JUNE 1937

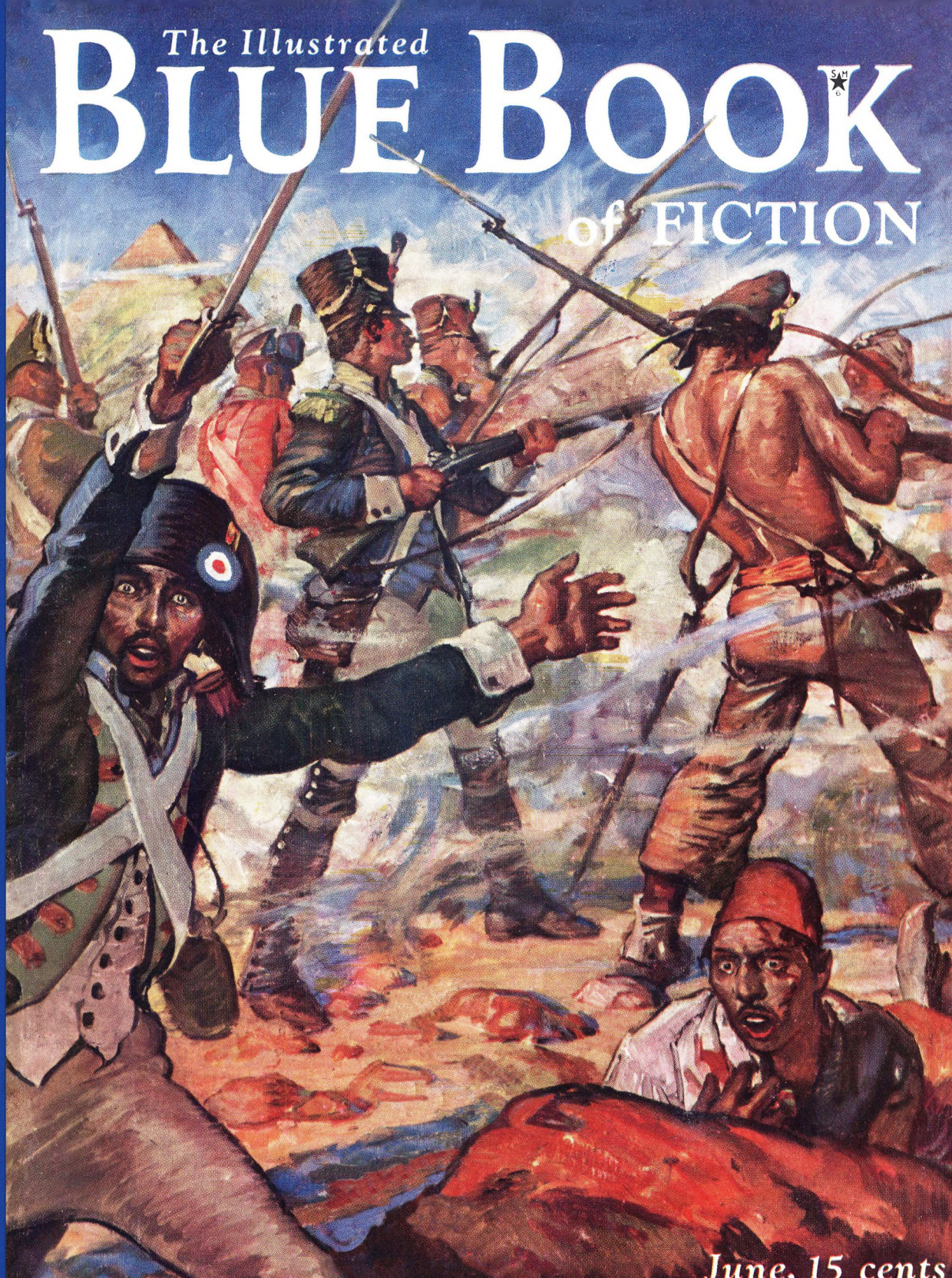
THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

VOL. 65 No. 2

The Illustrated

BLUE BOOK

of FICTION



June, 15 cents

WARRIORS IN EXILE—a new series
by H. Bedford-Jones.... Henry Rowland, Bigelow Neal
William Chester, Robert Mill, Beatrice Grimshaw

SWELL NEWS!

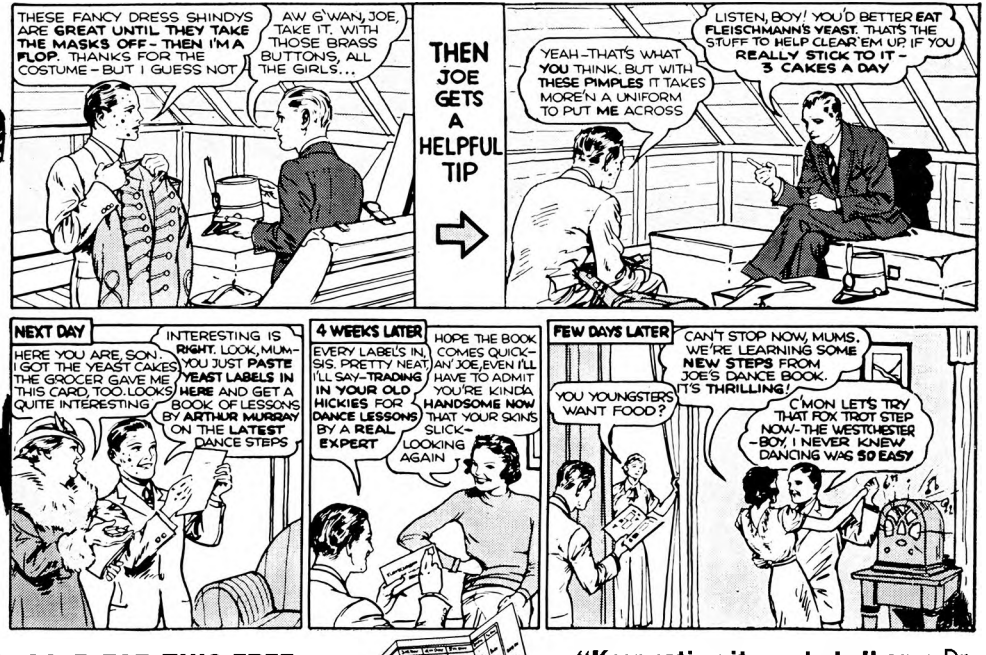
Start Now to Clear up Your Skin! Learn the New Steps! BE POPULAR

ARTHUR MURRAY
World's Greatest Dance Instructor—Tells you how to do the very Newest

DANCE STEPS

FREE!

IT COSTS $5 EACH PRIVATE LESSON TO LEARN THESE STEPS IN MR. MURRAY'S NEW YORK STUDIO



ASK YOUR GROCER FOR THIS FREE FLEISCHMANN DANCE CARD . . .

Don't slip up on this big chance, boys and girls! Begin today to save yeast labels for Arthur Murray's *exciting* book of 20 dance lessons!

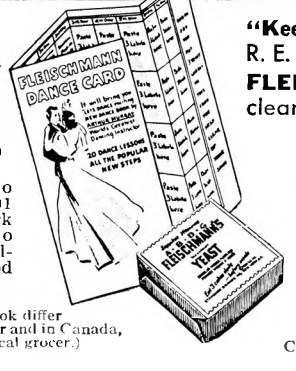
You CAN'T BUY this book anywhere! The *only way* to get one is with Fleischmann Yeast labels.

Eat 3 cakes of Fleischmann's Yeast *daily* for 27 days. *Save the label from each cake.* Paste these on the *free* Fleischmann Dance Card your grocer will give you.

If your grocer has no Dance Cards, save your 81 yeast labels and send them in an envelope, or pasted up on plain paper.

Send your labels to Fleischmann's Yeast, 701 Washington St., New York City. And don't forget to include *your* name and address. (This offer holds good until August 31, 1937.)

(Details of securing Dance Book differ slightly in states west of Denver and in Canada, see newspapers, or ask your local grocer.)



"Keep eating it regularly," says Dr. R. E. Lee, well-known physician, "and **FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST** will help clear up **ADOLESCENT PIMPLES."**

● After the start of adolescence important glands develop, causing disturbances throughout the system. The skin gets oversensitive. Waste poisons in the blood irritate this sensitive skin. Pimples break through.

Fleischmann's Yeast helps to overcome adolescent pimples by clearing these skin irritants out of the blood. Eat 3 cakes daily—one about ½ hour before meals—plain, or in water.

Next Month! **"Gunpowder Gold"**

The thrill-crammed story of an American patriot abroad, by the author of "Life's a Fight, Kit!"

By GORDON KEYNE

BLUE BOOK

JUNE, 1937 MAGAZINE VOL. 65, NO. 2

Eight Exceptional Short Stories

A Deeply Interesting Serial

A Swift-Moving Novelette

Prize Stories of Real Experience

Cover Design Painted by Herbert Morton Stoops

Except for stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

McCALL CORPORATION
William B. Warner, *President*
Marvin Pierce, *Vice-President*

Publisher, The Blue Book Magazine
Francis Hutter, *Secretary*
J. D. Hartman, *Treasurer*

DONALD KENNICOTT, Editor

Published monthly, at McCall St., Dayton, Ohio. Subscription Offices—Dayton, Ohio. Editorial and Executive Offices—230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE—June, 1937. Vol. LXV, No. 2.

Entered as second-class matter, November 12, 1930, at the Post Office at Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1897. Subscription Prices, one year $1.50, two years $2.00 in U. S. and Canada; foreign postage $1.00 per year. For change of address, give us four weeks' notice and send old address as well as new. Special Note: Each issue of The Blue Book Magazine is copyrighted.

Printed in U.S.A.

Prize Offer for Real Experiences

THERE is material for a novel in every person's life, it has been said. Whether this is true or not, we do believe that in the lives of most of us some experience has occurred sufficiently exciting to merit description in print. With this idea in mind we shall be pleased to receive and to print true stories of real experience, running from one thousand to four thousand words each. For each of those accepted each month we will pay, according to our appraisal of its length and strength, an average price of $50.

In theme the stories may deal with adventure, mystery, sport, humor,—especially humor!—war or business. Sex is barred. Manuscripts should be addressed to the Real Experience Editor, the Blue Book Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. Preferably but not necessarily they should be typewritten, and should be accompanied by a stamped and self-addressed envelope for use in case the story is unavailable.

A pen name may be used if desired, but in all cases the writer's real name and permanent address should accompany the manuscript. Be sure to write your name and correct address in the upper left-hand corner of the first page of your story, and keep a copy as insurance against loss of the original; for while we handle manuscripts with great care, we cannot accept responsibility for their return. As this is a monthly contest, from one to two months may elapse before you receive a report on your story.

One Year From Today

What Will You Be Earning?

This may be the most important year in your life! Your whole future is apt to depend on how you take advantage of present business changes.

The "New Deal" is opening up new jobs, creating unusual opportunities, bringing back prosperity. But that does not insure prosperity for you. Only you can insure that.

For months—maybe years—employers will be able to pick and choose out of the millions now unemployed or dissatisfied with their work and pay. Naturally they will pick the men with most preparation and ability.

You should—you must—make yourself quickly more valuable—to protect what you have and to insure getting your share of the promotions and pay raises. It is being done by OTHERS—it can be done by YOU!

Ask us to send you full details about our new spare time training, and to explain how it prepares you to meet today's demands and opportunities, also about our salary-increasing plan. If you really are in earnest, you should investigate *at once*. Check your field below, write your name and address, and *mail*.

LaSalle Extension University
Dept. 6369-R Chicago

Send me, free, the facts about the demands and opportunities in the business field I have checked —and about your training for that field.

- ☐ Higher Accountancy
- ☐ Expert Bookkeeping
- ☐ Business Management
- ☐ Traffic Management
- ☐ C. P. A. Coaching
- ☐ Personnel Management
- ☐ Modern Salesmanship
- ☐ Industrial Management
- ☐ Modern Foremanship
- ☐ Business English
- ☐ Law—LL. B. Degree
- ☐ Commercial Law
- ☐ Stenotypy
- ☐ Effective Speaking

Name .....

Present Position .....

Address .....

MIND POWER

A FREE BOOK

Develop your personal, creative power! Awaken the silent, sleeping forces in your own consciousness. Become Master of your own life. Push aside all obstacles with a new energy you have overlooked. The Rosicrucians know how, and will help you apply the greatest of all powers in man's control. Create health and abundance for yourself. Write for *Free* book, "The Secret Heritage." It tells how you may receive these teachings for study and use. It means the dawn of a new day for you. Address: Scribe M.Y.D.

The Rosicrucians
SAN JOSE —AMORC— CALIFORNIA

"The Rosicrucians are NOT a religious organization"

ARE YOU MISSING HALF THE FUN?

We supply complete Equipment and Instructions for doing your own

Photo Finishing

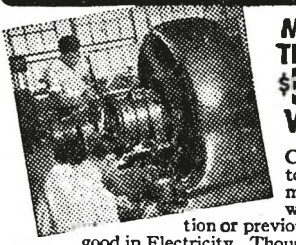
Only $3.98 for outfit—handles Kodak Prints and all types of work. Money-back guarantee. EARN EXTRA INCOME. Write today for circular.

BUNNELL STUDIO CO.
"The Reliable House"
Dept. R-3 **Banning, Cal.**

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE MORE MONEY SEND FOR DETAILS NOW ON MY AMAZINGLY EASY WAY TO TRAIN FOR

ELECTRICITY

IN 12 WEEKS



MANY ELECTRICAL TRAINED MEN EARN $30-$40-$50 Weekly & More

Clip the coupon and mail it today. Get PROOF that many COYNE graduates without advanced education or previous experience are making good in Electricity. Thousands of Trained Electrical Men are making good money in the many branches of Electricity. If you are in a low pay job and are ambitious, COYNE Practical Training will prepare you for your start for the opportunities in the big Electrical Field. My Big FREE Book is filled with Facts, Photographs and descriptions. It tells you about my **"Learn by Doing" training.** It is yours for the asking.

LEARN BY DOING—On Actual Equipment

At COYNE you train by working on full size Electrical Equipment. No Text Books—No Reciting. The necessary theory is given to you by experienced instructors. When a "job" has been explained to you . . . you do it, with the instructor there to guide you. When you have finished, you KNOW—because you did it yourself. You wind real armatures, operate real motors, dynamos and generators in the big COYNE Shops.

Easy Payment Plan—Board and Room Plan

Here is a big opportunity to get your start in these money-making fields. You CAN get the practical specialized training you need for a better job. I'll tell you how. I'll also rush details of my new low cost Board and Room plan. Don't let lack of money keep you from sending the coupon for information on how you can GET TRAINING FIRST and pay tuition LATER in easy monthly payments. SEND THE COUPON TODAY.

PART TIME EMPLOYMENT

Need part time work to help pay living expenses? We have helped hundreds of students to earn while learning.

JOB AFTER GRADUATION SERVICE

Here at Coyne we maintain a department which gives Lifetime Employment Service. This service will be given you free of charge when you graduate.

Diesel, Air Conditioning and Electric Refrigeration

Money making instruction in these profitable branches included without extra cost.

GET MY BIG FREE BOOK

Don't let lack of money keep you from mailing this coupon now . . . Facts . . . opportunities . . . photos of our big shops full of students . . . all in the big COYNE Book. Get full details of how easy it is for you to get started in ELECTRICITY. PROOF that this training pays. Mail the Coupon—NOW!

H. C. LEWIS, President;
COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
500 S. Paulina St., Dept. A 7-14, Chicago, Ill.

I am interested in more money. Please send me your Big FREE COYNE Book and full information on how I can become a Practical Trained Electrical Man.

Name.....*Age*.....

Address.....

City.....*State*.....

A Foreword to—

Chinaman's Chance, *by* Robert Mill

LAW-ENFORCEMENT presents a constantly changing picture. The crime front shifts with seasons, and in accordance with economic conditions.

The late depression, for example, did more than any human agency to halt the influx of illegal aliens to the United States; for this country lost its status as the land where the streets were paved with gold, and as such was the goal of every malcontent, misfit and undesirable from almost every other nation.

True, alien-smuggling did not cease entirely. There were brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, and in some cases husbands and wives who wished to join loved ones in this country, but who were barred because of quotas and other legal restrictions. Some of them, when legal means failed, yielded to temptation. A few made it, for the borders are long and the officials few. More were turned back.

All these unfortunates, however, encountered a justice that was tempered with much mercy. More than one of them saw an arresting officer transformed, once the facts were known and verified, into a friend and advocate.

The typical Immigration officer has only one pet peeve—the professional alien-runner. He hates him cordially; and when depression years ruined the alien-runner's business, the immigration officers heaved a sigh of relief.

Now, however, the rat-faced gentry are coming back.

The word has gone out on the grapevine that extends to the teeming centers of population in Europe, Asia and the other continents, that business in the United States is looking up. The response has been immediate, and it is gaining in volume as time goes on. Once more aliens are clamoring for admission to this country. Some of them seek to enter by legal means. Many more do not.

It is this last class that should be of concern to every citizen of the United States. Included in it are men and women who have proved undesirable citizens in their own lands, and whose only purpose in entering the United States is to pursue lives of crime in what they believe are greener fields. There are men and women whose physical condition is such that they are almost certain to become public charges, and some of them are a potential source of danger to all of us.

Also, working in accordance with the underworld' law of supply and demand, there are men waiting to take their money and attempt to render the service they ask. In other words, the organized rings of alien-smugglers are going to work again, and with 1937 streamlined methods.

The shock troops of the Immigration service are the men of the Border Patrol, who operate along the Canadian and Mexican borders and the coastline of Florida. They are a colorful lot. They are "career men." That is, promotions are made entirely from within the ranks; and, believe it or not, political influence often harms rather than helps. They believe in their work, are proud of their outfit—and they shun the spotlight of publicity.

They talked with me, but only after they had received an order from Washington. Then, as if to atone for their former reticence, they went the whole way. They invited me to their headquarters in Newport, Vermont, from which they direct the work in Maine, Vermont and New York. They taught me their slang, and they showed me their methods. They outlined the methods of the enemy, and then produced practical demonstrations. They worked for hours going through their reports and marking cases they thought might be of interest. They drew upon their experience and the experience of fellow-officers, as related to them, carefully pointing out what was actual knowledge and what was hearsay. They showed me information supplied by informers, some of which was valuable, and other parts of which they designated casually as "storybook stuff."

They expressed the polite hope that what was written about them would be true to life. They feel they are an everyday bunch of men, confronted with a tough job, which they try to do to the best of their ability. They don't care for the moving-picture version of them as quick-shooting adventurers. They call that "cowboy stuff."

They had only one request:

"Canada coöperates with us one hundred per cent. Get in something about the Mounties. They are swell guys."

MY earnest hope is that "Chinaman's Chance" is a faithful reflection of that colorful picture. And if my friends in the Patrol object to what they call the "cowboy stuff," I have only one defense:

You shouldn't have shown me your reports. It's all there. You have tried to hide it in brief laconic words. You use the sentence, "Soon things grew quiet in the cabin," to describe a fight to the death, deep in the Maine woods, between six of your men and twenty rum-crazed aliens, all ready to die rather than face jail and deportation.

There they were: Tales of heroism, tales of breathless chases, tales of hardships overcome, tales of meeting guile with guile. All that and more.

That is why this story was written about men who do their duty, and more. For no matter how much they protest, they do go out "looking for trouble" and the "wild stuff" naturally follows.

Now turn to Mr. Mill's fine novelette "Chinaman's Chance," beginning on Page 108.

WARRIORS in

By H. BEDFORD-JONES

PORSON and red-haired Casey and Kramer, all *anciens* of the Foreign Legion, were having a drink and a gam when I broke in. They made me welcome, though the nearest I ever got to the Legion was back of its rear files in Morocco.

"I tell you," Casey was saying excitedly, "there never was any Foreign Legion before 1831! I know. I've got the Livre d'Or of the Legion, and it gives the records!"

Porson calmly rolled a cigarette. He was a dark Alsatian, a splendid chap and a scholar to boot.

"You're wrong, Casey. Our corps began in Algeria, yes; but there was an earlier Foreign Legion, no less heroic, in the Egyptian campaign."

"Bah!" kicked in Kramer. "You might as well say the Swiss Guards, the old Scots archers and all the other mercenaries were foreign legions! There was none that had our title, however."

"There was one that had the title." Porson held a match to his cigarette.

"You're all wrong," I put in. "There's no such thing as the Foreign Legion."

Maybe they didn't jump on me! Not Porson, however. He knew I was right. He had the Croix, the Médaille, and a couple of wounds from Syria. When the others calmed down a bit, I explained my statement.

"Look up the records in your Golden Book, Casey. The Legion was formed in 1831, and finally went out of existence in 1856, to be replaced by the *Régiment Étranger*. Twenty years later it took back the name of Légion Étrangère, but in 1884 was again cut up into Foreign Regiments, and the name of the Legion does not reappear until 1915. Today the corps consists of five Foreign Regiments again, and one of cavalry—"

"You're just nuts on technicalities!" Casey exclaimed hotly. "It's always been the one corps—"

"It hasn't," I broke in with wicked delight. "The original Legion went out of existence in 1835, was destroyed in Spain, and not until 1837 was the corps again organized."

It began to look like a row, until Porson intervened.

"Our friend is right, boys," he said placidly. "Look at the records for yourselves. At the same time, the corps amounts to the same thing, regardless of changes of name—"

"But he says the Legion doesn't exist!" shouted short-tempered Kramer.

"It does not," said Porson. "And I say it existed back in 1800, which is the original argument. In fact, the greatest glory that the Legion ever won, came before it was our present Legion. Just *a* Foreign Legion, mind you, not *the* Le-

EXILE

Illustrated by
Jeremy Cannon

I—"WE, ABOUT TO DIE" is the first of a fascinating series based on the records of the most famous and picturesque fighting force of modern times—the French Foreign Legion. Fiction these stories admittedly are, but so vigorous and vivid that they outshine history itself.

gion!" His white teeth flashed in a smile. "This was the genesis of our Legion, my friends. Upon its men, its traditions, its heroism, was modeled our organization."

"You're opening your mouth too wide," said Casey shortly.

Porson gave him one lingering glance.

"Yes? The grandfather of my grandfather commanded that earliest Foreign Legion. I have seen his papers, his letters, everything. His story was a thing to marvel at. I, as a child, never believed the family tradition, until I investigated and found it to be true. It was the Foreign Legion who won the most desperate, bloody and momentous battle of the First Republic—a battle of which few people have heard."

Kramer signed to the waiter and had our glasses refilled.

"Tell us about it, Porson," he urged.

"It's a story, *mes amis!* The story of how one man succeeded where Napoleon failed. You all know how Bonaparte took an army to Egypt, cut up a few poor devils of Mamelukes in a make-believe battle, went into Syria and got trounced, lost his fleet, was facing disaster—and skipped out before a soul knew he was going. He left Kléber in command of the Army of Egypt: an army scattered all over the place, homesick and hungry and cut off, regiments shrunk to half their strength, no provisions, clothes or ammunition, a British fleet blockading the ports, and an army of sixty thousand Turks marching in from Syria. Do you get that picture? Kléber got good terms; he had to capitulate. When the Turkish army reached Cairo, he would turn over the city to them and go home with the honors of war.

"From that picture, turn to the story of Colonel Hans Porson. He had gone up from the ranks during this campaign; we have a miniature of him at home—a stalwart, lean, dark man—"

"Like you," put in Casey. Porson showed his teeth again.

"Like me, maybe, but far ahead of me. His men loved him. His wife loved him. He had married a girl in Cairo, you see: a lovely blue-eyed girl named Leila, the daughter of a Mameluke bey. They lived in her father's house near the Ezbekieh gardens. I wish I could make you see that house, built around a courtyard shaded by great trees, sweet with plashing fountains, and gay with tiles and with delicate work of fretted ivory and carven woods—"

WHAT magic lies in words! Before us rose a picture of Porson in that courtyard, a strapping, handsome man in tattered uniform and mended boots —only the officers had any boots at all in

that Army of Egypt. And his young wife, looking up with anxious eyes.

"You have news, Hans? It is bad?"

"I've obtained quarters for you and the babe and one servant, in the citadel," said Porson abruptly. "You must be out of here before noon."

She stared at him, this man who commanded the Foreign Legion that Kléber had organized.

"No! What do you mean? What has happened? You've been gone for two days," she said. "And now we must move into the citadel, before noon—why, that's only a little more than an hour from now!"

"I must be back at Headquarters then; you must be in safety." Porson wearily stretched out on a divan and closed his eyes. He went on speaking: "Nothing has happened; everything is about to happen. Let me sketch it for you. I myself am struggling to see it clearly."

"No news from the English admiral?"

"None as yet."

In the desperate effort to bring up his shattered regiments to some semblance of strength, Kléber had enrolled a corps of Copts, another of negroes from the Sudan, another of Greeks and mixed nationalities—the Foreign Legion, this, under Porson. Now, speaking slowly, painfully, Porson sketched for his wife the position of things.

The capitulation signed with the Turks and English had gone into effect. Some of Kléber's generals had departed. A scant twelve thousand men remained here at Cairo. The frontier forts had been handed over to the Turks; their army was within sight of the city.

Then had come that terrible letter from Sir Sydney Smith, noblest of gentlemen. As a matter of honor, he warned Kléber that the capitulation had been disavowed by his superiors, that the English would not acknowledge the treaty, that the Grand Vizier who commanded the Turkish army would not keep the terms. Kléber made one frantic appeal to Admiral Keith of the British fleet; no answer had yet come.

A SLAVE appeared, with coffee and fruit. Porson sat up, ate, swigged the coffee, and wiped his dark mustache.

"If Admiral Keith stands by the treaty, all's well," he said. "If not, it means massacre. Reports have come in that the Grand Vizier has sworn not to leave one Christian alive in Cairo; men, women, children, are to be exterminated. He has sixty thousand men—some say eighty thousand. We've given up all defenses. We've scarcely any powder."

Leila was white to the lips. "But the English signed the treaty! They can't—"

"They can do anything they desire," Porson said bitterly. "Already Turks are in the city by thousands. None of us is safe. Get your things together. As soon as I see you safely in the citadel, I

must go to the palace of Elfi Bey, where Kléber is waiting for word. I have an escort outside. Waste no time."

NONE was wasted. With what could be hurriedly salvaged, Hans Porson, Colonel of the Legion, drew his escort about his little family and conducted them through the streets to the citadel. Only the naked hungry steel of the escort saved them from the maddened populace; the Arabs, incited to fanatic fury by Turks who had entered the city, were mad for Christian blood.

Once within the towering gates, Porson kissed his wife, stooped above the child for an instant, then departed to Headquarters. . . .

It was the nineteenth of March, 1800.

