure dropped from the latch. The door swung wide open, and the figure reeled backward, stumbled, and crumpled up limply, without a sound, across the threshold.

"Goddlemighty!" whispered Pete. "That was—"

Jim gripped the old man's arm suddenly, savagely, commanding silence.

Across the clearing a stealthy figure was moving, a short, hulking figure hurrying towards the open door of the camp. High on the right shoulder was a quiver, and in one hand the figure clutched a long, slim bow!

Jim raised his rifle and covered the figure now clearly revealed in the flood of yellow light from the wide-flung door. "Stick them up!" he called sharply. "You're covered!"

The man with the bow halted as suddenly as though the hand of God had fallen upon his shoulder, and swung around to face the concealing clump of evergreens.

"Hold it!" snapped Jim, starting to shove through the springy fans of the young evergreens. "You—"

But the cornered man did not "hold it." Instead he dropped his bow and started running like a deer across the clearing.

Jim fired once, but hastily, knowing as the pin shot forward that it was a miss. He snarled something and slammed the bolt back and home. As he did so there was a thunderous roar from Pete's gun, a stabbing flash of yellow light, a sharp cry of agony. Jim had heard men cry out like that before, over in France. They seldom lived to make another sound.

"You got him, Pete," he said in a strangely quiet voice.

"Yes," nodded Pete, clattering the action of his antique old Winchester. "I think I did. That'll be the end of Red Hardin, I reckon!"

BUT how on earth did you come to figure it out Hardin was at the bottom of it?" asked Jim some time later,

as the two men were leaning back comfortably in their bunks.

"I didn't. Just stumbled across the idee," explained Pete.

"Run out of sody, I did, and mushed over to Hardin's camp to borry some, him bein' nearest to me. Well, he wasn't there, but I just happened to notice two or three pieces of wood in the wood-box, ready for burnin'. They was sections of white birch that had been chewed up pretty bad by something sharp and pointed. Like the head of an arrow. Against the black of a jack-pine, them little white birch logs would be pretty good targets, I figgered. So it looked like Red had been doin' a lot of practicing with a bow.

"That country of his ain't much good, and he knew yours was. He figgered nobody'd ever lay the killin' onto him, the whole thing havin' such a strong Injun flavor, so to speak. That's why he used the black arrow idee, and toed in to make his tracks look like an Injun's. And what more likely than for him, bein' your next door neighbor, so to speak, to take over your territory? The idee was all right, Jim—only like a lot of cussedness, it just kinda fell through, somehow."

"I never thought of Red. I felt sure it was an Indian, or a crew of them," said Jim, blowing a thoughtful cloud of smoke rolling towards the rafters. "That's how I figured out the idea of tunneling

out the back under the floor and that six feet or so of snow, and getting out into the bush without being seen. Then, with that dummy hanging by a thread from a beam over the door, and the door arranged to swing open at about the right time, I thought I could get whoever it was to do just what Red did: shoot, and then go up into the light where I could see him making sure I was dead."

"Regular Injun trick," nodded old Pete approvingly, his pale blue eyes very bright. "But I ain't seen yet how you made the door open up at just the right time."

"Easy. That candle, when it burned just so far, burned through a piece of string, and let the little saucepan, on the end of the string, slowly pull the door open. It was just heavy enough to turn the trick nicely. See how it was done now?"

"Sure," nodded Pete, grinning appreciatively. "Regular Injun trick, just like I said. Warn't it?"

Jim glanced up at the black arrows, lying carelessly on a little shelf above the table.

There were three of them now—and the last one he had plucked from the breast of his *koulatang*. It had been driven clear to the feathers into the old clothes with which Jim had stuffed his dummy.

Jim looked at Pete, his face very grave. "You fight fire with fire," he said quietly.

TRAVELING SAND DUNES

THE great Sahara has her shifting sand heaps, like practically all countries that have large deserts within their boundaries. Even in the smaller deserts of America the surface of a community may be entirely changed and foreign after a severe sand-storm. This is caused by the driving winds that shift the sand, causing new dunes to spring up over night, and leaving no trace of huge heaps that were formerly there.

What is probably the most remarkable instance of this in the world is the great traveling sand dunes of Peru. The Peruvian sand heaps really move; and, in contrast to the North American deserts, where the aspects of a location may be changed overnight, these dunes do not frequently change in shape and size. They move bodily. For that reason travelers in the Peruvian deserts, after an absence of several

days, are frequently mystified upon returning to discover that a large dune has moved a considerable distance from its former location.

This startling phenomenon is, however, rather easily explained. The Peruvian sand heaps are formed, as a usual thing, in the shape of a half-moon, and are of all sizes, ranging from dunes the size of a house to those that cover countless acres. Here the balmy coast winds blow continually inward, which is toward the north. The sand of these deserts is very soft-grained, and the steady wind forever rolls the grains on the south side of the dune upward. In a short while this thin layer of sand travels up the outside of the half-moon and rolls down on the inside. This shifting goes on day and night, slowly moving the dune before the wind.

These huge heaps that continually travel northward, cover up everything in their path.



"Get back, you cowards! Get back!" he roared.

The Sub and the Merchant Prince

A WAR NOVELETTE OF THE SEA

By F. V. W. Mason

A yellow captain; an enemy sub—but Jeff Gaines sticks with his crippled ship.

THE *Merchant Prince* buried her blunt bows into a towering, slate-gray roller with a shock that set her poor old fabric shuddering, as a cataract of water poured over the forecastle and tore savagely at the deck cargo of motor trucks.

"She doesn't like it, Hogan," said the second mate as he tied down the earlaps of his sou'wester. "And I don't blame her; she's too old for this sort of thing—much too old."

The chief engineer peered anxiously at the darkening horizon where low-flying, ragged clouds confirmed the alarming tale the barometer had been telling all afternoon. His little blue eyes narrowed as a mountainous sea rushed by, causing the steamer to pitch sharply.

"Faith, Mr. Gaines," he said, as his eyes swept the foaming expanse ahead, "ye'd well think so if ye could listen to the groaning o' her poor ol' engines. D'ye think the weather'll better during the night?"

"The skipper says it will," replied Gaines with a short laugh, and buttoned the slicker snugly about his thin chest.

"God above," groaned the engineer; "then it's sure to be a ninety-mile gale before dawn. How that Hedly man ever got a captain's papers! He should be runnin' a ferry in a nice quiet river with no traffic about—but I suppose this blasted war explains it. The damned swell-headed pup! I was chief o' a crack liner when he was still wearin' talcum powder and safety pins! An' he tries to tell me how to run my engine room force." The

old man snorted indignantly and ducked as a sheet of spray crashed against the pilot house, and dripped from the dazzle-painted woodwork.

"Oh, he's not as bad as all that," mechanically protested Gaines. But his clear brown eyes wore a troubled look. "He means well, but he hasn't had much experience. For that matter none of us have, save you. This is only my third trip across."

The engineer bent a curious look on the earnest features of the mate. "Look here, lad, why are ye always sayin' a good word for a man that ain't worth a tinker's damn? Is he a relative of yours?"

Slowly Gaines shook his head, and looked fixedly at the heaving bows.

"No," he said, "he's not exactly a relation."

"Did ye apply to be on this ship with him?" queried Hogan casually.

"Yes."

The engineer spat deliberately over the rail and wiped his mouth on the back of a powerful, calloused hand.

"Well, it beats me," he concluded. "He don't like ye any too well from what I see. He ain't no relation, and yet ye eat his dirt and pretend to like it. What's he to ye anyway?"

Gaines evaded the question as adroitly as possible.

"Oh, I know him pretty well. He doesn't mean most of what he says. Hedly's really a good fellow at heart. I ought to know. I grew up with him. He just lacks experience. He put in a few years on one of his father's freighters on the Great Lakes and picked up his master's ticket when the war broke out. I tried for a naval commission, but—but—you see—"

Hogan nodded sympathetically. "Aye, lad, I understand. 'Twas not for lack of study they turned ye down. You've forgotten more about seamanship than Hedly'll ever know."

"No," he said, "he'll learn fast. He's got the incentive to get ahead, for he's engaged to the finest girl in the world." His voice dropped. "I tell you, Hogan, I

love her better than life. But I've never stood a chance with Ellen Fahys—for she's in love with Tom. You see how it is?"

Hogan seemed to be examining the horizon, his face inscrutable. "What are ye trying to do?"

With a short, bitter laugh Gaines replied.

"I'm doing what little I can to make him worthy of her."

IN a voice that betrayed an unexpressed admiration Hogan said, "Y're a good lad, Jeff, as I've said before, but I think ye've tackled a job that's too big for ye. I've shipped and worked for hundreds of men during the past forty year' and I can tell purty well—" His voice changed to a grim rasp. "You're wastin' yer time: Hedly's a bad un. Rotten, I tell ye, rotten to the core!"

Grimly, the slender mate turned on the engineer.

"That'll do, Hogan," he warned. "Hedly's a good man and don't you forget it. He'll make a name for himself before the war is over."

Gaines stooped to retie an awning lace which had become undone. He expertly tied a reef knot and jerked it tight, but the rotten cord broke and the canvas flapped loose again with a loud report, and presently was snatched away by the ever-increasing force of the northeast gale.

"Rotten, like everything else on this ruin o' a boat," observed the chief.

Then, as though struck by a new thought, he spat over the side and turned to the second mate inquiringly. "Tell me, lad, what's that funny little cannon ye've been setting up on the after well deck?"

Blushing uncomfortably, Gaines looked up at the funnel, where the smoke, black as Egypt, went whirling over the side.

"Why—why—" he stammered, "it's a little invention of mine—employs a new principle in ballistics—"

Hogan grinned a wide, gap-toothed grin. "Could you really hurt anything with that little pop gun?"

"Pop gun?" Like a young mother whose

child is maligned, Gaines glared at the old man. "Pop gun! Say, listen, I could blow this whole damned steamer to Jericho with it!" His voice fell. "I'd hoped to give the principle to the Navy, but they wouldn't listen. Still,"—his jaw set itself in straight lines—"I'll show 'em yet what

those pore old pieces of junk off their bed plates."

GAINES turned quickly to the old engineer as he was about to clamber down the steel ladder which led from the bridge to the deck, and caught hold of



As he pulled with all his strength a sudden temptation came over him.

the ancient blue pea jacket he wore.

"Hogan," said he in a voice raised above the insistent shrieking of the wind, "all josh aside—I want to know something."

The chief engineer leaned his bent and old body against the wind and spat a stream of tobacco juice to leeward.

"Well?"

The mate leaned forward and with anxious eyes said, "Hogan, precisely how bad are those engines? We're in for a hell of a blow and I want to know how we're fixed."

"They're bad," said the chief engineer. "They're terrible. It's a marvel they run at all. I'm not promising a thing for to-night, and I'll be pleased to keep the

my gun can do—she's all set up and I've eight or ten shells. I tell you, Hogan, she's a damned good gun."

"Like as not, like as not," said Hogan with the air of a grown-up placating a child whose wooden sword has not been sufficiently admired. He turned towards the iron ladder. "Well, I must be gettin' back to my engines; that half-witted oiler they've given me for a second will have

poor old scrap heaps revolving until morning—if I can."

Gaines shook his head thoughtfully and gazed up at the place where the running lights should have been shining, and saw only the black outline of the lamps.

Hogan laughed. "Yes, I keep lookin' for 'em myself. Damn these subs anyway." He started to descend again, but once more paused with one heavy shoe on

the topmost rung of the steel ladder.

"And now, my boy, I'll ask you a question, fair and square." His deep-set eyes met those of the younger man, while his chin with its fringe of silvery bristles set itself in a firm line. "Tell me: What's wrong with the gun crew? I notice all but one's taken pretty sick. What is it they've got?"

"I'll tell you, but keep it to yourself—it would be bad if it got around," warned Gaines. "Truth is, they've got the flu—the Spanish flu—and they've got it bad. The petty officer died this afternoon, and another'll go before morning."

The man on the steel ladder uttered a low whistle.

"Mother av God," he murmured. "So that's it. All the gun crew save one, ye say?"

"Yes: a man named Smalley is still about—he's a tough nut," continued Gaines in a bellow which barely made itself heard above the groaning of the *Merchant Prince* as she labored forward at three knots an hour. "With this mongrel crew we've got, we're taking no chances. I'm going to drop the dead man over during the night. Hope to God that damned flu doesn't spread. We're still too far out of Bordeaux to get help."

A gigantic wave came up out of the Atlantic, thundered on the starboard side plates, plucked away a lifeboat as though it were a straw, and bent the rail to an angle of forty-five degrees, while the men on the bridge clutched madly to keep from being swept into the roaring blackness. When the water had drained over the side, Hogan nodded, and clambered cursing down the ladder to disappear with a clang through a steel door. As he opened it a momentary flood of light illuminated the streaming deck.

"Who the hell left that lantern there?" wondered Gaines. "No discipline at all! They've all had distinct orders to keep that doorway dark. Now if a sub saw that—" He peered ahead into the blackness and found that he could barely discern the outline of the bows and the shrouded shapes of the motor trucks tug-

ging strongly at the ropes which lashed them fast.

AT that moment the *Merchant Prince* rose with the suddenness of an express elevator, writhed to the top of a great hissing comber and turned on her side with a sickening twist which snapped the wireless antennæ from its position and hurled it far to leeward. Still careened on her side, she shot downwards into a yawning black gulf with a rush which sent Gaines' heart leaping to his mouth, while the little steamer shuddered from bridge to garboard strake. Then an icy wave swept over the bridge like a giant fist, and smashed full force against the pilot house with a dull crunching noise.

Gaines clung to a stanchion with the desperation of the doomed, and felt his body lifted off his feet while the roaring water wrenched madly to tear him away. But somehow he managed to retain his hold, and at last stumbled to his feet again with his eyes and ears filled with brine. With fearful intentness he waited to catch the throbbing of the engines, and was vastly relieved to feel the *Merchant Prince* once more gather headway, though he fancied that she moved more sluggishly than before.

In the gathering gloom a figure, gigantic in glistening oilskins, appeared on the steel ladder and clumped heavily upwards, staggering against the force of the wind as it made its way to where clung the second mate.

"Why in hell didn't you call me?" screamed the newcomer, his face thrust close to that of the mate.

"I was on my way, Tom," choked the other. "But a wave caught me, I—"

The captain's eyebrows met in a hard line. "You damned cross-eyed fool!" he bellowed. "Don't lie to me! A little sea like this would never reach up here."

Gaines angrily pointed to the dangling wires of the wireless. "Look at that then!"

Hedly glanced about and shook his head. "That's nothing. The *Merchant Prince* will stand that and a lot more.

With the engines as good as they are, there's no call to get frightened. I don't believe what that old grandmother of a chief engineer says. They look pretty good to me. I guess I know good engines when I see 'em."

With a contemptuous laugh he turned away. For a moment the ship was passing through a quiet area, and plunged a little less wildly, though the seas continued to pour over her bows every time she dipped, and the bulwark plates gushed like geysers as the water drained off her heaving decks.

THE mate hurried after the tall figure, now almost out of sight in the gloom at the other end of the thirty-foot bridge, and clutched his arm.

"For God's sake, Hedly, don't be a fool," implored Gaines. "Believe what Hogan tells you. Those engines were worn out and condemned years ago. He says we'll be lucky if they last out the night, and he ought to know."

The captain made a furious gesture with his arm. "Shut up, you damned cross-eyed coward. I know my ship, and no white-livered mate is goin' to tell me how to run it. I tell you the storm is dying down already."

Mumbling to himself the captain strode off down the reeling bridge, paused, and came back.

"And another thing. Get that damned Fourth of July cannon out of the well deck. I won't have that silly piece of junk cluttering up my decks."

A desperate appeal in his eyes, Gaines addressed his superior. "Please, Tom, won't you let it stay there?" he pleaded. "It's small and won't be in the way, and—*an*—it might come in handy—"

The big man threw back his head and roared with contemptuous laughter. "Handy? That pea-shooter couldn't blow the dust off my hat." Suddenly he paused as though changing his mind. "Come to think of it, it might come in handy."

Gaines started forward eagerly. "Yes, you ought to let it stay, Tom. You don't know what a wonderful gun it is."

"Yep," continued Hedly. "It would come in handy. Just what we need—"

"Need?"

"To squirt lysol at the cockroaches in the galley! Ha! ha! ha!" Once more he burst into a derisive laughter which filled Gaines with a mad desire to plant his fist squarely on Hedly's handsome jaw.

Recovering from his humorous outburst, the captain turned a face still suffused with mirth to the second mate, who stood trembling with fury.

"Now you get about your business—the storm's almost over. Forget about those engines. I'm in charge and I guess you needn't worry."

Realizing the futility of convincing the headstrong Hedly of the imminent danger which threatened, Gaines adopted a new course. Cupping his hands he screamed against the whistling wind.

"Has this old tub any sails?"

The captain settled his massive shoulders more snugly in his oilskins, for the wind was icy cold. "Yes," he grunted. "A jib or two and an old mainsail."

"Where are they?" insisted Gaines, inwardly cursing the incompetent Hedly.

"In hold number one. Behind the machine gun cases."

"Good God!" screamed Gaines. "D'y'e mean to say you had 'em stowed *behind* the cargo?"

"Yes, what of it?" snarled the captain. "What about it? You little runt!"

"Ever since we were boys together," said Gaines savagely, "you always thought you knew it all, and to date you've gotten away with it. But this time you've gone too far."

A shade of uncertainty crept into Hedly's manner. "What in hell do you mean?" he asked, and peered at the mate's face in the darkness as though to read a hidden meaning.

"Why, you great, misconceived idiot!" cried Gaines. "You've put the canvas where we'll have to take off a hatch to get at it."

"We won't need it," said Hedly sullenly. "We won't have to get it. The engines are all right, I tell you. You're

trying to throw a scare into me, Jeff Gaines—but you can't. I know what I'm doing."

GAINES leaned over the battered rail of the bridge and peered at the deck cargo, which creaked, black and sodden, below. Like a captive bear it seemed to strain at its bonds, rumbling threats of destruction when it should at last break free.

"We'll have to jettison two or three of those trucks," said the second mate after a pause. "It's the only way to get at that hatch cover."

"Jettison nothing," roared the captain. "D'ye remember what that officer told us when we sailed?"

"Yes," replied Gaines with his eyes on the trucks below. "He said the chemicals, guns and other equipment on this ship are particularly vital, and that we must get through to Bordeaux no matter what happens."

With a blind arrogance that Gaines had come to hate, the captain seized a fancied advantage. "Then what in hell are you suggesting we throw overboard part of that equipment for?"

"Don't you see, Tom?" pleaded Gaines. "It's only to save the ship. Where would we be if the engines quit?" He paused to let the other see the obvious answer. "You know damn well the *Merchant Prince* would founder in ten minutes in this sea. With sails of any sort, we could keep steerage way and her head up to the wind and ride out the gale."

For a moment Captain Hedly hesitated; then, with all the obstinacy of a weak character, he set his shoulder and faced the smaller man. In the smallness of his soul he dared not give in lest he lose caste in admitting his error.

"By God!" he stormed. "I forbid you to touch those trucks. It's mutiny if you disobey, and anyhow I'll break you in the morning for cowardice. You, who were turned down by the Navy! What a lot of gall you've got, trying to tell me how to run this ship! Get down off the bridge and call the watch or I'll—" He pounded

on the twisted rail in his fury and surged towards Gaines who held up a hand to ward him off.

"Rave all you damned please, Hedly," he panted, his eyes fixed on the other's twitching features. "But you know I'm right." His voice was filled with scorn that cut like a knife. "You big bluff! Everyone at home knows you got a captain's papers through pull and bribes. You're done for at last!"

Hedly rushed forward clenching his fists as he came. "Get off the bridge before I kick you off. In the morn—"

But, with an eerie shriek of fury that whistled in the wire rigging like a banshee, the storm returned to the attack, heeled the *Merchant Prince* far over on her side, and held her poised half in air and half in water for an eternal second. Then, with the maddened rush of an express train, the little steamer plunged downward, her screws racing in midair, to crash head-on into a gray-headed sea. With a whoop of triumph an irresistible wall of water roared up over the bows, and, racing along the deck, caught the Swedish first mate as he stepped from the shelter of the forecastle companionway. In a second's time he was swept over the side with a long wail of terror, and left the horrified officers on the bridge staring after him, while the whole bow dipped out of sight again beneath the black seas which stormed onwards the length of the deck.

"We're sinking!" screamed Hedly. In wild fear he turned to scramble down the ladder, and slipped as the vessel lurched further downwards. Like a drunkard he staggered, then spun and clutched frantically at the rail, but missed and fell to the streaming planks with a heavy thud.

AT that moment the *Merchant Prince* rolled violently to port, and the unconscious man would have rolled overboard had not Gaines snatched at his slippery oilskin collar and secured a hand hold. As he pulled with all his strength at the inert mass a sudden temptation came over him. He had only to let go;

another foot and Hedly would be gone forever. But the vision of Ellen, her life ruined, rose pleading before him. Holding the captain by one hand and clutching at the bridge stanchions with his free hand, he thumped on the chart house door until a wild-eyed seaman appeared and

Prince again plunged her bows clean under and rose but slowly.

With fear hammering at his own brain, the sound of the other's despair brought a change over the usually mild and easy-going Gaines. Cursing with a fluency which surprised him, he took the whimpering creature by the collar and shook him violently.

"Get up, you spineless wop," he raged, "and get the captain to his bunk. He'll be all right by morning. And you"—Gaines turned to the perspiring Scandinavian quartermaster who struggled to keep the *Merchant Prince's* bows to the seas—"keep her headed into the wind, as you value your worthless life. I'll send you another man to help."

With this he stepped out into the rushing blackness of the storm, and found he could barely feel his way along the twisted iron work of the bridge, for the icy wind drove sense from his fingers,

and on his way down the ladder a growling wave nearly swept him overboard.

As he crept aft his keen mind worked like a smoothly running engine while he summoned the mass of book learning acquired during his dogged study for the Naval examinations. What a fool he had been to believe that a high standing in examinations would offset the defect in his sight. A wave of indignation shook



"Break, damn you!" he roared, and swung the ax.

helped to draw the injured man into the shelter of the steel walls.

"Snap out of it, Santusso," ordered Gaines. "Don't stand there yammering. Take his legs, you fool!"

"*Maria Santissima!*" gasped the seaman as he beheld the bloody cut on the captain's head. "De cap'n he dead! *San Pietro!*" He clasped his hands and commenced to wail in terror as the *Merchant*
A. T.

him as he recalled the cold glare of the examining surgeon at Great Lakes Naval Training Camp, when he beheld the earnest little candidate standing hopefully in the doorway.

"What do you want?" he had asked perfunctorily.

"I want to take examinations—"

"Get out of here!" the surgeon had shouted derisively. "Get out of here, you cross-eyed bum. Go and join the Marines! There's a cock-eyed outfit for you!"

The bitter injustice of it still rankled, and Hedly's words of a few minutes ago had rubbed salt in the old wound.

"Now let's see," he mumbled to himself as he closed the steel door behind him and stood in the dim light of a passageway. "Hedly's knocked out, the Swede's overboard, so it comes down to me. I guess I'm the senior officer, by God!"

A THRILL possessed him, and he straightened his weary shoulders beneath the cold wrinkles of the oilskins from which dripped water onto the oil-stained planking of the passageway. He had a sudden desire to shout out loud and to caper about. Instead he swung through the battered door of the companionway and descended in the forecabin to find a scene of utter confusion.

A single lamp suspended from the ceiling cast flickering red rays to and fro as the ship plunged dizzily up and down. In the gloom resounded the curses and wails of the motley crew as they prepared to meet what they believed to be imminent death. One, a great negro with a dirty, bloody bandage tied about his head, shouted deliriously and slobbered prayers as he clung to his bunk, while another, whom Gaines recognized as an Englishman, was methodically tying up his belongings into a square of soiled canvas. One by one he was folding up his few garments, and whistling a music hall ditty as he did so. Lying terrified on the soaking and furniture-strewn floor, several villainous non-descripts, helpless with nausea, rolled to and fro in their own spew as the deck

tilted beneath them. Then a bow port gave under the terrific strain, and with a sudden spurt gallons of sea water came sluicing in.

Bedlam broke out, and there was a wild scramble in Gaines' direction which would have swept him off his feet had he not, with a sudden sweep, drawn an automatic from beneath his slicker and leveled it at the foremost.

"Back, you swine!" he shouted. They halted uncertainly and fell back.

"Get back, you cowards! Get back!" he roared, his little frame shaking with anger. "By the Lord Harry, I'll murder all of you in a minute. You, Nelson, pull that steel cover over the port. It should have been fastened in place hours ago, you careless dogs." He turned to face the crew, and spoke briskly. "All of you, get your skins on. Damn it all!—there's a pile of work to be done if you want to stay afloat. Get moving, you scum!"

In the smoky gloom a low grumble broke out, but the crew scrambled down from their refuges and, donning their waterproofs, followed the mate out among the straining trucks.

"You, Hardy," he ordered, "go find Chups and tell him to bring two or three axes and hatchets. The rest of you, except O'Leary and Mariano, get down to the engine room. Do anything the chief tells you." Gaines ducked as a sudden wall of water fell on the struggling figures. The wave crashed solidly on his back, driving the breath from his body with a jolt that nearly broke his hold on the brake handle of a high-sided Quad truck.

With anxious eyes he watched the wavering outlines of Hardy and the others make their way aft; then he turned to the two men whimpering at his side. "Back to forecabin!" he screamed.

As he hauled himself forward by main force he suddenly realized the magnitude of the task he had undertaken, and cursed Hedly's lack of foresight as he stumbled down the narrow foc'sle stair. It felt good to be indoors again.

"Oh, Boss!" howled Mariano above the

din of the seas. "We feeda da feesh dis trip. Me no mind so much, but now me Maria looka for dat damn Joe."

FOR a long half hour the three waited for the return of Hardy in the shelter of the forecabin. When at length the Englishman reappeared, he had three axes in his hands and a bloody froth on his lips. One by one the axes clattered to the floor while Hardy swayed on his feet. His features twisted in a grimace of pain.

"Cripes, Matey, I'm done for." He clutched the side of a bunk. "The bloody ol' tub pitched and stove in me left side. 'Ere are the haxes. 'For Gawd's sake use 'em quick,' said the chief. 'E says the bloody ol' engines goin' ter fall apart in another 'arf 'our. Says the brass facing on the thrust block is orl wore orf, 'n' they're heatin' fast."

The Englishman slipped to the deck and Gaines lifted the limp figure into a sodden bunk.

"Thankin' yer kindly, sir," gasped the blue-lipped seaman. "But don't waste no time on me—I'm a gorner, I am. An' the steam pumps is broke—'Strewth matey, the ol' hooker's a gorner like me—a gorner." A sudden rush of dark blood spurted onto the floor, and Hardy lay silent.