Kléber, that fiery, impetuous genius whom every man in the army loved as a brother, was asleep upstairs. In the courtyard were generals Reynier, Lanusse and Leclerc, awaiting what news might come; Porson fell into talk with them, and learned that the Grand Vizier's army was at Heliopolis, a scant five miles from the city. As they talked, a courier came in hurriedly and saluted.

"Citizen General," he addressed Reynier, "Nasif Pasha and six thousand Janissaries are occupying a village a mile this side of Heliopolis. The Grand Vizier is reviewing the cavalry of his vanguard, fifteen thousand strong, this afternoon; that means action tomorrow."

"Then the Turkish lines have moved up almost to our cantonments?"

"Yes, Citizen General. And as I returned, a boat was landing at Boulak. I saw an English officer coming ashore. And the Janissaries have openly proclaimed a massacre not only of the French, but of every Christian in Cairo."

Massacre? No matter; only the English officer mattered now. Here was the response on which hung life or death. Reynier sent an aide to bring the Englishman. Kléber lay still in exhausted slumber. Reynier turned to Porson.

"When the letter comes, take it to him. Let the chief meet it alone."

The words were gloomy. During these past days the insolence of the Turks and Arabs had become insufferable. Already Egypt was in their hands. That Kléber had scarcely ten thousand effectives, they knew only too well.

Porson waited. He and Kléber, both Alsatians, were old friends; therefore these others left him to endure the lion's wrath if the news were bad. Kléber, bitter enemy of Bonaparte, whose genius outshone that of the Corsican!

"You have news, Hans? It is bad?"

The guards saluted. The trim figure of an English naval officer entered—Lieutenant Wright of the *Tiger*. He looked at the grave, anxious faces.

"Messieurs, I bear a letter from my admiral for General Kléber."

Colonel Porson took the letter, turned, and ascended the stairs to the upper

rooms of Elfi Bey's palace. He came to the door of Kléber's room, knocked and entered. Kléber had just risen. The flowing lock of hair that marked him out, stood up from his massive, energetic features. In silence, Porson handed him the letter.

Kléber tore it open; without change of countenance he read the epistle, which was in French, handed it to Porson, then turned and went to the window, staring out. Porson glanced at the writing:

Having received positive orders to consent to no capitulation with the French army except as prisoners of war . . . . it is my duty to notify you that no ships will be allowed to leave this country. . . .

Kléber swung around.

"We're caught," he said quietly. "Even if the Turks gave us the promised ships, the English will not let us pass. And the Turks will do nothing."

Taking the letter from Porson, he sat down at his table, scribbled a few words at the bottom, and invited Porson to read them:

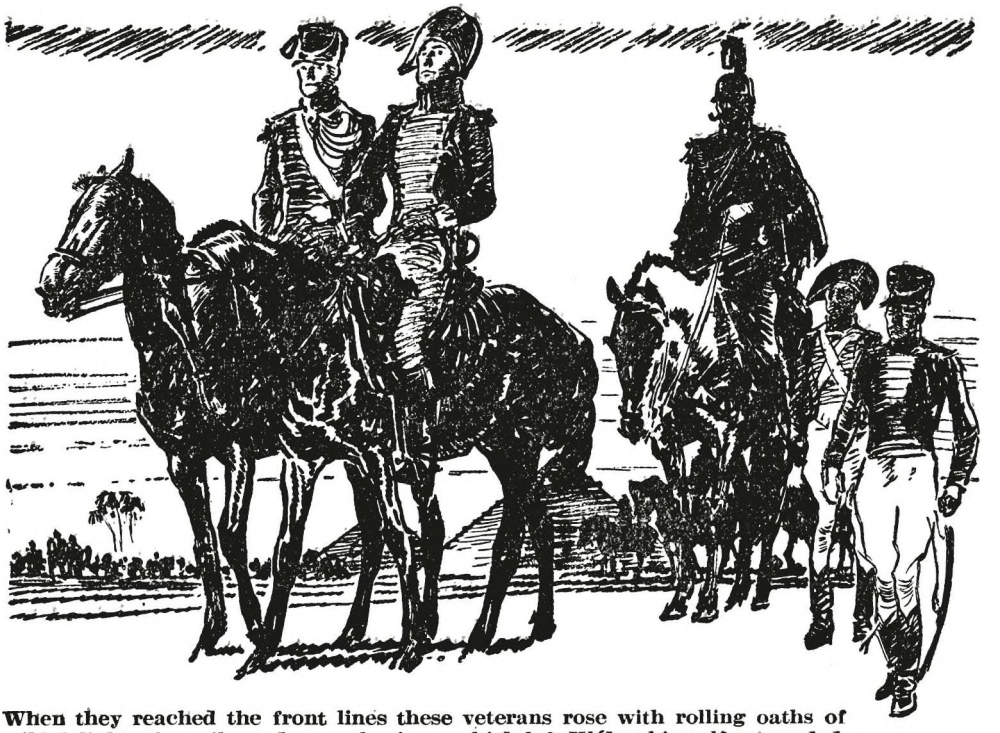
Soldiers, this insolence can have but one reply: victory! Prepare to fight.

Kléber.

"Fight!" repeated Porson in a low voice.

Kléber stood up, and he was smiling.

"Fight! Have a thousand copies of this letter, with my notation, printed and distributed among the troops before six o'clock. Here, have a letter written in Turkish to the Grand Vizier; send off a prisoner with it, and demand immediate answer. Say that he has kept no single term of the treaty, that the Eng-



When they reached the front lines these veterans rose with rolling oaths of wild delight; they vibrated an enthusiasm which left Kléber himself astounded.

lish refuse to honor it, and that unless he retreats by daylight tomorrow morning, I shall regard him as an enemy and the treaty as abrogated."

"The generals are below," said Porson. "You will receive them?"

"No." Kléber pointed to the maps on his table. "Leave me alone. Under no circumstances am I to be disturbed, until we get the Grand Vizier's reply."

Porson departed. In the courtyard below, the whole staff had gathered. They read the letter and the notation, and their eyes glinted.

"Ah!" Young Leclerc of the cavalry caught at his saber. "What happened, Porson? What did he do when he read it?"

"He smiled," said Porson, and went forth on his errands, gloomily enough.

As he worked, that afternoon, gathering news and getting off the messenger, he knew the worst was at hand. This ultimatum to the Turk was theatrically superb—and was utter nonsense. The enormous Turkish army, occupying the whole plain of Heliopolis, had more men in its advance guard alone than Kléber's entire command could muster.

Massacre! Yes: for nothing else remained. The few French wives and families, like his own, were in the citadel; but Cairo was full of Greek, Italian and other Christian merchants; not even the ancient citadel could hold out against the Turkish artillery. Massacre, for every man, woman and child. His own wife, his own child! Porson looked up at those towering walls, and shivered. There was no escape from this land of Egypt. The end had come.

TOWARD six o'clock Porson was in the courtyard at Headquarters, with the other staff officers, when the reply came from the Grand Vizier. Kléber appeared on the stairs, saw the messenger, and halted.

"The answer has come? Read it, Colonel Porson."

Porson obeyed. It was short, ominous: *"A Grand Vizier never retreats."*

There was an instant of dread silence —and then, despite the frightful tension, a laugh went up. For upon that silence Kléber had uttered one scornful word: a word which does not see print either in French or English.

"I'll make him retreat, and quicker than he wants!" went on Kléber. "Comrades, there need be no discussion. What shall we do?"

"Fight!" cried the impulsive Leclerc, and the others joined in.

Kléber smiled slightly.

"General Verdier! Put the wounded and convalescent here, to hold Headquarters. At midnight I join the front

line; the army marches. Can you hold the citadel with three thousand men?"

"Two thousand," said Verdier briefly. "Take the rest."

"Agreed. How much powder must you have?"

"Take the powder. We have bayonets."

Kléber beamed. "Keep enough for the cannon on the citadel. Colonel Porson, can this Foreign Legion of yours be relied upon to lead our march?"

"More than that." Porson saluted. *"Morituri te salutant!"*

Kléber clapped him on the shoulder. "We who are about to die—ha! Perhaps, and perhaps not. I'll tell you one thing, my friends: whether we die or live, we'll show these Turks one hell of a fight! And now let us eat, drink and be merry; for tomorrow—we accomplish the impossible!"

Porson, and many another, finished the speech otherwise in the course of that evening. When their first enthusiasm died out, when reality settled upon them, Kléber still clung to his calm assurance, but it was unshared by his staff.

"The fact remains," Porson said to him, when they were alone together, "that we have a scant ten thousand men."

"You forget what sort of men they are, comrade," rejoined Kléber, smiling.

TOWARD midnight, under a clear moon, Porson and the others rode beside Kléber to the camp, leaving Cairo glittering and fermenting under its silvern citadel. When they reached the front lines, with the distant lights of the vast Turkish camp stretching off across the plain, a surprise awaited them.

To Porson, it was an acute surprise.

He had snatched one brief farewell with Leila, with the baby to whose tiny loveliness he was devoted. He knew, and the other staff officers knew, that they were marching out this night to death. All illusion was dead. Ten thousand ragged, barefoot, hungry men, ill armed and equipped; and yonder, sixty thousand at the least—the dreaded Janissaries, the élite regiments of the whole Turkish Empire, with an enormous park of artillery.

But here in the camp came swift astonishment. These skeleton brigades, these veterans of Italy and the Rhine, rose up with rolling oaths of wild and fierce delight. Scarcely could Kléber command a way through the throngs to his own tent. These crowding figures fairly vibrated with an intangible force, a burning enthusiasm, an almost frenetic emotion, which left Kléber himself astounded. The other officers scattered. Kléber, before his own tent, took the arm of Porson, with a low word.

"What does it mean, my friend? Could you feel it, or did I imagine it—the wave of power, like a living force, uplifting these men?"

"They know they're about to die," said Porson quietly. "But they know that you, unlike Bonaparte, will share their fate. That's the answer."

"Not all the answer." Kléber turned him around gently until they faced the city, and pointed to the sky. "Perhaps I'm a little mad tonight; it seems to me the earth and air are filled with strange things. Do you see anything there?"

Clouds had veiled the moon, stopping her brilliant flood. Above the city hung a murky glow that vibrated, that moved in waves, that seemed instinct with life and motion. A reflection of torches, of lights in the streets, Porson declared.

"No." Kléber spoke so softly the sentries could not hear. "That's what you see; but I see something else. Just as you see a death-march ahead, while I see a march to victory—and each of us denies the other's vision. Look! I can see them as plainly as I see these campfires. Marching men, regiments, squadrons like waves! And all one, my friend, all of them beneath one flag. Not the tricolor; it is a flag I cannot distinguish. A legion, a great united corps, the legion of a dream—"

He broke off, face uplifted, staring. Then he sighed a little, and turned.

"You think I am a little touched in the head, *hein?*"

"I think you need a good sound sleep," said Porson dryly; and Kléber laughed.

"Very well; wait! At such a moment the heart speaks; repressed desires, hidden ambitions, secret thoughts. I trust you as I can trust no other man. Wait, then, and see! Perhaps I can have a destiny, a star, as well as that prating little Corsican. Good night, my friend. Sleep, if you can."

KLÉBER was gone into his tent. Porson went on to the camp of his own corps. The orders were to sleep until dawn, then march.

He moved among this Foreign Legion of his, talked with the men, did not attempt to hide the situation from them; they knew it anyway, and did not share the wild *élan* of the French.

Here were no veterans of the republican wars, but men who fought for an alien flag. Strapping blacks from Nubia, who had found under the tricolor not slavery but liberty, equality, fraternity. Copts, slim brown fellaheen who fingered unaccustomed muskets. Greeks, animated by age-old hatred of Turkish tyranny. Not a few deserters from Turkish regiments, mingled with Levantines, Mameluke warriors bred to arms, Italians, even Arabs.

PORSON and his drill sergeants had welded these men into soldiers. Now they greeted him with brief words, with straining eyes, with a certain grimness he could well understand and share. Their families were in the citadel, yes; but for taking up arms against the Turk, they would be exterminated root and branch if the Turk won.

Nicolas Pappas, head of the Greek corps of fifteen hundred; Ma'alem Yacoub, who had led his five hundred Copts through Upper Egypt under Desaix; Barthelemy, who commanded the Mamelukes and the 21st demi-brigade of blacks —these three met with Porson in his tent. They spoke frankly, freely, bluntly.

"My Colonel, we are alone," said the Greek, a massive, powerful man. "Not as one officer to another, but as one man to another, tell me what we must expect tomorrow."

"Death," said Porson quietly. He stuffed his pipe and lit it. "I have already told the commander that we shall lead the way. If you desire to let another corps have the place of honor—"

"Not I!" snapped Nicolas. "I answer for my men. That is all." He rose and strode out. Barthelemy gave Porson a twinkling glance, and came to his feet.

"Don't change your dispositions on my account, my Colonel," he said. "You'll find that my corps follow excellently where you lead, either here or in hell. Pleasant dreams!"

He too swaggered out. The dark Copt, Yacoub, shrugged slightly.

"By Allah," he said in Arabic, "what word can you give me for my men, effendi?"

"An invitation to help me loot the Turkish camp!"

Yacoub broke into a laugh, touched his forehead, and departed. Porson laid down his pipe and extinguished his little oil lamp, and slept. . . .

Before dawn, in the darkness, the word was passed. The brigades formed in squares, each square surrounding light artillery loaded with grape alone; the guns were to be used only at close quarters, because powder was scarce. Kléber spoke to Porson; his orders were simple: Advance, and keep advancing. Ignore the cavalry, cut off the Janissaries whose camp was dead ahead, drive straight through at the Grand Vizier—and no halts.

No drums, no trumpets. Porson gave the word, and in the dawn-grayness the column moved out at a steady pace. The Turkish lines were almost within earshot. Over the plain rippled the tumultuous murmur of thousands wakening. A challenge went up, a *tambour* beat sudden alarm. Then, like a thunderbolt, the Legion was into the enemy's lines.

On and on, with a volley here, another there, with bayonets stabbing, with Leclerc and his cavalry slashing on the flanks; din and uproar rolled ahead, the massing Turkish regiments crumpling under the impact. Daylight, and as the ranks of Janissaries formed up, Porson and the Legion were into them. Cold steel here, a momentary pause, a surge—and then forward relentlessly, leaving the most dreaded fighting corps in the world to perish under the bayonets that followed.

As the sun rose, the little French array was completely lost to sight under thick powder-smoke drifting across the plain. The Janissaries and the entire Turkish vanguard were destroyed. Nasif Pasha, who commanded the immense cloud of Turkish cavalry, took for granted that this column would be overwhelmed by the main army, and sent out his orders. Away swept those regiments, spurring out and away for Cairo, and ere noon were hurling themselves upon the defenseless city in a carnival of pillage and massacre.

Kléber, ignorant of this, drove forward.

NOW the thrust became a battle. The Grand Vizier rolled back his lines and opened on the French column with his immense park of artillery; but already the French were upon him. Leclerc's dragoons slashed into the lines, and the Turkish gunners were sabered. The guns fell silent.

Kléber drove ahead with steady pace. As the day wore on, wave after wave of Turkish infantry came surging at the squares, to be met with a hail of grape, and then to break and vanish as the

French bayonets went forward. Wave upon wave, advancing and shattering.

Desperately gathering what remained of his cavalry, the Grand Vizier hurled the squadrons forward in a furious charge. Grape met them as they thundered in, sundered and smashed their ranks. As they halted, Leclerc cut them up. As they rolled back, the French followed them, ever advancing, never pausing. The blacks of the Legion tasted blood full deep; the Copts stood like veterans; the Greeks fought like devils. Porson was proud of his men this day.

Broken with the dying afternoon, the Grand Vizier saw his artillery lost, his cavalry smashed, his enormous army a wild rabble of men. Falling back, he attempted to rally his regiments; but Leclerc hit him with the dragoons; and Reynier, with the reserve brigade, hurtled into him.

WITH sunset, Kléber and his victorious squares occupied the camp of the enemy. There, amid fantastic luxury, these men who had gone since daybreak without food or drink, dropped in utter exhaustion.

After a little they began to pillage, to gorge themselves, to seize on powder and supplies. Here were stores of all kinds for the having. To Porson, it was like a dream, a soldier's dream come true. A wild frenzy of delight seized upon the whole army. The impossible had been accomplished. Ten thousand had shattered sixty thousand. But Kléber was not satisfied.

"Rest until midnight—then march on," he told his staff. "Four hours of rest, then continue. Otherwise, the Grand Vizier will reform his army at Belbeys; we began the work—we must finish it!"

He turned, startled. Amid the delirious rejoicing on all sides, a sudden silence began to spread and spread. Voices dropped. Men looked at one another in wild and terrible surmise. Kléber sprang to his feet and stood listening.

Across the night came steady pulsations: the distant mutter, the vibration,

The Legion led the storm: a Legion not of men but of fiends, stopping for nothing.

of cannon. Verdier—and the two thousand men who held Cairo's citadel!

Information was coming in. Prisoners began to talk. A frantic Copt, half mad with terror, arrived from Cairo on a foam-lathered horse, with the first definite word of Nasif Bey and the thousands of Turkish cavalry in the city.

"The city is taken; massacre is let loose!" he wailed. "They have killed all the wounded, assaulted the citadel, taken it; the populace is in revolt—"

THE guns muttered again, giving him the lie. Sudden panic seized on everyone. About Kléber pressed the staff; Reynier and the other generals urged instant return. He was adamant.

"We have beaten the Turkish army; now we must destroy it," rose his voice, calm and unshaken. "We must push straight forward to Alexandria and the delta, re-occupy all the forts, and win Egypt back at one stroke. General Lagrange, I confide Cairo to you. Take three brigades, and march. . . . Colonel Porson! At midnight your Legion will lead the advance on Belbeys."

Porson saluted, and in agony of mind sought out his own command. The frightful news had spread through the army. About him clustered his officers, his frantic men. Only the black troops slumbered. The others crowded upon him, demanding instant return. When he ordered an advance at midnight, there was instant flame.

"We've done enough, Citizen Colonel!" cried Nicolas Pappas hoarsely. "Now it's time to think of our wives. My men return to Cairo."

"And mine," added Yacoub. "Our brothers, our children, are being slaughtered there. Before God, have you no compassion, no human feeling for men whose wives and children are dying?"

Porson looked at them in the flickering firelight. He was very pale, and drops of sweat ran down his lean cheeks.

"Three brigades are returning to the city; we are advancing," he said. "If your wives are there, so is mine. If your children are there, so is my child there. We cannot save them now. But if they are dead, we can avenge them. Be ready to march at midnight. The Legion leads the van."

They stared at him. . . . He had spoken the truth. His own wife and child were back there in the hell of massacre. If they were in agony, so was he. Suddenly the powerful Greek turned to him, embraced him, and emitted a roar.

"Where you go, we go!"

"You are right, Citizen Colonel!" Ma'alem Yacoub seized his hand and pressed it. "Forgive my words. Kill! March, comrades—march and kill!"

And at midnight the army pressed on. Morning found the town of Belbeys ahead, with the Grand Vizier and his reformed regiments making a stand. The Legion led the storm: a Legion not of men but of fiends, stopping for nothing, slaying with the cold steel, breaking the Turkish ranks, sweeping all irresistibly before them.

Through the day the battle endured, until Belbeys was taken, and again the Grand Vizier fell back with his broken remnants, thirty thousand strong. A brief halt, and through the night Kléber pressed on. With daybreak, he fell upon the Turks, who had rallied for the last time.

Now all was confusion; the attack was rapid, counting no costs. Kléber and his hussars rode over the low sand-hills and slap into a horde of Turkish cavalry. The hussars were broken. Reynier sent a regiment of dragoons to the rescue, but not before Kléber was wounded and half his men dead.

This was the finish. The Grand Vizier and five hundred horsemen spurred for Syria, and reached it. Twelve thousand Turks withdrew in a body; Belliard and two regiments destroyed them. The wild desert Arabs, who hated Turks only one degree less than Christians, swooped down in clouds and gave no quarter. The army of Turkey was gone.

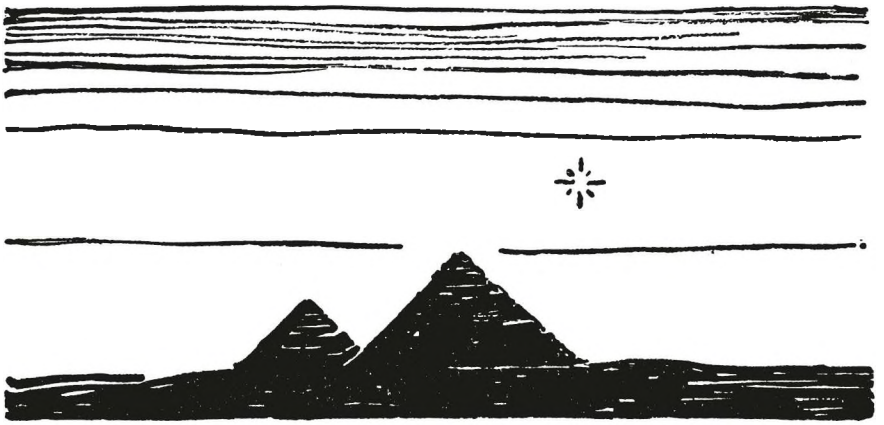
Then, with all Egypt won again, Kléber turned upon Cairo, where Verdier still held out in the citadel, and gave that rebellious city a lesson of fire and sword. Loot, vast supplies, powder, ammunition—suddenly Kléber, the idol of his army, found himself powerful and strong beyond all measure.

ONE day while the shattered city was being repaired, Porson and Leila and their child sat with Kléber in a Mameluke palace beside the rolling Nile flood. Kléber loved to play with the child; and to Porson he could unbosom himself as to no other person. Noon was approaching. Kléber had just come in from a review of the Legion, and was in high spirits, his luminous eyes agleam with energy.

"Hans, your Legion has given me a great dream," he said abruptly. "For you, for Egypt, for myself. As you know, with Bonaparte in control of France, my safest place is here. And we're utterly cut off from home."

He paused, and Porson nodded. So far as Kléber was concerned, any return to France was impossible; Bonaparte was bitterly jealous of him.

"The army has come to like Egypt—after our victory," went on Kléber dryly. "I like Egypt. And Egypt belongs to us. We've no more to fear from the Turks. A small English expedition is coming from India; we can destroy it. Now, Hans, I've been talking to the army and others. Your Legion has shown me what to do. We have the nucleus of



such a Foreign Legion as the world has never seen! A native army, officered by French, with enough of our men to form a solid backbone. Instead of separate corps of blacks, Greeks, Mamelukes and so on, we'll form a single corps—a vast Foreign Legion inured to the sun, to the climate, to everything! There's a dream for you—and Egypt ours!"

In those blazing indomitable eyes Porson read the truth.

"The Just Sultan—that's what the natives call you. And now you translate the title into fact, eh? Egypt is ours, yes; you mean to keep it?"

"Yes," said Kléber in a deep voice.

"As Bonaparte has seized France, you'll seize Egypt—good! Will the army consent?"

"The army will consent," Kléber replied. "I've sounded out some of the generals; some I'll send back to France, with any men who want to return. Among the others, I'll divide up all Egypt. The thing will work. Those who stay with me will have something to fight for—an empire worth fighting for, by heaven! The Army of Egypt passes. The Foreign Legion remains: the Legion, itself a vast army, with you at its head. You've shown us how such men can fight when properly led. Good! Such a Legion will be invincible. I have five thousand Mamelukes ready to join the ranks tomorrow. With French officers, Hans—you see?"

"I see," Porson said slowly. "I see a dream Legion, Kléber, a dream empire; it has but one drawback. With you at its head, all things are possible. But if anything happened to you, there's not one other man who could take your place."

Kléber broke into a laugh and rose.

"No fear! Nothing's going to happen to me. Draw up your plans, talk with Nicolas Pappas and the others; make the scheme, mind you, a vast Legion to welcome all creeds and colors of men. By heaven, we'll form a new country here, a new nation! We'll have a fighting machine that can smash any invasion, a country reconstructed, born again! Why, the horizon is illimitable! A horizon of glory, my friend! *Au revoir.* I must meet the others at Headquarters for luncheon. You'll come?"

Porson shook his head; and in that shake of the head spelled destiny. For if he had gone to luncheon with Kléber—

THE voice of our enchanter fell silent; Casey looked at Kramer; and we all looked at the dark, powerful man who had made us vision that ancestor of his and the dreams and glory of a forgotten campaign.

It was Casey who spoke out.

"Aw, hell! There wasn't any such Legion formed, Porson?"

"No." And Porson smiled slightly. "An hour after that talk beside the river, Kléber was struck down by the hand of an assassin; and all the glory of life had passed over the horizon. There, my friends, is the story of the first Foreign Legion, and the story of the Legion of a dream that never came to pass."

"Ha!" exclaimed Kramer, his eyes shining. "I'd like to have been there, me—back in that campaign! I never heard of it before. You were right, Porson, you were right; here's to the glory of that first Legion, the genesis of our own corps!"

His glass came up. The others came up, clinked, clinked again.

"Vive la Légion!"

Another long-to-be-remembered story in this great series will appear in our forthcoming July issue.

Adam and Eve

A moving drama of the South Seas, by the famous author of "The Flaming Sword," "Vaiti of the Islands," and many others.

By BEATRICE GRIMSHAW

ON the remote, hardly-at-all visited island of Adam-and-Eve, there were two people who had listened so long to the thrumming of the surf, the swooping whistle of sea-birds, that these sounds had taken possession of their souls. Only, with one it was love of the islands that had taken possession; with the other it was hate of the islands and all that pertained to them. They were man and wife: Christopher Ward, known as Chris to the few white people and the hundred or two of natives; and Viola, never by any chance or any person called Vi.

Viola was pretty—beautiful almost, with her sea-blue eyes and cedar-colored hair. It would be no use denying that I was more or less in love with her from the time when Chris Ward came to Adam-and-Eve as Resident,—an empty bit of glory, on that deserted scrap of land,—to the time when she ran away. After that I was not in love with her, because it seemed to me that if she was bent on running away, if she was fed up with the islands a hundred and a hundred times, so that she must go or die—well, why go alone, with a rather personable and quite well-educated trader ready to slip out with her, take the boat with her to Auckland, and with her (as things happened) utterly disappear?

If Ngamaru the wizard had not come into my store that gay southeast morning, wanting goods he could not pay for—but he did come.

Viola was there, looking a little pale and weary; the islands take their toll of white women's beauty, as of white men's strength. Not so with natives; Ngamaru, when he came in from the sea and the fresh sand and his lopping canoe, was like a god of Greece grown somewhat old: a fine bare figure carved in bronze, but with eyes such as no statue, no Greek, ever had; you would have to look among the wild things of the jungle to find their like, and if you ever found it, you would feel instinctively for pistol or for knife. . . . I used to look, myself, without knowing quite why I did it, at the repeater slung to the ceiling, when Ngamaru the wizard came into my store. He held half the island in terror; he was a murderer a score of times among the natives, though he had never dared, during the reign of Christopher Ward, to touch a white man.