For a moment Gaines remained staring at the inert figure; then, whirling on his heel, he led the way to where the deck load lay half submerged. With ropes around their waists and in a welter of flying spray the three groped for the groaning cables which held the heavy trucks in place. As they located the knots they fastened their life lines to the nearest stanchions and prepared to cut away the deck load.

At Gaines' direction they hacked through the less vital lashings first, while the wind tore at the canvas tarpaulins with invisible pincers. Knot after knot they severed, slipping precariously among the shifting motors as they strove to reach the more inaccessible lashings, until at last it appeared that four vital knots held the straining mass to the deck. Gaines located two of the knots to port and one to

starboard, but found that the fourth was lost in the midst of the tangle.

"Wait till she rolls to port!" he screamed above the driving gale. "Cut the two knots when they're slack. I'll get the starboard one."

"No! No! Boss you getta killed!" howled Mariano. "De trucks ketcha you on de way back!"

"Damn it all!" roared Gaines. "Do what I say. Cut those knots the third time she rolls to port." With this he scrambled across the wreckage-strewn deck, glancing apprehensively at the trucks, which were momentarily gaining further latitude in their plunges. He was fully alive to the danger he was running, and realized that his chances of dodging the freed avalanche of steel were small indeed.

"One!" he counted as the *Merchant Prince* swung over to the left, her stumpy mast describing a sickening arc. Heavily she rolled back to starboard, while Gaines fixed his eyes on the dark blur of the knot he must dash to reach. He judged it was about fifteen feet away, and cursed at the thought of the cumbersome knee boots and flapping oilskins which hampered his movements.

"Two!" The trucks coasted downwards a few feet, making Gaines' heart stand still with fear that the men on the other side might be crushed. But the longshoremen who tied the knots must have known their business, for the motors did not break loose. Like a lifted drawbridge the *Merchant Prince* commenced to roll back to the right. Down, down, down, she sank until the spindrift creamed over her battered rail. Then Gaines' heart gave a leap as he saw that, in an instant, the steamer would begin her third roll to port.

"Eee-yah!" he screamed as he had long ago, when with the other boys he had charged the snow fort out by Sutters' Mill. As swiftly as he could he lumbered forward, his eyes riveted on the outline of the knot. With a mighty groan, the ship commenced to turn back and with water up to his knees Gaines hacked

wildly at the knot. Desperately he rained blow after blow on the heavy hemp and felt his ax blade drive home. Sometimes he missed, and felt the jar on his wrists as steel struck steel.

"Break, damn you!" he raved, and swung the ax like a flail. He felt the ship come to the bottom of her roll and realized that in an instant she would start on the return roll and thus hurl twenty tons of cold steel in his direction. With furious strength he hacked through all but one strand and, glancing up, saw a dark mass bearing down on him. Instinctively he started to run, but stopped and swung once more at the rope.

LIKE the rush of a train in a tunnel, something hurtled past him to the right, crashed against the rail and vanished over the side with a mighty grinding of steel. A great spout of water flew up, far above the bridge. Then another freed truck knocked him spinning across the deck. As he clutched at a friendly stanchion, he saw that the inaccessible knot was holding a majority of the trucks in place for a brief moment, while the other machines skated wildly about the deck. Then the *Merchant Prince* writhed back to port, sending the whole mass crashing against the port rail as it rushed overboard and blotted out the two men who fled in its path.

Stupidly, Gaines stared at the cleared place where the trucks had been, and saw the seas breaking unimpeded across the deck. Then he noticed that, by accident or design, the hatch frame of number one hold was set rather higher up from the deck than the rest. It was a terrible risk, but it might be possible to get into that hold without swamping the ship.

"It's a hell of a big chance to take," he told himself. "But I've got to get those sails out."

Gaines slipped and stumbled down the dimly lit passage until he gained the little bridge made of steel bars running above the ancient engines. He peered downwards and tried to distinguish the figure of old Hogan in the drifting steam, and

found that he could barely see shapes hurrying to and fro. The hold flamed scarlet at intervals as the stokers flung open the furnace doors. The pounding of the sea outside, the hoarse wheezing of the old engines and scrape of coal shovels filled the pit with an uproar indescribable. Cupping his hands and bracing his body he shouted, "How's things goin'?"

"God in the foothills!" called the old man. "Why aren't you decently dead like we'll all be before mornin'?"

"Too busy," returned Gaines as he swung down to the floor, which was streaming with a mixture of water, coal dust and ashes to the depth of two or three inches.

He found the engineer clad in a dirty undershirt and studying the pressure gage with an anxious stare. A bloody bruise showed on his forehead where one of the ship's wild plunges had flung him against a boiler cover. Gaines held his numbed hands out to the glow.

"Where are all the men?"

"Savin' the black gang, they're all at the pumps; but the bosun says the water's makin' faster than a spring freshet." Hogan shrugged his blackened shoulders wearily. He passed the back of his hand over his sweat-streaked brow and winced as he touched the bruise. "There's so much water comin' down yonder funnel, the fires won't last much longer. Take a look at yonder thrust block! See her smoke! Ye can see the brass is all wore off. She's like to freeze any moment and then Molly Hogan'll be richer by five thousand dollars o' insurance before dawnin'."

The veteran turned to the groaning engines, which even to Gaines' untrained ears sounded on the verge of collapse, and, with a muttered curse, fell to oiling the smoking steel.

Then with sudden energy Gaines caught the chief engineer's arm. His eyes searched the other's grime-streaked features with a grim intentness. "How long can I have to rig a jib on her and make a stab at a staysail?"

For a moment Hogan stood silent, then

he put his hand gently on Gaines' shoulder.

"Yer a brave boy and a whole man, me lad," he said slowly, "but it's no good. Even if ye could rig a sail in this livin' gale—which I doubt ye can—I couldn't

and some were just morose and silent.

Quickly Gaines singled out the men he felt would be of use.

"Jimenez, Laborreau, and Fullen," he called: "come with me. How about you,



*The hard
walnut stock
crashed down
on Gaines'
salt-encrusted
sou'wester.*

promise ye more than fifteen minutes. Or twenty at the outside—"

Gaines clutched the other's calloused hand. "Promise me that you'll keep her at it till the last second and I'll—" Leaving the sentence unfinished he turned down a narrow passage to where the balance of the crew stood hopelessly sawing up and down on the pump handles. Over half of their members, unable to find a place on the handle bars, waited hopelessly for the end which seemed not an hour away. A few swore, a few sobbed,

Gohagan? Do you want to help out?"

A tall seaman stepped forward and buttoned his dirty yellow slicker with a nod.

"Faith, I'd as soon drown on deck, as a rat in a cage down here," he muttered.

GAINES never quite knew how they got into number one hatch without swamping the ship, nor even less how they got the stained old canvas on deck, for his whole consciousness was trained on the weak throbbing of the engines—a throbbing which grew steadily more fee-

ble, until, just as they were handing the sails up to the deck, there was a halt in the thudding and Gaines thought that the end had come. Immediately the *Merchant Prince* lost headway.

"To the boats!" shouted Jimenez frantically. "*Et vapor hunde!*"

Accompanied by the terror-stricken Laborreau, and regardless of Gaines' imploring commands, he vanished, to be mocked by empty davits on the hurricane deck.

"Yellow Guinnies," snarled Fullen as he clambered onto a cargo boom, a three-quarters inch rope between his teeth. With deliberate haste he prepared to lash the bottom of the improved leg-o'-mutton sail to it, while Gohagan and Gaines rigged a block and tackle sheet.

But just as the *Merchant Prince* commenced to roll into the fatal trough of the sea, the moribund engines gave a few feeble flutters more.

With this momentary respite, Gaines and Gohagan were able to pass the bight of a topping lift through the eye at the peak of the old jib. Once, as they worked, a thunderous gust of sleet-laden wind nearly ripped the precious canvas from their torn and bleeding fingers, but Gaines had wisely kept a double loop of stout manilla about the fullness of the sail. Finally the jib, close reefed, was hauled into position inch by inch and foot by foot, while the men were able to breathe only intermittently between clouds of spray.

At that moment the whole fabric of the *Merchant Prince* shuddered, and a great cloud of steam roared up the exhaust beside the funnel to be violently whipped from sight in the gradually paling sky. Then, as the laboring steamer lost headway, the nose of the freighter swung out of the wind and with the inexorable force of an hydraulic press, the hull began to roll heavily from side to side, her funnel tugging madly at the fifteen odd guys that held it in place. With wild eyes the mate saw what threatened and he turned half about.

"Hoist! For God's sake, hoist!"

screamed Gaines as he made the last twist to the bowline he was tying. With their united strength the three men heaved at the halyard while the canvas rose inch by inch.

A sudden dreadful doubt that the old jib would stand the strain seized him, but just then the first beam sea roared over the side, so, with an unvoiced prayer, he cast the fullness loose. With the report of a small cannon the jib filled and bellied out taut, while the men on deck struggled to keep their holds as they hauled on the improvised sheet.

It seemed as though the *Merchant Prince* lay wallowing in the trough with complete disdain of the streaming canvas forward, but at last her blunt nose commenced to seek the wind again, while the frothing combers pounded her dented bow plates unmercifully. Finally she rode once more, water-logged and helpless, but safe with her bow to the seas.

On stumbling feet the mate made his way up to the bridge as the *Merchant Prince*, her bows relieved by the removal of the jettisoned trucks, rode a trifle more easily.

PRESENTLY a broad-shouldered figure clad in a close-buttoned, blue pea-jacket struggled up the steel ladder and saluted Gaines with a short motion of the hand.

"Tried to find you sooner, sir," shouted the new arrival, whom Gaines recognized as Smalley. He was one of the gun crew supplied by the navy to work the four-inch rifle mounted aft. "Chief Petty Officer Williams died one hour ago and two of the seamen are pretty bad. I'm the only one that's able to move. I thought I'd better report, sir."

The mate shook his head. "I'm awfully sorry. Mr. Williams was a fine man."

He turned his wind and spray-burned face to look at the navy man who stood staring curiously at the bent and twisted davit of a lifeboat, the falls of which streamed horizontally in the wind. For the first time he noted that the dirty, white ventilators of the *Merchant Prince* were

as battered and dented as a hobo's derby. Two of them had been swept away without a trace.

"God, sir, you must have had one tough time on deck last night," said the navy man at length. "They say you got that sail rigged just in time. I thought we was headed for Jones sure. Gosh, but the old *Prince* looks sick!"

Suddenly Gaines remembered the man he sought to help. "Smalley, go and find out how Captain Hedly is," he said. "He was hurt last night."

THE seaman started to quit the bridge, but at that moment the head and shoulders of a sailor appeared on the ladder. He clambered heavily onto the slippery planking and was immediately followed by Captain Hedly, who wore a dirty bandage about his head. On the right side was a dull, red smudge.

Like an angry bull he roared as he caught sight of Gaines, and, drawing a revolver, he advanced, his face suffused and furious.

"You're under arrest," he bellowed. "You treacherous hound! Try to murder me and steal my ship, will you? Don't move or I'll drill your dirty hide." His voice dropped to a snarl and his breath came and went quickly between his white and regular teeth. "Well, Jeff Gaines, you've got to be a damn sight smarter than you'll ever be to put that over. Trying to ruin me so's to get Ellen for yourself! I'm on to your little game!"

Speechless with amazement, Gaines could only stare at the threatening figure bearing down on him. In a flash he saw what Hedly meant to do. He held up a warning hand and backed away.

"You don't know what you're saying," he protested. "You must be out of your head. I never tried to hurt you. You slipped on the deck, don't you remember—"

With a snarl the captain leaped forward. "You bet I remember," shouted Hedly, and swung his pistol butt down with a powerful heave. The hard walnut stock crashed down on Gaines' salt-

encrusted sou'wester and the mate sank to the deck without a sound, a thin stream of blood issuing from between his pallid lips.

"Try to murder me—steal my ship—disobey orders, will you?" Like a man gone mad, the captain rained kick after kick on the prostrate figure until Smalley threw himself forward with a savage curse.

"Lay off'n him, ye big four-flusher," he gritted as he pinioned Hedly's arms from behind. "D'ye want to scupper him? He saved your damned ol' garbage scow fer ye."

Sullenly the captain stepped back and glared vindictively at the seaman, his handsome face livid and distorted.

"Mind you own business, Navy; it don't pay to butt in. I won't hurt the sneaking son any more, but he'll get plenty when I get him before an admiralty court! I've got him dead to rights—Santusso saw him hit me with a marlin spike. The yellow hound!"

THREE days later the *Merchant Prince* was limping into the other edge of the Bay of Biscay with her patched and juried engines sobbing with each revolution of the screw. Overhead the sky was of a resplendent blue, and sparkling little wavelets stroked the camouflaged and salt-streaked sides of the freighter almost lovingly. But there was neither light nor air in the depths of the ship where Gaines lay in a fetid hole which served as the brig. Instead, the foul reek of the ancient bilges poisoned the air, while the sound of the waves beating on the hull pounded monotonously into his ears.

The ex-mate had no idea of the day or hour as he roused himself at the sound of cautiously approaching footsteps.

"Are you there, Johnnie?" queried a familiar voice in a hoarse whisper. A tiny spark of hope began to burn in the prisoner's head.

"Is it you, Hogan?"

The figure shifted its weight and sneezed softly. "Sure it's no one else." The engineer scratched a match and lit a

candle end, whose feeble light reflected on the moisture of the worn plates and the rusted bars which formed the brig.

"Have you a key?" whispered Gaines.

Hogan thrust forward a paper parcel. "No, but here's some decent food," said he. "I misdoubt you get nothing but hog-wash."

Eagerly the hollow-eyed prisoner munched the thick sandwiches while his friend talked.

"Ye're well off here, me lad," continued Hogan. "More than half the crew's down with the flu. They's hardly enough men left to run this old hog-trough. Hedly'd like to have you out if he dared. They ain't no other officers, and he don't know nothing." The engineer leaned forward, a look of deep concern on his battered features. "But you're in serious trouble. He's planning to have ye up for mutiny on the high seas—"

"On what grounds?" mumbled Gaines, his mouth full.

"Disobeying orders about those damn trucks. Not that ye weren't right to do what ye did. We'd all be floaters by now, if ye hadn't broke out them sails. The worst of it is, that square-headed quartermaster heard him order ye not to touch those trucks. 'Twas when ye was both up on the bridge—"

"Hm-m, that's bad," said Gaines after a pause. "Anything else I'm accused of?" Hogan stared. "Ain't that enough?"

"Plenty," said the other. "But what else?"

"Hedley says you tried to murder him. Old grudge, he says. He's got that scrap-in' o' the ghetto called Santusso ready to swear he saw ye punch the skipper on the jaw, then sock him wid a marlin spike. Oh, he's got ye framed very pretty." Hogan paused and scratched his back vigorously against a packing case. "Guess Hedly's got something on the dago or else he's bribed him. But at any rate yer in a damn bad way."

FOR several moments the two men sat in a silence broken only by the groaning of the ancient deck beams and the oc-

casional shrill squeal of a rat. Gaines wiped his mouth on a dingy sleeve, then leaned forward against the rusted bars.

"Well, there's still some time before we get in—"

"If we get in," corrected Hogan with a hollow laugh. "What with the rotten engines I've managed to patch up, and Hedly's rottener seamanship, we're still a long way from being safe. Thank God, the wireless has been repaired, and they say the convoy meets us some time tonight or to-morrow. The *Prince* must have a pretty valuable cargo in her else they wouldn't be meetin' of us two full days farther out than ordinary. At least Sparks says so."

In the gloom of the brig, Gaines stared miserably at the sputtering candle end and opened his mouth to speak, but with the suddenness of an electric shock there came a terrific explosion of bright orange flame which sent the cargo crashing down right and left. Under the shock wooden cases burst and split a heterogeneous mass of gas masks, machine guns, and steel carbons into the alleys between the white pine cases.

For a moment the men were too stunned by the concussion to speak, and they crouched helplessly against the slimy plates of the ship's sides. The candle had gone out.

"Guess the boilers is gone," gasped Hogan at length. "No, it can't be that. The engines is still goin'."

Overhead they heard hoarse shouts and the sound of feet hurrying across the deck, apparently in wild confusion.

For a moment Gaines was utterly mystified; then a swirl of blue-gray smoke came their way and he sniffed suspiciously.

He barely suppressed a cry of surprise. "Good God, Hogan!—that's from a shell," he cried. "Either the cargo is on fire or a sub's caught us. By God!—that's what it is! It's a sub."

Hogan started to his feet in alarm, and fumbled about in the blackness.

"What are you going to do?" shouted Gaines as the old man turned away.

"Open the sea cocks," said the chief engineer calmly. "I'm eternally damned if they get this ship. The murdering brutes sunk a son o' mine a year gone by."

"Hold on!" cried Gaines. "We might get away."

"Not with the wrecks of engines we've got. We can't make five knots an hour."

"Just a minute," pleaded Gaines. "How soon is the convoy due to join us?"

"The wireless man said around five o'clock. It's only three-thirty now, so it's no use. The sub can do all she wants to do in half an hour. Besides half the gun crew is dead o' the flu, and the other half's as good as dead. Only Smalley is on his feet. What's one man?"

Overhead came a dull report which reverberated through the iron hull like summer thunder.

"It's our gun," cried Gaines excit-

edly. "Smalley must be working her alone. Quick, Hogan, get me out of this. I know gunnery—studied it to get into the Navy. It's my chance at last!"

The mate set his shoulder to the bars with a mighty heave and nearly broke his neck on the cases opposite the doorway, for the bars flew back without opposition allowing Gaines to hurtle forward.

"Now may I be damned!" shouted Hogan. "Yonder shell must have blown the dusty old lock loose."

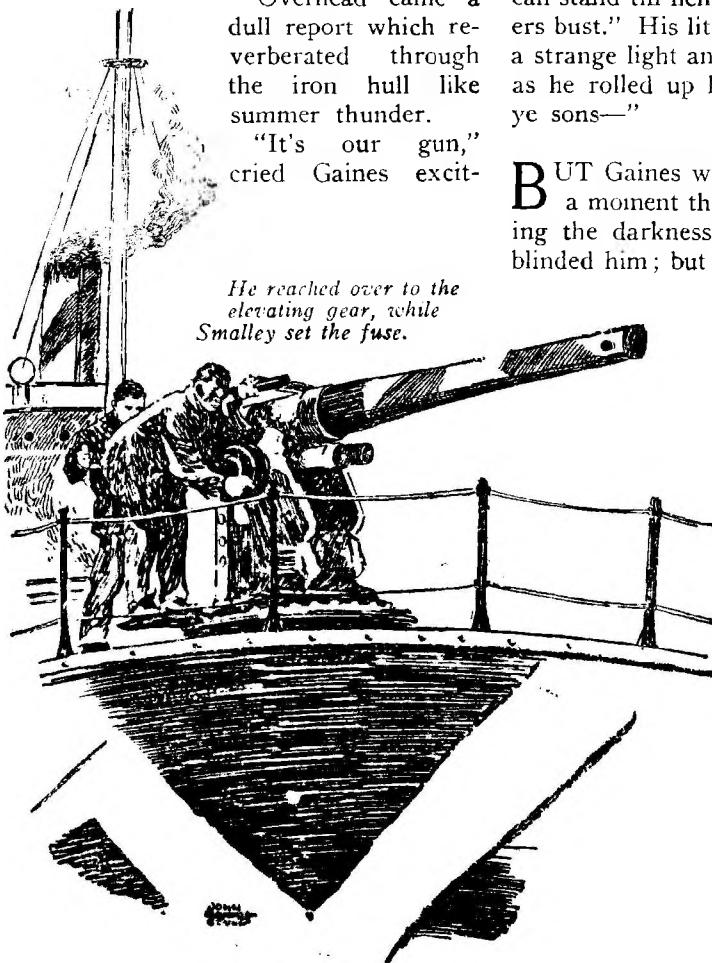
The two men scrambled over the cargo, coughing furiously as the fumes of the shell clutched at their throats.

"I'm for the engine room, lad," called Hogan over his shoulder as they emerged into a passageway. "I'll give 'er all she can stand till hell freezes over or the boilers bust." His little blue eyes burned with a strange light and his big hands trembled as he rolled up his sleeves. "Now then, ye sons—"

BUT Gaines was already on deck. For a moment the afternoon glare following the darkness of the hold completely blinded him; but presently he was able to

make out the bridge and saw Hedly outlined against the sky fumbling frantically in a pile of many-hued code flags.

Something whistled over the *Merchant Prince* with the shriek of a lost soul and crashed into the bright blue sea half a mile away, sending a tall geyser of white spray high into the air. Hedly crouched cowering a moment, then continued his search until at last he seemed to find satisfaction; then he sped down the ladder and along the deck towards the signal hal-



He reached over to the elevating gear, while Smalley set the fuse.

yard, a white bundle in his hands. Instantly Gaines divined his purpose and sprang forward with a growl of anger.

"Drop that!" he ordered, and swung with all his might towards the captain's jaw. His fist landed with a crunch fairly on the point of Hedly's chin, and sent the skipper tottering back. As he fell his length on the deck Gaines ran to the bridge, and, selecting an American ensign from the flag locker, bent it to the hal-yards. In another minute the flag soared aloft and waved a pitiful defiance to the mighty engine of war now rapidly approaching to finish off the *Merchant Prince*. Gaines paused just long enough to promise death to the Danish quartermaster if he did not pursue a zigzag course, changing direction every five minutes. The Scandinavian spat a thick brown stream to the floor of the pilot house and said, "You no worry Meester Gaines. Me no la-a-ak German. You no worry. Me do my bes'."

Gaines caught sight of the enemy for the first time as he raced over the deserted deck towards the stern. A little speck it was, far to windward. Like a child's toy, the U-boat seemed, but at that instant a puff of white broke from her side and a shell burst two hundred yards ahead of the *Merchant Prince*, which was slowly swinging around to an end-on position.

At the gun Gaines found Smalley all alone squinting into the sighting apparatus. Nearby lay the canvas cover of the gun and an empty shell case. As Gaines approached, the Navy man stepped back and jerked the lanyard. Instantly the whole deck shuddered under the recoil while a puff of white smoke drifted lazily over the stern.

"Over and to the right," called Gaines as he ran up.

"What the hell!" cried Smalley whirling about with a snarl of surprise. "Is someone of this God-forgotten pest-ship goin' to help me at last?"

"Just broke jail," gasped Gaines. "Now let's see what's what. I know a bit about

fire control. Studied to be an officer before the war broke out. Know anything about range finding?"

Smalley shook his head. "Not much. I'm only a machinist."

"Well then," decided Gaines, "you do the loading and firing and I'll call the ranges and check the shot. We'll both rustle shells when we can."

As he spoke he gave the training wheel a couple of turns and reached over to the elevating gear. Meanwhile Smalley prepared to set the fuse.

"Call it five thousand yards," directed Gaines as he ran for another shell from the supply in an after locker. Glancing up, he observed smoke, thick and black, pouring up from the battered, stumpy tunnel, and noticed that the engines were turning over more rapidly.

"Good old Hogan!" he said to himself as he sprinted back to the gun. Smalley was just closing the breech when he arrived and together they gaged the roll of the ship. Down she went to port, then slowly came up towards an even keel again.

"Fire!"

Smalley jerked the lanyard while Gaines watched for the burst. It came with a sullen cloud of white smoke in direct line with the submarine, but considerably over it.

"Over that time!" shouted the mate and ran for another shell. Thicker and thicker the smoke poured out of the funnel, and in passing over the stern it cast a deep shadow on the gun. Presently the *Merchant Prince* changed direction and blundered off on a starboard course with the lumbering haste of a fat tramp chased by a policeman.

Barely had she done so, when a shell sighed overhead and burst fifty yards to port with a crash and a sudden cloud of blackish smoke. Smalley and Gaines threw themselves flat on the dirty planking while the air was filled with singing splinters of steel. With beating hearts they heard the burst rattle on the side plates and on the funnel, and when they looked up they could see the smoke coming out of the cuts like water spurting from a

punctured garden hose. Long furrows, white and jagged, showed where fragments had scarred the deck planking.

"On a raft!" swore Smalley. "Lucky the Dane changed course when he did. Come on, Mate; it's our turn now."

Again and again they loaded and fired, missing each time by a smaller margin, until they came so close that it seemed that their next shot must surely land on that tiny distant target. Sweating and gasping with their exertions, the two men did the work of six, while Hogan in the engine room, a red-hot drawing bar in his hand, drove the stokers unmercifully.

Gradually the submarine drew nearer, shortening the range, but approaching with caution. Evidently she found the single gun on the stern of her victim far too dangerous to be ignored.

Finally the submarine sent a shell that burst squarely over the blunt bow of the *Merchant Prince* and sprinkled the fore deck with a shower of death-dealing fragments. There came a rending crash as the foremast toppled drunkenly over the side and took both cargo booms with it. Like broken legs, the shattered spars trailed over the side and materially hindered the pathetic speed of the fleeing steamer.

Smalley cursed at this fresh disaster. "Gosh, Mister Gaines, it's a case of hash for breakfast this trip," said the gunner. "He's got us bracketed at last. The next one will be the last."

WITH desperate haste they reloaded the four-inch rifle and spun the training wheel just as the quartermaster, who had evidently survived the bursting shell, changed course.

Suddenly the pursuing submarine halted its activities and sheered off, apparently undecided as to what to do.

"Look!" shouted Smalley, and pointed to two smudges of smoke low down on the sunlit horizon. "It must be the convoy destroyers."

"Yes," said Gaines, "But they'll never get here in time."

As the words left his mouth there came

a terrific roar overhead, and the whole stern was smothered in a burst of blinding, stunning flame which flung Gaines half dazed to the deck. How long he lay there, unable to think, he never knew but when he recovered himself, the submarine was much closer. So close it was, that he could make out little figures moving about her deck. He tried to get up, but found that his legs would not answer his efforts. Grimly he strove to force them to their duty, but they remained utterly passive. At last, one—his right—answered, but the other was broken in two places.

"Good God! Smalley," he groaned. "You'll have to fire the gun. I can't move." Then he looked about for the gunner and saw only a twisted shape lying limp in the scuppers, while a stream of red drained slowly over the side. How flat he looked!

Nearer came the submarine, quite certain that her last shot had knocked out both gun and engines, for the *Merchant Prince* lay motionless save for the rolling of the azure-tinted sea. The gun crew on the U-boat reloaded slowly while their officer examined the smoke smudges with his glasses.

"Gewiss," he said at last. "They are destroyers. Let us now the merchantman sink and be off. *Nein*, do not waste a torpedo on such a wretched tub. A shell will do. Right at the water line, *nicht wahr?*"

But the commander of the U-boat was not the only one who sighted the telltale smudge on the horizon off to port. Gaines uttered a groan of surprise.

"The convoy destroyers of course," he gasped. "But they'll be too late—that damned sub'll get us first!" His agonized eyes sought the breech of the gun and saw that the training gear was hopelessly bent and twisted, while the sighting apparatus had altogether disappeared.