That day he wanted quinine and tinned milk, for one of his children; he had fifteen or twenty of them, but this was, it seemed, the favorite, and none of his spells, since they were all harmful, could help him with little Tarua.

"You can't have any more goods without paying," I said; for his score had run beyond all proportions, and I did not even know he was telling the truth: he was a finely accomplished liar, among his other gifts.

He drew himself up straighter than ever, if that was possible, and said: "I think more better you give."

"I think more better you get out of this and go and catch some copra to pay with," I told him.

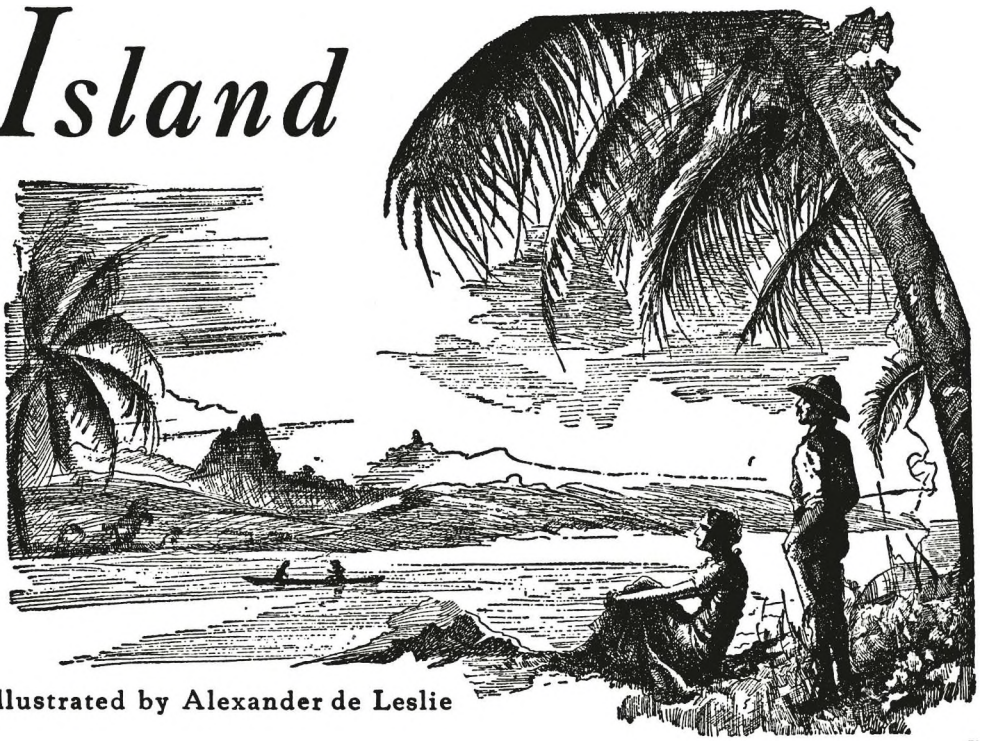
Viola had been in the store for ten minutes or so, looking at me now and then from underneath her long dark-cedar lashes, saying nothing very much, but talking, talking through and underneath what she said.

I did not want a bare, oily old sorcerer interrupting us. And I did not, in any case, believe what he said. Quinine is coin in these islands; it seemed to me he was simply begging.

But women are incalculable. Viola had been paying no attention whatever to the old man, until he said something in native (which she understood) about being fond of the baby. "I sha'n't have any more," he said. "I'm getting old. I want to keep him."

At that she slipped behind the counter, laid her hands on quinine and tinned

Island



Illustrated by Alexander de Leslie

milk, as much as he wanted, and gave them to him. "The Big Chief'll pay," she said.

Ngamaru nodded and went out.

Viola took my handkerchief (she was always losing her own) and wiped her eyes with it, and then began to talk about I don't know what. I was busy remembering that she had had a kid of her own, once, for a couple of days, and when it died, they said she couldn't have any more.

SHE ran out of words suddenly, and a deep silence fell in the store. Those trading places, where one has perhaps two customers today, and fifty tomorrow, and then none for a week, can be quiet in a way you wouldn't believe; just the tinkle of the billycans overhead swinging in the wind from the beach, and the *pick-pick* of straying fowls about the floor; and outside, the palms pattering away like rain, and a long way off, the drumming thunder of the reef. I was getting to like it all, in the drugged, dreaming way that one does like the islands; and she, I knew, was growing to hate it more every day.

"What's there for me?" she suddenly burst out. "Chris doesn't understand. He has his job. He keeps the natives in order, and puts down sorcery and all that; and he writes reports—loves doing it; and he tries cases in his precious court—a tin box set on legs—and goes fishing on Saturdays and Sundays. Fishing!"

It came to me just then—because I had seen a good deal of the world before settling down on that lost island called Adam-and-Eve—that men who are happily married seldom become enthusiastic fishermen.

Then Viola, aimlessly turning over the calicoes on my counter with her long pale fingers—always, they made me think of the song about the lady of the Shalimar—added: "I'm going south."

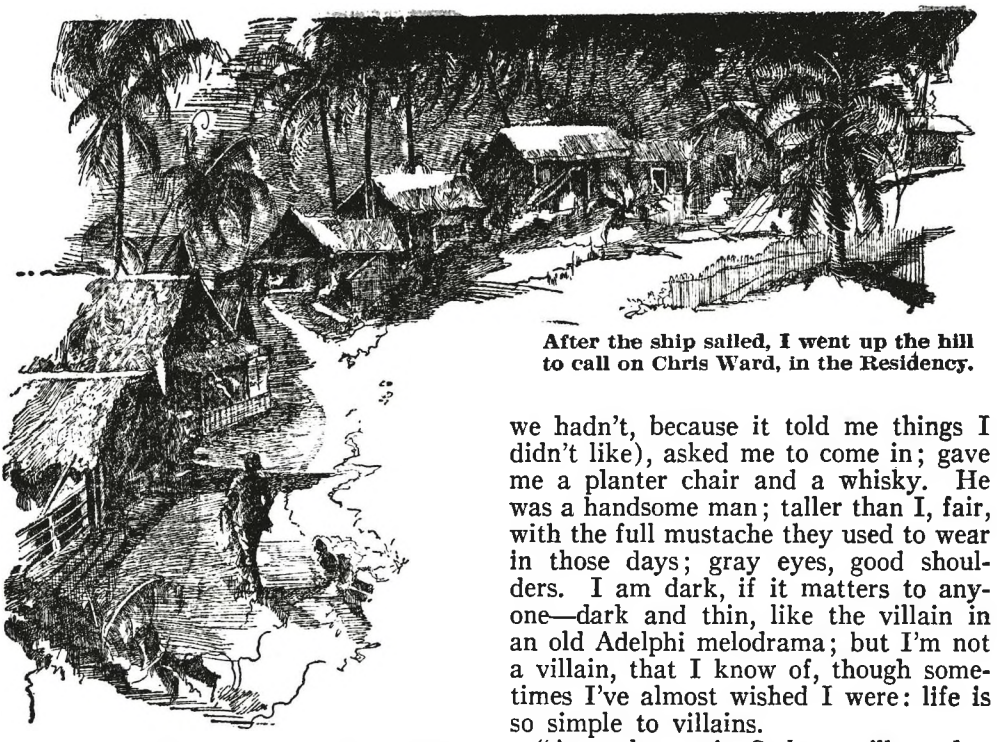
I said nothing.

"Not to stay," she went on. "Just to breathe and live a little, and then—come back."

All the wives in the islands go south to Sydney, Auckland or Melbourne every now and then; some with their men, some without. The men who are left behind—go fishing.

("If you cared about me as much as about that yard of stuff you're fingering," I thought; "if you didn't just use me as a sort of waste-basket for your mind, I'd see you didn't go alone; I'd make you know what it is to love the islands, and the men who belong to them.")

Aloud I said: "I hope you'll enjoy your holiday. When are you going?"



After the ship sailed, I went up the hill to call on Chris Ward, in the Residency.

She said: "Thanks. By the *Valeria*, next week."

The name of the ship meant nothing to me, nothing to anyone in the islands, that afternoon. People are fond of telling you—afterward—that they guessed what was coming, had supernatural warnings. I suppose every fellow on the island who wanted to go south that trip, and couldn't raise the fare, must have told all his friends that he had a dream or a warning about the *Valeria*—very likely believed as much himself. I had no presentiment; nor had she.

I heard she had gone to nurse Ngamaru's kid that had the medicine, and cured it. Then I heard no more until she left the island.

After the ship had sailed, I went up to call on Chris Ward, in the Residency on the summit of the island's only hill. From the veranda you looked down upon a sea of palm-tops, silvered wonderfully that night by the full moon; when they swayed to the pull of the wind, you might fancy they were fountains tossing crystal spray into the air. The sea was very dark blue; and a long way off, just passing through the Straits, one saw the orange speck that marked the last that any of us were to see of the doomed ship *Valeria*.

Ward, who was glad to see me (we always got on well; I could have wished we hadn't, because it told me things I didn't like), asked me to come in; gave me a planter chair and a whisky. He was a handsome man; taller than I, fair, with the full mustache they used to wear in those days; gray eyes, good shoulders. I am dark, if it matters to anyone—dark and thin, like the villain in an old Adelphi melodrama; but I'm not a villain, that I know of, though sometimes I've almost wished I were: life is so simple to villains.

"A good stay in Sydney will set her up," he told me, speaking of Viola. "She needed it. When she comes back—"

He had all sorts of plans about gardens and summer-houses—even a big cage for island birds: things meant to please her who could not be pleased. I thought: "He is making a cage for her as well as the birds, but she won't stay in it. Why, Lord help him," I thought, "she is fond of him, and if that won't keep her—"

THE sentence stayed unfinished in my mind. A girl was coming out of the office room behind the veranda—a tall girl with a slight stoop, and nothing remarkable about her except her very large, very soft brown eyes. I knew her; she was Ward's secretary, and pretty hard-worked at times, especially on mail days. She lived in the one hotel on the island, a miserable place; but she seemed perfectly happy in it—she was one of those who love the islands, sounds and odors and all; who would rather smell the reek of copra than the scent of hay; rather see the sunlight falling amber-green through palm-leaves than the gold and ruby rays of cathedral windows in one of the cities "south."

When a woman loves the islands, look for the man in the case. It isn't natural to them, as it is to some of us. Take my word.

I had had my secret opinion of Gladys Jefferson for some time, and it was not altered by the look I saw her cast upon the unfeeling back of Ward's brown head.

"All finished, sir, and put away," she said, and waited with her hands folded, for his answer.

I don't know why, but she made me think of *Jane Eyre* and *Jane's* meek way of worshiping her employer. Chris, however, was no *Rochester;* bless him, *Rochester* would not have stood for half a week what Chris seemed ready to stand for a lifetime at the hands of his wife. As for Gladys, Chris liked her as much as he liked his pet cat, not as much as he loved his little black and white fox-terrier, I'm sure.

He said now, hardly looking round: "Thanks, Miss Jefferson. I'm afraid you have had a hard day."

"It's a pleasure," she said primly, but her eyes were not prim. Why, I thought, the creature has fire in her—fire under ashes. I ran my eyes up and down her; she was shapely, if it had not been for that typist's stoop; she had hands as beautiful as Viola's hands, in their way: short and plump, but very kissable. Fire—yes; with tow lying handy, for Chris was the sort of married man who is lost without his wife.

("I wish they weren't both so damned good," I thought; "there might be fun for a looker-on. They're all too damned good, the whole pack of them. There's no sense in it; now, if it were I—")

Gladys looked at me as if she wondered why I was chewing my nails. I stopped; I did not want her to guess.

"Good night, Mr. Wilson," she said to me. "Good night, sir." With that *Jane Eyre* note in her voice—"Throw me down and trample on me with your nailed boots if you like; I'll be your doormat with pleasure!"—that was what was in her voice.

Chris, sucking at his pipe, took it out, and said: "Good night; take care of yourself." He stood up; he always treated her with courtesy, even when he was thinking of something else, and didn't really know she was there.

I DO not remember very well what happened after that—just island day upon island day, until the news came, late, and carried by a wandering trade schooner, of the loss of the *Valeria.* Burned to the water-line; wreck found drifting about, two boats turned up with far too few people in them—Viola not among the saved.

No news. Not then, nor any other time after. The Resident broke his heart making inquiries; the Australian Government sent out a ship to search. They never found anyone at all. Chris Ward was a widower, and so remained.

NGAMARU used to come sometimes into my store, where now the calicoes lay on the counter unstirred by any but black fingers, as the weeks, the months rolled by; where the tinkle of dangling billycans, and the throaty voices of the natives, were all that broke the quiet of the place. Sometimes I could almost think I heard her voice—"Good morning, Mr. Storekeeper; how's trade today?"—or saw her cedar hair, haloed with gold, in the doorway as she stood there, back to the sun. I fancy Ngamaru used to think about her too; he would clear his throat, standing there turning over a hank of beads, or a heap of calicoes, and say something about big canoes going down, and white women with gold on their heads—a kind of poetry, it seemed, all in native, and not meant for anyone but himself. Bad lot that he was, and soaked through and through with the blackest of black magic, there was something about Ngamaru that attracted you, even though you were careful never to leave him alone with your beads and knives.

I can recall, as if it were yesterday, the day when he came in, painted all over with river mud (which showed that he had been making sorcery) and told me that he had seen the Little White Queen, as he called her. He was full of betel-nut; and he recited over the counter as if he had been the chief competitor at an elocution contest:

"I have been where she is," he half said, half sang. "I have seen the Little White Queen who saved my child."

"Not much you haven't," I told him. "The like of you don't go where she has gone, now or afterward."

"I have looked through the gate," he went on singing. "The Queen, the Little White Queen! Gold, much gold, and a great sea."

"You leave be, parroting the Bible, which you don't believe in, anyway," I said, for he made my blood run cold. "Profane beggar that you are! I don't believe in all of it myself," I said, "but I won't stand here and listen to you blaspheming."

There are ugly things about this native sorcery, and ugly powers. If there's a hell, I reckon old Ngamaru *might* have managed to get a peep at it; but as for the other place—no!

"You will see her again, man who are in love with her," he went on, half singing; and I could have fetched him one on the ear, for what business was it of his that I wasn't likely to go that way—if there is a way of that kind to go, and she had gone on it?

"Shut up," I said; but he took no heed.

"It will be a long time, but I see you together," he went on singing. And then he came down with a jump; I reckon the drug, whatever it was that he had been taking, had lost its hold of him. "I feel cold," he whined, though the day was like burning brass outside the store. "Givem toback," he said, dropping into that pidgin English that always makes a native seem ridiculous; all his dignity was gone when he began to talk pidgin.

I gave him tobacco, and maybe something else that we aren't allowed to give natives, and he went away, rubbing his naked stomach, and looking like nothing at all but a dirty black man. But sorcerer as he was, and blasphemous at that, he'd made me feel religious; so I sent the cook-boy to church that night, being Sunday, and made him put a shilling in the plate for me, which I reckoned to be nearly as good as going myself.

SIX months afterward, which was about a year from the time of the loss of the *Valeria,* I put on my best clothes on a week-day, hot black coat and hot gray trousers, a waistcoat which I seldom wore, and a clean ironed shirt, and went to the Mission Church to see Gladys get her reward in a long white veil and a dress of some kind, and tears in her eyes because she was sad-happy, as we all are once or so in our lives. Chris Ward looked happy too, but he was thinking pretty hard of other things besides Gladys during the service, because when it came to the, "I, Christopher," he said, "take thee, Vi—Gladys." But I don't think she noticed it.

So they were married, like people in a book, and it was a very still day, between the southeast and the northwest seasons; and all the time, between the parson's words and her and his shaky answers, you could hear the drums of the coral reef beating away, far out at sea.

They were drumming still when the "happy couple" went away in the Government whaleboat to the next island for their honeymoon; but you couldn't hear them for the cheering and clapping of all the whites, come down to send the wedding-party off.

NOTHING happened after that for a very long time. It's so in the islands. Things, when they happen at all, are apt to come in bunches; and when I say things, I mean, of course, what everyone means—ugly things. Something has happened, you say—and you don't mean anything good. Queer comment on life.

The next thing was that Ngamaru was arrested for poisoning a pig. In the Pacific that's as bad as poisoning a man, nearly, and much worse than poisoning a woman. It was an enemy's pig, of course, and he had put something in its food. I reckon that whatever the stuff was, he had got it off the coral reef; I had seen him sometimes, out there in the moonlight alone, looking for something, searching secretly.

But I said nothing, not even when I was called to court as a witness to his character, because he traded with me, and I was supposed to know a lot about him, which nobody did. During these years—did I say that several years had passed? Well, it doesn't matter; time hardly counts on Adam-and-Eve—I had grown to like the old beggar quite a bit, and I gave my evidence strongly in his favor.

And after it was all over, and Ngamaru was released without a stain on his character, I followed him out of court and said in his ear, using the native tongue that fewer and fewer whites nowadays understand: "Companion, tell me, why *did* you kill the pig?"

He folded up a chew of betel-nut, put it in his mouth, and said consideringly: "Because the inside of a pig is very like the inside of a man." Then he went off with great strides, leaving me, who was fifteen years his junior, easily behind.

"So," I said to myself. "So! Always the industrious learner, aren't you? Always gathering knowledge?" And then I put the whole thing out of my mind, and it stayed out, for more and more years. . . .

The Resident and Gladys seemed happy enough, as married people go. They had two children now, nice little things. I used to see the whole family sitting out on the veranda sometimes,

That day she had gone up the gangway and left us—so it seemed—forever.

when I passed alone in the dark; the big oil lamp would be lighted, hanging up above, and the phonograph would be turned on, and they'd be sitting by it, listening, with the children playing about on the floor. I knew they could not see from that veranda after dark; I used to pause awhile under a clump of palm trees, and look. I'd hear the drums of the reef beating down below, when Chris turned off the phonograph, and the palms above me talking in a dry whisper, saying the things they always say, the things that keep us there, within sound of the palms, the reef, away from life and all that it means elsewhere.

One night as I stood thus:

"It will go on forever and ever," I thought, "and there will never be any change; we are all as if we were enchanted, like the people in fairy books." And I moved aside a little to feel for my matches, because I meant to light my pipe as soon as I went on; somehow I was feeling the want of that old friend. But as I moved, I barged into

something or somebody, there in the dusk behind the palm trees.

"Damn it," I said, "who are you, snooping about there?" I quite forgot that I was snooping myself.

There was no answer; so I turned on my electric torch and looked. And it was Viola.

I saw her as clearly, in the light of the torch, as I had seen her in full sunlight that last day years ago, when she had gone up the gangway of the luckless ship *Valeria*, and left us—so it seemed—forever. She was hardly changed at all. She was beautifully dressed in I-don't-know-what; she had still her lovely slim figure, and the gold of her hair shone in the torchlight just as it used to do, in moonlight or sunlight, when she stood in the doorway of my store. And I was not at all surprised to see her. Would you be surprised, if the woman you're thinking of now came out of her grave where the marbles are growing a little green, a little old, and walked right into your life again, and said: "It's all a mistake; how could you ever think I was dead?" You used to dream of that, you know. You used to see her, as clear as if she'd been standing before you. You knew that you would never be surprised if she really came back, because it did not seem possible—for she was no deserter—that she, of all people, would do such a thing as die. . . .

So I was not surprised. I only said, as if I had seen her yesterday:

"We are all as if enchanted," I thought, "like people in fairy books."

"Come away from that window; come down to the store, and let's talk."

I shut the doors and lit the lamp; we sat down, and—for she had said nothing at all—I asked:

"What happened?"

She talked then. The ship had gone down with all hands, but she had floated on a life-belt, and been picked up by a tramp steamer. And she gave a false name; it was all easy enough. She wanted, she said, to get away from Adam-and-Eve and everything in it, for good, she said.

"I went to San Francisco," she said, "and then on to a new gold-field farther south, and I got a claim and worked it. What are you looking like that for?"

"Nothing; go on." I had suddenly remembered Ngamaru's fit of prophecy, or second sight, or whatever it was: *"A great city and a sea and much gold."*

She said: "I made money. But they were always bothering me—the men, I mean. Some of them wanted to marry me, and some—didn't. And by and by I sold the claim and went on."

She paused, and in the silence the dry hands of the palm trees beat hard upon the iron roof of the store; it was a windy night outside.

"I've seen the world," she said presently. "I've lived."

"You mean—" I said.

"Yes. . . . I married him. I got a divorce from Chris; it held good in America, and I don't think I'd maybe have cared much if it didn't, I was so crazy after him."

"And he left you?" I said.

"How did you know?"

"I know that that's the kind of thing a man does, if he's the sort that women are crazy after."

SHE said, looking down at her hands, those long pale hands that I remembered, ringless now: "He was married to some one else all the time. He was—rotten. . . . I went into the motion pictures. I did pretty well. I learned how to keep my looks; that's why I'm still the same, or almost."

"You'd be the same, anyhow."

She passed over that. "I never wanted anyone after that; at least, if I did, I knew it wasn't the real thing and didn't take it seriously. One day I was down on the beach at Malibu, where there are palms. And I heard them rattling in the wind; just the same wind. . . . And I smelled the sea."

She was silent again for a minute. "I landed here in the dark tonight; no one's seen me. I had to come and just look. I knew he wouldn't be dead. I meant to call—whistle, the way I used."

She could not go on; her face was in her hands, and she was crying.

"They're happy," she said. "I thought if he married again, they wouldn't be. I thought—it doesn't matter. I—I want you to hide me for a day or so. There'll be a boat away at the end of the week. I'll never let him know."

I FELT as I suppose a victim of the Sun may have felt in old Mexico when the priest was splitting him open with a knife, and tearing out his heart before the god. People talk about feeling "a knife in your heart," but they don't know that the thing can happen just as if it was real.

I said: "We'll go away together—if you must." But she did not hear me. She was thinking, thinking of that picture seen in the lamplight, up on the top of the Residency Hill.

There's something in Tennyson's poems about that: *Enoch* somebody—a man who got left on an island and came home again. . . . Well, I suppose it happens.

I don't know what I was going to say—there seemed to be nothing one could say, but I felt the words bubbling up to my lips—when we were both interrupted by a scraping under the floor.

Island houses are set on high piles; a man can walk underneath and listen, if he likes, to what is being said. Some one was listening now, there under the floor; and his head, or some native ornament he wore on it, had touched the boards.

I made one jump outside. The man came up from under the house quite coolly. He was tall and brown and naked, and he had flowers and shells in his hair.

"Ngamaru!" I said. "What the devil—"

"I go under there to light my fipe," he said. "Been out pishing, want to smoke my fipe, and he won't light. Thank you, sir, he light now."

"It was Ngamaru," I told her, going back. "The old sorcerer—you remember him; you went and looked after his child."

"I remember," she said, with her head on her hand, looking down at the floor. "I remember too much. You read poetry, don't you?"

"Some," I said. "Old stuff, mostly."

"This is old stuff. Do you remember a poem called 'Tithonus'?"

And I heard her murmuring to herself:

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble, lest a saying learned
In days far off, on that dark earth, be true?
The gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.

"I got what I asked for," she said. "The world—and freedom. And I have to keep them both. . . .

"Will you show me somewhere to sleep?" she asked presently.

I gave her my room, and slept on the veranda.

RATHER early next day—it would be about nine o'clock, when the island breakfasts are over, and the island world is thinking leisurely of beginning its day's work—I heard a high thin wail break out on the top of the island, gathering and spreading swiftly down toward the shore. At first I thought it was the, "Sail-O" cry, that the natives raise whenever a ship is sighted; but very soon I understood it was something else. It was the death-cry, bewailing some man or woman's end.

Without ceremony I burst into the room where Viola had been sleeping, where she was sitting at that moment,

waving her cedar hair with her long fingers, and dressed in a silk wrapper all over flowers.

"Thank God you're not dead—or anything," I said.

"Why should I be?"

"Don't you hear?"

We both heard now: the wail was rising and increasing; it had a heart of wonder and dismay in it; it was the cry that heralds sudden death.

SHE sprang to her feet; her hand was at her lips; I saw that she remembered the meaning of that cry.

"Who—is it?" she said, just as if the breath had been squeezed out of her body and she had hardly enough left to speak.

I said: "You wait. I'll ask the cook-boy." For of course I knew that as soon as there was anything to be known, if not before, the cooky would have every detail at his tongue's end. I never saw an island cooky yet who wouldn't have made a first-class stunt reporter, if he'd been a white man and on the staff of a daily paper.

There was no one in the kitchen when I went there. It was like most island kitchens, a tin hut built behind the house, with two doors through which came parcels, messages, visiting natives, and sooner or later all the news of the place.

The rear door opened on the slope of the hill, with the green light of leaves showing through, and the trunks of the palms, all white, leaning criss-cross over it.

And among the palms, walking with a quick uneven step, I saw a brown man come. I thought it was the cooky, but it wasn't. It was Ngamaru—Ngamaru as I had never seen him, wild-eyed, crazy, waving his arms and talking to himself. Drugs, I thought; but it wasn't drugs: his eyes were bright and understanding when he came up to me, and suddenly sank down on the doorstep of the kitchen.

"I'm shamed," he said in native, beating his palms on the floor. "I, Ngamaru, am too old; I shall die; I shall die."

I knew what he meant; something had upset him very much, and he meant to go away and do as natives can do—lie down and let the life run out of him as blood runs out of a slaughtered ox.

I was sorry for the old fellow; villain though he might be, he had loads of what people nowadays call "personality," and I had grown quite fond of him during the years that had passed.

"Oh, you won't die," I told him, though I knew very well that nothing I could say would have any effect on his intention. "What have you been up to? What's the matter?"

It was the cook-boy who answered; not Ngamaru, lying there all over the kitchen steps with his head on the floor. The cooky, just arrived, breathless, excited, jumped over him as he lay, and called out: "Marster, marster! White fellow he go pinish!"

"White fellow finish? Who?" I asked. But I thought I knew. *"Fellow"* with the natives means either man or woman; and something told me that Ngamaru had been trying to pay off his debt in his own fashion; that he had quietly, the night before, resolved to clear out of the way the woman who stood before Viola, the feminine replica of *Enoch Arden,* and the renewal of old ties.

I BELIEVE that Viola thought so too. She had come down from the bedroom, and was looking through the kitchen window at Ngamaru outspread on the floor, and at the excited chattering cook-boy beside him. Her breast, beneath the flowered silk of her wrapper, heaved quickly; her lips were held apart as if she had been running. I could almost see her tremble.

"Who is dead?" I demanded of the cook-boy, although I thought I knew what he was going to say.

"Big white chief," were his first words; and after them, in my expectation, should have come, "wife belong him."

But the sentence ended there, hung empty, broken off.

It was extraordinarily still in the kitchen for a few long seconds, so still that I could hear the coral pebbles rising and falling on the beach below, and the fingers of the palm trees tapping on the roof, as if to call attention.