"No use," he thought. "That gun'll never fire another shot!" He rolled his head over and gazed at the slate-gray submarine which lay for the moment on the crest of a wave not a quarter of a mile distant. He found that he could distin-

guish the figures on her deck quite easily, and he recognized the various officers of the gun crew as they prepared to load again. Evidently they had decided not to waste an expensive torpedo on the battered old *Merchant Prince*.

"The fools!" thought Gaines. "If they only knew what a cargo's in her, they'd take no chances!"

Suddenly he realized that in less than five minutes the ship he had fought so hard to save would go swirling down to the cold depths on the ocean floor, and revulsion seized him.

"No! No!" he shouted aloud and wildly he looked about. Again his gaze fell on the menacing submarine, then glanced to the shattered gun.

"If we only had another gun," he whispered, "I might scare them off long enough!" Then with a mad thrill of hope he remembered his invention. It should be mounted in the after well deck not thirty feet away, if Hedly hadn't thrown it overboard while he was in the brig!

HE made a great effort and found himself able to crawl on his hands and one knee, while his broken leg trailed like a leaden weight after him. Sharp pangs of pain shot up to his whirling head as he crawled along foot by foot, a trail of small red blots marking his progress.

For eons, it seemed, he struggled onwards while his consciousness wavered on the edge into a red mist. Somehow he reached the bottom of the ladder and hauled himself abreast of the last packing case which hid the place where he had left his brain child. Hoping against hope he rounded the corner and uttered a husky whoop of joy, for there, shrouded in a piece of oily canvas, was his gun, her wicked little muzzle pointing drunkenly downwards.

Luckily, the gun was on the side where the U-boat lay, and Gaines realized he had only to train it. A hasty glance over the rail disclosed the fact that the gun crew on the submarine was closing the breech of their piece. In a moment they would fire. With flying fingers he clawed off the

cover, and reaching in a little tool chest to one side, where he kept the shells for his gun, he drew out three neat little cartridges. Selecting one fitted with a contact fuse, he flipped open the shiny breech and shot the bright little brass cylinder into place. With a soul-satisfying click the breech closed. Mumbling wildly to himself, Gaines handled the so-familiar pointing wheels and levers.

Fiery wheels buzzed and soared before his aching eyes as he finally found his target through the sights, and, fighting a deadly nausea, he propped himself on one hand to wait for the *Merchant Prince* to reach an even keel. As she slowly righted, he had a vague impression of the gunner on the U-boat raising his hand. Gaines knew that when he dropped that hand the gunner's mate would pull the fatal lanyard. Would the *Merchant Prince* never right!

Up—up—up she went: then, with all his remaining strength he jerked the little lanyard. There was a thunderous explosion and his nostrils were filled with the pungent odor of burnt lyddite while his ear-drums seemed to burst with the noise. Semiconsciously he rolled over facing the sea, to catch a momentary glimpse of a great cigarlike shape almost standing on end as it slowly sank out of sight.

As he lay spent and helpless on the deck, he seemed to see Ellen in her starched white dress coming towards him.

"Hedly," he murmured feebly. "Hedly, wake up! Everything will be all right—nobody saw you. Take that white flag. . . . Hedly, you didn't know, did you? . . . No," he said doggedly, "Hedly'd never do a thing like that." Then everything went black.

But Tom Hedly lay very still where the shell which had burst on the bows had killed him. His handsome features showed no trace of pain, and his unseeing eyes stared up at the bridge he had disgraced. Quite like a hero he looked.

AS he sat in Ellen Fahys' parlor, Gaines nervously clutched a sheet of paper which bore the heading of the Navy

Department. He reread the last paragraph for the hundredth time.

"... In the death of Captain Thomas Hedly our merchant marine has before it an example of the highest degree of self-sacrifice and courage. Fighting a hopeless battle to the end, he saved his ship and her vitally important cargo from destruction at the cost of his own life. His skill and seamanship twice saved his ship from loss: once from foundering in a great gale, and once from an enemy of greatly superior force. . . ."

Gaines set his jaw as he heard a light step on the stair.

"By God!" he murmured. "That ought to show her. She'll never know. Poor, poor Tom!"

Never had Ellen seemed so lovely as when she swept into the room holding out both hands in eager welcome.

"Why Jeff Gaines," she cried, her dark eyes intent on his face. "How well you're looking. I—I, we—we heard that you'd been badly wounded."

He struggled to his feet and stood amazed at the warmth of her reception, while a warm tide of color flooded his lean, brown cheeks.

"Oh," he said, "the surgeons patched me up pretty well at Bordeaux and I'm 'most as good as new." His voice fell and his eyes sought hers. "Ellen there's something I want to show you—"

"Oh!" her laugh rang out sweet and with a strange little tremor in it. "Oh, Jeff, I'm so glad—it was wonderful."

He stared in surprise.

"Why—why what do you mean?"

She caught his hand impulsively. "Oh Jeff, I mean your medal. I'm so awfully glad. I know you earned it—I always knew you'd do well. Don't spoil things by being too modest. Remember I've known you for years and years and you can't fool me."

He could barely believe his ears, and his head spun happily as he realized that Ellen was speaking to him—gazing with radiant eyes at little, funny-looking Jeff Gaines. It couldn't be true!

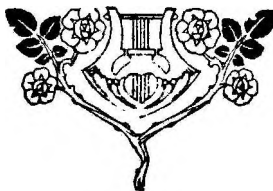
"But Ellen," he protested, "I was talking of something else."

Silently he handed her the letter, and watched her as she seated herself on the so-familiar horsehair sofa and commenced to read Tom Hedly's citation.

Slowly the smile vanished from her face, and her lips set themselves tightly as she finished the first page. Then, as she read the concluding paragraph, he saw two tears creep silently down her cheeks. Deeply moved, he got to his feet and started out; but he felt he must say something.

"Tom was all man," he said at last in a voice that trembled. "You've lost a wonderful fiancé in Tom." He faced blindly the gloom of the hallway and would have limped out, but he heard a sudden cry of dismay and whirling about saw Ellen coming towards him. In a moment she was in his arms sobbing.

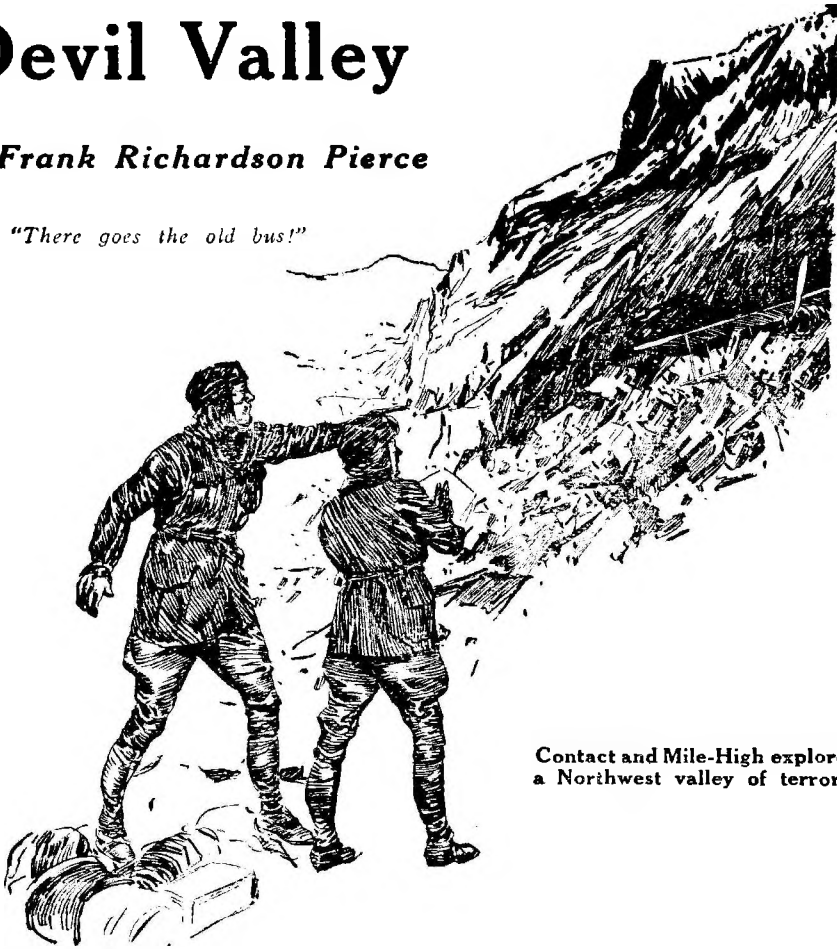
"Oh, Jeff, Jeff, why won't you see?" she failed. "I liked Tom in the old days, but there was nothing between us. Everybody wanted us to be engaged but—but I couldn't. Don't you see, dear? It's you—who really matter."



Devil Valley

By Frank Richardson Pierce

"There goes the old bus!"



Contact and Mile-High explore a Northwest valley of terror.

NOW what?" The spluttering of the motor told in plain words that it was time for Mile-High Denny O'Mara and Contact Jac' Sutton to look for an emergency landing field. Though flying in Alaska, this was not difficult to find. The Stikine River stretched below them, and its frozen surface was ideal in many respects.

Their motor was gasping when they finally reached the ice. On either side towered sheer mountains five thousand or more feet high. Despite the ice, spring was in the air. The break-up was just around the corner.

"Big change in the weather in the last two weeks," Mile-High observed as he shed his heavy flying togs and began to investigate the trouble.

Two weeks previous they had soared over this same river and picked up a hun-

dred thousand dollars' worth of fur and a lot of trouble. Now they were on their way to Devil Valley. In crossing it on the fur trip they had been blown several feet upward by some mysterious explosion. This interested the flying partners. They also were interested in the gold the valley was supposed to contain. But most of all they were interested in the reason Indians shunned the place.

Contact opened a compartment in the tail of the machine and dragged out several astonished husky dogs. Flying was a new experience for them. They did not care for it. He exercised them for several minutes, then joined his partner. "What's the trouble?"

"Danged if I know!" The red-headed little Irishman seemed to be stumped. "Guess we're down for the rest of the day and night," he admitted. "I'm wondering if somebody's jimmed the motor on us.

We've picked up a few enemies in our knocking around."

It was possible. In their various fights and adventures they had acquired several healthy enemies, and not all of them were in jail.

When darkness overtook them they camped for the night near the plane. It was Mile-High who was suddenly aroused from a sound sleep. "What the heck is that?" he growled. "Wake up, Contact."

"Nothing but the dogs' howling," the big pilot answered sleepily. "You'll get used to that in this country."

Again came the mournful howl. It reminded them of dark ages when men lived in caves. But there was a note in the howl that awakened Contact completely. "There's something wrong. That leader senses danger."

All four dogs were tugging madly at their chains, but the leader was gazing up the river. From the canyon above came the sound of rushing water. Contact squirmed from his sleeping bag. "Good God, Mile-High, the ice is going out!"

THE main river was quiet enough, but the water in one of the tributaries had started to run. This must of necessity come down the canyon, sweeping everything before it. They secured the plane to a tree and prepared for the worst. Throwing food into a pack, Contact ran with the dogs to the nearest high ground. On his heels came Mile-High, staggering under a load of grub, dog packs and sleeping bags.

Securing the dogs they returned to the plane for additional supplies of grub and ammunition. Unless they saved their outfit they were whipped at the start. The third trip completed the job. The pair struggled over ice to the shore, and the water was running two feet deep. Contact was limping slightly. An ice cake had cracked him across the knee.

As day began to break, the full force struck the river. "Look! The main stream is breaking up!" Mile-High pointed excitedly. His excitement was pardonable. Even hardened old sour-

doughs thrilled at sight of the break-up. Man can do many things, but it takes Nature to do things on a lavish scale. Ice breaking off a glacier; thunder; lightning; the northern lights and the ice going out.

The uproar was tremendous as the mass of ice rushed towards the sea. "There goes the old bus!" It was Contact who spoke. They had done their best, but nothing short of actual flight could have taken the plane to safety. Its moorings snapped. The plane moved several yards, was picked up bodily, carried downstream and smashed into a jam. For several minutes it resisted, then slowly crumpled. A wing lifted above the debris, reminding the partners of a dying insect—and then it was gone.

They faced each other with serious expressions. "What next, Contact, shall we go ahead, or what?"

"We're broke! What's there to go back for?"

"Nothing, let's go."

"Might as well. We've got to have money for a new plane. There's gold in Devil Valley, they say. But we've got to get by a band of superstitious Indians first. After that we've got to find the yellow stuff."

"I'd like to find enough of it," Mile-High observed, "so that we could do as we pleased, and busting up a plane or two in a good cause wouldn't bust our pocket-book at the same time."

"Devil Valley's the place," Contact answered. "Let's get organized. Say, you don't want this parachute do you? You've got to be up in the air to use it."

"Let's take it along. It might come in handy!" Mile-High was great on gathering things about him that might "come in handy."

With their outfit on the backs of the dogs and themselves, the flying partners struck off through the rugged country for Devil Valley.

THOUGH born flyers they found the novelty of using their legs pleasant. And at least they could talk without the motor drowning half of what they said.

"The natives are a good deal like the crowd we bumped into on that fur trip," Contact informed him. "They haven't had much experience with missionaries."

"Don't hold that against them," Mile-High answered. "Neither have I."

"The white man's religion and customs haven't made much of an impression," Contact resumed, ignoring the wisecrack. "We can expect anything. They may stop us from going into the valley. I've heard they do."

The days passed swiftly, and one noon Contact, who was in advance, suddenly pointed ahead. "There's the camp. The valley's just beyond." He was silent a moment. "Suppose you be my ace up the sleeve. I'll go ahead and size things up. If they get tough, you get the drop on 'em."

"O.K.," Mile-High answered, getting a better hold on his gun. "Just let out a yell when you want me to start something. I'll be there with bells!"

While the white man's religion and customs may not have

"Look at this," he cried as he displayed a condensed milk can hat filled with nuggets.



made much of an impression, the white man's clothes and weapons had. Half the tribe were dressed in modern clothing, and all were well armed.

The chief spoke fair English. "Prospector?" he inquired.

"No, Chief. I'm going into Devil Valley and look the devils over!" Contact beamed pleasantly.

The announcement met with a frown. "No!" The chief spoke firmly. "No man can enter. It is guarded by a white moose. The moose warns the devil. Then the caribou leave the country, the moose go away, and the salmon don't come up the rivers. The Indian dies."

"Why not pot the white moose. He seems to be the cause of it all. Now if you'll let me go into the valley I'll bag

that moose and—"

Contact was little prepared for the uproar that followed. Their manner became menacing. The younger men crowded about the chief. "No!" the chief repeated. "Go, or my young men—"

"Let's talk it over." Contact wondered where Mile-High was. He should be doing a little menacing on his own account. "Come on, Chief, let's powwow!" He squatted down and began a long talk, purposely using words he knew the chief did not understand. As he talked his eyes searched the surrounding brush for signs of his partner. Mile-High had vanished completely.

Contact finished his speech and was about to leave when the chief detained him. "I get the idea," he growled, resenting the fact he could not immediately look for Mile-High. "You've listened to my speech in a nice, polite way, now it's up to me to listen to yours. Oh, well—fire away, Chief."

The chief talked at length, delving back to the dark ages and coming down to the

present, a generation at a time. When stuck for an English term he used dialect with expressive gestures.

Towards the end a native leaped to his feet, let forth a cry of terror and pointed upward. Floating earthward was a devil. Horns protruded from his head; he wore a pair of red wings and his face was painted red. A touch of the modern was added by a parachute which supported him rather than the wings. The latter were flapping wildly because of the down rush through the air.

Contact bit his cheeks to keep from laughing. "Good old Mile-High!" he cried. "So that's where he's been, rigging up a devil lay-out and climbing to that cliff so he could jump off. My play is to keep still and see what he does."

HE landed in a clump of brush, discarded the parachute and stepped forth. Advancing to Contact he pointed to the east, west, north and south; then to the sun, to himself, the earth and finally the valley. "What do you think of my wings, kid!" he said in a whisper. "Made 'em from a red blanket. They darned near blew off before the chute opened. We're heading for the valley, now. Follow me."

Mile-High led off with dignity. They were almost within the valley portals when the chief asserted himself. "Now what?" Mile-High mumbled.

"He says we can go into the valley, but can not take guns. The report of the guns wakes the devils. He says you are a devil from another valley—different from this one."

"The devil he does. He's right!" Mile-High scratched his helmet. It was impossible for him to scratch his head, because the helmet was pulled down so tightly. This was necessary to hold the horns in place. The horns belonged to a mountain goat, long since eaten by some hunter. "It won't be so good going into that valley without guns."

"We're taking chance enough going in armed," Contact frankly informed his flying partner. "Without arms. . . . His

A. T.

silence was more eloquent than words.

"I hate to be licked at the start."

"We're going to beat this yet. That white bull moose is something to reckon with. He'll charge anything! Say, you're something of a ventriloquist. Try that on the chief."

Mile-High cleared his throat and from the air directly behind the chief came a voice. "Chief, you'd better let the boys go in. Let them take their guns. They'll need them."

The native jumped two feet into the air. The others grew tense and gripped their guns so tightly knuckle bones stood out white beneath dark skin. The chief spoke distinctly in dialect and legged it for cover. His men followed.

"Now's our chance!" Contact cried.

But the instant they stepped across what was doubtless a deadline, they returned. They meant business. This attitude threatened instant attack. "No!" The chief's snarl was furious.

"I wonder," Mile-High suggested, "if we could get by with bows and arrows. That's a bright idea. Spring it on the chief. Bows and arrows won't wake up any slumbering devils."

Contact talked at length and presently the native nodded, but added no man was brave enough to tackle the devil moose with bow and arrow.

Contact translated the information to his partner. "All right," Mile-High said with decision, "let's camp here for a day or so while I make a good stock of arrows and a couple of good bows, and then we'll go in."

Contact Jack stared at his partner in amazement. "I thought I was supposed to be the big fool of this partnership," he exclaimed, "but you win the crown of the Royal Order of Moose Feathers. Shooting an arrow from a bow is something that you can't learn overnight."

"Don't I know that," Mile-High answered. "At school between the football and the baseball season when there wasn't much to do, I practiced archery. We'll go in there and mind our own business, but if anything jumps up, we'll see what

we can do with bows and arrows. It wouldn't be the first time that big game has been killed by this method under similar conditions."

"Maybe so," Contact answered. "But it doesn't seem reasonable. I'm willing, though, to try anything."

THOUGH the Indians shook their heads doubtfully and watched the preparations with interest, they made no objections. In ages gone by it was evident that some of the natives had penetrated the valley, for there were curiously carved signs on the rocks, and three miles up they found a small deposit of human bones, undoubtedly of native origin. Mile-High examined them with interest. "What are you hanging around them for?" Contact inquired.

Mile-High explained, "Well it's like this. We have a museum in our home town, and I promised that if I found any unusual specimens of prehistoric life, such as ivory utensils in the Arctic or Indian implements or game that could be mounted, I was to send them back. They pay the expenses. But there is nothing so very ancient about these skulls.

"I should say the men had been dead not more than fifteen or twenty years. You'll notice there are no bullet holes in the skull or elsewhere, nor are there teeth marks. So these men were not killed by animals or enemies. I think they were probably caught in a landslide and buried. Since that time the creek has been gradually washing away the dirt until now their remains have been exposed. There's nothing here I want."

"Maybe that explains," Contact suggested, "why it is that certain parties had gone into this valley—certain parties of natives, I mean—and never returned alive. They go in here and they don't come back."

They plodded on upstream following occasional game trails, Mile-High in the lead, with his arrows ready for anything that might show up. Contact followed closely, and behind them came their dogs with packs on their backs.

TWO hours later they had about formed the conclusion the valley was no different from thousands of others in the North. The sun was shining, the birds singing in the trees, and occasionally small animals scurried out of their way.

Mile-High returned the arrows to the quiver on his back and carried the bow. "It's all a lot of applesauce," he announced. "I have found that true again and again. I've looked into the Indian stuff in the Southwest, and you can generally find some logical reason for it all."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the whole valley seemed to groan. The ground shook beneath their feet, and from branches of nearby trees fluttered clouds of birds in terror. Smaller animals ran wildly without definite destination or purpose. A sudden rush of air shook the limbs of the trees. Kenai and the other dogs crouched and trembled close to their master's legs as if for protection. Something that was half a scream, half a sigh, followed the uproar. It was as if a strange monster stirred in its sleep and relaxed.

"Run!" Contact warned. He led off with Mile-High at his heels. The dogs were racing at their sides apparently unmindful of the heavy loads on their backs. Nor did they slacken their pace until open country was reached. Then they looked back. Where they had stood a few moments before was covered with the ice of a small glacier that had broken off and rolled thousands of feet down the mountainside.

All along the valley they could hear the crashing and thunder of several slides. "Something sure started something," Contact shouted. "I vote that we stay right here in the open where we can see what is going on. That slide darn near caught us. There's that scream again. I'm glad the sun is shining; it would make shivers go up and down your spine on a dark gloomy night."

"It makes shivers go up and down my spine," Mile-High admitted, "on a bright, sunshiny day. Now what? Their dogs had suddenly leaped to their feet and were

standing very tense, as if prepared to charge. The hair on that portion of their backs not covered by packs was standing stiffly on end, and the leader snarled. Contact, observing the action of the dogs, warned his partner. "Whatever it is that happens to people that come into this valley," he said, "is going to happen to us right now. We had better shed our packs and get ready. I'll try my luck with the bow and arrow, but if it gets to be a case of close quarters, I'll drop that and rely on the good old ax."

It was the first test of the two boys under fire, and each was curious to know how the other would stand the gaff. The brush stirred violently and then parted, and into the open charged a moose. It was the largest bull Contact had ever seen, and one of those freaks of nature known as the albino. A grayish white, he presented a fearsome aspect as he charged. It was little wonder the natives regarded him as a devil. Apparently everything fled from it. His neck and shoulders were unscarred by the marks of conflict. As a trophy, his skin was almost perfect. Perhaps, because the bull had learned from experience that all animals fled from him, he regarded himself as invincible.

And then Contact saw one of the most thrilling sights he had ever seen. With machine rapidity Mile-High's right arm swung over his shoulder, caught an arrow, fitted it to the bow, pulled back the bowstring, and discharged the shaft. Immediately he repeated this. Each arrow went home. But the bull roared in fury, and came on apparently unchecked. Contact stepped aside and gripped his ax a little bit harder.

"TWO arrows left!" Mile-High panted. "Run," Contact shouted. "I'll see if I can finish him with the ax." Mile-High did not answer. He waited until the bull was within about thirty feet, then launched an arrow. By good fortune the shaft passed clean through. His last arrow followed. Then he dropped his bow and sidestepped. The moose rushed by, turned, and then charged Jerry. Contact

decided to quickly sidestep and then drive the ax swiftly downward as the bull rushed by, but he never had an opportunity to put his plan into effect, for just as the bull was within ten feet his forelegs crumpled beneath him. With a mighty thud he turned a somersault and crashed down upon his side. A quiver passed through his frame, and then he was quiet.

Contact's first act was to bleed the bull; then he reached over and pounded his partner on the back. "Mile-High, old kid, you are there like a million. You've got more nerve than I have, to stand there until he was close enough for you to pick your vital spot and then let him have it."

"Uh-huh," Mile-High drawled. "I didn't see you doing any running! Well here's trophy number one for the museum. The first thing to do is to skin and cache this hide and then go on up the valley to see what the row is all about. Gee, it sure seems quiet after all the excitement. Say! Where's the river?"

A curious expression passed over Contact's face. "That's funny," he replied, and ran some three hundred yards across the flat. A moment later Mile-High saw him beckoning him to come. "Look at that," he said pointing dramatically. The river had ceased to flow. All that remained of the once brawling stream was a tiny stream of water seeping from pool to pool. Already great rainbow trout were darting about in the depths in panic. Some of the pools were crowded, for as the stream lowered, the trout naturally sought the pools.

As the two boys stood on the river bank trying to explain the phenomena, the same wheezy screams that had at first startled them were repeated. It was a wail similar to that of a siren, and it seemed to splutter and finally die in a bubbling, gurgling sound.

"How far do you suppose that is away from here?" Mile-High asked.

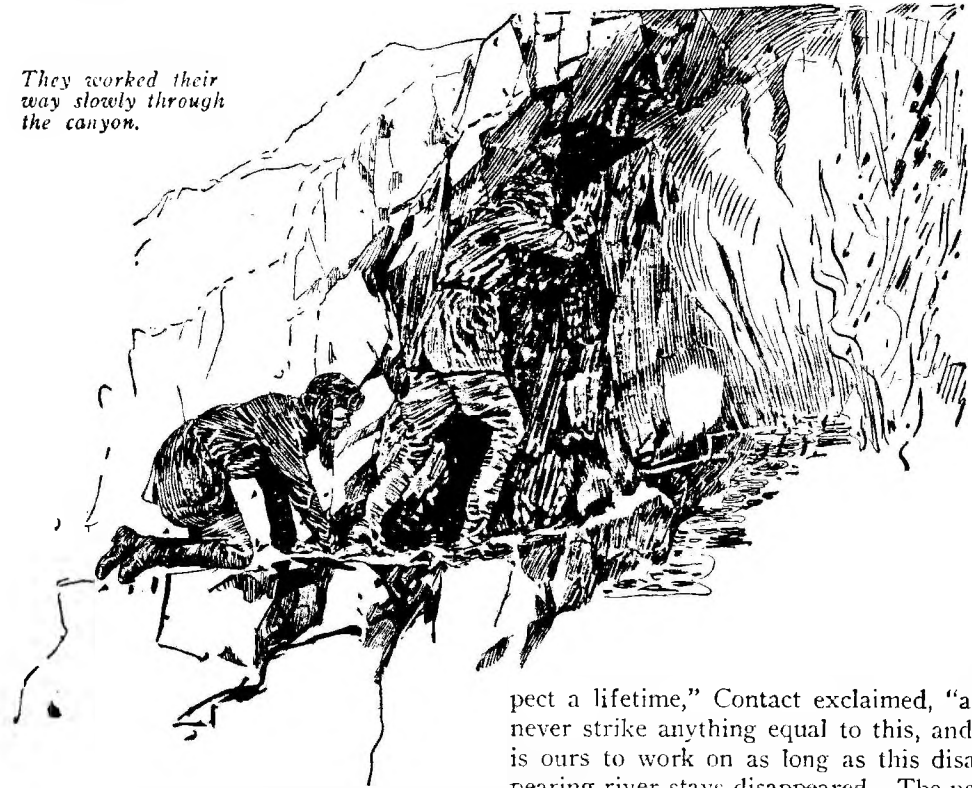
"Not far enough," Contact frankly admitted. "But let's try to forget it for a few minutes. In this country it pays to strike while the iron is hot, and you may

not know it, but this is the chance of a lifetime. Let's pan some of those exposed bars and see what we get in the way of a color. We may never have another chance. This is a life-size stream a good many months of the year, and it isn't often the water gets this low."

on, but the gold stays at the bottom. I was down to bed rock within two feet. This sure is a poor man's proposition."

He helped Mile-High skin out the moose. They carried the skin and their outfit to a place of safety, and then returned to the big eddy. "You might pros-

They worked their way slowly through the canyon.



"You go ahead," said Mile-High, "and try some likely looking places while I skin out this moose. I'll yell for help when I want him turned over."

"And I'll be within yelling distance," Contact answered. "I don't think it is a good idea for us to get too far apart until we get at the bottom of this mess."

CONTACT returned an hour later in a high state of excitement. "Look at this," he cried as he displayed a condensed milk can half filled with nuggets. "I panned it at the big eddy. The water acts just like the water in a miner's pan when he is panning. The heavier rocks and most of the sand and gravel are carried

pect a lifetime," Contact exclaimed, "and never strike anything equal to this, and it is ours to work on as long as this disappearing river stays disappeared. The next thing is to whipsaw boards for a sluice box." He led the way to some good-looking timber. "I'll saw the boards while you pack them down."

"We are both in pretty good shape," Mile-High answered. "Suppose we keep at this until we drop. The water may come any time."

"There was a man up in Nome," Contact said, "in the early days, who shoveled dirt for thirteen days and nights without stopping. When he went to sleep they couldn't wake him up for nearly fifty hours. I don't figure we'll go that long. If we have forty-eight hours to work on this eddy, it should be enough, and the chances are we won't have that."

Due to the fact that the twilight was almost continuous, the only stop they made was around midnight, when they cooked a meal which was washed down with hot tea, and then they went back to the muck again. By this time the sluice box was in place. A small part of the stream was diverted, then the shoveling-in commenced. It was around noon the next day that Contact's pick sunk into something. He gave a tug and dragged out the fragments of a rusted gold pan. They shoveled around the spot and in time the head of a badly rusted ax, a piece of a shovel, and the remainder of the gold pan were unearthed.

"We are not the first ones to find this eddy," Mile-High observed.

Contact nodded. "Yes, this is probably all that remains of one of those men that went into the valley and never came out again."

It was evident that others had struck it rich, and then, for some reason or other, never lived to enjoy their fortune.

They kept the stream in check for a period of seventy-two hours, and during that time the boys only stopped long enough to hastily grab some food. Each shovel full of dirt might mean five cents or it might mean fifty dollars. Sometimes they struck veritable pockets of gold, and again nothing, depending on the tricks of the current that had brought the gold down, then covered it with sand and gravel.

Clean-ups were frequent, but they made no effort to sweep out the rifles in their sluice box. They merely scraped out the coarse gold and resumed shoveling. Probably no men ever worked harder over the same period of time. Then, what the natives called the sleeping monster of Devil Valley once more began to stir. It came first in a low growl, then something that sounded a good deal like an explosion. In the valley far above them they could hear the booming and echoing of some mighty force.

Contact listened a moment. As before, the dogs scented danger even before the men. The leader and his team mates had

been working along the shallows catching trout. This sport ceased suddenly, and the leader, with a low whine of fear, raced from the river bed as though he had been whipped. They saw him bounding towards the distant bank, and once he gained this, he ran along until he was on the point high above them, where he peered down, trembling.

"Let's go out of here," Contact shouted. "That noise we hear is water and a lot of it." They gathered up the tools and equipment scattered about, raked out the last of the nuggets in the sluice box, poured them into moose hide pokes, and legged it to safety.

From the timber upstream there plunged a cow moose and her calf. She was galloping wildly. Hot on her heels came a brown bear and two cubs, and then a bull moose. Three or four foxes followed, running low and looking from side to side; then a half-frightened wolf. Each of its kind ignored the other. They were solely intent on escaping the common danger. The cow moose turned off and followed a sharp incline until she had gained the country above the river, and taking this cue, the others followed. Then came the water, a solid wall, dark with muck, and covered with debris. It piled up in the great eddy, and their sluice box vanished in a twinkling. For several moments the water seethed and boiled, creeping high up the banks as if trying to climb the very mountains, and then roared downstream a madened thing—one of the monsters of Devil Valley.

For an hour or more the boys watched it, and then, spreading their sleeping-bags in a place of safety, they crawled in and slept the clock around.

WHEN they awakened, the sun was shining. Once more the birds were singing in the trees, and the river had returned to its normal flow. Contact poured their gold into a bag, and then, using pound cans of corn as weights, he weighed the gold on the improvised scale. His lips mumbled as he did some mental calculation. A smile broke over his face. "Not

so bad," he said, "for a couple of young fellows trying to get along in the world. I figure during that clean-up we were making five thousand dollars a day apiece. It was just like robbing somebody's dump."

"It was robbing somebody's dump," Mile-High answered. "It was robbing the dump that the river had been making for years. Listen, there's that scream again." It began with a low moan, increased in volume until it became a hideous scream, and then once more died down, as though some powerful hand had throttled its throat.

The boys looked at each other. Mile-High was the first to speak. "I'm beginning to understand several things," he said. "Let's go up and see what it's all about."

"I'm on," Contact answered. "But first, just to play safe, in case we want to make a sudden getaway, we'll bury this gold."

Early the following morning they set off upstream, leaving most of their outfit behind and traveling very light, so if speed became a necessity they would not be carrying excess baggage. As they got further upstream and the valley narrowed, Contact pointed to the canyon wall. "That," he said, "is where the old river once ran, maybe a thousand years ago. Then something happened to change the stream's course, and a new bed was formed. Every once in a while a flood like that one we saw yesterday comes tearing down and washes the gold from the old river bed and carries it on downstream, just as if the water was determined to always keep the gold with it."

"And it looks to me," Mile-High answered, "as if the stream had kept all the gold with it. You know the legend, 'No one has ever come out alive'—and don't forget the rusted gold pan or the bones we found at that slide."

They worked their way slowly through the canyon, sometimes having to crawl along narrow edges, and just when their progress seemed completely blocked the valley opened up once more and they found themselves crawling through débris and muck of various kinds.

Again came the mighty groan. The earth

shook beneath their feet. And then from an opening in the rocks just ahead steam leaped upward. The steam was so hot it did not become visible to the eye until it was forty or fifty feet in the air. With the steam came the wailing scream, which at this point was almost deafening.

The canyon grew strangely quiet. A rattle high above them caused the boys to look up. On the opposite side of the canyon was a veritable mountain of shale. The explosion had started several pieces downwards. They doubled in number, then tripled, and the volume increased, until there was a slide of considerable area. Half of the slide spilled over the canyon wall, fell into the stream, and partly damned it.

It was not an unusual situation in the North. There are a number of hot springs, and some of them are so numerous that entire valleys are tropical. In this instance the steam was stopped up perhaps by flowing mud, deep in the earth. The pressure increased until it became tremendous. Then the stopper was blown out and the vapor escaped through the natural vent. This process was accompanied by miniature earthquakes, and it was but natural that the shale would start sliding. When the force was great enough, the entire stream dammed, and so it remained until the water had piled up sufficiently to overcome the obstacles. And this accounted for the river vanishing for several days at a time—accounted for the screaming and roaring that filled the natives with fear. Perhaps forty or fifty years before some miner had entered the valley with a gun, and in firing, the vibration had been sufficient to start a slide.

Mile-High set up a motion picture camera and, waiting until the steam again burst forth, he shot several hundred feet. Then he straightened up. "Well, Contact, what next?" he said. "We've got our stake, and the season has just started."

"The next thing," Contact answered, "is to get this gold by those cussed Indians. After that, old son, we head South for the best plane money can buy."

"O. K.—let's go!" Mile-High answered.



He had a spear wound in his shoulder, and he thought a rib was broken.

Maehoe

By Murray Leinster

A brutal white, a faithful black, and Fear act out their parts in this drama of the Solomon Islands.

The wicked flee when no man pursueth.—Proverbs 28:1.

THIS is the story of Gleason and Maehoe and of Fear, who makes a bad third in any company. Henderson doesn't really count, because he died of black-water fever some three weeks after Gleason met him. And old Sunaku—he was killed, later, when a British warship shelled his village for trying to cut off a trading schooner—is a very minor character. All you really have to remember is that Maehoe desired, passionately, to become a member of the Native Constabulary Force of the Solomon Islands Protectorate, and that Henderson was entirely too fond of one Biblical quotation.

Gleason had no idea of the triangular relationship he was entering when he landed his whaleboat on the shingle beach below Henderson's house and staggered through

the surf supported by his four surviving paddlers. He had a spear-wound in his shoulder, and he thought a rib was broken—it hurt excruciatingly as one of his boat-boys helped him up the beach—and he was a mass of minor wounds and bruises.

The four boat-boys were in at least as bad a case. A particularly filthy rag about the arm of one of them was stained unpleasantly by the wound made by an irregularly shaped slug fired at close range. A trade gas-pipe gun had fired the slug as part of its charge of half a handful of assorted hardware. Another of the boys—they were To Ba'ita boys, from the north of Malaita—was limping with a gaping hole in his leg. The other two were merely slashed, cut, pounded, scratched, and generally battered, as the survivors of the defeated side in the nastiest kind

of jungle fighting are so very apt to be.

Those injuries had come about when Gleason was trying to rob a devil-devil house of its trophies for strictly commercial reasons. The whole tale would be unpleasant. But he had gotten caught in a jungle path and he and his boat-boys had to fight nearly two miles to get back to the water. The boys, being from north Malaita, rated as potential long pig in south Malaita, and fought like demons to get away. Gleason got away with them by a miracle, but he lost his schooner, and after Henderson patched him up he was very unphilosophic about the affair.

He gave Henderson an entirely fictitious account of his misfortune, redounding much to the discredit of the Sunaku mentioned a little while back. And for days he lived in terror lest Sunaku send a raiding party after him.

HENDERSON laughed at that idea. He had a houseboy, one Maehoe, who had told him truthfully that Sunaku had a *tabu* laid upon his ever passing Cape Kini on a war-party. A *tabu*, you know, is a sort of ceremonial prohibition, a jinx, a talismanic warning against ever having anything to do with the thing *tabued*. It differs for every man; it is laid upon him by the devil-devil doctor; and it may range from a totemic prohibition against eating the flesh of his name-animal—this sort of *tabu* is given a new-born infant on those mornings when the devil-devil doctor is feeling low and devoid of originality—to warnings of dire disaster if he ever happens to speak to one of his maternal second cousins when the moon is new. Not very reasonable things, those *tabus*, but absolutely binding and frequently convenient—as in this case.

Henderson had picked out his island as a site for a copra plantation after learning about Sunaku's *tabu*. It made him safe, because nobody else wanted to poach on Sunaku's territory and Sunaku wouldn't raid himself. Henderson was as safe as he felt, so seeing Gleason full of terror he tried to laugh him out of it.

"The wicked flee when no man pur-

sueh," he would quote maliciously. "Your boys sweated blood for a good ten miles after Sunaku gave up the chase. One of them is likely to run up his toes, by the way, Gleason. I give him rum and he gets better. I stop it, and he gets worse. Dammit, I wish he'd make up his mind before he drinks all the trade-*rum* in stock."

To which Gleason replied unpleasantly that he did not give a hoot in hell whether the boy died or not. Gleason was still weak, though growing stronger, and Henderson didn't see that he was crazy with envy of a man who was safe and prosperous and ought to turn out rich when his newly planted coconut trees came into bearing.

"Your nerves are bad, Gleason," Henderson would tell him tolerantly, and add, grinning, "The wicked flee when no man pursueh. But there's no use staying in a blue funk. Cheer up!"

He would march on his way, whistling, while Gleason ground his teeth. Henderson had a kid back in school in England, and he had it figured out that he would be a rich man just about the time a lot of money would mean a great deal to a girl. He had it all planned out how he'd spend his money and have a wonderful time buying frocks for her and so on, and taking her about the Continent.

But that hasn't anything to do with Gleason and Maehoe and Fear.

MAEHOE was the head houseboy at Henderson's—the boy who'd found out about Sunaku's personal and private *tabu*. He rather attached himself to Gleason while Gleason was getting well. His costume consisted of an immaculate, rather short white jacket and a gee-string, and he had at some time past discarded a nose-plug and several ear-ornaments in token of his ambition to become a member of the Native Constabulary of the Solomon Islands Protectorate. If Gleason had been otherwise he might have been amused by Maehoe.

A round and frizzy head of hair would appear above the flooring of the veranda. It would be followed by a not particularly

high forehead, the dark-brown and invincibly sad eyes of the Malaita bushboy, and then a wide, flat, very black nose with a dangling strip of cartridge where the nose-plug had been removed on Maehoe's adoption of civilization. There would follow, then, in quick succession a wide and beaming grin, a thick and corded neck, an absolutely immaculate white drill jacket, and lean and gnarly brown legs—astoundingly long and very naked-looking—with many scars from the scratches of thorns and underbrush. Last of all, wide, splay feet, with each and every toe prehensile, would step up on the veranda, and Maehoe would beam more widely still and say in a hushed voice:

"I fetch 'm one-fella peg, Sar?"

Gleason generally took the peg. But he did not humor Maehoe by listening to a description of the glories of the Native Constabulary Force of the Solomon Islands Protectorate, delivered with a vast gusto in an amazing *bêche-de-mer* agglomeration of supposedly English syllables. Maehoe had been refused for the constabulary for some reason he could never fathom, but hopefully anticipated a reversal of the refusal at some future time. Henderson had promised to speak in his favor, and Henderson listened to him now and again, wherefore he worshipped Henderson and served him with an honesty that in a Malaita bushboy was superhuman.

But Gleason hated him cordially, especially after a certain morning when he felt a little stronger and tried to walk about a bit. Henderson was inland, swearing at a labor gang that was clearing more land for the planting of yet more coconut trees. Gleason walked down to the beach, looked nervously at Cape Kini—he was always a little nervous about Sunaku—and went aimlessly over toward the barrack sheds, and there he suddenly heard a voice talking in English behind a bush.

Gleason moved suspiciously to where he could look. He saw Maehoe going through apparently aimless evolutions—now here, saying something, and now there, replying. It was seconds before

he realized that Maehoe was practising. He was imitating his master and Gleason with great solemnity and for his own personal pleasure.

"The wicked flee when no man pursueth," announced Maehoe solemnly, maltreating the words in a fashion no possible print could reproduce. "Your boys sweated blood for good ten miles after Sunaku gave up chase. One them likely turn up toes, Gleason—"

He went on with a vast solemnity duplicating Henderson's speech and even his intonation with a surprising fidelity. Gleason watched suspiciously. Maehoe finished with Henderson's lines, his face shining with pleasure, and went over to a spot from where he solemnly swore in Gleason's own terms that he did not give a hoot in hell whether the boy died or not. And then he returned and solemnly repeated, "Your nerves bad, Gleason. The wicked flee when no man pursueth. But no use staying in blue funk. Cherrup."

He beamed at his own exactitude and wiped the sweat off his face, happy. He considered, and set about going soberly over the whole business again.

GLEASON walked away, shaking with the fretful sort of rage that a white man sometimes feels in the Solomons. It comes of too much fever, too many pegs, and too much brooding. Gleason should have laughed, instead of thinking savagely of innumerable forms of insult Maehoe's private diversion seemed to him to constitute. Or he could have done as Henderson did when he told him about it. Henderson chuckled for half an hour and devised a speech full of incredible words and involved phrases, which he repeated after that whenever he could be sure Maehoe was listening. And Henderson tried to eavesdrop and discover Maehoe struggling with the new and to him unpronounceable words.

He did not succeed. Henderson came down with black-water fever about three days later, and in a week he was dead.

While he was ill, though, Gleason saw one other side of Maehoe that eventually

led to the triangular drama of Gleason and Maehoe and Fear.

It was the plantation boys, of course. Gleason should have taken them in hand when Henderson went flat on his back, and kept the vice sweated out of them. Idleness is not good for anybody, and especially for recruited laborers on a Solomon Island plantation. These boys were bushboys, from salt water villages, and two days of idleness gave them time to remember much devilment and speculate hopefully on more.

Two days after Henderson developed black-water fever, Gleason's four paddlers came shivering to the house and begged to be allowed to stay there. They were To Ba'ita boys, and the labor gangs were south Malaita men.

"'M fella boy talk too damn much *Pau* talk," their leader explained fearfully to Gleason. "I think 'm *kai-kai* 'm To Ba'ita boy plenty damn quick."

Gleason chewed at his nails. The thing to do, of course, was strap on an extra revolver and go over to the barrack sheds and fill each several and separate man with an unholy fear. It could be done especially with the four paddlers to guard his back. Three of them were strong enough to fight, anyhow.

Gleason did not. He assigned sleeping quarters to his men underneath the house, and went and took a peg. During the next hour or so he took several more. And he fretfully stopped Maehoe, who was about to give Henderson quinine. Quinine is almost a specific for ordinary fevers, but it is rank poison in black-water.

Next day—three days after Henderson went down—there was a tumult down at the store-shed. A houseboy fired off a rifle and fled. A knot of scared figures plunged for the bush and vanished. They'd tried to loot the store.

And when recruited laborers on a Solomon Island plantation try to loot the store-house, it is then time for any white man who wants to keep his head on his shoulders to take some action. The proper and approved action—though it is strictly un-

lawful—is to flog every man who may conceivably be suspected of the attempt. And it is a very good idea to knock the others about a bit and generally act as if you are fairly itching for them to try to rush you. And of course, thereafter you must work them until they drop in their tracks—bullying them the while—and make their lives a burden to them for some time to come. Loving kindness is not understood or appreciated by salt water boys who contemplate the ownership of a white man's head with a yearning wistfulness.

But Gleason had a chill, which may or may not have been the sort of chill that comes from a blue funk on top of a fever-racked system. Gleason did nothing whatever except go in half a dozen times to see if Henderson was getting over his delirium with prospects of being able to get up. And he stopped Maehoe from giving him quinine. He was just in time.

The thing was that Sunaku had scared Gleason down to the marrow of his soul. A timid man either gets out of the Solomons or he doesn't last long. Gleason had become timid. He had lost his nerve because of the exceeding narrowness of his escape from Sunaku.

IN consequence, when on the fourth day of Henderson's illness the inhabitants of the barrack sheds were observed to be talking excitedly, Gleason went and took a peg. When, later, they vanished suddenly, he went and took a couple more. In justice to him, it should also be remarked that during the next hour he stopped Maehoe for the fiftieth time from giving Henderson quinine.

But at two o'clock in the afternoon Gleason's fear of Maehoe began. The plantation boys had actually tried to rush the house.

A howl from Gleason's four paddlers underneath the house was warning. Dark figures with improvised clubs were racing across the house-clearing, yelling. A few knives were in evidence, and many tools, and at least one flint-lock pistol smuggled painstakingly through the entire recruit-

ing process and hidden in somebody's bar-rack-box.

Gleason started shooting in a panic. He dropped one—two—three of them. His four paddlers swarmed up, gray with fear and frenziedly ready to fight. The wave of frizzy-haired, nose-plugged caricatures of humanity came on, screeching. Gleason shot crazily.

And Maehoe came out on the veranda with a box of dynamite in his hands and one of Henderson's cheroots between his teeth. He hadn't told Gleason about fusing the dynamite. Gleason would have stopped him, not trusting natives with civilized weapons.

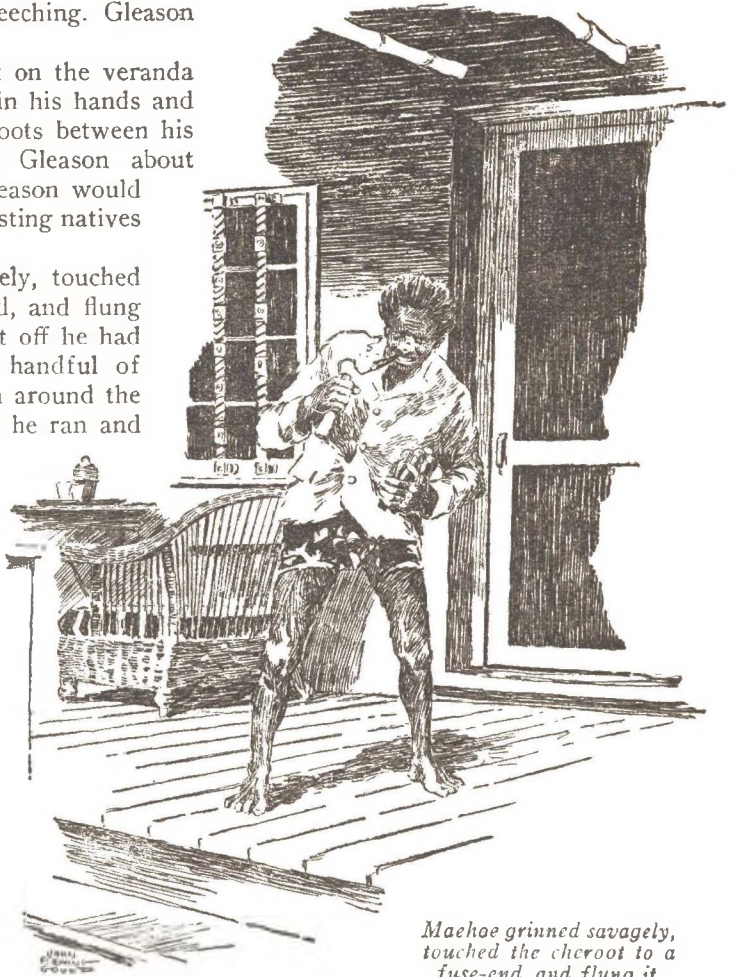
Maehoe grinned savagely, touched the cheroot to a fuse-end, and flung it. Before the stick went off he had flung another. With a handful of sticks in his hand, he ran around the veranda lighting fuses as he ran and flinging the dynamite down among the attackers.

The sticks made an awful racket when they went off. The house rocked from the detonations. Then the veranda floor lifted and shook. The dynamite box jolted from the floor a full six inches, coming down with a terrific crash. Gleason's four paddlers howled and dived over the railing. But the dynamite did not go off and Gleason's courage came back suddenly. He began to shoot with steadier hands, putting bullets in black backs that were running away again. And it may be that the howls that followed the explosions helped to steady his hands.

There was a final detonation and a last chorus of screams. Maehoe came back. He saw Gleason, full of courage now, firing vengefully at fleeing figures. Maehoe went inside the house. A moment later Gleason heard him blubbing.

Henderson had heard the shooting and the screams. The sound had penetrated even his delirium. He had gotten up and tried to come out with a revolver in his hand. He hadn't quite made it. Maehoe was lifting him back to his bunk.

Fifteen minutes later Maehoe came out



Maehoe grinned savagely, touched the cheroot to a fuse-end, and flung it.

again, wearing his immaculate white drill jacket and his gee-string and nothing else except a cheroot between his teeth. He was sobbing softly to himself and his eyes were fixed. He took a double handful of dynamite sticks from the box and went on down into the bush, his gnarly, lean brown legs astonishingly prominent below the white jacket.

Five minutes later Gleason heard a

dynamite stick go off. Screams followed it. Ten minutes more, and another went off. And then, for an hour, at odd and irregular intervals there came the crisp, crackling detonations of dynamite, curiously echoed among the tree trunks. Usually, after an explosion, there were howls and outcries.

Then Maehoe came back. His white drill jacket was stained with blood. He limped a little, and there was a monstrous bruise on one temple where a flung club had nearly downed him.

He looked at Gleason with dumb agony in his eyes, in the sort of dull apathy which comes over a bushboy after he has gone into a frenzy akin to hysteria, has done a lot of damage, and has accomplished nothing.

"Fella marster go die plenty damn quick," he said dully. "No got one-fella *mane ni ha'a mauria*. No fetch 'em stuff *puru puru*. Fella marster go die plenty damn quick."

He went into the house with dragging steps, leaving Gleason biting at his fingertips. Maehoe thought Henderson was dying because there was no doctor and he hadn't been given the stuff from the bottle—quinine. The dynamite and his hysterical hunting of his fellow bushboys had been for the purpose of working off the rage and despair that filled him.

And Gleason, with the hair raising on his head, began to wonder what Maehoe would do when Henderson died. He would blame it all on Gleason for preventing his giving Henderson quinine. And Gleason began to feel a rather horrible fear.

WHEN Maehoe desperately got out the medicine bottle that afternoon and stared dumbly at Gleason, begging for permission to administer the medicine that had made Henderson well of other fevers, Gleason shivered and went out of the room. He was afraid to stop Maehoe again.

And that night, because he knew Henderson was going to die, Gleason ran away in his whaleboat. He took his own

four paddlers and four of the houseboys, whom he impressed into service by flourishing a revolver. Maehoe knew nothing of his departure. He was hovering over Henderson's bunk, dumbly miserable, waiting for signs of improvement in Henderson's condition from the quinine. And quinine is, of course, rank poison in black-water fever.

And that was that. Gleason should have gotten away nicely. He should have made Uras Cove in about four days. There is a missionary there, and unregenerate persons have convinced the neighboring tribesmen that the particularly potent devils of the white men will consume the vitals, bit by bit, of any man who harms a hair of his head—of which conviction, however, the missionary is wholly ignorant. Gleason would have been safe with him until a trading schooner came along.

But news travels fast in the bush. All that had gone on on Henderson's island since Gleason's landing and before, was known for an astonishing distance along the mainland. And with astonishing speed that news was kept up to date. No white man knows how news does travel in the bush, but it goes, and when it is news of a white man unarmed or unnerved or ill there are innumerable bepainted, befrizzed and tattooed young warriors who inspect their weapons and dream high dreams.

So when Gleason's whaleboat blundered into a belated fishing-canoe some ten miles to the northwest of Henderson's place, there was an instant reaction. The fishing-canoe challenged. A To Ba'ita boy answered. There was excited chatter in the fishing-canoe, caused by his foreign manner of speech. Gleason warned it off in a white man's curt voice. And the fishing-canoe fled.

That opened the second act of the drama of Gleason and Maehoe and Fear.

FIVE minutes after the fishing-canoe had vanished into utter darkness, a few puffs of wind came from nowhere. Gleason had a sail hoisted and prepared to beat his way up to the northwest. The

boat was intended for surf work and was a clumsy sailer, but would make better time under sail than with unskilled oarsmen. The puffs of wind continued, enough to tease him with the hope of a steady breeze at any minute, but not enough to make much headway. It was utterly dark. A long, oily swell came from offshore and pounded dully on the beach—where there was a beach—and gurgled among mangrove roots where there was none. There was a thin film of cloud overhead, just enough to obscure most of the stars and make the world abysmally dark and to make the boat seem hideously and horribly alone.