"Listen," they seemed to say, "this thing that has happened is important."

The cook-boy went on; I do not remember his exact words. He said that when the early coffee had been brought up that morning, the White Chief's woman had left hers untouched; it was not good, she said. The Chief had said: "You are always blaming the servants." Which was true, for she did scold them constantly, and often for what they had not done; and the coffee was generally good.

So, to convince her, the Chief took the cup and drank it himself, and he said: "It is very good, but a little strong."

By and by he went to sleep again, and she got up. And when they found that they could not wake him, they went for the doctor; and he could not wake the Chief, and the woman said something about his heart, and the woman cried very much. And the magistrate sent the prisoners from the native jail out to the cemetery to dig his grave, and the funeral would be at half-past four; and all the offices and shops were closed, and the women were wailing for the Chief, but his woman most of all.

I left them in the kitchen, and went to look for Viola; she had disappeared from the window, and I knew she was gone back to hiding. I found her in my room. I entered, locking the door behind me.

"There's a boat," I said without preliminary, "leaving tomorrow. I have had an offer for my business standing this two years. I'll take it now. If you wear a veil," I said, "no one will know you've ever been here, and the widow and the children will inherit all right."

She was sitting on the edge of the bed, silent, absently looking down at her little narrow feet in their satin mules. I was thinking how much there was in such a slight thing as the shape of a foot or a hand—remembering that the feet of Gladys weren't like Viola's; telling myself that Viola's were the feet of the sort of woman whom men loved, and kept on loving—just as was every bit of her, from head to heel. If once Chris Ward had seen her—but his eyes were closed with dust.

She said presently, looking up at me with a look I couldn't comprehend—and cannot yet, even after all that has been: "I liked you best, next to him, if I know myself. I don't think I ever did know myself, really. But if you don't mind trying—"

I took her in my arms then, for the first time; but not the last.

She said, as the boat slid away from the wharf and the palms of Adam-and-Eve began to grow pale and thin in sunny distance, something I couldn't quite catch, something out of the poem she had quoted on the night when she came back from wandering:

"The gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

WE have never gone back to the islands; we have gone on and on. I think we have been happy—as happy, at least, as you are, and the people whom you know. . . .

Ngamaru died without apparent cause on the night of the funeral. I don't think anyone, except myself, knew why.

ONE AGAINST

A great exploit of Kioga the Snow Hawk, a white boy whose parents (later killed) had been cast away on a strange volcano-warmed coast north of Siberia, inhabited by cousins of the American Indians.

THE seven Kindred Shoni Tribes are of a race who love the earth. They are a copper-skinned people, surviving wild cousins of the tamed American red man, who dwell beyond the shoulders of the earth, within the Arctic Circle, in a volcano-warmed land which they call Nato'-wa. It has been known to men whose skins are white only within this present decade.

The Shoni tribesmen have good cause to revere their wilderness land, warmed by a mellow ocean current and by the inner fires of the earth, and thronged with game. But even more, perhaps, do they revere the forest rivers which link their savage kingdom together, and form their avenues of inter-tribal trade—and ofttimes of bloody war.

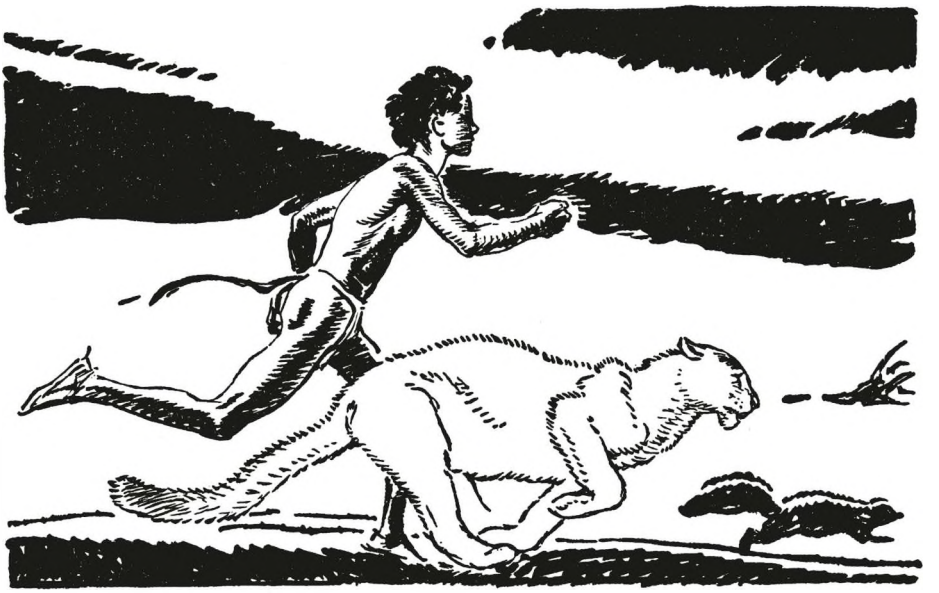
Each river has its patron god—so think the Shoni—and every cave and lake and shadowed glade its spirit of good or evil. Unto these spirits and gods the Shoni tribes make endless sacrifice. Sometimes this sacrifice is in the form of food, tossed on the waters, sometimes of ornaments hung on some sacred rock; again a man may make a sacrifice of weaponry, or cast his valued shield into a waterfall. More rarely the shamans give a human life, though happily this does not often occur. . . .

On the banks of the Hiwasi, two arrows' flight from old Hopeka-town, there is an image of a human head, carved in the rugged granite high on the cliffs through which the river flows.

The head upon the rock is handsome—a skilled, true likeness of a youth of fifteen, carved by the primitive sculptor Okantepek, whom all the mighty chieftains of the Shoni tribes engage to perpetuate their faces for the coming ages.

Okantepek would say, if asked about that youth's head carved in stone, "That is Kioga of Hopeka-town. He did a brave deed."

When springtime comes among the Shoni tribesmen, and the sinews of the rivers bulge and with a mighty effort break the icy chains of winter and course their channels once again, the tale is heard when the hunters gather about the watch-fires. And if Guna of the hundred stripes halts in his prowling to chill the forest with his roar, or if T'yone of the wolfish clan sends up his hunger-howl, so much the fitter. For then the red men nod their heads and say: " 'Tis



A WILDERNESS

IV—"FLIGHT OF THE FOREST PEOPLE"

By WILLIAM L. CHESTER

true: for hark—the forest folk speak their agreement. They too were there."

Okantepek, of Magua, a northern river village, tells the story best, for he was present. And when Okantepek recounts it, others listen to his tale, clapping hands to mouths in wonder. . . .

Spring came early to mysterious Nato'-wa, the year when these events transpired. The sun, long absent on his winter journey from the Arctic, sent up red fanlike banners to herald his coming in the southern sky. The earthly heat, volcanic in its nature, which warms this newfound land, seemed aided in this office by unseasonably warm winds from out the south. The migrant birds from far away came north early that year, to roost in countless myriads amid the deep primeval forests of Nato'-wa, and fill the breezes with their homing calls.

Between two mighty mountains, and high above the forest stretching cloaklike down the valley, one lake especially was high abrim with water: Metinga, which means "a piece of sky" in the Shoni tongue, is so named for its summer turquoise color; it is a vast, deep basin, an old volcano crater; into it from gleaming glaciers far above the timber-line immense volumes of water yearly flow and are collected, and overflow in two great cataracts to form the white headwaters of the river Makalu, which drains into the Hiwasi.

Above the shining surface of Metinga, leaned outward as if admiring themselves in its mirror surface, two overhanging forest trees threw shadows down upon the water. Above, upon one of their limbs, a brilliant Nato'wan jay preened one wing and presently discovered his moving image just below, whereat he puffed out his breast and stared complacently.

As the jay stared, his wise eye sharpened. For on the liquid mirror just below, there suddenly appeared another face that looked straight upward into his. A handsome face it was, framed in an unruly tangle of blue-black hair, with brilliant greenish eyes whose light of quick intelligence gleamed forth from the well-browned face. Naked, well-muscled shoulders next rose up, and round the neck the jay saw a string of eagle-claws.

But suddenly another face appeared beside the boy's. This was no human face, but of the ursine clan—a mighty bear whose shadow dwarfed that of his

Illustrated by

human companion. As if agrin at some huge joke, the bear's jaws hung open, red tongue lolling, lips back-drawn, exposing shining teeth from ear to ear, the fear and dread of every other forest dweller. Unlike the youth, who was the soul of silence, the bear rose up with no pretense of caution, and dislodged a great stone that plunged, shivering the images upon the lake with a sudden splash.

A beat of wings, a shriek of shrill surprise, and Wi-jak was away. But not too far, for Wi-jak's curiosity is fully equal to his caution. Upon a limb above, the bright bird perched, uttering things that should not be repeated.

SOME days before, when Kioga quit the village of Hopeka, quick-eyed Wi-jak had seen him go. When Kioga lurked in ambush and drove his arrow through a buck, Wi-jak was there to steal a meal. When the Snow Hawk met with Aki, Wi-jak it was who spread broadcast the news. Then he had lost their trail and spent the night upon that branch above the swollen lake, only to see Kioga rising, as it seemed, from its deep blue waters in the morning. And so the forest pirate cursed the boy again, for cursing is the specialty of Wi-jak and his kind.

Between two quick short laughs Kioga answered: "Be still, Wi-jak, O Waker-of-the-Dead! How can we hear the sounds of spring when you are shouting? Be still, *ehi!* Or I will spit thee upon an arrow, as sure as my name is Kioga!"

At sound of human voice Wi-jak grew silent, and other sounds were heard. From everywhere the music of running waters bubbled. An icy brooklet giggled somewhere underneath the rocks. A loon laughed out uproariously out on the still deep lake, and disappeared beneath the water. But Wi-jak listened as Kioga spoke again indignantly.

"Thou art a selfish tuft of feathers. We came here first and slept beneath this thicket—I and Aki. We are at peace with thee and thine, Wi-jak. Now off with you—be gone! My ears still ring!"

But Wi-jak only answered with a string of fiery forest oaths, albeit in a lesser voice. Even had he understood the boy's command to go, Wi-jak would still have lingered; for often in the recent past he had hovered near this strange youth who consorted with the forest brutes, and spied upon his strange adventures, and found them fascinating.

Pretending not to hear Wi-jak's warm compliments, Kioga addressed his monologue to his shaggy friend.

" 'Tis spring, Aki. Hear how the waters sing around us! The lake is overflowing, and all the streams are white with foam and spray."

Kioga threw a glance aloft to where a glacier capped a peak with silver; and as he watched, a blue-white piece of ice broke off and burst bomblike on a rocky slope, showering down a glassy dust.

"An early season, this," Kioga went on. "But in Hopeka-town they'll welcome it with songs and feasts and dancing. And to Hopeka we shall go, O Clumsy-foot, first down the mountain to the river Makalu, where I have hid a raft, on which we'll ride round all the

Jeremy Cannon

bends to where the river pours into the Hiwasi. From there it is an easy trip. Mayhap along the way we'll lose the one above, who troubles us."

Squatted on his haunches, Aki of the mighty jaws attended as if he understood. Thus it was—because Wi-jak annoyed their waking hours—that Aki and the Snow Hawk turned valleyward again and left the swollen Lake Metinga far behind them. And but for the harsh persecutions of Wi-jak, vast tragedy had surely fallen on the Shoni nation. . . .

Down through the forest tangle Kioga and his bear companion made their way. Great Aki, sure of foot but vast of bulk, must often go the longer route. Kioga, more agile than the quickest acrobat, descended like a plummet from cliff to tall tree's top, and down the yielding branches at their supple ends, transferred from one upon another, falling like a gibbon, and with as little effort. When far ahead he waited a little while for Aki, and waiting, listened to the boisterous laughter of the running streams, all eager for their yearly springtime union with the mighty rivers.

ALL forest life was now astir. Birds whistled in the branches. Across the valley two elks were bugling back and forth. Somewhere a tree fell, cut through by Flint-tooth the beaver, making annual repairs to his home and engineering works. Aki then came swinging into view, roaring with sheer gusto and joy of the season.

With Aki, then, as was his frequent habit, Kioga climbed to a ledge that overlooked his wilderness to have a look around. Emerging on the watching-place,—a cliff beside a waterfall that overlooked the forest round about,—he suddenly felt a subtle change, the first foreshadowing of trouble. The birds were still; the wapiti no longer bugled.

Then he saw death. A crushed and broken fawn rode limply over the brink and dashed to pieces on the rocks so far below he scarce could hear its fall.

And now it seemed to him the streams had changed their voices. They muttered, as with a threat. He saw for the first time that many were no longer pure and sparkling, but turbid with black earth and yellow silt.

Kioga and Aki walked a little way upstream. They saw a pocket of leaves and floating twigs become a lesser jam of branches. Then downstream came a stumpy log which burst the jam. A flying piece caught Kioga underneath the eye. The river seemed to growl at him. Instinctively he moved a little nearer Aki, and put one hand upon that mighty shaggy shoulder, speaking in a whisper.

"There's trouble brewing, Aki. I feel it in my bones. Hark you—no bird's note can be heard. How still the forest is! And yet the waters talk more loudly than ever I have heard them before."

Great Aki whined, deep in his chest and shook his shaggy head uneasily. Kioga pointed upward. "Behold, the Birds of Death are circling and holding council in the air above Metinga. They know that something evil soon will happen. They always come beforehand. I hate them, Aki! Come, let us see what's

brewing. But first—a drink." Suiting the action to the words, Kioga bent down beside a flowing spring to cup the liquid to his lips. But as at the waving of a magic wand, the water disappeared. A little moistened sand was all his hand scooped up. The font went dry before their eyes.

"Eh-hu!" Kioga muttered. "The earth begrudges us a drink. And hark! I hear the sound of rumbling. . . . Come, Aki!"

Back up the slope they went, not pausing until they stood again where earlier Wi-jak had broken in upon their slumbers. One single glance Kioga flung across the lake, then caught his breath. For here and there upon the surface, great oily bubbles rose, and bursting, gave forth a strange unpleasant stench. And even as they watched, there was a tremor of the earth. A great crack formed along the solid rocky wall which held the impounded waters of Metinga in a kind of natural dam. There was the fearful sound of tree-roots parting like pack-thread well below the surface of the earth, and thunder shook the ground beneath their feet.

HAD a tiger sprung upon him, Kioga would have leaped away, and probably escaped. But when the very earth convulses, it is the better part of common sense to wait, stock-still. Tense, yet cool as ice, Kioga waited for what might come, as oftentimes before, when quakes disturbed his forests. Beside him, the usually fearless Aki quivered.

There was a stillness, fraught with apprehension. Then with a hissing sound, a geyser rose within the lake—a gigantic mushroom of water. When it fell, drenching them with chilly spray, two cylindrical rods of water under fearful pressure burst from the south wall of Metinga, and shot forth horizontally, shearing off stout trees like candle-wax.

And then, from far above, there came the roar of avalanche. Cracked by the tremors of the earth and loosened by the warmth of early spring, the half of one great glacier was tumbling down the mountain, immensely adding to the weight of old Metinga's stored-up waters. Beneath that added pressure the southern wall gave way. Not all at once, or Kioga and Aki had been engulfed, but slowly at the first, and with the fearful groan of rock on rock.

As with one mind Aki and Kioga turned tail and sought a higher level still, wherefrom they watched with staring eyes the dying of an age-old lake. The pressure of the water told. Great streams, each a cataract in size, burst from the crumbling rock. Then with the crash of field-artillery, the whole shell of the ancient crater bulged and leaped outward. Havoc, terror and destruction rushed upon the valley in the path of Metinga's flood.

A wall of water eighty feet in height and many more across, a mighty river roaring where a creek had babbled, its rushing crest already a chaos of uprooted trees and forest trash—that was what Kioga and Aki looked upon from

fancied safety on a slope above the foaming flood; but even there they were not immune to the giant's clutch of the monster just unleashed.

Hardly had the first crest swept past, when the forest slope on which they stood began to slip, undermined by the racing tide. A quarter-mile of virgin timber took leave of its rocky moorings and coasted toward the flood.

Kioga and the bear, entrapped among the tottering trees, rode downward with the ragged square of forest; and with them went uncounted other living creatures who chanced to occupy the area before it slipped away. Until it reached the flood, the land-slip held together, while on its sliding surface the hunter-killers ceased pursuit, and the hunted ones stood rooted and sought no longer to escape.

A weary buck at bay beheld the wolf-pack falter as the ground beneath them heaved and groaned. A tiger, poised to launch his killing rush, saw prey and forest roar away to leave the rocky bones of earth laid bare. Then with a rush the land-slip plunged into the waters. Great forest giants tossed about like twigs, and in their ponderous convulsions bludgeoned all that came into their path.

For others they were floating haven. Locked by fangs and claws to such a great tree, mighty Aki clung with all his strength. And onto Aki, Kioga clung with grim tenacity, dodging tossing limbs and tangled roots. Their tree turned over, dragging both beneath the surface, then righted, raising them aloft again. Then plunging like a monstrous brute, berserk among a thousand tossing others of its kind, their tree rushed wildly forward on the swirling waters. Kioga and Aki were a part of chaos, and not the only ones engulfed.

A LUCKLESS half-drowned tigress struggled to draw herself upon the log, but could not summon strength. Into her fear-filled eyes the Snow Hawk gazed. Although in other circumstances Gunahi would have eaten him with relish, now they shared a common danger. Mutual peril raised a truce. Pity filled Kioga while she struggled, slipping slowly back. Laying hold upon her heavy tail he sought to drag Gunahi from the water, while Aki watched and showed his teeth, and roared in harsh hostility.

But when Kioga shouted at him, Aki, with many a distasteful grunt, took grip upon the tigress' heavy ruff. And so, between them both, they hauled her onto their log—a sorry-looking forest baroness, too spent to more than bare her fangs and twitch her wet, bedraggled tail.

Now from the other side a stag swam alongside, with fear-distended eyes. By one antler Kioga seized him, and drew him trembling up to sanctuary.

From time to time other creatures, hard beset, sought safety on this only stable thing in all the boiling press about them. A mother-wolf came with her one surviving pup between her jaws, and was not turned away. A nest containing birds dangled from a limb sweeping

past. The little downy things cried out, and at the risk of life and limb Kioga reached, seized, overbalanced, but recovered, saving all the nestlings. A troop of forest birds winged above to the plunging tree and settled on its upreaching boughs which once had been their home, all agitation, their young destroyed.

Thus laden with its birds and beasts, the strange ark raced on the tides of Metinga, with Kioga as its only human occupant. Sometimes it skirted close to shore, again yawed widely on the middle currents. All the Snow Hawk's efforts to guide it to the bank were as an ant's breath against a mainsail. But reach the bank he must, for into mind this thought had leaped, to strike fear for others into him who was fearless on his own account.

"Hopeka-town lies in the path of this onrushing flood!"

He had a momentary vision of the greatest Shoni village, filled with warriors and powerful chiefs from every distant clan and tribe along the river-ways. He visualized the dancers in their full regalia, the singers lifting up their voices in thanksgiving for this early spring—while down upon them rushed disaster. He saw beloved Mokuyi and Awena, his Indian foster-parents, caught upon the dread white bubbling crest and dashed into eternity. He saw Hopeka's walls and dwellings leveled, swept away, a blow from which the Shoni nation would not recover for a generation.

How long before this racing flood would overwhelm the Shoni capitol and sweep the canoe argosies into nothingness? Kioga knew the route the river Makalu described. He knew its many serpentine turns and twists, and where it emptied into the Hiwasi. And one thing more he knew—the one defile through which a man afoot might pass, and granting that he were swift, attain Hopeka in time to warn its celebrants.

A man afoot—upon that thought he looked about him at the havoc on the surface. Ahead the crest was well advanced, destroying as it went. Miles behind already Metinga Lake was still outspilling its vast quantities of water, adding to the tidal wave. And all around, a wilderness of trees tossed and pitched wildly. To seek to gain the shore across the jam was suicide.

He glanced ahead again. A bend showed in the river, and toward it their ark was rushing. The seething waters carved deep into the bank, and damming up, forced Kioga's tree away toward mid-river. Then suddenly a back-eddy seized its crown and swung it in toward shore, beneath the cut-under bank.

Kioga saw his chance and raced along the bole. Catlike, he sprang upon a limb, and leaping, caught a dangling slippery root, maintained his grip and clambered up. The wet root snapped. Kioga grasped another.

A moment more, and he was safe. He paused a second to look back. The log, still bearing up its many occupants, rushed onward. A lump was in Kioga's throat, and seeing was not easy through the mist that came before his vision at sight of faithful Aki, upreared upon the disappearing tree and calling in a mighty voice to one who never in the past had deserted.

Then, low of heart, the Snow Hawk turned away, taking comfort from the thought that Aki had a chance for life, at least. But who in all Hopeka-town would still survive if no one warned them of the coming torrent?

ON flying feet that spurned the earth Kioga fled along a forest trail, worn smooth by countless hordes of brutes who wander through the forests of Nato'-wa. Then from the trail he turned obliquely and up a mountain-side began to climb.

The rocks were slippery with melting snow, but no chamois had ever surer feet than he. Up and up Kioga went, taking hand-hold where he found it, seizing roots and spurs of rock to draw himself aloft. Sometimes his ascent was slow, but oftener he leaped and sprang with panther's ease and speed. For all that

he made haste, scarce a stone did those light steps disturb in mounting to the summit.

Along the ridge he ran, hair blown straight out behind him, a shadow black against a sunset sky. Then through the rocky pass which cuts uncounted miles of travel from the forest roamings of the Shoni scouts and messengers, and down into the valley, Kioga raced with grim catastrophe, and came toward the valley as if hell-hags were hard upon his heels.

HERE flowed the broad Hiwasi, whose distant reaches lapped the bank at Hopeka. To a well-hidden place Kioga went, and poked around among the thickets, uncovering at last a good light bark canoe and paddle, cached there the season past when early winter and a sudden freeze caught him far from home.

He lifted the canoe and placed it on the water. It leaked, but time did not permit repairs. Taking up his paddle, Kioga drove it deep and sent the craft gliding out into the middle currents.

The deep Hiwasi, too, was swollen, and all its tributary streams were adding to its size. The banks were inundated, the water-level risen twenty feet. The yearly river-ravages were just begun, and for that the Shoni would be prepared. But when that white-headed roaring flood, as yet far up the winding valley of the Makalu, did come, it must wreak a frightful havoc—unless Kioga came in time.

Ahead his quick eye sought a certain waterfall he knew, which he must portage his canoe around. As he drew near, the place appeared, not now a drop of forty feet, but thanks to rising waters, a lesser rushing current which fell but twenty in a long low arc. A carry here would cost him precious minutes in his race to bear a warning to Hopeka-town. He scanned the white-capped waves beyond the fall, for there the greatest danger lurked. Then he looked long and searchingly up the valley of the Makalu.

There was not time to make the carry even if he wished, for near enough for seeing with the naked eye, he glimpsed the birds of death, wheeling and funneling in the sky. That meant the racing crest moved swifter than he had anticipated. As it moved, it carried dead and dying creatures on its flood. And where death is, the forest scavengers are always near.

Now with a calculating eye upon the waters he gently urged his birch-bark forward. He knew the dire risks of these unyielding rips below. Not for nothing had Kioga ridden back and forth with the red-skinned traders from Hopeka-town. But with a cool and level gaze he faced it, risks and all.

He felt the swelling current seize the flimsy fabric of his craft. With cunning touch he dipped and held, or twisted on the handle of his blade to hold his bow upon a rock that showed up far below the point of peril. But though the river had borne him on its breast before, it now was definitely hostile, and on a deep and fearful note roared down between its banks. The very winds had changed and caught his bow and gave a twist that almost robbed him of control. A great rock, shifting on the changing river-bottom, upturned, and with its sharp edge skived deeply through the barken side of his canoe, and water entered. Kioga shifted balance slightly to bring the damaged part above the waterline.

He cut inshore, to skirt a whirlpool that seethed between two rocks; and hardly had he passed when down the crumbling perpendicular wall a hundred tons of granite toppled, hurling him forward on its mighty wave. Each time disaster skimmed him just a little closer.

THE forest, hitherto impartial, had turned its other face. He felt forces, grim, malign, leaguing up against him. He thought of all the Shoni superstitions relating to the river-gods, and gripped his paddle a little tighter. For whiteskin though he was by heredity, association with the Indians of the Shoni tribes had filled his head with curious half-beliefs which now crept into mind with sinister suggestion.

"The forest gods have turned against me. . . . O Thing-of-Bark, be light and fleet! A thousand lives now ride betwixt thy slender ribs. For if Kioga comes too late, Hopeka is no more."

An Indian, thus apprehending danger from the many gods he feared, would have given up resistance, and let the waters bear him where they would. Not so with Kioga of the blue-green eyes and paler skin. In him there was a different spirit, daring to pit itself against the hostile powers of the wilderness, even in this, their angry mood.

An instant more, and he was on that bulging central current of the cataract. The bank fled past, the light craft racing like a thing alive. Then came a

leap, a mighty surge. As if on wings the small canoe shot forth upon the brink, and there a moment poised. Kioga felt a sinking motion; then his craft slipped swiftly over the fall and down amid the stiff and curling waves of the rapids.

Crouching low with ready blade, he held his cockle-shell upon a steady course. All about, the snarling river gnashed, and sought some grip upon that smooth and fragile fabric, which by its very lightness bobbed along almost in safety. But with the greatest danger well behind, Kioga saw the straining seams give way. A vicious wave broke hard across the bow, and in an instant overturned the fleeing craft.

Kioga plunged before the canoe dipped under. Sport of the whirling currents, he struck out for the nearest bank. The waters whipped and spun him. He seized a floating log. An eddy swung him into quiet water. On the bank he rested panting, almost spent, but with the knowledge of his duty still before him. Then swiftly down the bank he fled, and heaved a sigh of deep relief when Hopeka's walls came into view.

DRAWING near, the Snow Hawk heard the old men's voices rising in deep hosannas, and answering, the ringing chorus of the women's song. He heard the undertone of drums, the peal of sacred whistles, the silken rustle of the deer-hide rattles. He turned an instant toward whence he had come, and sought to translate the muttering of the waters into knowledge of when the crest would come. The river was swollen to within ten feet of the palisades.

He stood before the heavy gate and beat upon it fiercely with his fist. A sentry's head appeared; the gate swung in. Kioga entered, threw a glance about, and saw a hundred faces that he knew.

Sawamic, the Shoni emperor-chief, resplendent in his gleaming ceremonial robes; the circle of the shamans, squatted in the center of the dancing-place before the huge waist-high granite stone whereon the sacred village fire burned, from which each year the Shoni fires are rekindled; the long queue of the bending, leaping, naked dancers, winding in and out in mystic figures. . . . All eyes were toward the stone, the center of attention; and all Hopeka listened raptly to the music, when suddenly, with catlike bound a supple figure sprang upon the fire-stone.

In loud and piercing tones Kioga raised his voice, pointing northward, up the river: "O Chiefs, and Elder Councilors, and people of Hopeka—rise up and flee! The waters of Metinga are soon upon you! Escape, before they come!"

The drums fell still. The sound of singing voices died away. Black as thunder grew the brows of the shamans at this fancied sacrilege. Slow Bull the warlock stood forth, fury in his eyes.

"Thou darest profane the sacred festival!" he cried. "O imp of mischief, I

will punish thee!" And raising a tomahawk, Slow Bull advanced upon the Snow Hawk.

Then from his belt Kioga drew his long, well-sharpened knife and holding it poised for the throw, he faced the shaman grimly. "Another step, Slow Bull, and thou shalt feel my metal in thy heart!"

"You dare to threaten me?" cried Slow Bull in fury.

"I dare," replied Kioga, watching Slow Bull as a leopard would.

The shaman hesitated, liking not the steely gaze of that defiant figure on the fire-stone. And while he hesitated, Kioga addressed the others, speaking urgently:

"I come from far upriver. Metinga's wall has burst, and all its waters flood the valley of the Makalu. Make haste! An hour hence will be too late!"

"Ah, *bah!*" cried Slow Bull jeeringly. "What foolery is this! A youth gives orders to his chiefs, and flaunts the holy shamans to their very faces! Ho, warriors—fall upon the upstart!"

A rumble went among the great assembly, and from his rock Kioga saw that none believed him. From somewhere near, a stone was thrown, and caught the Snow Hawk on the shoulder, hurling him from the rock.

He sprawled before Slow Bull, who swung his tomahawk. Kioga dodged aside and the blow fell harmlessly. Slow Bull would then have made another stroke, when lean and sinewy fingers fell upon his wrist.

Kioga saw Mokuyi, his Indian foster-father, disarm the shaman. But as he ran, a dozen others would have seized him, for he had many mortal foes among the villagers. Eluding them, he turned toward the village gate and ran the gantlet, a shower of flying missiles clattering behind him.

He flung the great gate wide. And at what he saw upon the river Kioga checked, then swung round upon the spot and pointed, with a high, shrill yell: "Behold—all you who disbelieve!"

Two warriors came and looked with startled eyes upon the river's swollen width, then raised a cry which brought every person in Hopeka to the walls, to gaze in apprehension at a phenomenon.

FROM northward, down the river, the forest denizens of every clan came swimming. A troop of beaver, full two hundred strong, led the way, paddling swiftly past the village without a backward glance; and hard upon their heels uncounted mink and otter hastened. Behind them came bands of woodland caribou, their antlers clacking as they forged along white-eyed with fear.

Along the nearer bank a pack of wolves raced southward, tails between their legs. When these had gone, three tigers passed, a mother with her two-year cubs. And panting almost on their heels an elk-stag, with his frightened harem, hurried by. Upon the distant shore a dozen mighty bears lumbered hastily; nor did they even pause to

drink, despite their hanging, lathered tongues.

And then—something stranger still rushed past among the farther forest shadows, a thing of vaster bulk than any other brute. From Hopeka's wall the people looked, pointing, astounded at that uncouth shadowy shape for which they had no name. Of them all, but one had ever seen the monster brute before. Nor had Kioga name for what he saw. But what he sketched upon a bit of hide, which has endured, was unmistakably a living mammoth, surviving on no other part of earth except Nato'wa. . . .

Above the waters countless birds flew in a vast confusion and higher up, in swinging gyres, flew the purifiers of the forest—the giant buzzards and all their awful kin, the ravens and the carrion hawks. And even through the branches of the trees, innumerable squirrels and orange-breasted martens and other things which leap and climb, fled like a myriad silent shadows.

THEN upon Hopeka there descended a horde of all the lesser creatures of the forest. Wood-rats and jumping mice, things that burrowed and things that crawled, with here and there among them their natural foes, the foxes and the weasel-tribe. Up all the palisaded walls they swarmed and over-ran the village, scurrying everywhere as if in search of haven, then fleeing on, a veritable tide of life intent on self-preservation, the first law of the wilderness.

And every brute among that legion, great and small, rode on the wings of fear. Some vast overwhelming instinct drove every one upon its headlong way.

Soon to the watchers on Hopeka's walls the apprehension grew infectious. A woman screamed:

"*Ai-ya—alai!* Take up what you own and flee! The forest gods are making war!"

The rush began and gathered swift momentum. All those who could, ran to their lodges, trampling those less agile as they ran. Mob-spirit ruled and all was wild upheaval, with only here and there a calm and stoic figure. Of these old Sawamic sought to raise his failing voice above the din and rally his warriors into orderly action, a losing effort as fear of death spread out like wildfire.

Upon the water-front there stood another, cool and quick to see the one way of escape. Small among the crowding, taller warriors, Kioga saw Mokuyi and Awena coming through the gateway, and to them passed an urgent message.

"Abandon the canoes. Take to the heights above the river-cliffs."

WITHOUT a word Mokuyi nodded and gathering others about him, began the climb. Then to the warriors Kioga shouted out his counsel. The great majority obeyed, but many more rushed helter-skelter to the great canoes lined up on the bank, and pushed off, putting their faith, as ever, in the water-way.

The exodus was now well under way. A little time would see Hopeka-town evacuated. But there were those less swift, who lagged behind, and through the gate Kioga rushed to lend them aid.

Metika, old and withered, he bore out in his arms and summoned two tall warriors to carry her aloft. Tokaya, with a broken leg in splints, he aided to the gate, where other hands took up his burden. Then he returned in search of any more in need of help.

Now from the heights there rose a sudden cry from many throats: "The waters of Metinga! The crest! The crest!"

Down in the condemned village Kioga heard that cry and rushed from lodge to lodge at speed redoubled. He found no one remaining and with a sense of duty well discharged, he sprinted to the gate and looked up-river.

A mile away he saw the yellow foaming crest approaching at a swift remorseless pace. He saw the several canoes, all laden deep with those who sought escape upon the river. He saw their paddlers cease their labors, and helpless, grasp the sides of their canoes, girding for the worst, their death-songs rising.

On roared the waters of Metinga, tearing mighty forests from their root-holds. The seething chaos loomed above the drifting war-canoes. Then like great chips the craft were snatched up and tossed, as from the horns of some gigantic bull, their human freight hurled every way. The solid craft rolled over and over, up-ended on the roaring crest, then were broken, crushed and pulverized between the milling trunks.

A moment, mesmerized by that evidence of primal power, Kioga watched death's drama, then turned to fly, when from the village came a cracked and broken voice, raising the death-chant of the Shoni people.

He knew it on the instant for the voice of Iska—Iska of the blinded eyes. And then he glimpsed her, as she groped along the village wall, a wizened, small, pathetic figure, the one forgotten soul in all of doomed Hopeka.

There stood one whose span of life was almost at its end. Upon her gazed Kioga, whose years were not a seventh of her own. From up above there came a distant warning: "Do not go back! The waters are upon you!"

Old Iska heard, and possibly divining, cried: "Escape! I'm old and worthless —I do not fear to die. Escape!"

"Escape, and leave thee here to die alone? Not I!" she heard, for answer. There came the padding sound of running feet. A quick hand took her own. The bellow of the waters mounted. But up above their roar came great shouts of encouragement from the cliffs, whence Hopeka's people saw a thrilling scene enacting.

Across Hopeka-town Kioga came, and through the open gate, then up the trail leading Iska by the hand, toward where a cheering populace watched, breathless, while the Snow Hawk matched his strength of will against the wild instinct to run from the threatening power of Metinga's oncoming waters.

BEHIND, the Snow Hawk heard the northern wall of Hopeka fall with a mighty splintering sound, and a quick glance back revealed the towering yellow-bubbled wave, then in the act of breaking full upon the village. An instant Hopeka stood forth, each detail clear in young Kioga's sight, the lodges, rambling streets, the fire-stone, its flame blown incandescent by the rush of air which had beaten down that northern wall.

Then as if some deathly spell were being cast, the site was whelmed in vast destruction. Hopeka-town was gone, all that it once had been now rushing toward the Caldrons of the Yei upon Metinga's tumultuous crest.

Once more Kioga turned to climb beyond the reach of danger. He sought to carry Iska. And then his strength, till now sustained by hurry and excitement, seemed draining from him. His feet were heavy. That slight weight of shriveled Iska, which at another time he would have borne with ease, was now too much. His breath came quick. His heart beat fast. Close behind the waters roared. Yet still he would not desert poor Iska, but turned to see the smothering foam rushing nearer. Within his naked breast Kioga's heart beat faster still, and yet with fearless eyes he faced his end without a tremor.

VALOR begets its kind. Some one shouted from above:

"He falters. Aid him—quick!"

Three warriors formed a human chain, and at the risk of life and limb, lowered down within his reach. He put old Iska's wrists in the grasp of a clutching hand and stood back to watch her lifted to safety. But suddenly the other of that pair of hands seized hold on him. It was the iron grip of tall Okantepek—the One-Who-Cuts-the-Stone.

And thus, old Iska and Kioga were raised aloft.

Close beneath Kioga's dangling feet, Metinga's crest tossed up its foam, as from great jaws that snap and miss. Then in full roaring tide the flood churned along its boiling way, while eager hands hauled up Kioga and his human burden.

Now, while the people of Hopeka watched the passing of the waters, Kioga ate heartily of the meats and sweets with which the women plied him. But all the while his eyes were on the slowly falling river, eager for a glimpse of one he had abandoned far up-river, on the Makalu.

The waters fell yet lower, and still no sign of Aki, when suddenly Kioga bounded to his feet, a piercing whistle darting out across the river. Hopeka's homeless folk beheld a mighty fallen tree afloat upon the water. A tigress paced it restlessly. A wolf with cub crouched at one end beside a terror-stricken buck. Forward on the log a huge bear roared an answer to Kioga's whistle.

A flock of birds took wing as the great

tree grounded with a jar. The buck sprang wildly ashore. The bear and other animals followed.

And then the villagers beheld a singular sight. A lithe brown youth sprang full upon the bear and on the bank they wrestled for a moment, then were gone. Hopeka's folk saw them later—high upon a pinnacle of stone, gazing after the receding fluid juggernaut that passed with muted thunder into distance. Then they were gone again, in search of other wilderness adventure.

The villagers filed down upon the clean-swept flat, all that remained of what was once Hopeka. When their early apathy had disappeared, they fell to work. A new Hopeka slowly rose upon the site.

But there was one who labored at a different kind of task. Okantepeg began cutting an image on a prominent cliff, at a point which marked the highest level to which the Hiwasi's waters had ever risen. . . .

One day, not long thereafter, Kioga chanced to pass. He saw the carven head, and knew it for his own. Beholding it, he laughed aloud. And as he laughed, a quick-winged jay alighted on a limb above his head, and cursed him in a loud and raucous voice. Kioga laughed again, this time without resentment of Wi-jak. Then to the great bear sitting at his side, he said:

"Okantepek carves skillfully. But there is something he forgot. I have the remedy for that."

Then from a belt-pouch he took a piece of flint, and standing on the ledge, scratched in, free-hand, a crude picture of a northern jay, above that other head. When he had done the Snow Hawk eyed his handiwork and cast a glance of merriment up at Wi-jak.

"It is your honest due, O Waker-of-the-Dead. For had you not awakened us to danger, Hopeka's folk had all been gone when we arrived."

The picture of Wi-jak has been eroded by the winds until a few faint scratches are all that now remain. The elements have had their way with Kioga's image, too.

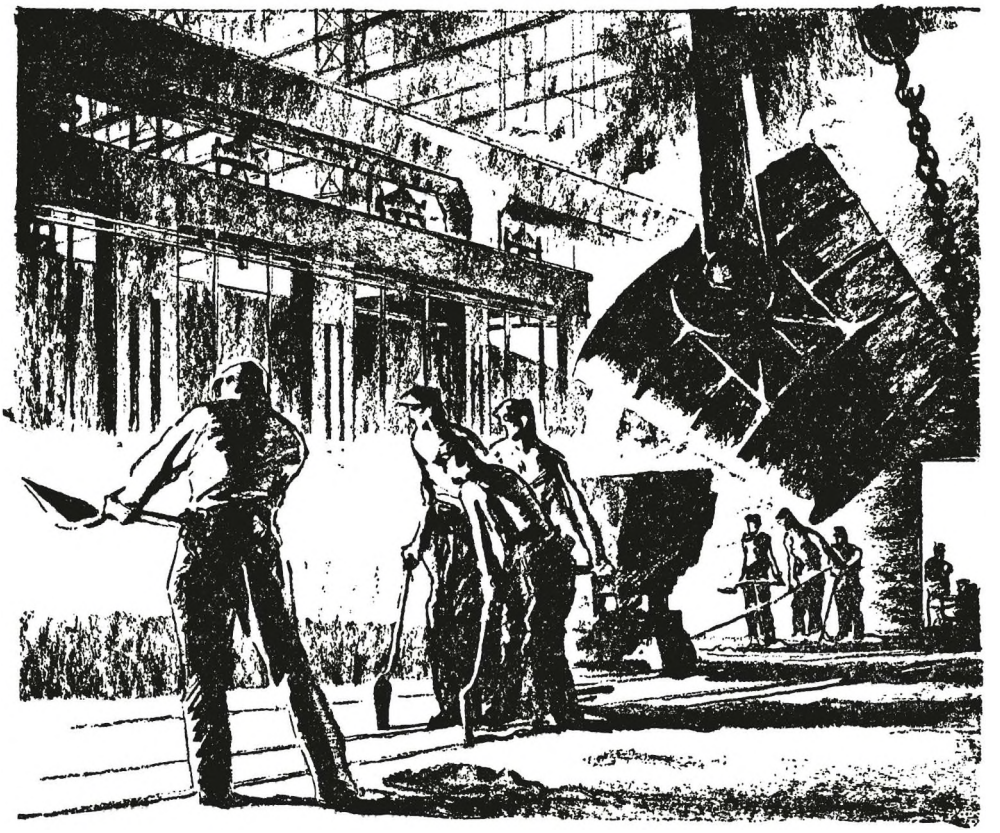
But in the minds of Hopeka's red-skinned folk, the memory of those events is ever fresh. And if, in time to come, you chance to sit beside the watch-fires of the Shoni hunters, you'll hear the tale just as I have here unfolded it.

Another lively story of "One Against a Wilderness" will appear in our next issue.

Good Steel

IT had not occurred to us that some day the Old Man would check out, even as you and I will when our times come. You know how it is: A man will be up and around until the day he's ready for flowers and soft music, and then you wonder why you hadn't noticed how peaked he looked the last time you saw him. That's the way we were with the Old Man. He had been down at the mill as usual, bellowing out what he wanted done, in a voice that made the roar of the furnaces sound like a soft and peaceful murmur, and so we never gave a thought to his dying. But we

Does Not Chip



A new writer gives us a fine story of men and steel.

By OWEN FRANCIS

Illustrated by Grattan Condon

should have. After a man has bent his elbow celebrating his sixtieth birthday it is not exactly the correct caper for him to swing on the business end of a ravel-rod sticking out of a furnace full of melted steel, particularly not during the hot spells that hit us in July.

But the Old Man was a steel man from the word go. Trying to keep him off the melting platform was as difficult as keeping a cinder-man out of Mosley's bar on Saturday nights. It didn't make any difference if the thermometer was down where breathing was possible without painful effort, or up so high there were no marks to indicate how hot it was; it could not be classified as gambling to bet that whenever a furnace got its hottest, the Old Man would be within scorching distance. The smell of ore and dolomite was his life, the roar of a loaded furnace his only true love, the making of high-grade steel his religion.

THE fact that he was William C. Reardon, owner of the Reardon Steel and Foundry, with more dollars in the Ironville Trust and Savings than you could stack in a ladle, didn't bother him any. That is, not until the afternoon we picked him up from the melting floor in front of Number Two Furnace, where he had been raveling out a high-carbon heat instead of being out in the main office polishing the seat of the superintendent's chair, as he should have been.

We took him to his big house on the hill and laid him on the couch. Doc Colcord listened to his heart, shook his head as if what he heard didn't please him, and told us what to expect. The Old Man heard Doc's voice, and made a good but useless effort to get up.

"WHAT'S that?" he roared, his voice working as good as ever. "Don't go whispering around. I'm giving this party, and the fact that I close my eyes for a spell is no sign I don't want to know what's going on. Speak up, Doc—let's hear what's on your mind."

Doc hemmed and hawed and cleared his throat. He was pretty fond of the Old Man, as all of us were.

"Bill, I told you if you didn't slow down, your heart would go back on you. Well—it has."

"I'm in no mood to be reminded what you told me!" the Old Man barked. "You made a guess, and it just happened to turn out that way. All right—make another one, and we'll see how smart you are. How long have I got?"

"Hard to say exactly. Twenty-four hours—maybe a little longer."

The Old Man glared at Doc as if Doc were personally responsible for the dirty trick that was being played on him, the veins of his neck standing out as they always did when he started to get mad.

"That's long enough," he said, after thinking for a full minute. "Move me over by the window where I can see the mill. I want to see if those skim-milk cookers ever did get that heat out of Number Two. By the looks of things the whole day is standing around here. Well, I aint dead yet. Go on back to work! And send Tons Walker up here."

The Grim Reaper wasn't bluffing the Old Man. He might cut him down, but there was going to be a nick in his scythe. We went down the hill, being careful not to look one another in the eye, and told Tons the Old Man wanted him.

We didn't call Tons Walker "Tons" as a nickname; it was the name his mother had given him. Now, you might think that the name Tons is not a suitable one to give any baby. But you are not Mrs. Walker. She worried for months before he was born, trying to figure out a name. She knew he was going to be a steel-worker and she didn't want to get him off to a bad start with a soft name. The first time she held Tons in her arms she said:

"Why, he feels like a ton of steel."

So they christened him Tons; and as time went on, it turned out to fit him.

Standing a little better than six feet two, and weighing in around two-twenty, Tons was built the way a steel-worker should be, big and square. Coupled with his physical equipment was an idea that the making of steel was the greatest privilege bestowed upon mankind. The opportunity to take advantage of this blessing kept him in good humor most of the time, thank God; but when the fighting did start, all Tons wanted to know was how many were against him, and if his friends were back where they wouldn't get hurt.

Because of the fact that he could yell louder and longer, and was not afraid to yell what he thought, Tons was the only person ever known to win an argument with the Old Man. Every time they met, they would argue which was the better steel man and when they got to going good and calling each other choice names, we'd laugh ourselves weak; but we were careful neither heard us, for they took their arguments seriously.

When we told Tons the Old Man wanted him, he turned down the flues so Number One wouldn't be ready to tap out until he got back, and went up the hill wondering what the Old Man wanted.

TONS didn't come back to work that afternoon. Most of us stayed in Mosley's later than usual, making guesses what the Old Man and Tons were arguing about now. Around eight o'clock Tons came in, looking as if he had suffered through a spell of the hot mill cramps. He walked over to the bar and laid some bills before Two-up Mosley.

"The Old Man's gone. He said for all of us to have a slug of the best you've got in the place. I'm taking mine now."

Two-up set out a bottle of his private stock. We drank to the best boss a steel-worker ever had.

"It ain't right," Tons said, at last.

"We knoweth not the time nor the place," said Two-up, who was a great hand at clever sayings. "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. . . . Have a drink on the house."

"The Lord didn't have anything to do with what I'm talking about. The Old Man figured this out himself."

Tons took a deep breath, and in a voice that sounded as if he had his head in an empty tin pail, he said:

"The Old Man gave me the mill, all his money, and the job of making a

steel-worker out of William C. Reardon the Second."

If Two-up had suddenly announced that he had given a thousand dollars to the W.C.T.U., we wouldn't have been more surprised. We stood there with our mouths open in amazement.

"The Old Man said," Tons went on, "his one purpose in life was to have William the Second turn out to be a steel-worker, and not the tea-drinking, picture-painting tango-jumper his mother had made out of him. He failed, so he gave me the job. If the boy don't turn out to be a steel man, he don't get any money. Personally, I don't give a hoot if he drinks all the tea in China, paints pictures all day, dances like St. Vitus, or falls in a ladle the first time he sees one. The Old Man had no right wishing the job on me."

"Get this through your thick head, you big hunk of slag," Honey blazed. "I'm not going out with you; I've picked out my male escort from now on. It's Bill Reardon!"

"It's a very hard task, it is indeed," Two-up said, "but the incentive is lucrative. William C., the Elder, must have been worth a million or more. What are your plans, if I may be so bold as to ask, Mr. Walker?"

"To break the jaw of the next man who calls me Mr. Walker," Tons said, and we knew he meant it. "I'm going to do the best I can, as I promised the Old Man. I'll make a steel-worker out of William the Second, or kill him trying. Then I'll give the mill and the money to an old ladies' home, and get a job in Homestead, where they make steel and don't run no kids' school."

With that, Tons walked out, leaving behind as surprised a bunch of men as you'll ever find in the Mon valley.

IF I may coin a phrase, William the Second had been the thorn in the Old Man's side. We well remembered the night young Bill was born. The Old Man bought out Mosley's bar, and the entire male population of Ironville, including Tom Giles, whose gout usually keeps him sober, got as drunk as humanly possible in one evening. To hear the Old Man brag that night, we expected to find young Bill first-helping on the night turn when we went to work in the morning. But all babies, even future steel-workers, have to have mothers. The mother of William the Second was as determined that he was going to be a gentleman and a scholar, as the Old Man was that young Bill was going to be a steel-worker and a credit to the community. It was the groundwork for a fine argument.

When young Bill finished common school, the Old Man told him there was a job waiting for him down at the mill. The Old Man told young Bill that a little schooling never hurt anyone, but you can't learn how to load a furnace out of a book. William the Second's mother had told him something different. The Old Man asked for a showdown, and he got it: the next day Mrs. Reardon left Ironville forever, and she took William the Second with her. . . .

Reports would come back by way of the Sunday newspapers how Mrs. William C. Reardon, wife of the steel magnate, and her son William the Second

were leaving or returning from Europe, or that they were among those present at some society function. Later on, news came that Mrs. Reardon had died, and that William the Second was in Europe studying art. The Old Man had the bank send young Bill as much money as he wanted, just as he always had, but he never mentioned his name from that day on. Now William the Second was coming back to Ironville. . . .

Two-up leaned on the bar and started scratching his chin, a sure sign he had something to say. We listened to his pearls of wisdom.

"As the twig is bent, so doth the tree incline," Two-up said, which is a pretty wise remark if you stop to figure it out. "It may be that William the Second will turn out to be young Bill, a chip off the old block—a steel block."

"Good steel don't chip," chimed in Steve Ord, who should have known better.

Two-up looked at Steve with great pity and said sarcastically:

"That is beside the point. It is irrelevant. Furthermore, it has nothing to do with the matter whatsoever. As anyone with the mental brains of an average-sized pygmy would know, I was resorting to my prerogative of utilizing poetic license. In words which you will understand, what I mean is that Tons Walker may have caught a Tartar."

"What's a Tartar?" Steve asked skeptically.

"I'm deeply sorry indeed that I broached the matter," Two-up said sadly, "and let's forget it. Only I wish to go on record as saying that if young Bill has any of the Old Man's blood coursing through his left ventricle, what is going to happen will be much the same as the irresistible force meeting the immovable body. And if you don't get my drift, Mr. Ord, I'd advise you to inquire as to when the next term of common school opens."

As is often the case, it turned out as Two-up said it would. At least, that's what I think he said.

WILLIAM the Second arrived in Ironville a week after we buried the Old Man. He couldn't get from Europe any sooner. As the Old Man had instructed, Tons had moved into the big house. He was in the library waiting for young Bill when he arrived.

"Mr. Smalley of the Trust and Savings told me you wanted to see me," young Bill said, surprised at Tons making himself so much at home.

Tons looked young Bill over, as surprised at what he saw as young Bill had been. He didn't see the scrawny, bespectacled he-flapper he'd expected. What he saw was about a hundred and ninety pounds of what looked like solid flesh, a jaw that reminded him of the Old Man's, and a pair of eyes that looked at him steadily. It wasn't Tons' idea of William the Second at all.

"Smalley told you wrong. I don't want to see you; I have to. What else did he tell you?"

"Nothing; he said you'd explain."

"Well, I will. Your Old Man wished a job on me, that of making a steelworker out of you if it is possible, which it probably isn't."

YOUNG BILL laughed. It wasn't the nervous laugh of a man who is told something, knows he has to do it, and is just laughing to make others think he likes it. It was the laugh of a man who feels pretty sure of himself.

"We can settle that all right, Mr. Walker, and save you an unpleasant job. You see, I don't want to be a steelworker."

"Or nothing else that has work connected with it," Tons said insultingly. "From what I gather, all you want to do is to paint pictures, be called William Reardon the Second, and spend the Old Man's hard-earned money. Well, that's all over with."

Young Bill's face got red, and the veins of his neck started standing out just the way his dad's used to. He didn't like Tons making himself so much at home in his house; he didn't like what Tons said. In fact, he didn't like Tons, and he felt that the feeling was mutual.

"I don't know what Dad told you. But I'll tell you something. What I intend doing and how I go about doing it is my own business—"

"You can do as you damn' please," Tons interrupted, "but you won't do it on the money the Old Man left. I own the mill, the house and the money. You haven't a suitcase to put your other shirt in, nor a bed to shove it under. And you'll get nothing from me but a chance to do as the Old Man wanted you to."

It must have been pretty hard, being told the news in that manner. Young Bill's jaw clamped shut and he looked Tons eye to eye. When he did speak, his voice was even.

"And if I do go to work in the mill and turn out to be a steel man, what happens?"

"I'll turn the mill and the money over to you as the Old Man instructed."

"The decision *when,* being left for you to decide," Young Bill said deliberately. "It is certainly a *fair* proposition."

Tons heard the implication young Bill put on the word fair. For the first time in his life, he didn't do what he felt like doing.

"You can take it or leave it," Tons said, trying not to get any madder.

Young Bill walked over to a picture of his father that hung over the fireplace. It was a picture that his mother had had painted in the days she was trying to get the Old Man to act like other rich men. Young Bill stood looking at the picture for a long time.

"It is bad art but a good subject," he said, turning to Tons. "He was a pretty nice old gent. I think I'll take it, Mr. Walker. How does one go about being a steel man?"

"Don't call me Mr. Walker; my name is Tons. You go about being a steel-worker by starting as cinder-man, just as your Old Man and me did. You can have my old room at Horkey's boarding-house, and report to Steve Ord in the open hearth tomorrow at a quarter to seven. Don't expect any favors."

"And give none." The way young Bill said it, it sounded like a challenge. "I think we understand each other, Mr. Walker."

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a check, throwing it on the table.

"Here's the last check Dad sent to me. I might as well start off broke the way he did."

Before Tons could say anything, young Bill went out of the room and down the hill toward Horkey's boarding-house.