Then, from a little distance behind, there arose a dull and monotonous throbbing thunder. Devil-devil drums, sending out a general call for any devils that might be in the neighborhood to call at the devil-devil house and receive instruction. Lights appeared, racing about the village that housed the drums. Great flaring flamebeaux sent pin points of reflected light dancing upon the distant smooth swells. There were yells and howls, and there was much activity ashore. Two long war-boats—*la'os*—were being slid down into the dark water.

They went swiftly into the outer darkness, beyond the shore. A white man had been sighted in a whaleboat. A To Ba'ita boy had answered a challenge. The white man had warned the fishing-canoe off instead of cursing it or desiring to trade with it. Therefore it was the *mane maala*, the wounded man from Henderson's.

The news went swiftly through the bush. The puffs of wind died down. The whaleboat fell off from her course and rocked and rolled soggly in the long smooth swells. Gleason began to feel little prickles at the base of his skull. He was being hunted.

His paddlers were at work again, trying to use their unaccustomed oars silently, when there came through the night a second dull and distant booming. Far ahead this was, and it meant that another village was awake and preparing to scour the surface of the sea in its greater war-

canoes. Treasure was afloat. A white man's head, and the white man proven not invulnerable nor over-dangerous. And it seemed to Gleason, sweating suddenly from terror, that he heard yet other drums, more distant still.

All the dark coast began to boom with drums, both before and behind the whaleboat. The drums, of course, were summoning the local devils to be sent to raise hell with Gleason until the war-boats found him. This sound tactical use of devils is universal in the Solomons. And every village launched its boats, and every boat hunted for Gleason with a panting enthusiasm, and Gleason went into the bluest of blue funks.

He drove his boatmen, whimpering with terror, straight for the shore and apparently for the very stronghold of his enemies. The sensible thing would have been to stand out for the open sea. But one of Henderson's boat-boys kept Gleason's panic from being altogether suicide.

ALL night long the devil-devil drums beat on, and all night long the smoky fires flared in devil-devil houses, and all night long the war-boats hunted tirelessly. The news spread farther and yet farther as the night wore on, until all the coast was awake and aware of what was going on, and all the coast was joining in the hunt. But Gleason was not caught.

When the gray dawn spread across the open sea, there was no dancing speck afloat that could not be identified as an authentic Malaita craft upon its unlawful occasion. Gleason had vanished.

But that same gray dawn filtered down through mangrove leaves upon him. One of the houseboys had panted directions for a little streamlet he knew of. It oozed its way sluggishly out between unbroken banks of mangroves, and there was no village beside it. More, when the whaleboat pulled into it the mangroves were found to stretch their branches thirty or forty feet beyond the edge of the mud and to dip their farther ends unpleasantly into the stagnant, stinking stream. The whale-

boat had been drawn far in beneath those branches, and its sides bedecked with green. It was thoroughly hidden.

But Gleason still shook with fear, though the filtering pale light seemed to take away some of the menace of the drums. Birds, too, awaking in the branches overhead, seemed to drown out a little of their rumbling threat. And as the mistiness of dawn faded into the colorful light of early morning, one by one the devil-devil drums ceased their booming.

But the mangrove mud stank noisomely, and little, many-times-deflected ripples from the outer surf sucked and gurgled among the tangled roots. The smell of mangrove mud filled his nostrils, and he waited to be discovered.

Crouched in the whaleboat, the paddlers and Gleason alike stared fearfully about them. The sun rose higher in the heavens. Mosquitos swarmed about them. The soft and indefinite humming noise of a sunlit jungle arose to the high heavens. And all the coast was busy, looking to see where the white man might have hid.

Toward noon, Gleason saw one warrior. He came down to the water's edge nearly half a mile upstream, where perhaps the mangroves gave place to a more wholesome growth. He saw him plainly. White circles of moistened lime had been daubed about his eyes. His hair was whitened with the same stuff. His ear-lobes had been stretched incredibly to hold a pleasing assortment of variegated knick-knacks, from a brass curtain ring to slender pig bones which projected at varied angles from his head.

He stood in plain sight for a long time, peering up and down the stream. Even his reflection was mirrorlike on the upper water. But he did not move from the spot where he had first appeared. Mangrove swamps remain untrod, even on such occasions as this. Leaving aside the incredible toil traveling in them would entail, and the very real danger of being swallowed up entire, there are such things as mangrove ulcers which came from mangrove mud upon a man's bare leg.

The warrior peered here and there and

everywhere in silence, while Gleason eyed him in stark panic. Suddenly he went depressedly back into the jungle without any sign of interest or triumph, and Gleason nearly whimpered in relief. The drooping branches outside the boat had hidden it effectively.

BUT all that long, hot, malodorous afternoon he abode in fear. A canoe might slip into the stream at any instant. And the report of a single firearm, or the yell of a single man, would bring swarming hordes of warriors. . . .

At dusk, Gleason's heart stopped. A canoe did come in. It came in very softly and very quietly. There were four paddlers and one man sitting in the stern. This was in the short, abruptly ending twilight of the tropics. Gleason saw the canoe pass by not more than twenty yards away. Beneath the dropping mangrove roots the whaleboat was not seen, but there was enough light left for Gleason to recognize the man in the stern despite new and barbaric ornamentation. It was Maehoe.

He gazed behind him and seemed satisfied. And suddenly he brought up something from the bottom of the canoe and slipped it on. It was an immaculate white drill jacket. And he removed certain ornaments from about his ears and nose, and wiped the lime-streaks from about his eyes, and spoke to his paddlers.

Gleason could piece out the words from his knowledge of the *Pau* dialect. But before this he had swung his revolver on the four houseboys he had impressed into service. With his eyes wild and staring, he warned them voicelessly that at their first word he would kill them. The words he pieced together of Maehoe's talk increased his terror.

Maehoe had his own paddlers under a bond of fear. Henderson's revolver was in his hand. And Maehoe was demanding if this was surely the waterway that one of the houseboys with Gleason knew of. A man answered, trembling, that it was. Maehoe ordered the paddlers to go on upstream.

His white drill jacket dwindled to a speck which—so rapidly did the twilight deepen—was already no more than a gray blur when he vanished past the spot where the warrior had been seen that forenoon. Gleason did not wait for the further deepening of the night. In a racked whisper he ordered his paddlers to clear the whaleboat of the branches that had decked it and to make for the open sea once more.

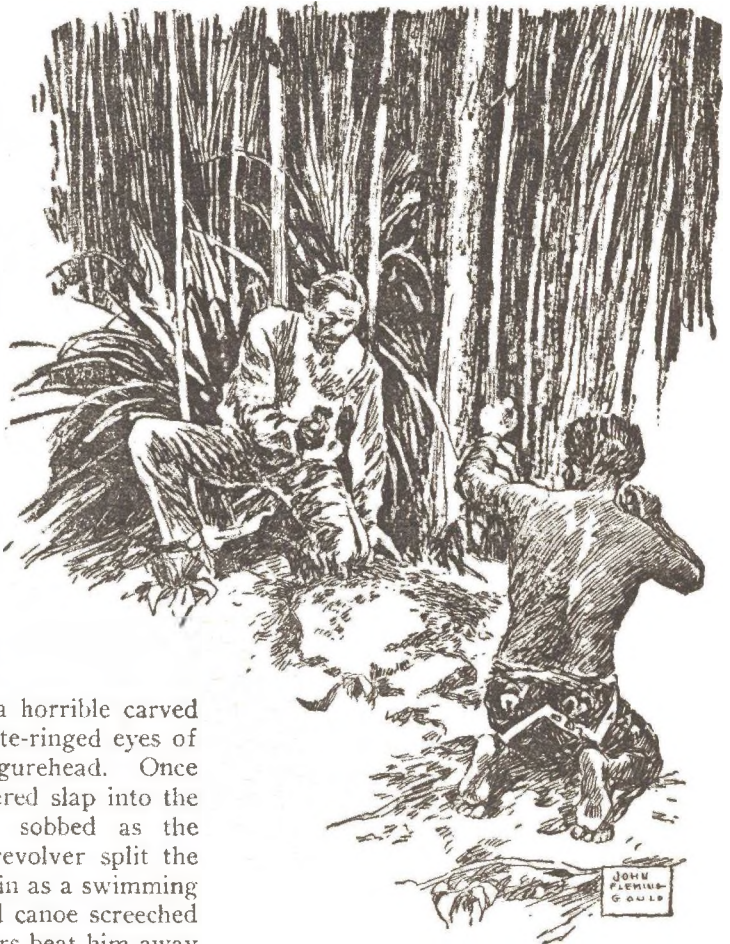
Sheer horror was almost paralyzing Gleason now. The whaleboat lifted to the first of the ocean swells and made for far offshore. Night rolled across the face of the sea and swallowed up all the world. The whaleboat headed due north, for the open water beyond the coast. But a dull booming set up behind it. Almost instantly the booming was duplicated to the right and to the left. The whaleboat had been seen before night hid it.

THERE followed a nightmare of terror. Three times in the next two hours the war canoes went swiftly on past the whaleboat, with paddles splashing in the haste of the paddlers. Once Gleason saw the dim outline of a horrible carved prow with the wide, white-ringed eyes of the god that was its figurehead. Once a four-man canoe blundered slap into the whaleboat and Gleason sobbed as the spurting flames of his revolver split the darkness, and sobbed again as a swimming man from the overturned canoe screeched horribly when the paddlers beat him away from the gunwhale with their oar-blades.

The whaleboat turned back for the shore, then. It headed at a panic-stricken rate in the direction of Henderson's island plantation. That was the last course it would be expected to take, because

safety for Gleason lay no nearer than Uras Cove to the northwest. And Gleason, sick with terror in the stern, heard the rushing war-boats streaking for the site of the combat and heard them yelling to one another before they scattered to hunt again.

Of Maehoe he heard nothing. He knew, however, that that questing person had doffed his white jacket and had replaced a nose-plug in the cartilage between his nostrils, and had redecorated his distended ear-lobes with divers gruesome or-



Gleason raised his weapon to shoot again.

naments and was in the thick of the hunt. Maehoe was a native of this part of the world. He was not safe, of course, among the man-hunters of another village than

his own, but, armed as he was, and with a white man afloat being hunted by war-boats from half a dozen villages, he would be ignored until the greater game was captured.

Dodging, drifting shadows, sweating alike with exertion and with fear, those in the whaleboat made but little progress. They reached the shingle beach of the plantation island two hours before dawn. By daybreak the whaleboat was hidden. During the day Gleason saw the still smoking ruins of the house and the store. He did not see where Henderson was buried, of course. Maehoe would have attended to the hiding of that burial place. A white man's head is a white man's head, however it be come by, and Maehoe on deserting the plantation would take precautions lest his late master provide a trophy for some devil-devil house ashore.

Maehoe came back. A canoe became visible not later than five o'clock in the afternoon, paddling steadily and openly along the sea. Its occupants were plainly savage; befrizzed, bepainted, and going about the business of paddling with the calm practicality of the salt-water boy.

The canoe drove up to the shingle beach and landed. The man in the stern shepherded the others before him—Gleason saw a glint of metal in his hand—up among the trees. Out of sight of the water, that man donned a white drill jacket and moved on, still driving the others before him. Gleason saw gnarly and lean and astoundingly naked-looking legs beneath the white jacket. Three times before sunset and darkness he caught a glimpse of white among the trees, moving about as if looking for signs that Gleason had returned to the ruins.

Gleason cursed himself in a whisper for having had the courage to go and look. A white man's boot-tracks in fresh ashes would show clearly. When darkness fell and he saw a flambeau lighted, and saw it moving steadily as if Maehoe had at last found his trail and was following it by torchlight, Gleason cursed hysterically.

He drove his paddlers to their work once more. He dared not attempt to make

Uras Cove again. All the coast was up and hunting him. The best—the only chance for him was to head southwest, heading past Sunaku's territory for Maramasike Pass, across it, and to the mission at Saa.

He struck out on the course as darkness settled down upon the ocean and all the world. And half an hour later, with the dull reverberations of many drums dying away below the horizon, one of the paddlers panted.

"Marster! One-fella *irora!*"

Gleason strained his ears and heard it. It was following!

UTTER blackness lay over all the world. To the right there was the long, low pestilential coast where Sunaku held sway, where any white man was fair game and Gleason would be prized more than most. To the left was open sea, from which only swells came rolling in unendingly. Ahead was emptiness. Behind was the dull rumble of devil-devil drums in half a dozen villages whose warriors were hunting Gleason—and, nearer, the splashing paddles of a canoe. By the splashings and the tempo, the paddlers were weary to exhaustion. But the canoe drew steadily nearer.

Gleason swung off his course and cursed his men in a whisper. He let the boat rock and roll in the darkness without a paddle lifted, and the following canoe went on past. And then the whaleboat sped on toward the shore to resume its course.

But presently the dreary splashing of paddles in the hands of exhausted men sounded once more in the darkness. A voice called, startlingly close. Maehoe's voice. In a frenzy, Gleason shot at it.

And that shot was heard on shore.

In half an hour the heavens were echoing the dull, monotonous booming of a devil-devil drum ahead, and word was passing through the bush in the mysterious fashion of bush-wireless, of Gleason's presence and his new course. And, of course, the sea was swarming with hunting war-boats.

ONCE, before dawn, Gleason had to fight. He got away by a miracle, but with only four paddlers left, and he had a fresh wound in his side and was literally mad with fear. A land breeze was blowing now and the whaleboat crept along under sail because four men could not handle it. It was so close to the shore that the splashing of waves among the mangrove roots was plainly audible. Also audible were certain hunting-cries upon the water. And—and this was the thing that crazed Gleason—in the whaleboat's wake and growing nearer with desperate slowness there was the sound of paddles being dipped by exhausted, driven men.

When in fine irony the whaleboat grounded on the sandspit beyond Cape Kini and the sail cracked thunderously, Gleason sobbed. His remaining paddlers waited in apathetic despair. He saw the shore looming up darker and more forbidding than even the sea, and the whaleboat lifted giddily and crashed again on the sandbank, and a voice sounded behind him, nearer than the cries of the hunting war-boats. . . .

Gleason splashed over the side, shaking in terror. He ran blindly, fighting the swells that tried to trip him, gasping hoarsely in sheer panic, fighting his way to the beach. There was little or no surf. The swells oozed up on the steeply slanting beach and retreated almost soundlessly. Gleason fought his way clear of them and plunged into the dark trees, sobbing as he ran. He tripped and fell and picked himself up, and ran and tripped and fell again.

The sound of the distant devil-devil drum filled him with horror. He ran on hysterically. He was still running at dawn, when the drum slowed up and stopped. And when the sun rolled up overhead Gleason was three miles inland, shaking, with his revolvers naked in his hands, staring wildly all about him.

He was up among the foothills of the inner mountains, by the bank of a swiftly flowing little stream. He was many days' journey from the nearest white man, in the territory of the one native chief who

A. T.

would pay most lavishly for his head. Jungle surrounded him on every side. In that jungle, as soon as the deserted whaleboat was found, there would be eager hunting-parties searching. . . .

Gleason wept hysterically. He raved. He very probably prayed. And very suddenly he slept, for the first time in two nights and two days.

HE slept, it may be, for two hours. No more. There was a crackling of underbrush and a rustling of leaves. Gleason woke in a cold panic and stared with glassy eyes. He saw long, gnarly legs, astoundingly naked-looking, moving beneath a trailing cloud of foliage. Gleason's revolver came up, held stiffly in a hand of ice.

He saw a frizzy, rounded head. A not particularly high forehead. The invincibly sad, dark-brown eyes of the Malaita bushboy. A wide, flat, and very black nose with a strip of dangling cartilage where Maehoe had discarded a nose-plug on his adoption of civilization.

Maehoe stepped forward, looking at footprints in the mud at the stream's edge. He had a revolver in his hand, and there was a package strapped about his waist from which projected the ends of half a dozen dynamite sticks, all fused and ready. He stepped into the stream, to cross.

In pure hysterical rage, Gleason shot him, knowing that the shot would be heard and would bring Sunaku's warriors eagerly to the spot.

Maehoe collapsed in the stream. He wallowed feebly in the water, then summoned superhuman strength and crawled ashore. Dead-white and rigid, Gleason raised his weapon to shoot again.

"One-fella marster," gasped Maehoe, "he say fetch 'm one-fella Gleason 'm guns, 'm dynamite. Tell 'm shoot hell out of bushboy an' give plantation money 'm one-fella white Mary pore."

He struggled to hand over his bundle. Gleason gagged. Henderson had told Maehoe to give Gleason the guns and the dynamite and to ask him to quell the boys

and sell his plantation and send the money to his daughter. This was what Maehoe had chased him for! This was what—

"'M go away plenty damn quick," gasped Maehoe, shoving the bundle toward Gleason. "'M bad fella bushboy come. I shoot, all same one-fella Native Constabulary. . . ."

Gleason took the bundle in stiff fingers. Gleason's eyes were glassy. Maehoe grinned at him, a pain-racked, desperate grin.

"Your nerves bad, Gleason," he pronounced in a swagger, in Henderson's own identical tones. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth. But no use staying in blue funk. Cherrup."

And then he raised his revolver feebly as Gleason heard a crackling in the underbrush some little distance away. He thought he heard the pattering of feet.

He was right. He did.

GLEASON fled. He fumbled with the dynamite-sticks. They were wet. The dynamite was useless. He flung it aside. He plucked at the revolver shells. Wrong! For Maehoe had the revolver, and was essaying to hold off the pursuing bushboys as a desirous member of the Native Constabulary Force of

the Solomon Island Protectorate should do. But Maehoe was dead before the first bushboy appeared.

An arrow slithered across the way before Gleason. It missed him by inches only. He snapped a shot from his own weapon and panted on. He saw a hideous face, tattooed out of all semblance of humanity, with gogglelike circles painted in white about its eyes. It vanished before he could fire. He saw another, and another. . . .

Gleason began to scream. He emptied his revolvers and had no more shells. He flung the useless things aside and began to run. And suddenly he was laughing. Henderson had said, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." He'd repeated it and re-repeated it until it became a tiresome saw. Henderson was wrong.

Gleason howled with hysterical laughter as he fled like a deer from the men who hunted him earnestly. Even Maehoe had quoted the thing at him. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." But they were wrong, now. He was fleeing, all right, but men were pursuing him. The jungle was full of the noise of the chase. Men were pursuing him, all right. . . .

And they caught him.

Continued Next Month

THROUGH THE WAR ON A SUBMARINE

As Told to D. W. Hall

By Captain J. D. Dryburgh R. N. R.

*Carnegie wheeled to
face a revolver.*



Passengers

By Bertrand W. Williams

A deserted derelict comes to life and kidnaps Carnegie—and his passengers.

HOLD on there a minute, mister.” William Carnegie, third officer of the *S. S. Cawnpore*, frowned in annoyance. It was late in the afternoon, and the derelict which he had been ordered to examine looked much farther away from the level of the ship's boat than it had from the bridge. Still, it was the Old Man who was calling; so he signed to the crew to leave the falls unhooked.

“Carnegie,” went on the captain crisply, “Miss Duball and Dr. Stacpoole want to—er—break the monotony of the trip by visiting that hulk. Room for them in the boat, eh?”

Carnegie nodded. “Aye, aye, sir.” If it had been the second, or even the chief officer, he would have said bluntly that there wasn't—not for joy-riding passengers on a business errand like this. He tried to hide his disgust as the girl and

her companion settled themselves in the stern-sheets.

“Give way,” he grunted, almost before Stacpoole had found a seat. If he delayed the skipper would be foisting more sight-seers on to him.

“What queer expressions you sailors use!” remarked Miss Duball.

Carnegie hardly knew what to say to this. The nearness of this gorgeous creature took his speech away. So far he had only seen her from the bridge or across the dining saloon. She had been pointed out to him by Fogg, the second mate, as “real class.” Fogg had added, “Though I think she and the old girl, her aunt, are putting up a lot of front without much dough at the back of it. That's why she lets this Stacpoole hang round.”

“Who's he?” Carnegie had asked without much interest.

“That fattish fellow. Rich stock broker in Chicago. Got to have money these

days to catch the lookers, Bill, me boy."

"How far do you calculate that wreck is—er—officer?" asked Stacpoole.

Officer! He used the word as if he was addressing a policeman.

"'Bout a mile," Carnegie grunted, wondering if the fellow expected him to tack on an obsequious "sir" to the answer.

THE *Cawnpore*, carrying passengers and freight from Port Said to Rangoon, had that day sighted a small steamer rolling beam-on to the long swells and apparently deserted. No signal flew from her rigging, nor was there any sign of life aboard. A derelict not worth salvaging and a menace to navigation, Captain Rance had decided. Therefore Carnegie's instructions to blow her up after an examination of the cargo. He had the dynamite with him. She looked like a large tug, he thought, as they came closer. Leaving the crew in the boat he helped his two passengers aboard.

"I'm afraid you won't find much on this vessel to interest you," he said to Miss Duball. "Still, you can look round while I search the chart room for papers."

He grinned as he saw them go down the open companionway. "Serve 'em right if they come across a 'stiff' or two. An abandoned ship is no place for tourists."

He had been puzzled by his first glance round the deck. None of the vessel's boats seemed to be missing, nor did he find in the chart room any evidences of a hasty departure. Indeed, everything was in order; compass and chronometer in their usual places and other nautical instruments hanging on the walls. *Amaranth*, Bangkok, was the name and port of registry painted on her stern. It was odd to find a vessel of her type so far from her home waters.

He flung outside at sound of a hoarse jabbering among the boat's crew to find the four lascar sailors pulling frantically away.

"What the hell—" spluttered Carnegie. His eye fell on the painter dangling from where he had made it fast, cut in half.

"Sahib matey," wailed one of the lascars. "Dat sheep no damn good. No can come—" He ceased abruptly to dig his oar into the water, his eyes glazing with terror.

That some monster fish, a shark or even a whale, was circling round the *Amaranth* was Carnegie's first thought. He leaned over the low bulwark. A hand was projecting from an open port-hole—a large brown hand holding an exceedingly businesslike revolver. No wonder the crew had shoved off!

Suddenly he remembered the two passengers; they were below. Perhaps that fat Mr. Stacpoole had gone mad or was planning to abduct his fair companion or—or something. A ship's officer does not keep his job very long unless he can act promptly in almost any kind of an emergency. Carnegie slipped a winch lever from its socket and stepped to the companionway.

BELOW there!" he hailed. There was no answer. He descended the stairway and peered into the saloon. A glance showed it to be empty, but several small staterooms opened out on the starboard side, and it was from the port-hole of one of these that the threatening hand had appeared. As he stood debating whether to boldly search each one in turn or to wait outside for the hidden aggressor he felt the whole vessel quiver. There was a rumble of machinery below, a clank of piston rods, and a few muffled shouts.

With a bound he was on deck again to see the boat a mere speck bobbing up and down in the swells a quarter of the way back to the *Cawnpore*. In the gathering dusk neither his nor his two passengers' absence would be noticed till it reached the liner, and already the *Amaranth* was moving. He could see her yeasty wake foaming behind in great eddies. Smoke poured out of the squat funnel and streamed into the gloom of approaching night.

Someone was in the chart room where he had been less than three minutes ago—

a half-naked brown seaman. He was gripping the small wheel and did not look up at Carnegie's approach. Then the lid of what he had taken to be a flag locker lifted and a thin, wizened man crawled out.

"Blimey, but it was stuffy in there! Me and Vasco was 'all smothered while you was fooling in the wheel 'ouse."

He eyed the mate warily and fingered a large carving knife he was carrying. "No funny business, mister. I'm pretty slick chucking these 'ere things. Never misses, I don't. Better put down that lump o' iron. It mykes me nervous."

"What's the big idea?" asked Carnegie

"Big hidear! So you're a Yank, eh? Second myte, I suppose, by the brass-board looks of yer?"

"Third officer of the *Cawnpore*, and let me tell you—"

"A bloomin' third! An' yer ain't tellin' me nuthin'. We didn't arsk yer to come aboard."

"That'll be enough from you," growled Carnegie, lifting his bar and advancing.

The other retreated, balancing his knife for a throw.

"Drop that bar and stick up your hands, Mister Officer!" ordered a voice from the rear.

Carnegie wheeled to face a revolver held by a thick-set, middle-aged man who had just come out of the engine room hatch. Reluctantly he obeyed.

"E's only a third myte, Quigg," explained the first man to the newcomer.

Quigg grunted. "All the better. They'll make less fuss over him if we have to bump him off. Know navigation, mister?"

Carnegie nodded.

"Good for you. Come below and we'll talk this thing over." He turned to the other. "Keep her east-by-south, Ike, and don't go lighting no cigarettes or we'll be having that liner after us."

THE *Amaranth* was now steaming full speed at right angles to the *Cawnpore's* original course, two great phosphorescent feathers curling up beneath her bows. The saloon was lit by a single

oil lamp, and Carnegie noticed all the ports were carefully shuttered. At close quarters Quigg proved to be a truculent-looking individual with a seamed face and a rat trap of a mouth—the sort of man, Carnegie thought, who could be an ugly customer if he chose. He came to the point without waste of words.

"It's like this, mister. By midnight we'll be clear of that fancy ship of yours. Mebbe they'll fool round a bit in the dark or mebbe they'll be satisfied burning up the air with their wireless. Anyhow, we'll shift our course by then and be out of the track of shipping. To-morrow at noon you'll shoot the sun and lay a course for where I'll tell you."

"Where's that?"

"Never mind. You'll be told when you show our position on the chart. I ain't no navigator, but I can check up on dead reckoning. And God help you if your figures don't come near mine! Play square with us and you won't find me nor my mates hard to get along with."

"What about those two who came aboard with me?" asked Carnegie.

"They're in that cabin there. Had to muffle up the female to keep her from squawking. The big feller got a tap on the bean for his share."

"What are you going to do with them?"

"How the hell do I know yet?" growled Quigg. "That's for us—er—owners to decide. Anyhow, mister, the fewer questions you ask the longer you'll live. Bunk down in one of them rooms for to-night. And leave what matches you got here."

"Listen, Mr. Quigg, or whatever your name is, I'm responsible for those passengers and they're still under my care. Unlock that door. I've got to see them."

Quigg glared, but the young man's determined manner evidently impressed him. "Well, I dunno's how it makes much difference," he conceded. "Neither you nor them can do us any damage while I'm a-watching of you. What's up, Ike?" he asked the cockney, who had entered the saloon.

"There ain't nuthin' up. Reckon the deck 'and can 'old that wheel straight for

a few minutes while I come down for a cup of cawfee."

"There ain't no coffee here, Ike Chudy. No, nor time to make it. I told you to keep on deck till eight bells, midnight."

"So yer did, mytey, but everythin's goin' grand, sea calm, no moon, an' no lights a-chasin' us." He slapped his thigh. "Sye, 'ow abart puttin' that female woman to work in the galley? We're too short-anded to spare any of the niggers."

Quigg scowled. "Thought you was the cook: ain't that what you signed on as?"

"Yus, I did. But this 'ere tug's under new management now. Hi'm one of the oficers."