BILL established himself in Mrs. Horkey's boarding-house, and the next morning at a quarter of seven he reported to Steve Ord, the melter foreman. Following Tons' instructions, Steve put Bill on the cinder-gang, and told Joe Zimich, the gang pusher, to give him the gaff.

Now, in steel-mill parlance, the gaff means make it as tough as possible. It's a neat trick: the new man gets the front end of the ravel-rods when a heat is pushed out; the furnace door is accidentally on purpose left open when he throws in his dolomite; and he is always given the job of throwing coal in the ladle while the steel is being poured. It is a very effective method of showing the tech school smart alecs, who think they need a little practical experience before going into the main office and sending out reports how steel should be made, what a soft job steel-making is. After a day or two of taking the gaff, the college boys are either carried out feet first, or reach a decision that practical experience is not necessary after all. Size or strength don't have much to do with how long they stick it out—it's the heat that gets them, a heat that dries them out, sends them too often to the water-spout, and then to a hospital. Any man who gets the gaff during the summer and lives through it, has something to boast about to his grandchildren.

THEY gave young Bill the gaff, and he took it. He lasted out the first day turn without complaining; and when the night shift came on to relieve him, he went home under his own power. But his face was white, a kind of a greenish white, and his legs were wobbling. He was a candidate for the hot cramps, and if he cooled off too quickly, he was sure to be elected.

Young Bill staggered up to his room. He sat at the opened window until he started to get sick at his stomach. Then Mrs. Horkey sent Honey Ayers up to take care of him.

Honey Ayers was the serving-girl at the boarding-house. Having lived all her nineteen years within shouting distance of the open hearth, it wasn't anything new to see a man with the cramps. We called her Honey on account of her hair. It looked like strained honey when it's held up to the light. She was as nice a girl as any steel-worker would ever find: she had a disposition as sweet as her hair looked; she knew what was expected of a Ironville woman; and she didn't have the habit of crying when something went wrong. She was small and tender-looking, but she was efficient. When anything went wrong, she did something about it.

She didn't know Bill from Adam's off ox, but she saw he was a sick man who was going to get sicker if he didn't get the only treatment which helps any in the case of hot cramps—to keep warm.

"Get those clothes off and get into bed while I heat a blanket down at the cook-stove," Honey commanded.

"I'm burning up now," Bill moaned.

"Sure you are," said Honey, starting

to unbutton his shirt. "But you'll be colder than last New Year's Eve, and it will be permanent, if you don't do as I tell you."

It was either Bill would take his clothes off or Honey would do it for him. When she came back with a hot blanket, he was under the covers.

Honey wrapped the hot blanket around him, put a cold cloth on his feet, and fanned him until he fell asleep, which wasn't long. And in the morning, she went up and awakened him. He would probably have slept until noon.

"How are you feeling, Toots?" Honey asked.

"Not so good, Florence Nightingale," Bill answered truthfully. "Thanks for saving my life."

"Think nothing of it. It's not the first blanket I've heated for the cramps. But you'd better get smart. Every time you want a drink today, count ten slow, and then don't take any until you have to."

"Work? Today? Don't think I can make it."

"Then I'm sorry I wasted my time," Honey said. "Well, get a good rest today, and tomorrow go over to Wakefield's drug-store. I heard that Clarence cut his finger on a marshmallow-sundæ dish, and they need a new soda squirt."

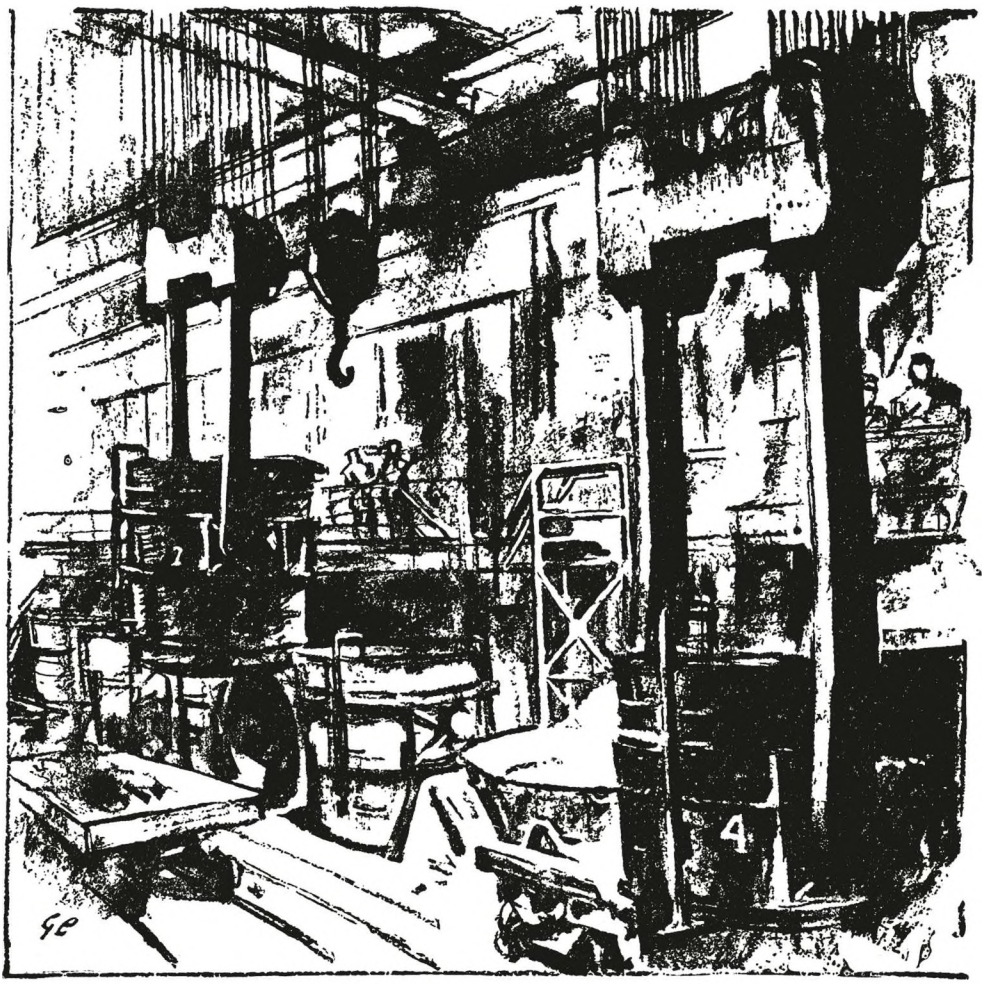
Honey went out banging the door behind her. Ten minutes later Bill was in the dining-room.

"Look here—" he started to explain.

"Don't bother me now; I'm busy," Honey cut him short. "If you're going to the mill and want to get there on time, see how quick you can hide those eggs and potatoes."

Bill went to work that morning, the next one, and the ones following. After a week he found, much to his amazement, that the heat hadn't cooked him all the way through, and that he could bend over without wincing.

If you don't believe in love at first sight, you've never had the hot cramps



and been doctored by a good-looking girl like Honey. There is little doubt but that Bill would have quit after the first turn if it hadn't been for her. And no one could have blamed him much, the way they gave him the gaff. But Bill, being in love with Honey, couldn't quit and explain to her why. Honey wasn't that kind of girl.

Falling in love with Honey was about the worst thing young Bill could have done while taking orders from Tons Walker—for Honey was Tons' girl. She never said so, but Tons did, and that was sufficient proof for any of the young lads about town.

Of course, Honey soon found out who Bill was, and how Tons had been giving him the gaff. It made her think less of Tons and more of Bill; and the next time Tons came around to take her to the picture-show, he was told off in no uncertain terms. Her blue eyes flashing, every pound of her hundred and five quivering with the injustice of it all, Honey read Tons the first, second and third verses of the riot act.

"Get this through your thick head, you big hunk of slag," Honey blazed: "I'm not going out or in anywhere with you, now or next Easter. I've picked out my male escort from now on. So you won't have to spend any time guessing who, I'll tell you: it's Bill Reardon. Put that in your furnace and turn the flues down."

Honey did all right when she wanted to.

"My, but you look pretty when you get mad," Tons said. "Bill Reardon—where have I heard that name? Oh, you mean William the Second. I never thought a girl like you would take up with a Sweet William. Well, he won't be around long."

Young Bill knew he didn't have a chance. But he didn't quit.

"Then I'll go with him—if he asks me to," said Honey, as near to crying as she ever would be. "But he's not going to quit. Bill says cinder-pitting is easy. Why, we go dancing every night."

Now, of course Honey was stretching the truth about as far as she could without bold-faced lying. It is true they

had gone dancing a couple of times, but it was on Saturday nights when Bill didn't have to wrestle a furnace next morning; and what Bill said about cinder-pitting was that it should be done with tractors. But Tons believed her. It's funny what a man will believe when the green-eyed monster gets him. As Tons went home, he thought it over. So the work was easy! So young William the Second was getting his exercise dancing. Tons had a plan to fix that.

NEXT morning Tons came into the mill and started first-helping on Number One. He made young Bill his cinderman. Tons was in a bad humor, anyway, for things at the main office were in a bad state: orders had been sent to the wrong firm; orders were piling up unfilled; other orders had been canceled after the steel was made. Tons knew what was wrong as well as anyone did. He wasn't any good as a superintendent. He didn't know what happened after steel was made, and he didn't care.

The main-office trouble, plus the cheering chat with Honey, had made Tons as irritable as a roller's wife when her husband doesn't show up on a pay-day night. The way Tons figured it out, William the Second was the cause of it all. And what young Bill had gone through before, was a game of ring-around-the-rosy to what Tons gave him. Bill had plenty of what it takes to be a good steel man. The harder Tons worked him, the harder he gritted his teeth, and tried; the harder Bill tried, the tougher Tons made it. Each night Honey would work on Bill; she pleaded, begged, bulldozed and threatened him into going to the mill each morning for another round.

"Stick to it, Bill; don't let it get you, and have Tons laugh at both of us. Why, every man in the mill is cheering for you. That big ox can't make it any tougher; something will have to break soon."

And something did. It was Bill. No human could stand up under the punishment that Tons was dishing out and Bill was human. One morning, instead of going to the mill after he left the boarding-house, Bill went into Mosley's.

"Give me a drink of Scotch," he said to Two-up, leaning on the bar for support.

"I beg pardon?" Two-up questioned.

"A drink of Scotch," Bill repeated. "I need one."

"My friend," Two-up told him solemnly, "for twenty years Old Man Giles, who has a tricky stomach that won't stand much, is the only man who has drunk Scotch over this bar. I will give you such if you so demand; but it makes me very sad indeed to see such an old and revered custom broken."

Despite the fact that he was a very gloomy young man, Bill had to laugh.

"Then what would you recommend?"

"I would recommend the extract of *spiritus frumenti* which this bottle contains, most highly," Two-up said, reaching for a bottle of his private stock. "About this much taken with nothing to spoil its flavor or effects makes a mighty fine drink."

Two-up poured a double hooker. Bill downed it, Two-up watching with satisfaction. He leaned on the bar and looked young Bill over with an experienced eye.

"Tell me, what is the causation of this hilarious celebration, if I may ask without being unduly nosey?" Two-up questioned.

"I'm licked, and I know it," young Bill confided bitterly. "I'm sneaking out of town without facing Honey to tell her good-by. I'm going to get a job as a soda-dispenser. But first I'm going to get so drunk I won't remember my name is Reardon."

"A good idea, a very good idea indeed," Two-up agreed; "only, personally I never needed any excuse of any kind whatsoever when the good old demon beckoned. Take another encourager and give my experienced ear the events leading to and from this deplorable predicament."

BILL poured out another drink and his troubles. He told Two-up of his love for Honey, of his desire to make good, and how Tons Walker was riding him. He had tried, but there was no use trying any longer. Two-up listened, and again agreed:

"I think you are a very smart young fellow, and no doubt will make a name for yourself at your chosen profession of soda-squirting."

Two-up took a look around the bar to make sure no one else had come in. Seeing that there was no one to interrupt, Two-up lied with the grace and ease which comes only from years of practice.

"Forty years," Two-up said, "—yes, just forty years come this October, your father William C. Reardon the First stood at this very bar confronted by much the same problem that now rears its ugly head in your path. It seems that

there was a first-helper that had it in for him and was making life very miserable indeed. Yes sir, one might say the two cases coincide perfectly, and furthermore are quite similar."

"Dad didn't leave town, did he?" Bill questioned.

"No, he did not, indeed not, although I fervently begged him to do so at the time."

"What did he do?" asked Bill, forgetting he was tired, being warmed by Two-up's words—and his private stock.

"I remember as clearly as if it was this very day," Two-up said, rubbing his chin. "He took three—yes, just three drinks out of a bottle of the same elixir that stands before you. He then went into the mill, and met in combat the first helper who had been riding him. It was a very ugly spectacle indeed, and no sight a gentleman would care to witness. However, the next morning your dad was first-helping on the furnace. It seems that the man who had been riding him was suddenly of the opinion that Gary, Indiana, was a mighty nice town to live, love and laugh in."

Young Bill let the words and the whisky soak for a while. The effect of both hit him at the same time. He reached for the bottle.

"That gives me an idea," he said with a grin. "I'll take a couple of more drinks."

"Never act in anger," Two-up counseled. "This is a distillate of barbed wire. One drink makes you want to hit some one; two drinks, and you want some one to hit you; three drinks, and you usually find some one accommodating. Your quota calls for one more, which will make three. I believe you can find Mr. Walker at Number One furnace if you hurry."

Bill found him.

"You're late, and that means an extra hour tonight," Tons told him.

"You're not giving me any more orders, Mr. Walker," Bill said.

"So you quit, eh?"

"I've quit; but there's three things I am going to do. I'm licking you; I'm marrying Honey Ayers this afternoon; and I'm going down to Homestead and get a good cinder-pitting job."

Tons laughed, and Bill hit him.

IT was the best fight since the day Big Andrews threw the Chief of Police of Homestead and three of his men into their own jail.

After hitting Tons as hard as he could without knocking the grin off his face, young Bill knew he didn't have a chance. But he didn't quit. He would tear into Tons, and Tons would knock him down. Bill would get up and rush in again. This went on until it got very monotonous to all of us who had gathered around to watch. It finally got monotonous to young Bill. So weak he could hardly lift his hands in front of him, Bill tried for the last time. Not wanting to hit him any more, Tons pushed Bill back. Bill staggered against the furnace wall, then stumbled against the rail and dropped twenty feet to the cinder floor below.... He lay alongside the side box, out cold.

Number One furnace, whose slag-hole we had half-dug out a few minutes before, chose a fine time to blow out the hole. With a rush, the slag hit the box near where Bill was lying. In about two split seconds it would overflow and Bill would be a cinder.

TONS didn't take time to go down the steps. He made the pit floor in one jump, and got to Bill's side in another one. He was quick enough to save Bill, but both of them got burned by the splashing metal.

We carted them over to the mill hospital, where Miss Hannah sent for Doc Colcord, though she said the burns were painful but nothing to worry about.

For a week Tons and young Bill sat in the hospital glaring at each other through a lot of gauze bandages. Then they sent for Mr. Smalley of the Trust and Savings. He went down, all smiles, carrying a lot of official papers, and a letter for young Bill. It was a letter from the Old Man. Young Bill has it hanging in his office.

Dear Bill:

Tell Tons he owes you a hundred bucks. I said you'd be a man six months after coming home. He said it couldn't be done. Of course, if you're not a man, you won't be reading this.

Times have changed a lot, I guess, and don't kill yourself trying to do everything. Don't hold anything against Tons. He's all right, only he will never be the steel man I was. But he's pretty good. Let him handle the open hearth. Take care of yourself, Bill.

Your Dad, Wm. C. Reardon (the First)

P. S. You better get a new batch of ingot molds. Too damn' many ingots are cracking.

SHIPS and MEN

By

H. BEDFORD-JONES *and* CAPTAIN L. B. WILLIAMS

TWO small boys were sailing toy boats in the civic fountain of Beverly Hills, and a fuzzy old man was watching them in keen delight.

They had no earthly business doing it; but the traffic officer had a blind eye for them, and it was a lark. The two boys were whooping it up joyously, arguing and almost fighting over their boats. One of the toy craft wallowed around; the other cut the water cleanly. I sat down beside the fuzzy old fellow, who had wisps of gray hair sticking out from under his battered hat, and a keen shrewd eye like that of Will Rogers.

"Y'know," he said to me with the easy familiarity of idle men, "those kids are worth watching. That red-haired one has built a good craft. Knows his business. The other one don't. He's like the old Greeks. He aint learned yet."

"The old Greeks," I said, "knew something about ships."

"Nope; you mean, they learned something." He wagged his head, and begged a cigarette, and lit it with appreciation. "Away back in them early days they were split up into little kingdoms. They had cranky, poorly made ships that went to pieces in a seaway; couldn't stand the strain. Traders came to them. They didn't go places."

"You seem to know a lot about it," I observed.

He nodded shrewdly. "I do. Two or three generations before the Trojan war, a bunch of Greeks settled over in Asia Minor and built a city called Troy. Contacts showed 'em how to build the proper kind of a ship; they were like that red-headed kid there. The Greeks back home had never learned the trick. They were like that other kid yonder."

He pointed to the fountain, with a knowing wink.

"One o' those Greek kingdoms was a little place called Sparta," he said. "I been there. A lot of these here Greek café boys come from there today. The king lived in a town called Therapne, twenty-five miles up the Eurotas River, quite a jag from the sea. This here king, Menelaos, had a shipyard. He used to go jaunting around in his ships in fair weather; but they wouldn't stand the strain of any blow."

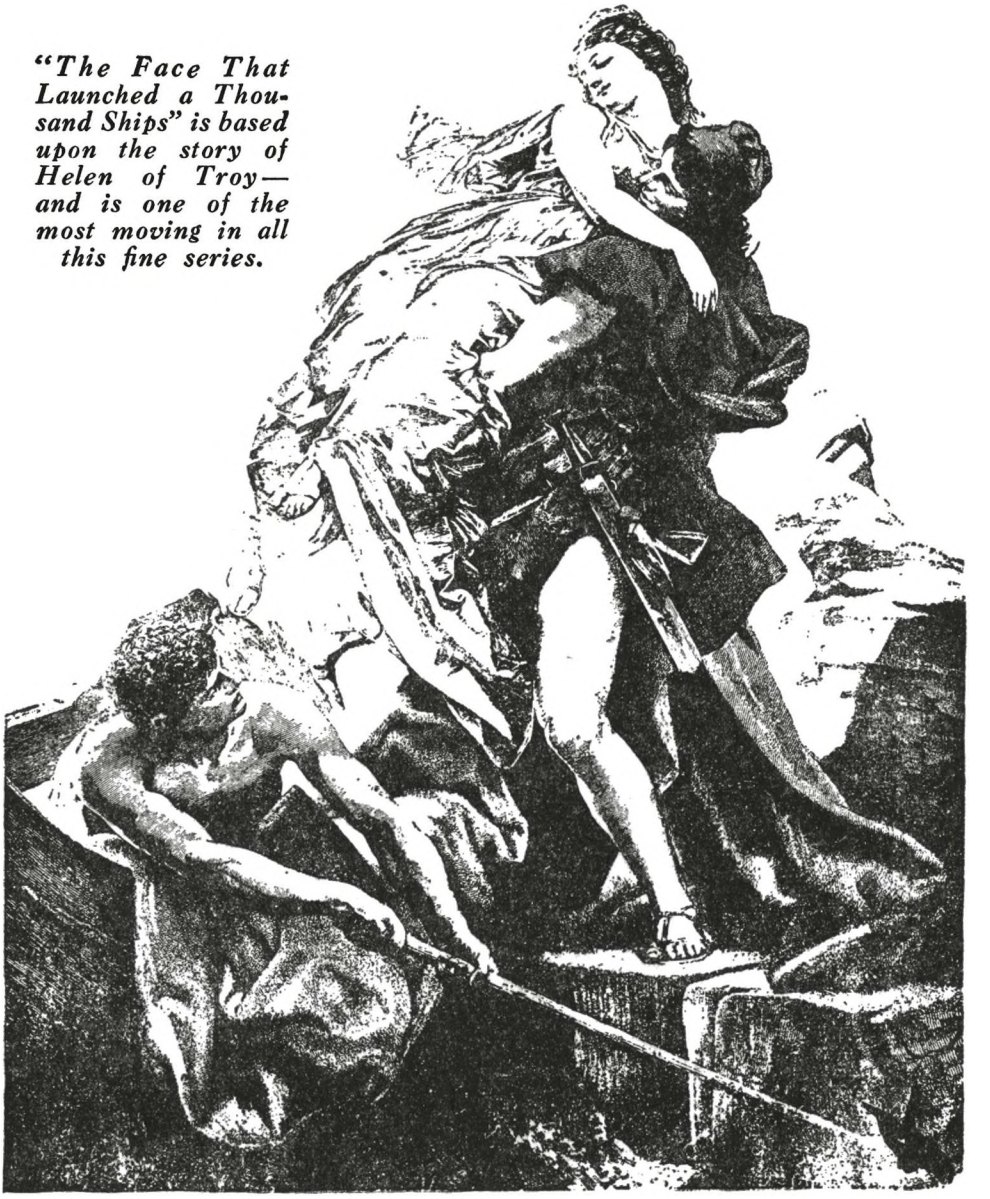
"Was he a friend of yours?" I inquired with mild sarcasm.

The fuzzy old rascal winked at me again. "Yeah. . . . He was good-looking but a futile sort of a bird; and his wife was right sick of her bargain. Well, there was a ship from Troy that dropped in, and brought company. The sailing-master was a fellow named Skopas, and his boss was a gay sprig whose dad was the king, back in Troy. He was quite a sport, this here Paris was; but he had something on the ball, at that. Old Skopas, he killed a lot of time around the shipyard; and since he sort of ran things for Paris and had a weather eye for trouble, he knew all right why young Paris was hanging around here instead of picking up and going somewhere else. And one day when they were walking together from the shipyard up to the palace, he cut loose. Funny old rascal, this Skopas was—"

FUNNY old rascal indeed, and the very image of this fellow on the bench beside me. He walked with a lurch, he had the same wisps of gray hair over his hard, weather-beaten countenance; and he laid down the law to the blue-eyed laughing Paris as they walked up through the hot white sunlight.

His words were neither polite nor decent, for he had a rough tongue. Paris,

"The Face That Launched a Thousand Ships" is based upon the story of Helen of Troy—and is one of the most moving in all this fine series.



From an old engraving, Courtesy, Culver Service

The Abduction of Helen

who loved the old seadog, merely laughed again at warnings.

"You'll laugh out of the other side of your mouth," said Skopas, "if this here Menelaos puts a spear through your gizzard some day. Everybody's talking about it. You mooning around with this dame—"

"You mind your respect to the Lady Helen," struck in Paris.

"Yah!" gibed Skopas. "I aint stuck on her, even if you are. And we've got just forty men, remember, which don't amount to much when you think of all these Greeks around here. What's more, we're a long ways from our ship, down at the ocean; and even if we had the ship here, these Greeks would be too many for us. Don't you go to start anything, Alec."

"And don't you go to calling me Alec," snapped Paris. "Just because I was called Alexander when I was a kid, doesn't mean anything now. Forget it. And never mind about these Greeks, either. They're shipbuilders, but they

"By the gods!" said he in a low tense voice. "It's true—what I've dreamed — true! Say it is!"

Drawings by Frederic Anderson

don't know anything about ships. I've a notion to show 'em something."

"You'd better not," said old Skopas. "Show these Greeks anything, and they'll beat you at it. They don't like us Trojans anyhow. One of these days they'll crack a belaying-pin over your head if you don't stay away from the shipyard."

"Mind your own business," said Paris shortly. "I'll send you down the river to get the ship ready for sea, if you don't tauten your jaw-tackle."

"The ship's ready," Skopas retorted. "I've sent word to the men to keep her in shape to skip out any time."

Paris gave him a sharp look. "What makes you think we'll skip out?"

"Huh! If we don't, we're liable to be carried out," said Skopas sourly. "I

know when weather's brewing, if you don't. And you'd better quit your bragging about the walls of Troy. It don't set good with these fellows. They build walls like they do ships."

There was some justice in the observation. The palace, imposing as it was, had been built of cut stone blocks fitted together. Yet it was a glittering, showy place, gay with Cretan and Egyptian weaves, the long halls gleaming with gold. A wealthy man was Menelaos, who believed that precious metals and handsome weapons were for use and display, not for sticking away in chests and hoarding.

Greece was wealthy too. The traders of all the world came here—Tyrians, Cretans and Egyptians; so that the Greeks had no urge to go forth themselves. Yet in the eyes of the visitors, this quiet, humdrum back-country with its rather crude structures was something of a joke.

The forty Trojans, camped close to their ship near the mouth of the Eurotas, swaggered among the gaping rustics with tall tales of the windy plains and pine-clad mountains of Troy, and the huge commerce that poured in there from all quarters. At first the Greeks drank in the stories greedily; then they came to resent such talk.

They resented other things too. These foreign seamen had a way with them when it came to the women. They were a blustering, gusty, high-handed lot, all of them: men of the world, who laughed at the country bumpkins in the Spartan villages. The girls thought them magnificent, and so indeed they were.

AT the Therapne palace, however, Paris was extremely popular. He was no braggart. With his crisp yellow hair, blue eyes and infectious laugh, with his great address at all sports, with his perfumes and fine clothes and silver tongue, he was an instant favorite.

Much of his time was spent with Helen the queen, for Menelaos was often away looking after his herds and farms. A stodgy, canny sort, he entertained the visitor royally and went on about his business as usual, while Paris filled the women's ears with talk about Troy town and its wonders. And as shrewd old Skopas foresaw, such a business could have but one ending, very human and natural withal.

And when Paris himself was aware of this, it was too late.

Anyone would have fallen in love with Helen: half of Greece had courted her until she made the mistake of marrying Menelaos. She was tall and lovely past words; and the very heart of a man melted with longing and sharp pain when her eyes were turned upon him; she was wise, moreover, brave and clear-sighted in all things.

REALIZATION came to them suddenly one day. Paris sat with her in the lush grass beside the river, watching her women playing at ball. He was talking of Troy, and a slow sigh came from her.

"Oh, I long to see these far places!" she said softly. "I'd love to watch these strange ships and people. But what good is longing?"

"Longing?" repeated Paris. "It's the greatest and bitterest and most beautiful and most universal of human feelings, my dear Helen. Longing after something—that's what makes the world go forward! To conquer the unattainable—why, that's ambition worth while!"

"For a man, yes," she said, and smiled into his eyes. "But for a woman—"

"The same." And he laughed gayly. "Your very name shows it: *Helen the Taker!* Taker of men, of beauty, of tribute due you! Why, my dear, I'd lay all Troy town at your feet—"

He checked himself abruptly, but it had been said. Their eyes met in silence; the sharp laughing cries of the girls at play came to them; and from somewhere near by, the tootling pipes of a shepherd. Paris touched her white fingers.