CARNEGIE paid no attention to their wrangling. He had entered the cabin and was helping to free Miss Duball from the muslin curtain which had been bound round her face. She only nodded when he hastily explained the situation. Stacpoole was lying in the lower bunk with his eyes open, gingerly feeling a bruise at the back of his head.

"What does this outrage mean?" he mumbled feebly when Carnegie offered to help him up. He waved the proferred hand aside. "Get me some hot water and a bandage." He caught sight of the girl. "You all right, Helen? Bit of an adventure, eh, what? If the scoundrels have hurt you, I'll make it hot for 'em. I've some influence with—"

He became aware of Chudy and Quigg watching from the doorway.

"Who're these men?" he snapped, sitting up without assistance.

"These men!" mocked Chudy. "Why, mister, we're the bloomin' oficers of this packet." He turned to Quigg. "'Usky bloke, ain't 'e? I'll bet Vasco'll be able to use 'im down below. Know anythin' abart steam henges, mister?"

Stacpoole stared, not comprehending the drift of the ex-cook's remarks. "See here, my man—"

"Ho, I'm 'is man' now!"

He paused, and sensing the venom in his tone, Carnegie shut the door in his face.

"Mr. Stacpoole," he said, "you and I'll bunk together in the next cabin. Miss Duball, I think you'll be safe here for to-night. If anyone disturbs you, rap on the wall."

Stacpoole stared coldly at him. "You're one of the *Cawnpore's* minor officers, aren't you? D'you know anything of this kidnaping business?"

"Yes, I know that we're in a far more serious predicament than you seem to realize. Good night, Miss Duball."

BREAKFAST was served in the saloon next morning by a silent-footed Hindu. Quigg was on deck, but Chudy and another man sat at the table with Carnegie. The stranger was a swart Portuguese whom the other addressed as Vasco. He was a youngish man, handsome in a cheap, animal kind of way, and as he smelt strongly of perfume the mate judged he had expected company. He nodded carelessly to Carnegie and looked at Chudy inquiringly.

"Hour navigator," introduced the cook. "'E's goin' to blaze a path for us across the trackless hocean. Nyme of Carnegie. There was two others with 'im. They're a-waitin' for me to tyke their breakfasts to 'em in bed."

Vasco showed a row of gleaming teeth. "I taka da lady's to her."

"Better 'urry up an' get back to yer hengine afore Quigg comes down."

Vasco's smile faded into a scowl. "Looka here, Ike, we alla be equal in dis business an' we alla share da same, too. *Sim*, an' if one swing, da others—"

"Shut yer trap!" snarled Chudy. He turned to Carnegie. "Say, mister, better roust them two passengers o' yours out. This ain't the blinkin' *Mauretania*."

Carnegie went on eating in silence. He was at that age when young men take themselves, or at least their professions, very seriously. He had been at sea long enough to know that few excuses are accepted in maritime mishaps and that an incident like this might be quite enough to blast his future career. The best he could do now was to deliver the two

passengers safe and unharmed at the first port they touched. That was one consolation: all vessels came to port sooner or later unless. . . .

He rapped sharply at Miss Duball's door and entered his own cabin.

"Get up, Stacpoole. This is no time to play the invalid. Snap out of it." Without giving the other time to reply, he marched out, leaving the door open.

The girl was the first to appear. Carnegie was surprised to observe that she did not look in the least disturbed or frightened by her recent experience. She nodded brightly to the mate.

"The plot thickens, Mr.—er—"

"William Carnegie."

"Carnegie. Quite an aristocratic name for—I mean—"

"For one in my lowly position," he grinned. What a pity, he reflected, that these good-looking dames always cloak themselves with that superior air which is far less becoming than they guessed. He wondered if this girl with her mop of curly hair and big blue eyes had ever smiled genuinely. She seemed so artificial.

When Stacpoole joined them, she chaffed him on his haggard appearance, then relented suddenly.

"Still, I'm glad it was you, Miles, that came with me. Suppose it had been some of the other passengers. We may be on this nasty little steamer several days."

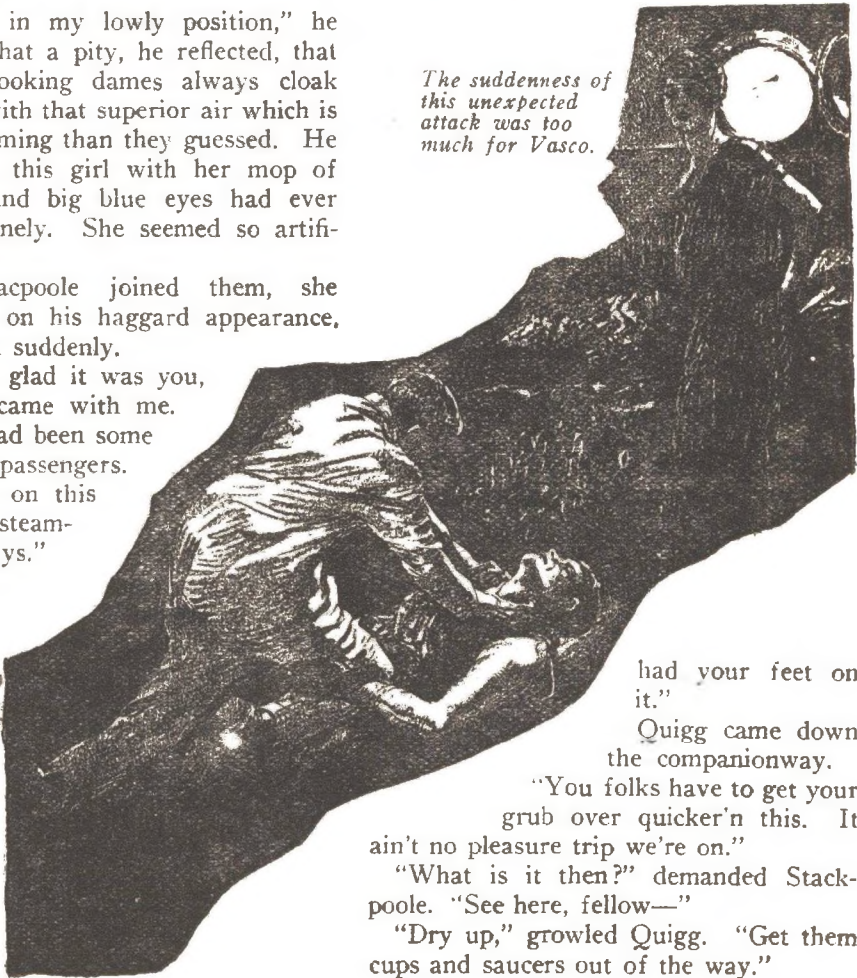
They ignored Carnegie and fell to discussing their experience of the evening before and the probable cause of their abduction.

"Undoubtedly ransom," declared Stacpoole. "You know we're both—er—fairly well off."

"Don't be silly, Miles. We visited this boat of our own free wills, thinking it was a derelict. Captain Rance said he was sending a man to blow it up. He promised me I could light the—the fuse I think they call it."

Stackpoole glared at Carnegie. "And do you mean to tell me that there were actually explosives in the little boat we crossed in?"

"Sure. A whole case of dynamite. You



The suddenness of this unexpected attack was too much for Vasco.

had your feet on it."

Quigg came down the companionway.

"You folks have to get your grub over quicker'n this. It ain't no pleasure trip we're on."

"What is it then?" demanded Stackpoole. "See here, fellow—"

"Dry up," growled Quigg. "Get them cups and saucers out of the way."

To avoid argument, Carnegie gathered up the breakfast things.

Quigg nodded approvingly.

"One of you sees which side his bread's buttered on." He produced a cake of tobacco and bit off a chew. "You two's a problem, 'specially the lady," he continued, eyeing the girl sourly. "This fat blighter yer husband?"

Neither of the two answered. "Answer me!" he shouted, banging his fist on the table. "None of that la-di-da stuff on this hooker. You'll be tame enough before I've done with you, my wench."

MISS DUBALL turned pale and her lips trembled slightly.

The broker shifted uneasily. "Better be careful," he warned in an unsteady voice. "The jury won't—"

Quigg laughed harshly. "Jury, eh? So you're figuring on being at my trial? Man, you'll be lucky if you're alive this time tomorrow. As for her—"

Carnegie, who had been a passive spectator of this little scene, wheeled round. He was not nearly so powerful a man as Quigg, nor was he armed, but there was something about his square, ordinary face and the angle at which his jaw stuck out that made most people listen when he spoke.

"You'll treat the lady civilly, Quigg, or else navigate this vessel yourself."

"Oh, will I?" grumbled the other. "And I suppose I've got to truckle to this fat swab also?"

Carnegie shrugged. True, Stacpoole was a passenger and theoretically under his care; but he was also a man and should be able to take care of himself. Further argument was interrupted by the entrance of Chudy and Vasco. The latter pulled off his cap and made an elaborate bow at sight of the girl. Chudy looked truculently at all three.

"Well, Quigg, made up yer mind abart these 'ere two?" He jerked his thumb at the *Cawnpore* passengers. "'Cos if yer 'aven't, me an' Joe 'as. A boat, a keg o' water, an' a box of 'ardtack—'ow's that strike yer?"

"Notta now," objected Vasco with a smirk. "I not see da lady before. She verra nice lady. I t'ink she an' me goin' be verra good frien's."

"Lay off, Vasco," growled Quigg. "This here's business. When the shares have been whacked out you can do as you like—wine, wimmen, or cards."

"A bloomin' female always spells trouble," objected the cockney. "Still, we're short'anded, as I said, an' if so be as the lydy an' 'er sweetie's willin' to work, 'twill be orl right with me."

"It will help a whole lot better," remarked Carnegie dryly, "if you tell me where you want to go and something of your plans."

Quigg looked at him reflectively. "Never mind our plans. But I'll tell you where we're going—first."

HE left the saloon, to return a minute later with a large chart of the Bengal Sea. A tiny island, one of the Andaman group, was marked with a red cross. Carnegie made a brief calculation.

"We should make it in three days." He stared at the men. "What happens then?"

"Well," replied Quigg without removing his chew, "we has a bit o' business on that island. Won't take long, though. After that, we sails away to a port in—in Oriental waters." He stopped and looked at his mates. "We ain't figured our plans out 'actly that far ahead, mister; but if everything goes good, why, you and these here two can have the *Amaranth* and go a-yachting in her if you like."

"Why shouldn't things go good!" growled Chudy. "They'd better, anyhow. First 'int of a double-cross, mister, an'—"

"Notta so fast, you fellas," interrupted Vasco. "Disa tug never goes to no port after we land da—after da beezness ees finish. We seenk her close to dat place we speak of. Da ees plenty time to feex all dat."

Despite Carnegie's protests and his own loud threats of future hangings for all the *Amaranth's* personnel, Miles Stacpoole was herded into the engine room to work at the bunkers or whatever Vasco deemed

him fitted for. Miss Duball surprised all by telling them she could steer and was willing to take an occasional trick at the wheel.

"If I must do something, I'll do that," she declared. "My cousin had a steam yacht larger than this vessel, and her skipper taught me how to keep a straight course even in bad weather."

Quigg was doubtful of trusting her with the helm, but was overruled by his mates.

"If the lydy wants to do 'er bit, let 'er," said Chudy. "Joe can use another 'and in the stokehold. Me or you'll be on watch to see she don't go a-runnin' us up the 'Oogli or bumpin' into Port Blair."

At noon Carnegie took an observation and laid a course for the place marked on the chart: Pincos Island, it was called. If the mate had any idea of navigating the tug into the steamer lanes or to a known port, he gave it up when he saw the close attention with which Quigg watched the compass card and his laborious calculations of time and distance. The man had formerly been bos'n on the *Amaranth* and had a rough knowledge of rule-of-thumb navigation. Carnegie asked him bluntly what had happened to the tug's captain and officers.

"They was lost at sea," Quigg replied, looking hard at the young man.

SATISFIED that he had made an impression, Quigg left his new navigator pretty much to himself. The sea was calm, its glassy smoothness broken only by occasional schools of flying fish, yet day and night a lookout was stationed on the chart house roof with orders to report the first smudge of smoke or twinkling light on the horizon. Except now and then at meals, Carnegie saw very little of either Stacpoole or the girl. They both seemed to avoid him. Whenever Miss Duball had the wheel, Quigg or Chudy were generally in the vicinity keeping a watchful eye on their captives. Once, as he passed the open window when she was steering, he caught her contemplative gaze fixed on him. He nodded and smiled.

"It'll all come out right, Miss Duball," he whispered hastily. "Thing is to lull their suspicions."

"And you're doing that very well, aren't you? Have they promised you a share of the treasure?"

"What do you mean?" he said angrily.

"Well, you seemed to knuckle down to those men very quickly. Poor Miles—Mr. Stacpoole's down in that dreadful engine room shoveling coal."

"I'm sorry; but I really can't help it. It'll take some of the fat off him," he added brutally.

The ghost of a smile came to her lips. Then she froze.

"He, at least, proved himself a man, while you—"

"Hey, mister, you ain't supposed to talk to the man at the wheel even if she ain't a man but a nice-lookin' young female," interposed Chudy, who had come up unseen.

Carnegie turned on him. "Get off this bridge, you rat!" He advanced towards the cook, who backed hastily away.

"Ho, yus, indeed. We'll see. Better watch yer step, mister, or you'll be goin' the syme way as Trum—" He stopped suddenly, and continued his retreat.

Miss Duball made a mute gesture for Carnegie to approach.

I apologize for what I said, Mr. Carnegie. Do be careful not to anger those men."

She studied him with a new interest as he paced back and forth on the little bridge. Carnegie was neither big nor handsome, yet there was about him some indefinable quality that was certainly lacking in Miles Stacpoole. She was honest enough to admit to herself that his ready acquiescence to their captors' proposal was the most sensible and tactful thing he could have done. He was very young, too; hardly more than her own age. She decided she liked him.

"Where is this spot we're making for?" she questioned as he stopped near her.

"It's one of the Andaman group, Miss Duball. They belong to India and all I know about them is that there's a penal settlement at Port Blair."

"Trum," she repeated thoughtfully. "You heard what that man said?"

He nodded. "I heard half of it. Looks as if these three hombres had mutinied and killed their officers." He frowned in sudden annoyance. "I shouldn't have said that."

"Why not?"

"Because you're a—a passenger."

She met his embarrassed gaze and smiled.

"Not now. I'm only a fellow prisoner. And please treat me as such. You know, even a woman can be helpful at times."

"Can they?" he asked doubtfully.

This time she laughed outright. "'Can you?' you meant. I suppose you think I am the doll type of female, utterly useless in the least emergency? Do please tell me what you really think of me."

To her surprise he did not blush or stammer. "That remains to be seen, Miss Duball," he answered gravely. "You acted splendidly when you volunteered to help with the steering. But you mustn't try and vamp me—now."

It was her turn to look embarrassed at this unexpected rejoinder.

"But I may later on, eh? Well, perhaps I shall." She was suddenly serious. "That dark man, the one they call Vasco—"

He wheeled abruptly. "Has he been annoying you?"

"No, it's the way he looks at me, though."

PINCOS proved to be a thickly wooded island of much larger dimensions than Carnegie had expected. It stood lone and solitary, out of sight of all other land. A tangled mass of jungle came almost to the water's edge, and, beyond, the land sloped abruptly backwards to culminate in a ridge of mist-wreathed hills, somehow sinister and gloomy even in the tropical daylight. There was no sign of life on the island as the *Amaranth* steamed at half speed along the shores. Quigg and his mates were on deck scanning each tiny patch of beach they passed. At one spot where a muddy stream joined the sea, he ordered the anchor to be dropped.

"Get below, mister, you and yer passengers," he told Carnegie. He ushered all three to separate cabins, saw that the port shutters were bolted, and locked them in.

This was no more than Carnegie had expected. He had managed to conceal a small wrench the previous day, and with this he unscrewed his port. It was not till after dark, however, that anything happened. Then a light flickered feebly among the bushes on the shore to disappear in a few seconds. Three times it showed as if making a prearranged signal. Ten minutes later there was the splash of a paddle outside, a scraping on deck, then the murmur of voices in the saloon.

Carnegie put his ear to the keyhole and caught a few sentences. Evidently only one person had come aboard, for a single strange voice was all he could hear.

"But Captain Trumble—you are not him. You are onlee sailorman."

A growl from Quigg, and again the stranger spoke.

"It is verree funnee and most irregular—not according to the Hoyle."

"Well, we're 'ere, ain't we?" broke in Chudy. "'And over the money an' shove yer bloomin' prisoner aboard."

"Do not step on her so hard, my good mister. The emolument will be paid in due time. Give me information first—"

"Gwan! Wotcher talkin' abart? E-molument! It's a fat roll of rupees we wants."

"Not so bellicose, my friend. You are not the party of the first part. I like to converse onlee with principal executives."

There was a rumble of angry protests from the others. By his queer phrasing and precise pronunciation of every syllable Carnegie judged the newcomer to be a Hindu of the babu class.

After that the voices faded away. For two hours Carnegie listened intently for voices or noises that might give him a clue to what was going on, but he heard nothing. Finally he grew tired and lay down, and soon he was asleep.

HE woke at dawn. There was something going on in the next cabin. An oily voice was murmuring words Carnegie

could not catch. Then came a short silence, followed by a little scream, instantly muffled.

Carnegie glanced swiftly round his tiny room like a trapped animal seeking escape. The hinges of the door swung on detachable pins which he had not noticed before, and to knock these out with the wrench was the work of a few seconds. To his surprise he found the next cabin was unlocked, and as he entered someone turned with a snarl. It was Vasco.

So close were the two men that Carnegie had no space to strike a blow. He just launched himself at the Portuguese, grappling for his throat. The suddenness of this unexpected attack was too much for the latter. Carnegie gave him no time to put up even the feeblest defense. He throttled him into semiconsciousness in less than a minute, banging his head on the floor for good measure.

"The towel, please!" he gasped. "Tear it into strips."

When he had finished binding his prisoner he turned and found the girl calmly watching him.

"Thank you very much for doing this, Mr. Carnegie—Mr. William Carnegie, isn't it?"

He nodded, annoyed at the flush he felt coming to his cheeks.

"Got to look carefully after all of my passengers," he said awkwardly.

She smiled.

"Is that all I am to you, Mr. Carnegie? I wish Miles Stacpoole would regard me in that light. He doesn't—" She broke off. "Do you think anything can have happened to him?"

They found a key on Vasco which fitted all three cabins. Stacpoole was lying asleep in his berth, snoring gently and with amazing regularity. Helen Duball regarded him steadily in silence.



Carnegie threw another of his crude grenades. This time the whole mob broke and fled.

"Dog tired," commented Carnegie. "I guess they've been working him pretty hard at the fires." Something in the girl's expression made him add, "He couldn't have come to help you without finding the trick of these doors—which was pure luck on my part."

"He's big and heavy enough to have pushed that flimsy partition down by brute force, I should think."

"Oh, come now, Miss Duball. Even if he were awake—"

"Yes, 'if he were awake,'" she interrupted coldly and distinctly.

Carnegie went on deck, and, seeing no one there but a couple of sleepy lascars, returned to the cabin. He found Stacpoole sitting up and rubbing his eyes.

"What's happened?" he asked.

Carnegie explained the situation.

"Hooray!" said Stacpoole. "Now the ship's ours. Let's slip the cable, or whatever you do when you're in a hurry, and beat it."

"There's no steam up: we'd only drift ashore," Carnegie grunted. He led the way on deck.

"Look!" cried Helen, pointing landwards. Quigg and the cook had just left the island and were rowing back to the *Amaranth*.

Carnegie flew into action. "Quick!" he yelled to Stacpoole. "Help with that other boat. It's our only chance to get away." He swung the davits outward, and cut the falls. "Get in," he ordered. "I'll be with you in a second." He raced forward to where a big hawser was kept coiled on deck. Into this he plunged his hand and dragged forth the small box he had brought from the *Campore*.

Stacpoole grunted in disgust. "What's that? Thought you'd gone to get some grub. We're worse off than before—we'll starve to death in that wilderness."

"Should be enough fruit to keep us going for a day or two," Carnegie replied absently. "Pull for all you're worth before they see us!"

It was impossible to escape unobserved, but beyond firing a few revolver shots, the mutineers of the *Amaranth* made no attempt at pursuit.

"They've got us corralled, anyhow," grumbled Stacpoole. "What was the sense of leaving a place where we had enough to eat and a reasonable chance of reaching civilization some time?"

The girl looked at Carnegie with the least hint of a smile about her mouth.

"We'll hide the boat and then ourselves," he explained. "When the tug pulls out, we'll load up with what we can

find in the way of provisions and try and reach Port Blair."

THEY made an uncomfortable camp in the bush that night, and in the morning Carnegie started on a cautious survey of the island, keeping close to the shore. When he was about opposite the *Amaranth*, he peered through the foliage and saw the tug's boat approaching with Chudy and the bos'n in it. A very fat black man in a turban and khaki suit was sitting on the beach awaiting them. He must be the visitor of the night before, thought Carnegie, though why he should have elected to stay alone on the island was a mystery. He watched them greet one another without cordiality; then all three moved into the shade close to where he lay hidden.

"What peoples row in that little boat yesterday, Mr. Quigg? Veree much disturbance you make with your shootings."

"Some of our crew," growled the bos'n. "See anything of 'em?"

The babu shook his head and grinned. "I observe two white mens and white lady in boat: veree prettee lady, she look. She belong crew, too?"

"Stewardess," snapped Chudy. "She an' the fat bloke can stop 'ere for all we care. But we've got to find the other one."

Quigg scowled. "Mate," he said shortly.

"But he was not the offic-er Captain Trumble—"

"Aw, shut up, Gammajee," snarled Chudy. "You gives me a pyne in the neck with yer questions. You perdooce that Ram of yours wot we've come for, an' the money, an' we'll syle away."

"Too much haste makes a paucity of speed," countered the babu. "Shootings and stewardesses all look veree much the fish to me. I tell my principal last night that story you narrate to me in the steamer."

"And what did he say?" growled Quigg.

"He is veree wise man. He say it is the sailor's bedroom."

"The what?"

"The sleeping apartment of a seaman, the bunk. Captain Trumble in Bangkok said—"

"Ain't I told yer we're hactin' for 'im. Listen; you bring your friend down 'ere to the waterfront and let me talk to 'im. We got to round up that mate of ours first, though."

Leaving the two lascar sailors to guard the boat, he and Quigg struck out along the beach. Carnegie dodged from bush to bush in an attempt to keep parallel. It was hardly likely that they would discover the boat or his companions, yet he wished to keep the two in sight. There was the possibility they might stray into the jungle and get lost, in which case he could summon the others and endeavor to recapture the *Amaranth*.

HIS reflections were interrupted by a shout from Quigg and the cockney. They had run fairly into Stacpoole, who had foolishly left the camp to go scouting on his own. Instead of fleeing in an opposite direction, the broker went bounding back the way he had come, with the others in hot pursuit. Five minutes later Carnegie had the mortification of seeing both his "passengers" surrender to the revolver of Quigg. From his hiding place he could not hear what was going on, but guessed the prisoners were being questioned as to his own whereabouts.

When all four had disappeared in the direction of the larger beach, he continued on his way to their overnight camping place. He retrieved the parcel he had brought ashore and retraced his steps. He was just in time to hear an excited shouting followed by a succession of pistol shots.

"The bloomin' black blighter!" he heard Chudy yell. "Joe'll fix 'im when he gets aboard."

Gammajee and the two lascar sailors were in the boat and already halfway to the *Amaranth*. A fourth figure was huddled in the stern-sheets.

Carnegie was somewhat puzzled as to the babu's intention. Whatever enterprise the tug was engaged in, it was plain that

the man was only an agent of some sort and entirely suspicious of Quigg and his associates. Possibly he expected to overcome Vasco with the aid of the crew, or perhaps bribe him to leave the island at once.

The same thought must have struck the boson. "Where's your boat, the one you stole yesterday?" he demanded fiercely of Stacpoole.

Carnegie wasted no time listening to what answer the other might give. He forgot his weariness and went bounding back to the clump of mangroves where he had moored the second boat. Possession of it suddenly became of enormous importance.

Just as he reached the shore and plunged across the slimy black ooze between it and the jungle there was a rustling behind him and what seemed like the quick padding of many feet. Without looking round, he tugged the slip-knot of the painter loose, pushed out strongly with his leg, and tumbled panting on the floor boards.

As the strong ebb-tide carried him clear of the shore he heard two or three little taps on the outside of the boat and a continual swishing in the water close by. Every moment he expected a bullet to come tearing through the planking, and not till he judged himself to be out of range did he venture to peep warily over the gunwale.

Half a dozen small brown figures were pointing excitedly at him. They carried bows and were completely nude. Seeing their quarry was beyond pursuit, they vanished into the mangroves.

Savages! Carnegie had never thought of Pincos Island as being inhabited. Like most sailors, his knowledge of the places he visited was hazy. Port Blair had, he knew, a large convict prison for native criminals. The adjoining islands, he had supposed, would be peopled by Hindus, mild and inoffensive like those he had met in Bombay or Calcutta. Suddenly he thrust the oars into the row-locks and pulled furiously abreast of the shore line. His passengers!

A SINGLE shot in the bush, followed by a shrill jabbering, told him that the presence of other strangers had already been discovered by the pygmies. The silence that ensued was confirmatory of his fears; for by the time he was opposite the beach where Gammajee had met the boat that morning, Quigg's party was cornered. Evidently they had been surprised by the bushmen and, after firing one shot, had taken to their heels. The creek had cut off their retreat, though doubtless their ultimate capture would only have been a matter of minutes. Carnegie noticed that Chudy was not with the others.

The savages were clustered in a little knot, gesticulating with drawn bows. At the extreme edge of the sand spit Quigg and Miss Duball were standing at bay, the former with his revolver outstretched. That the fierce little islanders knew the potency of firearms was evident; they hesitated to make any advance. Stacpoole, who had been the first to arrive at the beach, plunged into the water at sight of Carnegie's boat. But almost before he was out of his depth, an arrow struck him in the arm and others splashed ahead of him.

"Better come back, Miles," the girl called. "I saw a shark in the water yesterday."

Carnegie waved to her, but as she did not respond, he supposed she had not seen him. The impending tragedy of the situation was relieved for a moment by Stacpoole's return. He came dripping out of the water to sink on the sand several yards away from his companions. A few of the bolder spirits among the pygmies immediately surrounded him.

Carnegie had a closer view of them. They were short wiry fellows, the tallest under five feet high, he judged, with fuzzy hair which stuck out at all angles, giving them a savage appearance. Immediate action was necessary if these fierce little brutes were to be checked. He congratulated himself on having made some preparations for such an emergency the night before. Lighting a cigarette, he sculled

slowly shorewards, keeping his face to the enemy.

A shower of arrows greeted him, many coming unpleasantly close. He chanced a few more strokes, then picked up one of the objects he had laid on the forethwart—a half stick of dynamite with a short length of fuse attached. He lit the latter from his cigarette tip, held it spluttering above his head, and tossed it forward.

The boat rocked from the concussion, and a small geyser flew up out of the water. The nearest savages jumped back with a yell. Carnegie rowed through the low breakers and threw another of his crude grenades. This time the whole mob broke and fled. He assisted the others into the boat and hastily shoved off.

"They got Ike," panted Quigg. "Put a dozen arrers into him before you could say 'knife.'"

"They'll do the same to us in a minute. Their bows shoot farther than I can throw."

When the boat was safely out of range, he looked at the boson.

"Ship your oar, Quigg, and put your hands behind you."

"Hey, hey, what—"

"Do as I tell you. Bind his wrists with the painter, Stacpoole. And make a good job of it, too."

Quigg got to his feet. "I'll upset the blasted boat first, you—"

Carnegie snatched up an oaken stretcher and struck the boson across the head. He caught him as he toppled forward and eased him to the bottom. "Go on, Stacpoole, do as I told you," he ordered.

"Cave man stuff, eh?" murmured the broker. "But moderate your tone when you—"

"I'm speaking to a first-class passenger. Here, take my oar. I'll do the trussing."

"Miles, you really—" began the girl.

But Carnegie's nerves were on edge with the happenings of the last hour. "Don't call him Miles," he blurted out angrily, and a second later would have given worlds to recall the childish remark.

Stacpoole gave an amused chuckle,

which ceased abruptly when the girl spoke.

"Why not—Bill? He's quite harmless. Surely he's proved that since we left the *Cawnpore*."

CONTRARY to their expectation they were allowed to board the *Amaranth* without opposition. The crew watched silently from the rail and Gammajee clapped fat hands together in approval at the sight of Quigg lying bound.

"More rough-houses. But this time, my good mister, the Amalekites gets the smiting. The little man without the h's, he is conspicuous with absence?"

"Niggers got him," replied Carnegie curtly. He was not at all sure of this complacent Hindu. "Who are you, anyhow?" he snapped as he climbed over the rail.

"That is large question and not put in good grammar. I am Mr. Amadab Gammajee of Calcutta, and this verree quick steamer was charter by me in Bangkok, which is city in foolish kingdom of Siam."

"What for?"

"That I inform you more subsequently. It be verree good plan to make water boil in boilers and go away quickly."

"I think so too. Where's Vasco?"

"Ah, the Portuguese gentlemans? He act verree foolish when I come shipboard and some of my low-caste countrymans lock in machinery room. With little chastisement, perhaps he find sense."

This proved to be the case. There was no opposition left in Vasco once he learnt the fate of his two companions. Within an hour Pincos Island was a dot astern.

Carnegie was poring over the chart on the bridge when the babu approached.

"Captain sahib, you verree nice young mans and not bucko like late Trumble, but I have honor to be boss. I like to make business talk downstairs."

Besides Miss Duball and Stacpoole Vasco and another man were in the saloon. The latter was a withered old Hindu, clad only in a few rags, and incredibly dirty. He quatted in one corner with his eyes fixed on vacancy, and di not look up when Gammajee spoke his name.

"Lady and gentlemans and Mr. Engineer, this is Ram Gundular, religious countrymans of mine. Verree nice old gentlemans, but make sedition talk against British lion who not like tail twisted."

Vasco grunted. "Da fella we come all dis way to get? He not look-a like he have verrea mooch mon'."

"Ram Gundular not use money; he have bowl."

"Bowl?"

"Yas, for beg with. Everybody pass place where he sit in Delhi put rice, millet, sometimes anna or two. All peoples like holy man."

"He gotta reech frien's, perhaps?" insinuated the Portuguese.

Gammajee smiled unctuously. "Wealthy countrymans not all bend knee to King George. Ram Gundular make considerable troubles for said royalty."

"I see," said Carnegie. "So the Indian Government sent him to Port Blair and you chartered this steamer to help him escape?"

"Captain sahib, you have much perspicuity for sailormans. Original skipper of *Amaranth* now deceased, you collect stipulated sum of fifty thousand rupees. C. O. D. at—at place I tell you more private."

FIFTY thousand rupees! Over ten thousand dollars! It was a large sum. Carnegie glanced curiously at the shriveled fakir, finding it difficult to realize the importance he had played in an enterprise that had already cost the lives of three white men. The old man must have proved a very prickly thorn to the Indian Government if his friends were willing to pay that much for his return. He did not doubt that Gammajee would be as good as his word. The very fact that he had chartered a vessel like the *Amaranth* showed there was money behind the affair. If the babu had arranged the preliminaries of the escape himself, he was not the fat fool his speech inclined one to believe. Plainly he or his protégé had the native crew under their influence also.

Gammajee was watching him, and it

seemed to Carnegie that there was a different light in the fellow's little black eyes—a hard look, calculating, utterly unscrupulous.

"Good enough," he acquiesced. "What about these two?" He pointed to Stacpoole and the girl sitting together on the settee.

"You like to give share of money to your friends, that your business."

"They're not my friends," grunted Carnegie. "Only been a nuisance so far."

The babu's eyes gleamed with approbation. "We talk about them more later, yas."

Carnegie avoided the girl's eyes as he left the saloon. Vasco was watching, and would only be too ready to inform Gammajee of the mate's previous interest in his passengers. Everything depended on the way he acted during the next twenty-four hours. A few eager questions regarding the reward and its manner of payment seemed to lull whatever suspicions the babu may have had. He named the spot on the Burman coast where the *Amaranth* was to be taken and left Carnegie in charge of the bridge.

"Veree important we make quick speed from these islands. Better you sleep little bit now and look after ships to-night. Low-caste lascar not steer good in dark unless white mans stand by."

Carnegie nodded.

That suited his plans very well. Besides being dog tired, he wished to avoid Miss Duball. He had heard Stacpoole

mutter something about "double-crosser" as he passed the two leaning over the rail.

AT eight bells, midnight, he entered the chart house and relieved the sailor at the wheel. During the five minutes delay changing watches, the *Amaranth's* bow described an arc, so gradual that the curl in her wake was almost imperceptible.

Helen Duball woke with a curious sense of something missing. She groped in her mind a few moments before she found it was the throbbing of the engines. Stacpoole rapped at her door.

"Get up, Helen. We're in port, a British port. That nautical hero of yours must have made a mistake in the night."

She left the sneer unanswered and hastened on deck. The *Amaranth* lay motionless in the calm waters of a landlocked harbor. Ashore nestled a picturesque settlement with rows and rows of white buildings in the background. On the bridge Gammajee and Vasco were watching the approach of a launch speeding towards them. Carnegie stood to one side, and it seemed to the girl that his glance was a little defiant as he met hers.

She brushed Stacpoole's detaining hand aside and went up to him.

"Don't think I didn't trust you—er—Bill. I knew you would bring your passengers safely into port some time."

He smiled. "They were becoming quite a nuisance: I wanted to get rid of them."

She crept closer. "Both of them, Bill?" she whispered.

NEXT MONTH

SHARK GOTCH

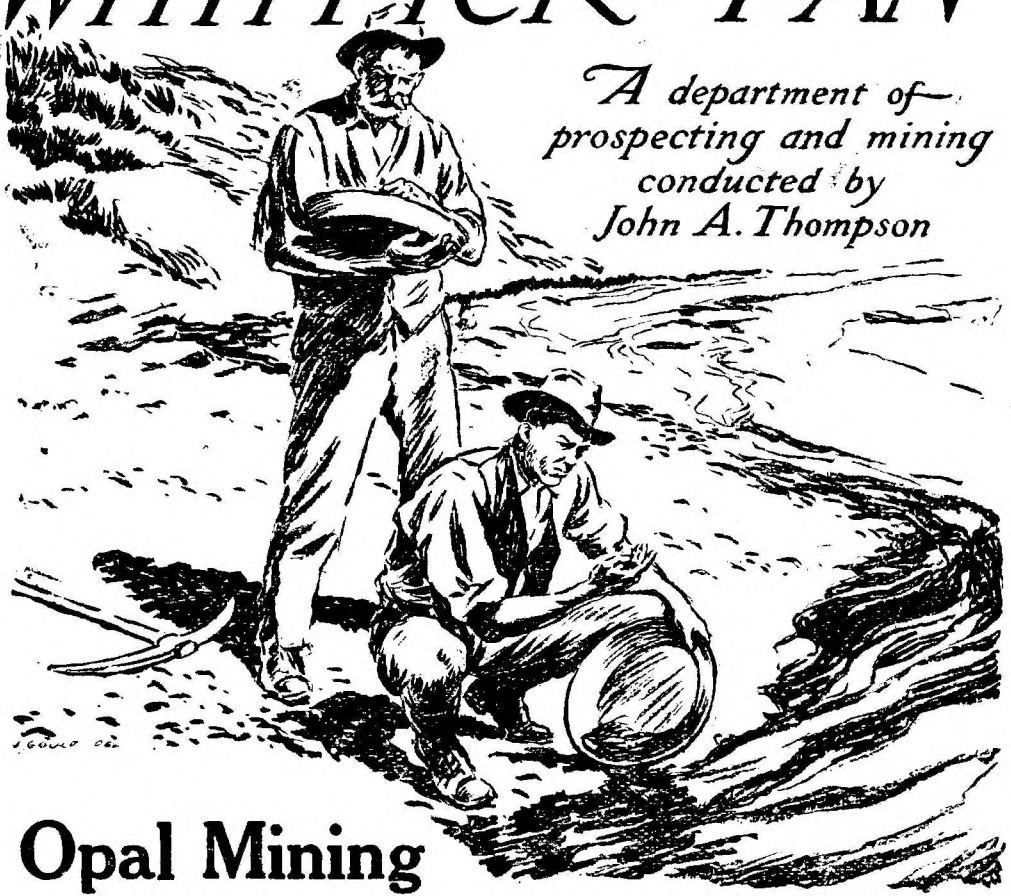
By ALBERT RICHARD WETJEN

IN

ADVENTURE TRAILS!

WITH PICK AND PAN

*A department of
prospecting and mining
conducted by
John A. Thompson*



Opal Mining

FOR real adventure try opal mining in Australia. The rewards are often great. But, like most of fortune's favors, they are fitful. Not all opal is precious. Much of it is just a valueless vitreous mass, locally known as "potch."

Hunting opals is a glorious gamble, and there are few thrills in the world that can compare with the sudden discovery of a piece of gem opal—say a flashing orange pin-fire—as it lies twinkling like a living eye entombed in the dead and worthless "potch." The single find of gem stone may be worth many hundreds of dollars.

In an opal camp such a find means dropping pick and shovel, clambering hurriedly out of the pit and exultantly showing the precious stone to the rest of the miners. One man's luck encourages the others. Everybody is glad. The old field

is fertile yet. Still a good producer. The lucky opal miner is soon surrounded by an excited group of fellow "opalers." Congratulations are hurled at him. He is bombarded with questions.

"Attaboy, Jack. She's a beauty, too, ain't she!"

"What level did you find it on, brother?"

"Any open ground near you?"

"How's to peg a claim beside you?"

"The pit I been workin' is a dud. Nothin' in two months but 'potch' and a few 'red flames' that ain't hardly worth the trouble o' gradin'. Still, after seein' that I guess I'll give her another twirl. How deep down did you say you was?"

"Boy, take a tip from an old-time opaler. Don't sell that stuff to the local sharps up here. They won't none of them give you but half of what it's worth. Go

on down into town and get a decent price."

As a rule, "town" means either Brisbane or Sydney. And it is generally to town that the miner takes his exceptional stones. The jewelers and reputable merchants there usually give him a better price than he could obtain from the resident buyers in camp, or from the itinerant dealers who travel about from one field to the other seeking bargains in raw opal—and getting them, too.

There is another reason for going to town after a big discovery. Nobody wants to stay in an opal camp when his pockets are bulging with money. There's no place to spend it in camp. Town is the place to get rid of money. And after it is spent one can always go back to the diggings and look for more opals.

Throughout southwestern Queensland literally hundreds of small opal mining camps exist in the mulga scrub far beyond the railway's furthest steel, but the cosmopolitan town of White Cliffs in New South Wales is perhaps the center of opal mining in Australia.

The camp itself is not particularly easy of access. It lies about 150 miles from Broken Hill on the west, and about fifty miles more than that from the railhead at Cobar on the east.

White Cliffs is a strange place. Its population a jumbled hodge-podge of every creed and color. Afghan and Chinaman may have neighboring shops—and next to them, perhaps, the squalid dive of some Assyrian trader. There is also the ever present group of resident opal buyers—sons of Palestine, mostly. Saloons and rickety frame hotels are everywhere.

Yet the bulk of the population does not live in the town itself. The opal hunters camp out at the diggings in the hillside.

Between the town of White Cliffs and the opal pits two streams of shifting miners flow steadily. One is composed of those who have made their "pot" and are hustling into town and thence back to civilization. The other stream is headed campward. It includes the new arrivals coming out to try their luck.

Hope runs high among the men in this second stream, for it has often been said in Australia that any man can find opal in White Cliffs by the simple system of taking up an abandoned claim and continuing to work where the last man left off. In time he too will make his "pot" and pass on, leaving the pit to await its next new tenant.

Opal mining is unique. There is nothing else quite like it. In the Australian fields surface indications of opal are rare. There is no vein to follow as in mining most of the metallic ores. No pay streak to be traced along some stream bed as there is in hunting placer gold.

A shaft must be sunk. But there is no natural marker to determine where. This is one reason why the timid often prefer to carry on in the deserted pit of some former "opaler." Sometimes a stone is thrown, or a coin is tossed. Others dig where first they put their tools down. It doesn't seem to matter much which system one uses. Opaling is a gamble anyhow.

Even as the shaft goes down and the depth of the pit increases there is little to tell one whether he is close to a fortune or not. Suddenly the opal hunter's pick may strike something hard and brittle in the tough clay or "mullock." A seam of opal!

So far everything is hunky dory. The next step is to sink through the opal layer carefully and, when a few feet underneath it, tunnel out the "mullock" until there is room for two men to crawl beneath the opal roof. The "mullock" is hauled to the surface by windlass.

The miners now get down into the pit and pry down the clay-incrusted opal seam. Excitement is at fever pitch. Hundreds of dollars may be within their grasp.

Much of the opal will be only worthless "potch"—perhaps all of it. If it is dead opal and nowhere shows the ever-changing fires that give beauty to the gem the whole mass is valueless.

The first fragments are examined with care. Somewhere within the dead "potch" may be the flashing rays that mark the precious opal. More of the opalescent

roof is broken down for minute inspection. The drift beneath the opal seam is lengthened. The brittle stuff may peter out altogether. That's one of the chances the opal hunter takes. Or nestled somewhere in the heart of the mass may lie the valuable "orange pin-fires," first grade gem stones.

When a bit of live opal has been struck the pieces are collected and graded carefully. "Orange pin-fires" and "greens" with a changing wave color are generally set aside as firsts. Pieces of "red flame" as a rule are piled with seconds, and the "blues," well they are looked upon contemptuously and re-graded later.

Black opals usually bring a better price than "orange pin-fires," though the latter are thought by many to be the more beautiful of the two gems.

Next to White Cliffs, the town of Lightning Ridge in New South Wales near the Queensland border is the most famous of the Australian opal camps. It is at Lightning Ridge that black opals are found. They will fetch considerable money, even from the itinerant buyers who drive, or ride out to the township from time to time. The place is comparatively easy to reach. It is less than a hundred miles from the railway terminal at Walgett, and from Walgett a road runs to the camp.

Three is the ideal number to engage in an "opaling" trip. That affords one man to dig in the shaft, one to work the windlass, and leaves the third to keep the table supplied with game and do the cooking. The jobs may be rotated, or, if one man is a particularly good cook and hunter, he may take on the commissary duties permanently.

No special technical knowledge is required to be an "opaler." That's one of the big attractions in the game. Nobody can miss a batch of "potch" once his pick strikes it. And the difference between a dead mass of worthless stuff and the "live" gem opal is so striking that it is almost impossible to make a mistake. The grading, of course, requires a little skill. But that soon comes with practice.

There is no rule as to where to start the pits in the clay formations, and nothing to tell at what depth opal may be struck, unless the new shaft is being sunk to cut the extension of an already discovered seam.

Sometimes the opal is struck just below the surface—less than five feet. But the next fifty feet may be barren. Or again opal may not be reached until the pit has hit the forty-foot level. The shafts are not large. A three-foot square often suffices. No expensive machinery is required. Just a little elbow grease on the part of the man working the hand windlass and ditto from the man below with the pick and shovel. No heavy investment is required. The staples procured from the nearest settlement are not exorbitantly priced as a rule. Game is generally plentiful. So are mosquitoes. But then, even an opal hunter can't expect all modern conveniences.

Questions and Answers

Question: Are there any aluminum ores in Jugoslavia?—BERNARD DENIS, PORT WASHINGTON, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK.

Answer: In a report recently made public by Leslie A. Davis, American Consul at Zagreb, it was stated that a survey has shown the existence of extensive, and in many places commercially exploitable, deposits of bauxite, the ore of aluminum, throughout Jugoslavia. Most of the deposits were said to occur in the vicinity of the Adriatic and on the adjacent islands. Among the localities favorably mentioned were Dalmatia, Croatia, Herzegovina and Montenegro.

Questions: (a) What do you think of Dutch Guiana as a place to try prospecting? And what are in general its (b) mining laws, (c) climate, (d) the rivers, as far as navigability is concerned? (e) Also, must one know the Dutch language to get along there?—ALFRED MAPES, STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT.

Answers: (a) Terrible. (b) In the first place—unless the mining laws have been changed—only citizens of the Netherlands or of the colony of Surinam (Dutch Guiana), or companies legally organized under the laws of either one of the two countries, may acquire and hold

mining rights in Dutch Guiana. There is a lot more red tape, too. Prospecting is not free. A written permit from the governor must be obtained before one can prospect on Crown land.

(c) The climate is distinctly tropical—and moist. Temperature ranges from 70° F. on real cold days up to about 95° F., and sometimes beyond. There is considerable rainfall along the coast, and more in the jungles of the interior. The dry seasons run from about February to April, and August to November. From April to August and from November to February the wet seasons do their stuff. And how! (d) All inland trade and travel depends largely on the waterways. Luckily many of the rivers are deep, some being navigable for seagoing vessels, others navigable for long distances in launches and other light craft that draw ten feet of water or less. Steamers drawing from fifteen to twenty feet of water can get up the Surinam River as far as Paramaribo. Light-draught vessels can go one hundred miles inland. The Maroni is good for forty miles into the country. The Nickerie can handle light-draught vessels for sixty miles up from its mouth, and for the same type of boat the Corentyne is navigable about ten miles further inland. Privately owned schooners and launches as well as a government service of motor boats are constantly plying up and down these waterways. (e) Though the official language of the colony is Dutch, one can get along pretty well with English, as the latter is spoken fairly generally throughout Surinam.

Here Next Month

Not all the head hunters in the world can keep gold hunters out of the little known mountains of New Guinea. Neither can the jungle and the fever keep the prospectors away from this region where almost any creek offers a good lead, and colors can be found most anywhere.

Those who have been there lately say that New Guinea is the new Prospectors' Paradise. The gold fields of this country will be discussed here next month.

"With Pick and Pan"

This department is devoted to prospecting, mining, and the proper field identification of ores and minerals, and is intended to be of real and practical help to readers of ADVENTURE TRAILS.

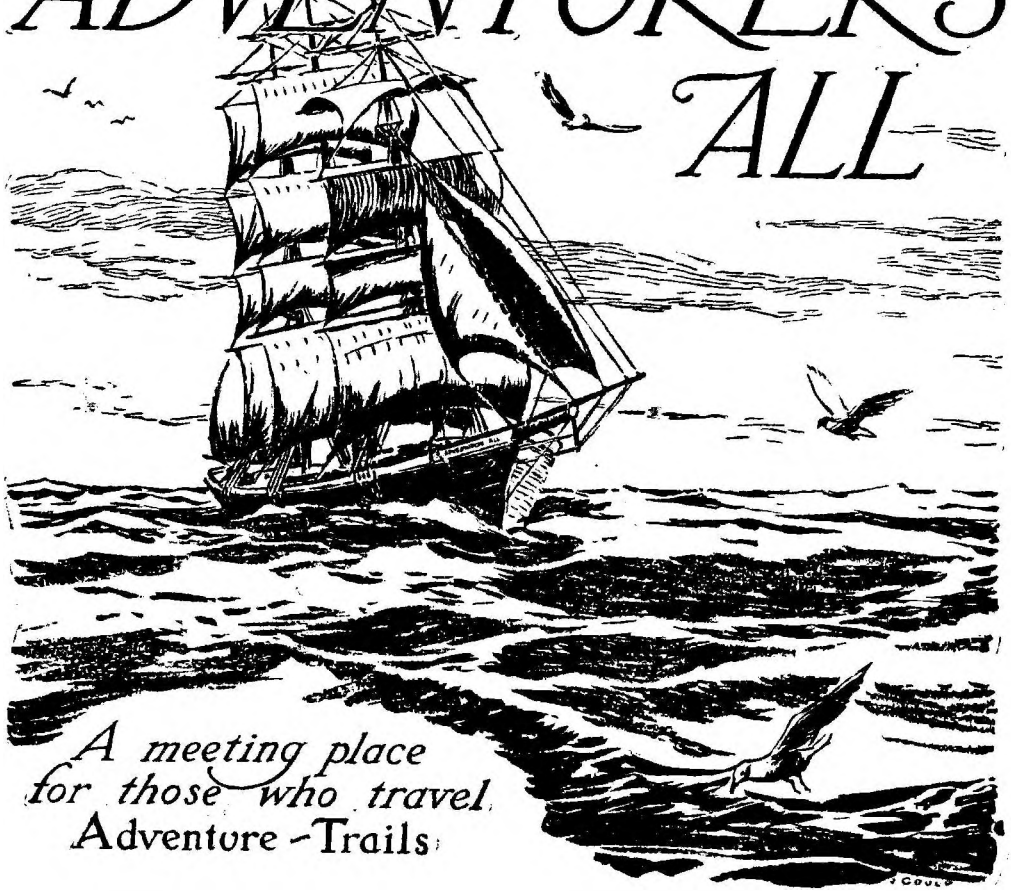
Every month we will have here an original article based on the experience I gleaned in years of actual prospecting in a good many countries. Also, I will answer any questions you send in relating to prospecting, mining, mining equipment, field conditions, mining laws in the various countries and kindred subjects.

Send in as many questions as you please; all will be gladly answered. Address your communications to John A. Thompson, Mining Expert, Care of ADVENTURE TRAILS, 80 Lafayette St., New York, N. Y., U. S. A. If a personal reply is wanted, kindly enclose a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

John A. Thompson



ADVENTURERS ALL



*A meeting place
for those who travel.
Adventure - Trails*

"Passengers"

Bertram W. Williams in the interesting letter which follows tells us how he came to write his story "Passengers," appearing in this issue.

In most large department stores it is impressed upon the employees that "the customer is always right." To a certain extent the same axiom applies to steamship lines carrying passengers—the latter must be deferred to at all times. I once heard a Welsh skipper say to his chief officer apropos of a crowd of unwashed Armenians, "Them's passengers, mister; passengers has to be treated different from seamen."

Naturally such a rule often goes against the grain of hard-boiled mates and tough-grained salts who find enough to do battling the elements of nature without answering the silly questions put to them in the midst of duties.

I have often wondered how some of these young officers who are all courtesy and smiles on their own decks would act were they placed in a situation where they didn't *have to be* polite to those under their charge. Hence the idea of "Passengers."

Although some of the incidents in the yarn

may appear far-fetched, they are quite possible, if not probable.

That out-of-the-way group of islands, the Andamans, are very little known, even by their owner, J. Bull, Esquire. With the exception of the governor and a few officials at the penal settlement of Port Blair there are no white men on any of the adjoining islands. Traders and tourists are not even allowed, much less encouraged to visit them. And probably no aboriginal race of savages has managed to retain its customs and warlike habits without interference from Europeans as have these dwarf Andamanese. Because none of the group of islands are suitable for cultivation or very rich in raw produce, the Indian government has never gone to the trouble of subduing the fierce little islanders. Indeed, it has been wise enough to make capital out of their very ferocity, which acts as a deterrent on any convict with ambitions to escape.—BERTRAM W. WILLIAMS.

"The Sub and the Merchant Prince"

F. V. W. Mason, author of "The Sub and the Merchant Prince," appearing in this issue, acknowledges the source of the key idea for his chief situation.

The principal idea for this story was inspired by a re-reading of Victor Hugo's masterpiece which describes the havoc wrought by a gun broken loose on a man-o'-war. In "The Sub and the Merchant Prince" I have tried to reconstruct the same principle on modern lines—with what success it is for you to judge.

It is an interesting fact that the original of Victor Hugo's story was a real man—a sailor in the French Navy. He had, and I believe still has, the distinction of being the only man who has been awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor in the morning, and been executed by a firing squad in the afternoon. This is quite true.

The same man cast loose the juggernaut-like gun, and then, his conscience awakened, finally recaptured it just as it was about to smash through the side of the frigate which was struggling in a violent storm.

For the first act he was tried by court-martial and being found guilty of an action which caused great damage and the death of several of the crew, he was condemned to die.

For the second act of risking his life to secure the plunging cannon he was awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor and mentioned in orders for heroism.

With all solemnity the tragic farce was carried out. The coveted decoration was pinned to the condemned man just a few hours before he was marched out to face the waiting firing squad.

Happily, this case is unique, but I believe it to be one of the most interesting on record.—F. V. W. MASON.

Zulu Discipline

Captain Harvey Payne, in the following letter, writes in to tell us something of the iron discipline which contributed to making the Zulus of Africa one of the most outstanding of all the negro tribes.

The soldiers of Chaka, king of the Zulus, literally fought with ropes round their necks, for they knew that to be defeated in battle meant an inevitable death sentence.

Once when an *impi*—a regiment of three thousand men—had turned its back on an enemy, the whole army, numbering sixty thousand warriors, was drawn up in the form of a hollow square near a place now known as Chaka's Rock, at the mouth of the Umzimkulu River, Natal. The doomed regiment was immediately in front of a rude throne on which sat the tyrant.

After the royal salute of "Bayete" had been given, the king demanded of the *Induna*—chief-tain—who commanded the regiment, "Have you wounds in your backs?" The chief replied, "*A-aca-Nkose*"—"Yes, Oh King!"

With a wave of the hand Chaka said, "You are dismissed."

Then, led by their commander, each man keeping his place in the ranks, the whole *impi* broke out into a song; and, dancing a war dance, and brandishing their shields and asse-

gais, they danced over the edge of a nearby precipice and straight to their deaths.

Other victims, "smelled out" by the *Icanusi*—witch-doctors—were clubbed or stabbed to death, and on the occasion of one big "smelling out" over six thousand persons—men, women and children—were sacrificed.