"Well, there it is," he said abruptly. "Take Troy, then; you can have it. Everybody in the place would be at your feet. Even that dour, upright brother of mine, Hector—yes."

"Don't be foolish, my dear Alec," she said softly; but she had gone white to the lips. He looked up sharply.

"Who told you that name of mine?"

"Skopas," she said, and colored again. "We were talking about you the other day. That old rascal loves you. And—"

Silence again. Her white fingers quivered to his touch, then twined suddenly about his shoulder.

"By the gods!" said he in a low tense voice. "It's true! What I've felt, what I've dreamed—it's true. Say it is!"

"No, no!" She drew her hand away. A shaky laugh came from her lovely lips. "Why, even if you gave me all Troy, I couldn't keep it! Menelaos and his brother and all Greece would—"

"Greece? Bah! Look at those ships of yours!" he exclaimed hotly, eagerly. "They couldn't sail that far. And look at those walls of ours! You know, we used to build like you folks. Back when my grandfather was king, two fellows showed up and showed us how to use cement, and you ought to see the walls they put up around the city! Why, those walls could keep out the whole of Greece, honest! I've heard tell that my grandfather did 'em in one night, and then gave it out that a couple of gods had built the walls and disappeared. That was like the old man. He was a tough one, he was."

He caught her hand again, gazed into her eyes, his face ablaze.

"I'll always love you," he said quickly, abruptly. "It's out; why hide it? I'll give you the world—all of it! And you love me. I can feel it."

"Yes," she said under her breath. "Yes. That's true, Alec. I like the name better than Paris. But it's so useless! What can we do about it? Nothing. I'm no common woman, my dear."

"You're the most glorious woman in the world," he said brokenly, then drew away from her as the girls, laughing and panting, came from their play. No more chance now for private talk.

THAT night Paris, out under the stars, was striding up and down, trying to see some light on the affair, when he was aware of a dark cloaked shape behind him. It was Skopas, who chuckled at his instinctive gesture.

"Hand to sword, Paris? Too late. I saw your looks, and hers, at supper. So you wouldn't run for it, eh? All right, my boy, I'm with you. Say the word, and I'll bring up some of our men from the ship, and we'll bump off that pompous Menelaos—"

"Stow your jaw!" snapped Paris. "You fool, he's my friend, my host!"

"Which didn't prevent your falling in love with his wife. Well, blame the gods for that; but when you're on a lee shore, watch your helm! What's to come of it?"

"Damned if I know, Skopas," said Paris with a groan. "What do you suggest?"

"Go back to Troy tomorrow."

"I will not."

"Then face the music," said Skopas coolly. "Sure you aren't fooling yourself? Just a bit of passion, or do you want to be hitched for life?"

"It's the real thing, Skopas," Paris rejoined in a low voice.

"I believe you. Still, she's no common wench; she's not the girl to do any cheating," the old seadog commented. "This thing is going to raise hell; but all Trojans stick together, so write your own ticket and we're with you. What's it to be?"

"I don't know," said Paris helplessly. "Wait and see; I'll have a talk with her in the morning."

"I can tell you one thing," Skopas rejoined. "If she ever steps inside the gate of Troy, she'll own the place. Another man's wife or not—boy, what a woman she is! Your dad wouldn't have a word to say, I bet."

"Shut up and go to bed," snapped Paris impatiently. "I'll fight this thing out somehow myself."

"You mean, she will," said Skopas, and then vanished hurriedly, as Paris aimed a blow at his head. . . .

Next morning Paris found that Helen had gone into town with her husband to hear various lawsuits. Menelaos was the lawgiver; but the lawyers and people had more faith in Helen's judgment, which was indeed exceptional. . . . So Paris went down to the shipyard and lent a hand in the building of the king's new galley, but he was in no good humor.

Stripped and sweating, he flung himself into the work, and presently lost patience with it all.

"When you get the thing finished, you'll have nothing," he snapped at the foreman and draftsmen. "She won't stand the strain and stress of a ten-mile wind."

"The timbers are strong, My Lord," the foreman said. "Look at those cross-pieces! Good solid oak, every one."

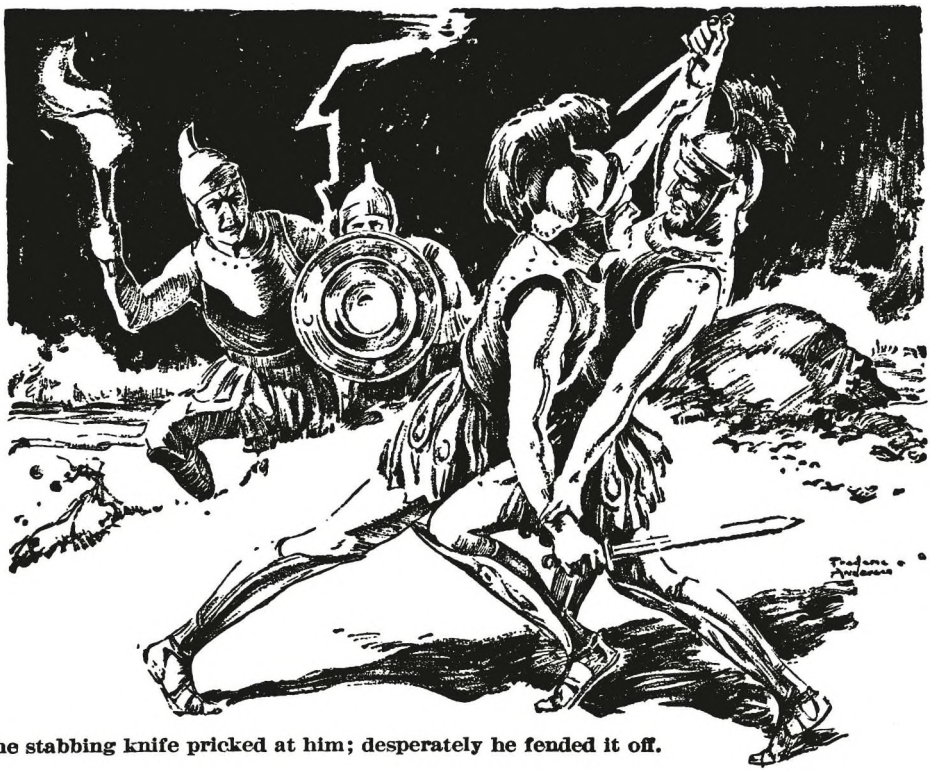
"The whole thing's out of kilter," Paris rejoined. "Why, she gives and shakes like a snake in motion! Your keel's not strong enough, and you need a brace from for'ard to aft to keep her from shaking to pieces. Like that on Tyrian ships, or on my own ship. Look here—"

And stooping, he drew with his finger in the dust.

"There y'are: A stout six-foot walk from stem to stern, braced to every cross-timber. Then your ship's a solid thing, and can stand the waves."

"But such a walk is above the rowers' benches!" protested the foreman.

"Of course it is, you fool!" cried Paris angrily. "For the officers and crew to



The stabbing knife pricked at him; desperately he fended it off.

use in fighting; for the overseers to use in keeping the slaves at work!"

"Well, we're not slaves, and we don't use 'em at the oars, and we don't care to have any godless Trojans come along and call us fools," said one of the designers hotly. "What's good enough for our fathers will serve us—"

"And go to pieces on you as on them," Paris cut in. "That solid walk serves as an additional brace for your mast, also. If you built a ship like this, your imitation seamen might get somewhere in the world."

One thing led to another: words came to blows, and the pack of them went for Paris with anything handy. He laid out first one, then another, and was in the thick of a fine hot scrimmage when spearmen came running, and King Menelaos himself appeared on the scene. His spearmen rounded up the ship-workers, and he ordered them given fifty lashes each. Then Paris came forward, wiping the sweat and blood from his eyes.

"Don't do that, Menelaos," he cried out. "It was all my own fault. I prodded 'em into the scrap, and there's no harm done."

Menelaos, black-browed and angry, eyed him up and down.

"Hang me if you don't look like the god Phœbus himself! Well, I'll have no guest of mine insulted. Not if he were a common thief instead of a prince. Hospitality is the first law of the hearth, as you know well."

"The fault was all mine," said Paris. "I'll go along with them and take what they get, if you're so cursed set on a flogging."

"Don't be a fool," said Menelaos, and signed to his spearmen. "All right; let 'em off. Paris, I want to have a word or two with you tonight. I'm off to look over a pair of horses that a merchant from Argolis has brought to town, and I may not be back early this afternoon. When I return, give me a few minutes."

"Gladly," said Paris. The two of them were eye to eye for a moment; and in this moment, Paris saw that the king knew. Then Menelaos went his way, to harness a fresh team to his chariot and be off to town again.

Paris went down to the river, had a swim, and afterward fell asleep. When he woke up, Skopas was sitting beside him with a basket of lunch and some wine.

"You've certainly played the devil this morning," said Skopas grimly. "Forgot all about eating, huh? Here, pitch into this grub. And this is the best Chian wine you ever sampled. Save some for me."

From an etching by
Yngve E. Soderberg

"What are you so grumpy about?" Paris demanded, as he eagerly seized the food.

"Weather brewing and a high sea running offshore." Skopas cocked an eye at the sky, which was fair enough. "By tomorrow night, we're going to have one hell of a blow if I'm any judge. Rain's coming out of the west. Well, you've started a lot of talk, in spite of my warnings. I told you not to teach these Greeks anything about ship-building."

"Huh! Nobody could teach those fools anything," grumbled Paris.

"Sure. That's what you think. Just the same, they drank it all in; and I hear they're going to work right away at a ship along proper lines."

"What's that to me? Or you?"

Skopas scratched his fuzzy chin. "I dunno. It may be a lot, later on. By the way, Lady Helen said she'd be in the back garden, if you'd care to see her."

Paris leaped up. "Why didn't you say so in the first place?"

"What's the rush, anyhow? She'll keep. I've laid out that second-best suit of armor you brought along. Better use it if you get in a pinch, for the other one looks better, but wouldn't stop a blunt wooden spear."

"Huh?" And Paris eyed him keenly. "What are you driving at?"

"Breakers ahead and plenty of 'em, my boy."

"Then you pull out of here," ordered Paris. "Take one of the small-boats and go downriver to the ship. Overhaul the tackle and have the men ready to go aboard at a moment's notice."

"I sent down a message yesterday to that effect." And Skopas grinned.

"Go yourself, and go now, and have everything shipshape."

"All right, all right," grumbled the other. "About tomorrow morning it's going to be blowing great guns—a good time to run, all right. None of these Greek ships can take it on the chin the way we can."

"I'm not running, you idiot," snapped Paris, and started for the palace.

Just the same, he knew that Skopas was a wise old man; and when he sought the private back garden, he was scowling in uneasy thought. For Menelaos knew. No doubt about it.

HELEN greeted him with a friendly smile and a quiet gesture that held him off.

"Have you thought about it?" she asked.

"About nothing else, confound it!" Paris looked at her for a moment, then burst out: "My dear, my dear, let's have it straight out with him! He knows; I could read it in his face. He wants to see me tonight."

"See him, and leave," she said quietly.

His eyes blazed. "I will not! When I go, you go with me. That's final."

The rose-leaf color slowly ebbed out of her face.

"The easy thing to do—yes. But I can't do it, Alec my dear; and I can't slink away; and—and there's just nothing else for it than to do the hard thing. Live my own life, be true to him, hold you locked in my heart forever, and keep silent."

"NOW, listen to me, Helen," Paris broke in. "I love you, and you love me. I don't take any stock in high nobility and self-sacrificing and so forth. We've got our lives to live, my dear. You're the biggest thing in the world to me, and always will be. I'm not infatuated with you; I love you! Do you know what that means?"

"I know what that means, since meeting you," she said, looking at him steadily.

"Then I'll face the issue tonight, and face it squarely," said Paris. "If he wants to fight it out, well and good."

"He's no fighter," she replied, her eyes thoughtful. "My dear, it's an impossible situation. I'll give up everything—home, friends, honor—to go with you. But I'll not sneak out and away. There's something you don't know. We had a dispute this morning; that's why he left the law-courts early. He didn't like the way I settled a case. He got furious, and stalked out."

"What of it?" And Paris uttered a curt laugh.

"He'll kill us both; don't you see?" she urged gently. "I don't want you to die, my dear. He'd call in fifty men and have you killed."

"A guest—killed?"

"A thief killed, yes," she said. "The man changes his mind from hour to hour. You can depend on nothing he says. Alec. . . . Now listen to me! I'm not worth it. Give up all thought of me, and go your way, and forget me—"

"I will not," said he again, and meant it to the bottom of his soul; and she saw that he meant it. She leaned back on the stone seat, and her hands fell in her lap.

"Will you go with me to Troy—for life?" he asked calmly and steadily.

"If I can take my pride with me, yes," she replied. "But you see that it's not possible, otherwise. And to go with his consent, is impossible. There's no way out."

"There's always a way out," said Paris. "The only trouble is to find it."

Fear lightened in her eyes. "Don't look for it, my dear," she said, her voice

The Flight of Helen—From an old German engraving. Courtesy, Culver Service

like low vibrant music. "Don't look for it! I know the man. It means death. And I want you to live."

"By the gods, I intend to live!" swore Paris, and laughed gayly, lightly. He held out his hand to her. "An oath! If you can go with his consent, you go?"

"I go," she said, and gripped his hand for an instant. But when he would have come closer, when the swift blaze in his eyes warned her, she shook her head. "No, my dear, no. I am still his wife."

Paris turned and left her.

NOT until the afternoon was run, and dinner was being set up in the long hall, did Menelaos return. And Paris, all this while, sat with his own thoughts, cursing the impulse that had made him send Skopas away. He needed that man's wit and guile this night, as never before.

He knew Menelaos well, knew him like a book, and feared him. No great warrior, and in many ways of thought a petty fellow, but filled with a pompous pride, an ear to what people might say, and hence a crafty man. Stubborn weaklings are ever crafty; and Paris knew that he might well stumble into some snare this night.

"That poor half-witted sister of mine said some great evil would come of this cruise," he muttered. "True, Cassandra is always croaking, and nobody pays any attention to her; but it would be awkward if my funeral proved her right this time! And my good host Menelaos is a slippery one. Hospitality, eh? He'd prate of anything, and deny it next minute. Oh, why the devil does a wonderful girl like her always take up with some sap such as he is?"

He cast an eye on the armor that Skopas had laid out, and then went in to dinner, wishing vainly that he had a few of his Trojan seadogs along. A sense of foreboding, of oppression, had come upon him; only the smile of Helen dispelled it, as he joined her and the king.

Menelaos was courteous; but there was a glitter in his eye and an acid touch to his words. The captains and courtiers at the lower table were more silent than usual too. Paris fancied that they eyed him appraisingly, as men eye some noble ox destined to the altar of sacrifice. It was an oppressive night, with thunderclouds massing high, and a shrill keen moaning of wind among the trees, yet no wind here beneath them. Skopas had been right about a storm coming up fast.

When the meal was over, Menelaos cleared the hall, sent away the wine-bearers, and the three of them were alone. He bent his dark brows on his guest.

"I hear you don't think much of our Greek ships, Paris."

"Candidly, my dear Menelaos, they're not worth a good deep-sea oath." And Paris laughed a little, as he met those glowering eyes. "Of course, they're all right for coasting operations and trips among the islands—"

"But our women are more to Trojan taste, eh?" broke in Menelaos. "Those men of yours have been raising merry hell down at the coast. And just how far do

you and my wife think the duties of hospitality should extend? Or will you try to lie out of it, my fine popinjay?"

The steady gaze of Paris did not flicker, although Helen went white as death.

"You don't seem to know your wife very well, Menelaos," he returned coolly. "And I don't lie—unless it's really necessary. If you mean to insinuate that I'm in love with Helen, that's quite true. Everyone who knows her, I think, loves her."

Menelaos flushed darkly.

"I've watched the two of you!" And his voice was harsh. "You've slunk into my house and made love to my wife—"

"No, no, Menelaos," struck in Paris, with his gay smile. "I've won your wife's love. There's no use your acting like some Bœotian hill-billy and raving about vengeance and so forth; look at the matter sensibly. You couldn't hold her, and I can. Now, what's to be done about it? I'm perfectly willing to meet you with spear and sword, if you care to settle matters that way—"

Menelaos grunted, and met the questioning gaze of his wife.

"Is this true?" he rapped out. "Do you actually love this fellow?"

"You're well aware that I ceased to love you quite a while back," she replied evenly, "—ever since I found out about that girl from Miletos. It's no surprise to you, so don't affect airs about it. As for Paris—yes. I do love him."

The king took a deep breath. His anger was a cold, still flame, not a raging fury.

"The gods know," he said slowly, "that I've stood your contempt and lack of love long enough. Not to mention the way you cut in on my position. Why, you're more king here than I am! You, with your giving judgment in the courts—"

"I've always been loyal to you, Menelaos," she said quietly.

"That's just it; you're so damned pure and noble!" he cried, white about the nostrils. "I'm sick of the sight of you! You're no wife to me, no wife of mine. If you want to go with this blasted foreigner, go and welcome! Disgrace yourself, disgrace me and my family, become a thing scorned in the eyes of the world! Go, then!"

QUICK as a flash, Helen stood up before him, and took from her arm the great ring of beaten gold that symbolized her wifely estate. She flung it on the board. Gone was her poised calm; and in her face was such a glory, such a blaze of living exaltation, that the two men stared at her as at some goddess.

"Free!" she cried out, her voice ringing down the hall. "I am free! Now you have indeed spoken the truth, Menelaos, and exposed your whole dark unkind heart and soul. Well, I take you at your word."

"And I." Paris rose, and extended his hand to her very gallantly. But Menelaos started up with a swift cry.

"No, no! You can't do this, Helen—you can't do this to me, disgrace me—"

She turned to him, with cold scorn.

"You have set me free—"

"I didn't mean it!" The cords stood out on his temples; a break came into his voice; his dark eyes were wide and anguished. "Can't you see? You're more beautiful than ever before; you're the most glorious creature in the world—"

"As you told the girl from Miletos," she rejoined acidly. Then she turned again to Paris, and smiled into his eyes, those deep violet eyes of hers like great stars. Menelaos cried out gasping, incoherent words; but her lips moved a little, and Paris caught the low-breathed sound.

"In the back garden—as soon as you can come."

THEN she was gone from them, gone quickly and eagerly, while Menelaos cursed in his black-curled beard.

Paris gave him a look.

"You'll excuse me, I trust? Perhaps you'll even have a chariot harnessed, to take us as far as my ship? It would be very good of you. And I've enjoyed the visit very much, I assure you."

Menelaos lifted his head.

"I'll have a chariot harnessed at once," he said in a dull voice. "At once."

Paris strode out of the great hall to his own room. This had a window that opened on the large garden, whence the little back garden could be gained. Hastily he buckled on his corselet and felt for sword and spear. A cold sweat of fear was upon him—not fear of the king, but fear of the unknown. Somewhere, he knew, guile was at work.

And he was right. Scarcely had he bared his sword, when feet sounded outside his door, and there was a clash of arms in the passage. He reached out to his light, doused it, and with a leap was at the window. Another leap, and he was out—out, and in the very arms of half a dozen men. A yell shrilled up.

"We've got him!"

Paris leaped again, twisted himself sidewise. With naked sword for his only shield, he thrust with the spear—a terrible weapon in his hand. A man screamed; and freeing the long bronze point, he thrust again. Another guard was running up with a torch, and the flickering light showed Paris that he was ringed in. A spear flew for him, but he dodged it with lightning agility and sent his point home to a brown Greek throat, and twisted aside from two rushing figures.

Suddenly there was a blinding crackle of light as the heavens split open. In the glare, Paris saw himself hemmed in, surrounded by a score of spearmen, others coming on the run. Then the searing, deafening peal of thunder, upon an intense blackness that paralyzed every person—except one.

IT was his chance. He seized it, death-fear spurring him. Two steps, and he went up into the air, clear up above the foremost figures and over them—over them and down. His spear struck a shield; his left hand drove in the sword-point. Through them now, away from them all, running like a deer, while their shouts rose vainly, confused.

He came to the low wall, the back garden close ahead. Another lightning-flash ran across the sky. A guard directly before him; no chance to evade. The man's spear drove straight at him, smashed at his corselet, struck him squarely and was embedded in the metal. Paris whipped his own spear through and through that man, whose scream was lost in the thunder-roll. Then, freeing himself of corselet and embedded spear, Paris was over the wall at a leap.

Torches were flitting everywhere. . . . Bruised, breathless, he groped in the darkness, found the hands of the woman who awaited him, and drew her close. He could feel the hammering of her heart as he held her. Now her voice sobbed at his ear.

"My fault, my fault! I could not resist taking him at his word—and he has trapped us, my dear. There was murder in his heart. Now we cannot reach the stables—"

"The stables be hanged," he broke in. "The river's just below. Over the wall and down to the water, take one of those boats on the shore, and be off! We can make it."

She shivered against him. "Alec, I'm afraid! Of him."

"So am I, my dear. All the more reason to fight it out to the end."

"But you don't understand. I think he intended all the time to murder you; but now it's worse. He hates me for having taken him at his word. He'll deny that to everyone. He'll try to disgrace me; he'll say that I just ran away with you. He'll kill us both if he can. He's always thinking about what people will say—"

"I don't give a damn what people will say," said Paris with a short laugh. "I know that all Troy will be at your feet!"

"Troy! That's just it; don't you see? Why was he away all afternoon? Why did horsemen go riding out before dinner? Your men, your ship, Paris!"

He understood, and cold sharp dread pierced him like a knife. If his men had been attacked and killed, or laid by the heels, if his ship were seized—then he was a lost man indeed. And this woman in his arms was doomed. Then he rallied.

"Bah! Wait and see. Trust old Skopas; he's too sharp to be caught like a rat in a trap. Come along, now."

No more lightning, luckily, although there was a thunder-roll over the horizon, and the wind was whining in the high trees. Torches were everywhere, and a babel of tongues; spearmen were searching the grounds, the palace, the stables.

Down the slope toward the river and the boat-landing the two of them hurried. As they neared the landing, a gasp broke from Helen; she caught his arm, checked him. Voices ahead.

"Guards!" she breathed.

"Aye," said Paris quietly. "A couple of men, no more, apparently. Go right ahead. One of the boats and a paddle—your job. Can you do it?"

"Yes," she said, and her voice was calm. For an instant he held her close, and their lips met. The first kiss, the first touch, here under the stormy sky, with death ahead and behind.

"WHO'S there? Who comes?" rang out the challenge.

"The Lady Helen," she replied, and went straight to the landing. Two spearmen were there in the obscurity. They drew back, startled and confused by her appearance. Then one whipped around.

"Look out, Agias! Here he is!"

Paris was into them with a rush. Only his sword left now, a short slender blade of keen-edged bronze. Lightning rippled along the horizon, revealing all three figures distinctly.

Paris felt the spear-point touch his breast, felt the warm blood spurt—then his blade drove in. One man cried out and crashed away. The other leaped in, missed his spear-stroke, dropped the weapon, jerked out a knife, and grappled. Paris felt himself all but helpless, crushed against this mailed figure. The deep voice bayed out warning and alarm. From somewhere along the shore, two other men came running, torches bobbing and smoking in their hands.

THE stabbing knife pricked at him, and desperately he fended it off. The red light of the torches lit the scene. Paris, in frenzied dismay, saw that Helen had been unable to shove out the heavy boat; it would not budge. Lost! The two spearmen with torches were close.

His sword-hilt smashed up, bore back the fellow who gripped him; a second blow, crushing in the sweating bearded face. His weapon came free, and he drove in the point, writhing aside as one of the two spears flicked out at him.

Then something sang in the torchlight, sang and thudded. One man pitched forward; the other whirled around and dropped his spear and torch, and plucked with both hands at his throat, where the shaft of an arrow stood out. In the darkness, a shape surged on the water, the voice of Skopas sounded.

"Come aboard, Cap'n! Quick about it. Lucky this Cretan archer of ours was along. Hey, Cap'n! Where are you?"

Somehow Paris fell into the boat, the arm of Helen supporting him. Skopas and half a dozen men at the oars, sent the boat spurting away down the current.

"Hurt, boy?" said Skopas, leaning over the wounded figure.

"Nothing to worry about." And Paris, gasping, sat up. "Safe, Helen?"

"Quiet, my dear, quiet—don't move!" she said, busily at work. "I've got to bandage this wound in your chest."

"Damn the wound! You, Skopas!" Paris exclaimed swiftly. "What's happened? You haven't had time to get to the ship and back—what brought these men here?"

"Death," came the dry, harsh voice of the sailing-master. "Lucky thing I had ordered the ship moored out from shore! The Greeks jumped our men early this afternoon, all of a sudden. Killed about half of 'em, took the camp, burned it. About fifteen got out to the ship; they can hold it. These boys got away to the river, found this boat, and started up after us. I met 'em and turned back with 'em, and here we are. The men aboard the ship will wait for news of us. If we get down there before the storm breaks and makes the ship run for it, well and good. If not, we won't see Troy again, my lad."

A joyous laugh broke from Paris.

"We'll make it, we'll make it!" he cried. "And once out to sea, these Greeks won't dare follow us. Luck's with us!"

"Maybe you think so," the old seadog grunted. "But what's to come after? Ten to one we'll have half Greece knocking at the gates of Troy; they'll never forgive you for getting away with their queen. Your fault, blast you! I warned you not to teach those fellows how to build ships—I warned you! If you'd kept your mouth shut, they wouldn't be able to do much with their ratty little craft. But you've showed 'em how, you've taught 'em the trick, and they'll have something to come and get."

"Aye, something worth while!" And Paris laughed softly, happily, gayly, as he gripped the warm fingers of Helen in the darkness, and the boat surged down the rippling stream toward the waiting ship and the open sea and Troy.

BEFORE my eyes the wrinkled, whimsical features of Skopas took form and shape. They were those of the fuzzy old man sitting beside me on the bench. Twilight had come; the sun was gone. The two boys playing with their boats had disappeared. I came back to reality, roused up, and came stiffly to my feet.

"Well, you can bet that was the way of it," said the old fellow. "Them Greeks learned to build ships, and started off to lick Troy, and done it."

"I don't know but what you're right," I rejoined slowly. "Anyhow, the theory is interesting—"

"Theory, hell!" said the fuzzy old man. "I was there, I tell you! I seen the whole thing. Say, if you got another of them cigarettes to spare, I'd sort of like to take it back with me."

"Sure," and I proffered my case. "Back where?"

"Back to the old soldiers' hospital, over the hill yonder. I slid out when the guards weren't looking, and I got to be back if I want any supper. Much obliged, friend. See you again sometime."

And he drifted away in the dusk, leaving me to wonder.

Another memorable story in this colorful series will be a feature of the July issue.