Strictest eugenics were enforced, any child having the slightest deformity or showing any signs of weakness being ruthlessly abandoned to the lions and other carnivorous beasts which abounded. The results of this custom show themselves even yet, for the Zulus are one of the finest races, physically, in the world.

In such a warrior race one would expect to find a horde of fierce, untameable barbarians whose every thought is of war, who know nothing of the ordinary virtues, and who have as their king a tyrannical and cruel despot. Instead, they are a quiet, kindly, light-hearted race. They are cleanly, sober and honest—and loyally attached, too, to the memory of their king who was supposed to be such a detestable tyrant.

Chaka was later murdered by Umbopa, a servant in the pay of Dingaan and Umhlangane, Chaka's two brothers. They afterwards fought a duel to determine the succession, and Dingaan killed his brother.

Though Chaka's reign was such a short one—only twenty-eight years—he raised the Zulu people from an obscure tribe to be the most important savage race in South Africa, and introduced a military discipline which was afterwards to give the British government serious trouble for nearly a century.

Hates His "Accursed Wanderlust"

Dear Editor:

Upon reading "Adventurers All" in a recent issue of ADVENTURE TRAILS (formerly Danger Trail) I find that two boys, eighteen and fourteen years respectively, are itching for the twang of adventure and romance. They are young, yes, very young to start thinking of such things, more so when there are so many more and better things to be done which would be more to their advantage. Once one is taken with the accursed wanderlust he never recovers, but goes through life gaining nothing and losing much. I know, as I am a wanderer, heart and soul, and cannot break away from it—but let me tell my story.

I am thirty years of age and have seen many different countries as hobo, soldier, sailor and adventurer in quest of that yellow metal which makes brutes out of men—gold. I have shot and killed men in war. In South America where it was kill or get killed, I have been near death upon four different occasions: once from a shot from a Mexican bandit gun; twice in Brazil from being too free with my own gun; and once from a knife thrown by an Argentina cowboy. I have heard the rumble of long drums in the South Sea Islands; I have been in front of witch-doctors and just escaped by a hairbreadth. I have been hunted as a bandit in Argentina and a gunman in Chili. I am well known in Mexico as a killer and general bad

actor, and am looked upon as a master with six-gun and rifle—all of which has gained me nothing but a few souvenirs and a bullet-scarred body.

I started when I was seven years old, when I ran away from home with the yen to see the world. But no, boys, it is better to finish school and be some good to this great American civilization, that you may feel your life wasn't thrown away to satisfy a few whims of your inward feelings.

I am married now and have a son of my own—and may God keep this wandering fever away from him. It has its hold on me yet, and I am planning a trip into the wilds of South America. My family will be well taken care of—I have tended to that—and I feel that I will return safely as I have always done.

I feel that it is better that my name not accompany this letter for reasons which I care not to make public. You may print whatever you think advisable, or none if you wish. But I have been through a perfect hell of a life and realize my mistake all too late.

I hope you give the boys some real advice.—
A RESTLESS ADVENTURER.

Noble Slaves

Apropos of the discussion of the Zulus and their civilization we are printing the following letter from Captain Paul Brown regarding the negro civilization in Hayti.

More than a century ago Toussaint L'Ouverture, a negro slave who had gained his liberty in Hayti from the French, gradually established himself as the most powerful man on the entire island and was appointed Governor General by the French government.

Later, Napoleon, then First Consul and desirous of becoming emperor, sent the strongly republican army of the Rhine to Hayti in command of his brother-in-law, General Leclerc, with instructions to suppress the rising authority of the erstwhile slaves, and to send L'Ouverture and his immediate associates to France as prisoners.

The recently freed blacks, apprised of this intention, never permitted the French army to leave the port of Cap Haytien, after it had disembarked. Leclerc, ostensibly to gain the benefits of a conference with L'Ouverture, asked that he keep a rendezvous with him in Cap Haytien. L'Ouverture went, but was seized and sent to France in chains, where he was confined and soon died in the Castle Joux.

Jean Jacques Dessalines, another ex-slave, assumed command of the blacks and declared the country free from French rule. In 1804 he was made governor for life with the right to name his successor. Soon after his elevation to this post, however, he became dissatisfied, and declared himself emperor, as Jacques I. His first official act as emperor was to incite his black subjects to a massacre of every white man, woman and child in the island, and apparently this was done. Hayti became a black nation. Of Dessalines it is said that he personally executed a thousand whites on the grave of his

dead wife to satisfy his personal vengeance, as she had been killed accidentally when the French were pursuing him.

His reign was so brutal and bloody, however, that it was soon terminated. His own officers assassinated him. He had created no nobles, as he had contended that he alone was noble.

Upon his death, in 1806, after ruling for two unspeakably horrible years, he was succeeded by Henry Christophe, who with Dessalines had constituted the power behind L'Ouverture. Christophe ruled fairly well, with the title of Grand Protector, from 1807 to 1811, when he declared himself King and ruled for nine more years.

However, he was not able to extend his rule over the entire country, and Alexander Petion was elected President in the south of the island, with his capital at Port au Prince. Possibly fearing the loss of the rest of his kingdom, particularly at the hands of the French, Christophe built the most remarkable edifice of its kind when he caused the erection of the great fortress of the Citadel just outside of Cap Haytien.

It is sprawled over the top of one of the highest peaks in the vicinity, and thrusts a great prow down the mountain from the side from which attack was most likely. All the available cannon in the country were dragged to the Citadel and are still mounted there in long galleries commanding every possible approach. They have been mute since they were mounted. Enormous magazines were made deep in the rocky hillsides inside the fort, and great cisterns were made for stores of water.

The Citadel was never quite completed, for Christophe ruled so cruelly toward the end of his reign that his subjects revolted, and, rather than be captured, he committed suicide with a silver bullet in the rocky galleries of what was to be his monument. His tomb is still in the inner court of the Citadel.

It is still told of Christophe in the vicinity of his fortress that he one time marched an entire company of his gaudily uniformed soldiers over the edge of an enormously high wall of the Citadel merely to impress a visitor with the iron discipline he maintained; and that on another occasion, when he came upon one hundred men struggling futilely to drag a huge cannon up the steep slopes of the mountain, he ordered the execution of every tenth man under the belief that ninety men could do what one hundred could not. The gun went up.

While he was King he created a copious black aristocracy, and all over Hayti there are still tombs, usually in the central square of little villages in the interior, where lie the remains of his nobles.—CAPTAIN PAUL BROWN.

Rather Read Than Eat

Dear Editor:

I've been a constant reader of your fine magazine ADVENTURE TRAILS (formerly Danger Trail) for at least two years, and I must say this, that your magazine is a better one than all the other ones put together. I would rather read ADVENTURE TRAILS than eat. The story in the October issue, "Eagle Stuff," by R. A. Martinsen, set my adventurous blood on the jump.

I like all red-blooded stories of adventure, and some day I hope to have the opportunity to travel to foreign countries. I wish your magazine all the success in the world.—EUGENE HEFLIN, Box 1477, Pampa, Texas.

Here Next Month

The novel next month will be by Albert Richard Wetjen and will take its name, "Shark Gotch," from the chief character in it. Shark Gotch was a character in real life. He lived contemporaneously with such famous adventurers as "Bully" Hayes and "Bobby" Towns, "German" Harry and Nicholas the Greek—and he was greater than them all, though Gotch was not the name he went by. We believe that Dick Wetjen in Shark Gotch has brought to life the greatest adventurer since the immortal Captain Kettle, and are sure that most of you will agree.

Also there will be a story "Soldier of the Legion," by Theodore Roscoe, who needs no introduction to you. You will be interested to know that "Sun-touched," a story of Mr. Roscoe's which appeared in DANGER TRAIL a number of months ago, was included in the splendid anthology "Modern Short Stories" (Macmillan), which has just been published.

The contributors to this anthology include most of the great short story writers of modern times, and the list of names in the preface reads like the Who's Who of the literary aristocracy—where-

fore you will understand our pleasure at the indirect acknowledgment of the worth of the stories and authors that are appearing in ADVENTURE TRAILS.

The third article of our "Through the War on a Submarine" series will also be here next month. In it you will read of a thrilling fight with an enemy seaplane, and of a strange premonition of death—and its dramatic sequel. Enough said.

"Adventurers All"

This department is a meeting place for all adventurers—not only those who themselves venture on strange trails, or those who spin our yarns so vividly, but for that greater number who relish corking good stories of adventure laid on the frontiers of the world.

Have you had an experience worth telling, or do you know something of common interest? Share it with us.

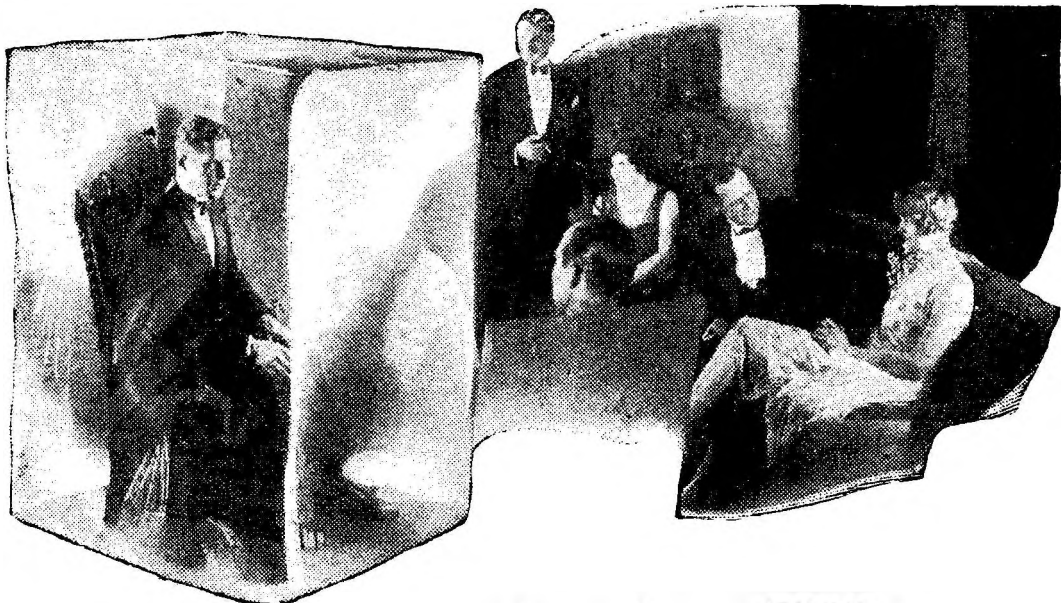
Would you like to go pen-adventuring? Write in: maybe someone on a distant frontier will be glad to correspond with you.

Is there a question you would like to ask? Send it along, and we will get the answer for you. If the subject is of general interest we will answer you here.

Remember, you have a standing, cordial invitation to use "Adventurers All." It is your department.

—THE EDITOR.





I Turned To Ice When I Tried To Talk

- But Now I Can Sway An Audience of Thousands!

I HAD always been painfully bashful. When trying to carry on even the most commonplace conversation my voice would sound unnatural and my hands and knees would tremble. Often I would listen to an argument among a group and become so keenly interested that I would want to voice my own opinion—yet timidity would keep me silent. I never had the courage to stand up for what I knew to be my rights—I was always afraid of “what people would say,” of ridicule. Since my childhood I had had a secret desire to appear in public—to be active in politics—but my shyness was so great that I turned to ice when I tried to talk—in even the smallest gathering!

My inability to talk was also affecting my business success. I dreaded going in and asking for a raise—I was afraid of any situation that meant using my voice—having to express myself. I didn't know how to present the ideas which I was sure the firm could use. I was just a plodder—a truck horse, capable of doing a lot of heavy work but of no use where brilliant performance was required. Often I would see men who were not half so thorough nor so hard working as I, promoted to positions where they made a brilliant showing—not through hard work, but through their ability to talk cleverly and convincingly—to give the appearance of being efficient and skillful.

In Twenty Minutes a Day

And then suddenly I discovered a new easy method which made me a forceful speaker almost overnight. I learned how to dominate one man or an audience of thousands—how to say just the right words at the right time, how to win and hold the attention of those around me, how to express my thoughts simply and clearly, yet in a pleasing, interesting and amusing way. In just a few months I was able to make campaign speeches for a

local candidate—I who a short time before had turned to ice when I tried to carry on an ordinary conversation!

Soon I had won salary increases, promotion, popularity, power. Today I always have a ready flow of speech at my command. I am able to rise to any occasion, to meet any emergency with just the right words, to approach all types of people with ease and fearlessness. And I accomplished all this by developing the natural power of speech possessed by everyone, but cultivated by so few—by simply spending 20 minutes a day in my own home on this most fascinating subject.

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This new method of training is fully described in a very interesting and informative booklet which is now being sent to everyone mailing the coupon below. This book is called *How to Work Wonders with Words*. In it you are shown how to conquer stage fright, self-consciousness, timidity, bashfulness and fear—those things that keep you silent while men of lesser ability get what they want by the sheer power of convincing speech. Not only men who have made millions, but thousands have sent for this book—and are unstinting in their praise of it. You are told how to bring out and develop your priceless “hidden knack”—the natural gift within you—which will win for you advancement in position and salary, popularity, social standing, power and real success. You can obtain your copy absolutely free by sending the coupon.

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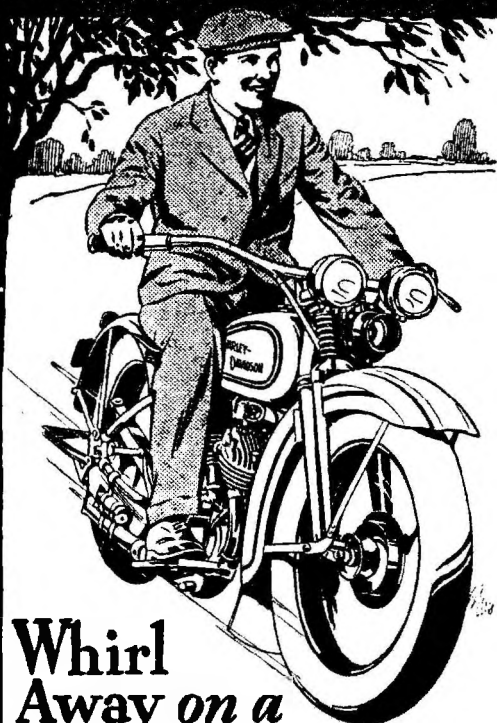
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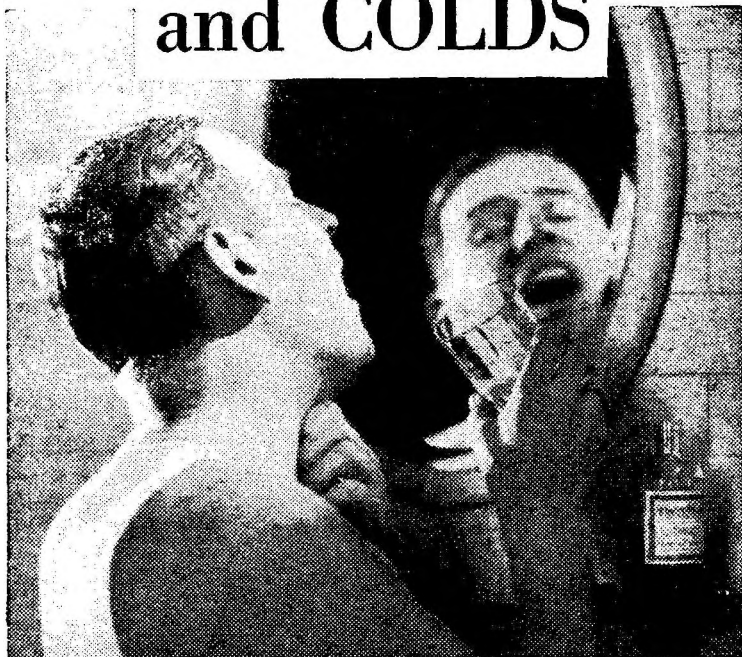
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More than fifty diseases, some slight, some dangerous, have their beginning in the nose or throat.

Therefore, an irritated throat demands immediate attention. It may be the symptom of a cold—or worse. The germs causing the irritation must be killed before they get the upper hand.

Listerine, used full strength as a gargle, is a powerful aid in killing germs. Repeated tests by laboratories of national repute prove it. For example, Listerine, full strength, in 15 seconds destroyed even the virulent *M. Aureus* (pus) and *B. Typhosus* (typhoid) germ. Yet Listerine is so gentle and safe



it may be used undiluted in any cavity of the body.

Now you can understand why millions rely on Listerine to avoid ordinary sore throat and colds entirely, and to check them should they gain a throat hold. You'll be amazed to find how quickly Listerine brings relief.

If, however, a feeling of soreness persists, call your physician. It is no longer a matter with which an antiseptic can deal.

Keep a bottle of Listerine handy at home and in the office, and at the first sign of throat irritation gargle repeatedly with it full strength. Lambert Pharmaceutical Company, St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.

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Countless colds start when germs are carried to the mouth on food. By using Listerine on the hands before every meal, you attack such germs and lessen the risk of cold. Remember this, mothers, when handling baby's food.

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Find the "Different" Picture

Here are twelve pictures of Charlie Chaplin, the world famous United Artists star. No, they're not all alike, even though they look alike. Eleven of them are exactly alike, but one and only one is different from all the others. That's the real Charlie Chaplin. Can you find him? The difference may be in the hat, shirt or tie.

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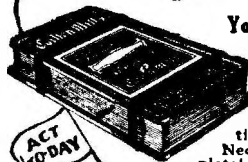
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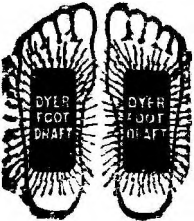
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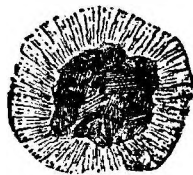
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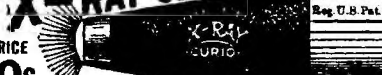
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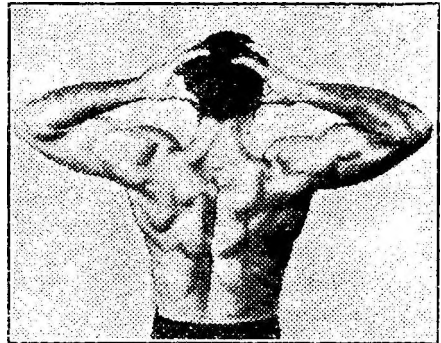
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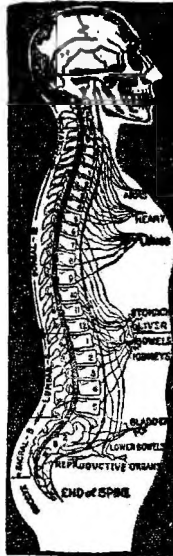
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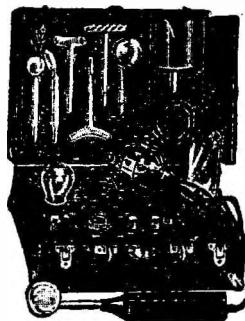
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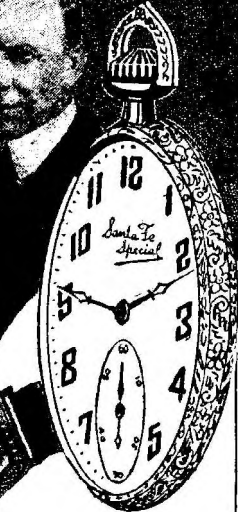
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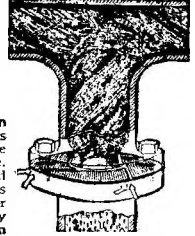
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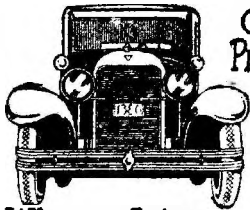
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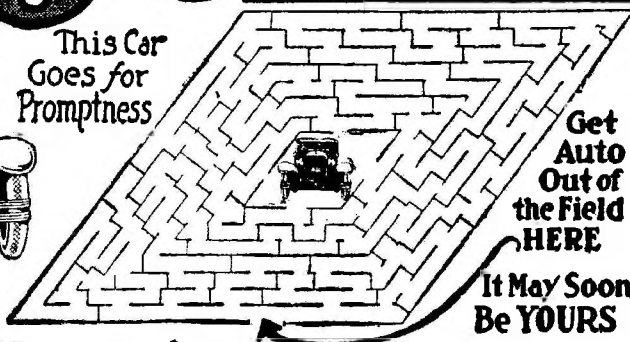
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Get Auto Out of the Field HERE

It May Soon Be YOURS

Solve this puzzle and solve it quick. There's too much at stake for you to delay a minute. Take a pencil and draw a line showing how the auto can be driven out of the field pictured above. There's all kinds of fences in your way and there's only one gate out of the field, but if your eyes are sharp you MAY find a way thru the various gates in the fences, and get your auto out.

If you find the way out, cut out the puzzle and SEND YOUR ANSWER QUICK

Some sharp-eyed person is going to win the \$1,000 CASH and the auto, too, if on time. Why not you? The Hudson is a prize for PROMPTNESS. If you win the \$1,000 you want to get the Hudson, too. Send your answer, TODAY. We will let you know at once, how close you are to winning, how to get the \$1,000 first prize, and make the Hudson yours. There will be no delay in giving you your award for solving this puzzle, so mail your answer AT ONCE!

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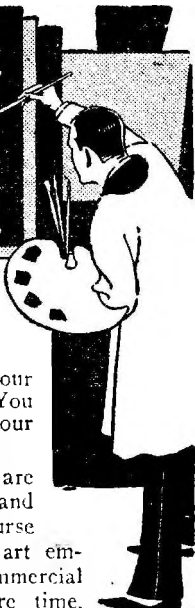
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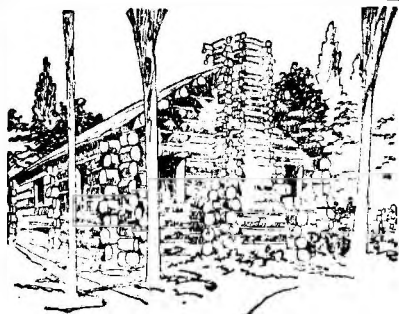


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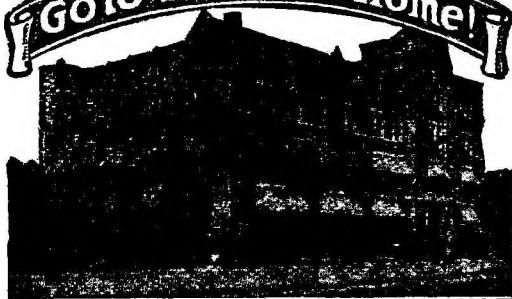
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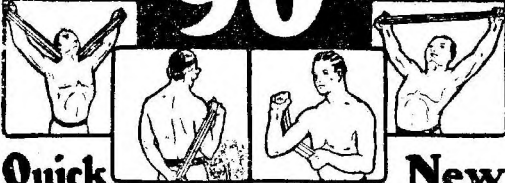
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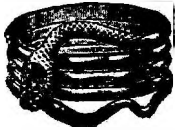
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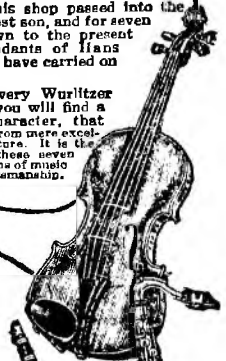
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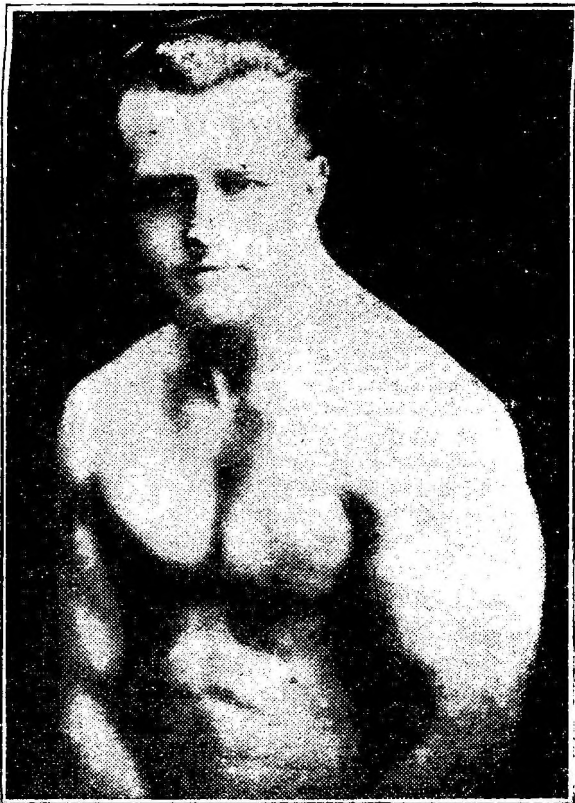
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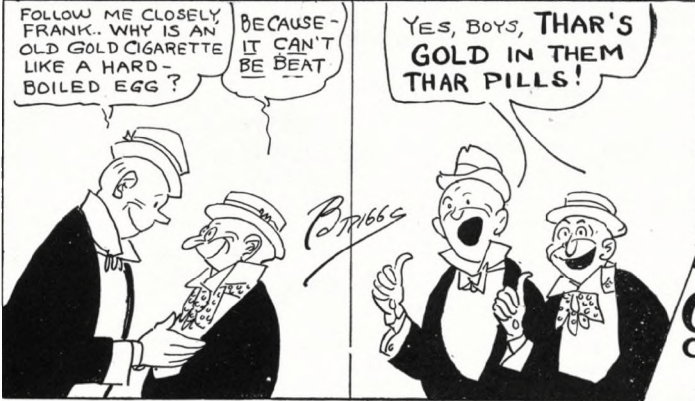
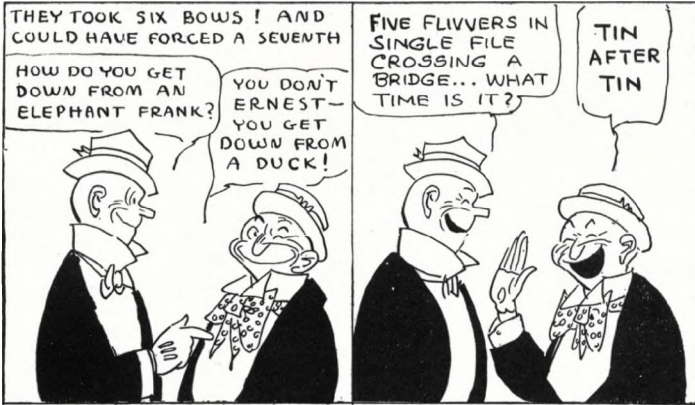
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