Young

The Story Thus Far:

RICKY had punched cows, drilled oil-wells and sailed the Seven Seas; but it was the sissy job of quartermaster on a yacht that brought the great adventure. For when the wealthy dilettante scientist Van Beekman and his almost-fiancée Francy Waite went ashore on a lonely coast in Central America in search of rare butterflies, they walked into big trouble. And it was Ricky Smith (nicknamed Maverick) who was sent ashore to find them.

They had been captured and carried off, it developed, by a local grandee named Don Edmundo—and for a curious reason: The Don had returned from a long sojourn in the United States, to find that the overseer at his mother's ranch had been steadily stealing the cattle and shipping them off by sea. Don Edmundo had caught him red-handed and promptly hanged three of the overseer's gang. Upon this scene Van Beekman and Miss Francy had stumbled; and Don Edmundo had carried them off to make sure they did not bear witness against him.

Ricky contrived to rescue "Miss Francy" and got back to the coast with her. And during the expedition he came upon a spot near the seacoast that gave unmistakable evidences of an oil-bearing formation at no great depth. Thereupon the resourceful Ricky put over a fantastically daring scheme: He got hold of the shipload of stolen cattle, sold them in the absent Don Edmundo's name, and with the proceeds purchased (in partnership with the Don, who didn't know about it yet!) an oil-drilling rig. Then it was that he learned that Don Edmundo had disappeared, and that the old Señora, his mother, had died. *(The story continues in detail:)*

THIS news while not surprising, was at the same time wonderful. It seemed to simplify this affair. If he had known it sooner, it could have made no difference, but now it would seem to remove one complication. Ricky said slowly:

"Then with the Señora dead, Don Edmundo must be the heir. He was her only son."

"Her son, yes," cried the port captain. "But eet do him no good."

"Why not?"

"Because all belong now to Señor Gonzales. He hold all ze mortgage. He sell some cattle for ze Señora time to time. But it ees not enough. He take up some more mortgage. He ees owner of ze hacienda—thees cows—cattle."

"No, he's not. Don't you fool yourself," Ricky said harshly.

"Why not?"

"Because he's dead too."

"What you say?"

"Don Edmundo shot him through the head. Listen, guy, and let it sink in: That robber of a superintendent is dead. If he had any papers to show that he ever had the right to sell off the stock, they can't be found. And the superintendent is dead. Do you see where that puts all you crooks that've been bleedin' the hacienda for months? You're a bunch of *ladrones*. Da Silva—you—the whole crowd of you."

"Señor!" Sweat was pouring from the fat yellow face.

"You all knew what was going on, and were glad to get yours. Don Edmundo heard about it and came back to stop it. He made sure how he stood, then sailed in to get you. He hanged those three cow-robbers off this ship. He got that buzzard of an overseer or superintendent or whatever that crook called himself. The chances are that by this time he's got Da Silva too. You're mighty apt to be the next."

The port captain did not seem to find it worth while to try to exculpate himself. He merely said rather feebly: "It is impossible."

"What's impossible?"

"Zat Señor Gonzales have no papers. If not, where you get zis order?"

"Say, señor, haven't you got any sense at all? Can't you see that the fact of my havin' this order is the best reason in the world why there aint any more papers, anywhere?"

His psychology was sound. The port captain's face showed that he had got the idea immediately, and was impressed by it. Also, he was depressed by it. He

Man from Texas

The deeply interesting adventures of a far-wandering son of the Southwest—by the author of "Sea Scamps," "The Wanderers," "Mile High" and other noted books.

By
HENRY ROWLAND

Illustrated by George Avison

knew the workings of his country, and that when the kingpin was squarely bowled, it was apt to prove a ten-strike.

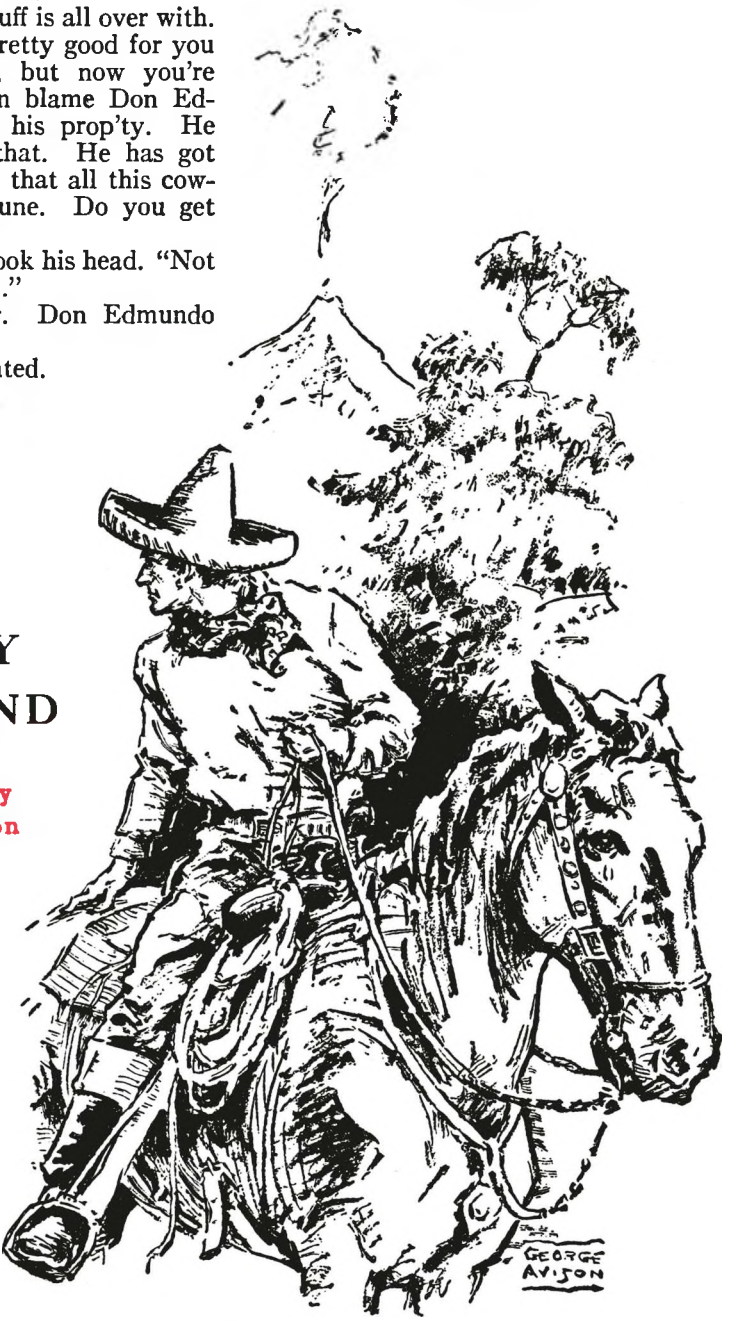
He was therefore quite prepared for a *volte-face* and a *viva* when Ricky said with a sudden change of tone:

"Well, señor, that stuff is all over with. It looks as if it was pretty good for you boys while it lasted, but now you're through. Nobody can blame Don Edmundo for protectin' his prop'ty. He aint worryin' about that. He has got onto something so big that all this cow-stealin' stuff is picayune. Do you get me?"

The port captain shook his head. "Not yet, I don' understand."

"Then listen, señor. Don Edmundo has found—oil."

"Oil?" Torres repeated.



"*Oil.* We know where there's oil enough to make La Bosta look like Tampico. Think of that. Just think of your fine harbor full of big oil-tanker ships. Shut your eyes and make a picture of your little dump with with fine great wharves and beautiful houses and a steady stream of oil pouring out of her to all parts of the world."

"But Señor Capitán—"

"Listen. We know where she lies. All we got to do is to set up a derrick and start. Then everybody gets rich. You get rich. Da Silva gets rich—if he's still livin'. We all know about it. I know. Don Edmundo knows. This señorita knows. All we got to do is start. That's what I'm here for. That's what the money for these cows is for. To start drillin' for oil. Get me?"

"Señor—"

"Look here!" Ricky sprang up, grabbed the fat perspiring little man by the shoulder and dragged him to the door of the chartroom. "Look on that wharf. Do you see all that gear piled up there? That's an oil rig. Engine, boiler, casing, take-down derrick, all the works."

A lean saturnine man on the wharf caught sight of the port captain and called to him in Spanish: "Everything is ready, señor."

"One moment," screamed the little fellow. He turned to Ricky. "You say, Capitán—"

"Get busy. Sell your cows. Tell me when this bird is ready to pay for them, and I'll take the money and spend some of it to buy that stuff. I ought to get her cheap. But keep your mouth shut. Then we'll load her aboard and hike back for La Bosta."

"*Madre de*— You are sure about this oil?"

"Say, señor, what d'you think this is all about? We know. I grew up in oil country. If I'd ever had any money, I'd be a millionaire this minute. I know all about oil. Every little thing. We are all going to get rich. You are going to get rich—if you keep your mouth shut and do just what I tell you. Not only here, but back at La Bosta. Now go sell the cows."

He pushed him out on deck. The port master started off, wiping his face. Ricky stood watching him for a moment, then turned and went back into the chart-room. He looked at Francy and grinned. She did not grin back at him.

"What's the matter, Miss Francy?"

"Oh—nothing—"

"You're wonderin' why I spilled everything to this fat grub? Miss Francy, there's a reason."

"You might as well have talked it into a broadcaster!"

"That's the reason. He can't scatter much before I get that drill rig loaded aboard; and after that, the more publicity the better."

"Why?"

"To give us local importance. You can't load an oil derrick on the back of a burro and sneak it out to your prospect at night. It's going to take all hands at La Bosta to tote and set up this rig."

"Could you do that, Ricky?"

"Lordy, Miss Francy, I did nothin' but that for nearly three years. As one of the workin' gang, I mean. The outfit I was with was sent from place to place just settin' up the gear. The last year I worked on a drill-crew."

"When were you a sailor?"

"That was before. When I was a kid—eighteen to twenty-two years old."

"You look about that, now."

"I'm twenty-six. My habits've always been good, and the life was healthy, if you didn't get crippled up somehow. I'd have been chief driller next job, a few months ago."

"Why did you give it up?"

"It gave me up—all of us. Everything was closin' down. Overproduction, for the time bein'. The scientific guys been studyin' about how it would work to cap producin' wells and fund the deep oil-sands. Some argue they'd lose by it, and others claim they'd gain by the oil havin' time to seep in and fill her up again. I reckon it won't be known for certain until it's tried out, and maybe not then."

"Why did you take a job as quartermaster on the yacht?"

"Partly because I was nearly flat and had to get me a job of some sort, partly because I learned from the skipper she

was comin' down here and thought there might be a chance to get ashore and poke round a little. There's another reason why I'm takin so much bother with this little blob of a cuss, Miss Francy."

"What?"

"Well, even a puddle of grease on the track can ditch a big car when she's travelin' top notch. We can't afford a check. So far, the breaks have been firin' hard and fast, like the explosions in a tourin' eight. Now, one thing's mighty important: We got to convince this port captain of ours—and he aint completely dumb—and all that bunch back at La Bosta, that the wind's shifted plumb round: that Señora Trujillo and her thievin' superintendent have checked out, leavin' Don Edmundo high-line."

"But Don Edmundo is in all wrong, and deep, Ricky."

"Nobody that stands to enrich the darned place is in very wrong, Miss Francy. That's why I just got me a loud-speaker."

"What if you're wrong about the oil?"

"What if we get an earthquake and tidal wave—that's not apt to test out so big, first jab. There'll be some oil, and a lot of gas, and then salt water, maybe. But the stuff is there. That's why the whole place is all poisoned up and no good for plantin' fruit. There's another reason why we got to work fast. She's apt to start rainin' 'most any day now; and when she does, we'll need divers." He rose. "Now I got to go ashore. There's a guy in khaki been roostin' over under that shed that looks like he might be from north of the Rio Grande."

"Have you any money, Ricky?"

"Only a little change, Miss Francy. Why?"

"I want to buy some fresh clothes. This dress is getting tired."

"You go shop all you like. Get you a whole outfit and have it sent down aboard, C.O.D., F.O.B. It's on the syndicate. I figger to be in funds pretty soon."

He went out and ashore. The cattle, a little wilted, were already starting to pour onto the wharf. A considerable crowd had gathered. Francy sat thinking. It seemed to her as if for the first time in her life she was really living one that was her own. This sort of mad adventure was the sort of thing for which she had been fashioned, Francy thought.

It occurred to her suddenly that she and Ricky were alike. This illiterate, resourceful, easy-going, quick-acting opportunist impressed her as infinitely more real than any other man whom she had ever met. He was so absolutely natural that he made this bizarre situation seem that way too.

Francy became extremely thoughtful. This was why she had felt so at ease with Ricky. . . . And because in this adventure he had been conscious of her throughout only as a partner in his Big Chance, she had—except at odd instants—felt the same toward him. She wondered if he had ever thought of her at all in any other way.

Returning to the situation in which they found themselves, Francy wondered what might happen if there should be some hitch in Ricky's plans. What if Don Edmundo had been killed? How could Ricky prove the honesty of his intentions? How explain his possession of the order with which he was provided?

She looked out and saw Ricky talking to the man in khaki he had mentioned. Both of them appeared engrossed, oblivious to the hubbub on the wharf, the cattle that were lowing and jostling as they were herded through a gate in file, with a brief scrutiny and tallying. They were beautiful big fawn-colored beasts, slightly humped on the shoulders.

Francy could not endure the suspense. She could not make Ricky hear above the tumult, but a sharp-eyed native saw her beckoning and called his attention to her. He came aboard, smiling.

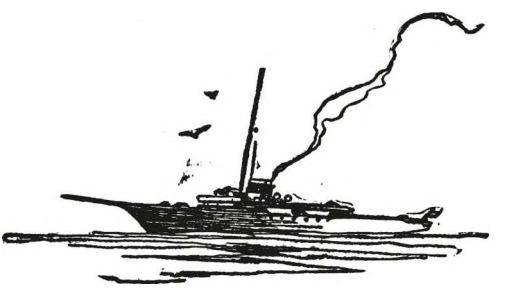
"Anything you want, Miss Francy?"

"I'm getting all worked up. There's such a racket—and the crowd. As if this business were sound and regular and aboveboard."

"Well,"—Ricky's smile broadened,—"that's the beauty of it."

"There's certainly nothing sneaky about the way it's being done. But what if you can't get this material—"

"I've got her. She belongs to this guy I'm talkin' to. He's from Oklahoma, and he's been on a contract job sinkin' dry holes for the Gov'ment. Been wait-



in' to ship his stuff out. I look like an angel from heaven to him. A sucker angel."

"Gosh, Ricky—that scares me. Everything's going too smoothly."

"I know. But it's still goin', and that's the main thing in the oil business."

"Then you're going to take it aboard?"

"Yes, Miss Francy; and this boy too. He's good. I'm offerin' him regular wages and a cut. He's bringing some of his crew. Natives been workin' for him. Don't you fret, Miss Francy. We still got our speed."

"That's what scares me."

"I know. It's gamble enough without sellin' somebody else's stock to get the stake. I got that coppered too, like we talked about. This guy's name is Sutton. We're goin' to see a lawyer. Fix up a declaration to drill, and who's doin' it and all. I'm puttin' it in the name of Don Edmundo and myself. That seems square. Fifty-fifty. Then I'm makin' over a half-interest of my share to you."

"Ricky!"

"Sure. You started it, gettin' kidnaped. Only for that—"

"But Ricky—"

" 'Scuse me, Miss Francy, but I'm terr'ble busy. We mustn't lose our speed. Soon's this corral gets cleared, we start loadin'. I got to watch that little louse that's checkin' the tallyin', too."

He went ashore again. Francy went back into the chart-room and fought laughter for a few minutes. Then she

Ricky held aloft the grimy white cap, wondering if the head it had previously adorned was still swinging under a branch of the mango tree.

gave herself a few freshening touches, and went ashore.

The port, if small in area and importance, was large in population, like an ant-hill; and there was a large store that bore a name older than that of any in that ancient colony—"ADAM." It was no new experience for Francy to find herself shopping with no money in her purse, but unquestioned credit. The proprietor recognized her immediately, and that helped even more, if possible.

"Zo," he said in English, "it is not true how you are kidnaped, señorita. I am so glad."

She explained that they had gone ashore and into the jungle to look for butterflies, and got turned about, when the captain of the yacht had heard some rumors and become alarmed. The yacht having left for Puerto Cabando, Francy had accepted the invitation of Senor Torres, the captain of the port, to come on the cattle-ship to join her party.

"And missed them once more again." Mr. Adam clucked sympathetically.

Then he insisted that she go into the garden of his house next door, where it was cool, and have some cakes and wine and fruit—the place was hers; Puerto Cabando was hers. Francy was glad to accept the invitation, after she had bought rather extensively of clothing and toilet articles.

She also bought a light but strong trunk in which to have her purchases packed. Then, at Mr. Adam's suggestion it was taken to his villa, so she could dress. His wife smilingly led Francy to a cool and spacious room with a rattan four-poster and a pink mosquito-net.

She rested. Two small lizards ran over the ceiling and made kissing sounds. Señor Adam had sent a note to the wharf to tell Ricky where she was.

This pleasant interlude of being kidnaped and chased by cattle thieves, then stealing the stolen cattle,—ship and all,—was brought to a close by a note from Ricky. It read: *"All down and paid for. Your gear aboard. Sailing in about an hour. —R. S."*

There were worse fates than to be the guest of a buccaneer! She was fresh and clean and rested and daintily dressed. Her charge-account at the most elegant store in town had been paid with a promptness unequaled in her shopping experience. She parted from Mr. Adam with assurances of mutual appreciation, and went aboard to get out of the way. Sacked coal and lumber were still being loaded aboard, also a quantity of stores. The whole population of the port appeared to have thronged down to the wharf. Señor Torres had found occasion to refresh himself at the café several times, and the word had somehow gone about that a great enterprise was being launched; that oil had been discovered near La Bosta by members of the scientific expedition aboard the yacht,

and that no time was being lost in clamping down the government concession.

Ricky looked haggard but happy. "We never lost a hoof, Miss Francy; and the price was all right too. We got plenty of funds to carry on with. I found me a lawyer and drafted up a sort of provisional incorporation. It aint legally valid until signed by the Señora or her legal heir or heirs—"

"But she's dead."

"Well, I sort of held out on that. Said that the old lady was dyin', and there was a rumor when we sailed that she'd gone west, but that her only son Don Edmundo was in charge."

"What if he should be dead too?"

"Miss Francy, that man can take care of himself like nobody's business but his own. Even if he should have got bumped, there's bound to be some heirs somewhere—the Gov'ment, maybe. But the whole darn' business is in such a snarl and everybody in this country from the President down so crazy for somebody to strike oil, that the old drill will be goin' round before anybody tries to serve any injunction, if then."

"I'll bet that's what you been counting on right along, Ricky."

"Well, with a prop'sition like this, if you can't get your line all laid out plumb, the next best thing is to ball it up so nobody can find either end or the middle. That's been done before. Look at Teapot Dome." He grinned. "I don't mind doin' a short stretch at the Atlanta of this darn' country if there's a million or two waitin' for me when I come out."

Francy looked worried.

"You mind your step, Ricky. You mightn't come out."

"Well, I mightn't go in. They want oil more'n they do prisoners, and I'm their white hope right now. Once she goes over the top, they're more apt to give me a monument."

"In a cemetery, maybe," said a dry voice behind Francy. It was the man in khaki, Sutton, to whom Ricky had thought best to explain certain features of the situation—after making his deal.

RICKY presented him to Francy. She liked his look, though he was leathery and saturnine. This last was partly pose, she thought, as there were fine lines of humor at the corners of his narrow-lidded eyes and wide tight-lipped mouth. He was a pioneer type, of forty-five perhaps, with a hard determined set of features. Having acknowledged the introduction, he moved on, and they heard him giving curt orders in Spanish.

"He seems like a competent guy," Ricky said. "Knows his stuff, and used to handlin' these birds. He agrees with me that our best bet now is speed. Not only for private reasons, but to get set before the rains start in."

The last of the deck cargo was coming aboard. Señor Torres was checking it. "That little cuss is all ours," Ricky said. "They're all born gamblers down here. Anything from a cock-fight to a revolution. They love a new deal like a girl loves a new dress. You look like a million barrels, Miss Francy. Why not? I got you all wrote in for half my share."

"But Ricky—"

"I heard that the first time, a spell ago, Miss Francy. But it's all reg'lar. That's about the only reg'lar thing about the whole doggone business. Only for you, nothin' would have broken at all. This legal stuff is just a form, so far, but it seemed best to make a bluff that there really was some sort of syndicate. Anyhow, the Señora can't put up a holler, and his nibs Gonzales can't holler, 'less'n he gives three whoops in hell, and we all have heard what that's worth. My loudspeaker's got the glad news some pub-lic'ty—"

"Yes; all you need is a brass band, Ricky."

"Listen—here she comes, now."

Sure enough, there came from the distance an outburst of martial music. The band of Puerto Cabando had been hastily mustered and was marching down to play the argosy away. The crowd at the pierhead cheered.

"Hey, Sutton!" Ricky called. "We better get out some buntin'. H'ist all the flags we got."

Señor Torres was of the same idea. The flag-locker in the chart-room gave up enough to make a respectable display. The little ship took on immediately a gala look in keeping with the high endeavor. The band, in garish if slightly nondescript and tarnished uniform, planted itself on the wharf amidships and blared forth the national anthem of the country. All stood at attention, uncovering. Ricky held aloft the grimy white cap with its corroded band of gold lace, wondering if the head it had previously adorned was still swinging under a branch of the mango tree.

The music ceased, and there were cheers. A speech was called for. Ricky made a brief but moving one, to judge

from the enthusiasm with which it was greeted. He drew a stirring picture of La Bosta rising proudly behind a fleet of tankers, and flanked by a stately forest of oil-derricks, many of which were gushing. He pointed to his stanch colleague Señor Torres, Captain of the Port of La Bosta, as one who hitherto had occupied a humble station, but whose name would soon be known throughout the oil world.

Señor Torres wept. Francy plunged into the chart-room, certain that this time nothing could save her from hysterics. She laughed herself into a brief semi-coma, from which fright suddenly rescued her. What if the facts were all to come out? But just what were the true facts, and how could they ever come out?

Don Edmundo seemed to be the pivotal point round which everything revolved. If charged with unlawfully hanging the ship's three officers, his defense would be that he had caught them trying to drive his mother's stolen cattle aboard the ship. If charged with kidnaping, Francy would swear that they had gone with him of their own accord because they feared Da Silva's crowd. Van Beekman could scarcely charge Don Edmundo with anything, after having fought at his side against the cattle thieves.

Don Edmundo, if mean enough, might attack Ricky's half-interest in the profits to accrue from the oil. He might, if bad sport enough, attack Ricky's having sold his cattle at all, then invested a part of the funds without his knowledge and consent. But there were the papers in the gourd buried at the corner of the little tobacco-shed. Ricky had coppered that bet too. Actually, these documents were the crux of the whole affair. The suppression of them stood between Don Edmundo and ruin. Yes, Ricky had certainly coppered his bet on Don Edmundo's square shooting.

SHE looked out to see the shouting crowd and blaring band, and felt at that moment the vibration of the engines. The lines were being cast off.

Ricky rang the engine-room telegraph. The ship started to move ahead with all the majesty of her hundreds of tons. Her whistle made a valiant effort that for several seconds was choked as if by emotion—tears and a swelling throat. Then suddenly she cleared it, and gave vent to a stupendous roar. The engines slowed a little from the lack of pressure expended by this effort. It did not matter. The tide was drifting her clear.

Francy felt as if she were dying a violent but happy death. She had never laughed so much, nor been so scared, in any other continuous twenty-four hours of her life.

CLEAR of the port, Ricky came into the chart-room.

"You must be all in, Ricky," Francy said. "Can't you get some sleep?"

"Sure, Miss Francy. Sutton can spell me pretty soon. He learned his navigation like I did, with a transit."

"That was a grand speech. One up for you again, as an orator."

Ricky laughed. "It's easy, when you're sure of a hand anyhow."

"What was all that about Torres?"

"I boosted him, to show we take care of the local guys that give us all they got. Brother Da Silva's goin' to hear about it, and want in."

"Do you want him in?"

"Sure. We're goin' to need all the labor and mules and ponies he can scare up to haul our gear. I can lighter it ashore close to our location where there's a creek puts in."

"What about the police that were sent on the yacht?"

"They'll be all right. I went to the police station in Puerto Cabando and told them all that brigand kidnapin' stuff was a false alarm. Said the yacht's captain had been sufferin' from a touch of fever and was nervous. Torres backed that up. In fact, he'd already said it."

"Well, there's no telling what may have happened back there."

"Nothin' much, I reckon. Don Edmundo may have knocked over some more, but we can't help that. I told 'em there'd been some bickerin' about sellin' off the hacienda stock, and that Don Edmundo claimed it was irreg'lar, and that Gonzales had been actin' without due and proper authority." He gave a tired smile. "We know all about that, Miss Francy."

"Did they ask about your order?"

"They did. I'd fixed that up with our port captain. He said it had been sent down to him, so when I showed up and

told him how things stood, he appointed me to take charge."

"Gosh, but we're in deep, Ricky!"

"Yes, pretty," he admitted. "The first thing I got to do is to get in touch with Don Edmundo, before he kills out all the labor, or messes things somehow."

"Yes, and maybe now Don Edmundo's hiding out."

Ricky frowned. "I thought of that. When he shot Gonzales out of the saddle, then couldn't get to him to grab off the papers he thought was on him, Don Edmundo may have decided he'd missed his throw, and beat it." His face showed suddenly the fatigue and strain that his cheerful tone denied. "I guess I'll lie down a spell."

"Lie down in there."

"In your cabin? No indeed. I'll stretch out on this locker and catch me a nap."

He was almost instantly asleep. The trade-wind was dropping with the sun, but it was cool. Ricky slept like a child suddenly tired from play, his breathing scarcely perceptible. Francy compared him with Van Beekman, from whose room aboard the yacht were wont to come rhythmic sounds, though his habits were temperate.

It occurred to her that she had scarcely thought of Van Beekman at all. She had not worried about him, though he must have been through a good deal of danger. He would always be alien to her, while Ricky seemed to be her own sort. Francy wondered what quirk in her personality made this tawny-haired quaint-spoken nomad from the Southwest so akin to her. She and Ricky might have been chums from childhood, swung on the front gate, hollered down the rain-barrel, climbed the cherry tree.

THE little ship churned its way along with a good deal of threshing under the stern, for it was light. She was older than any of the folk aboard her and far richer in experience. The log of her varied service would have been an interesting document.

In due time Ricky brought her into port at La Bosta and with a little maneuvering drifted her gently alongside the ancient stone jetty. Two or three natives caught and made fast her lines.

The yacht was back on her anchorage, and presently a boat put off from her and came ashore. It contained only the French chef, and a sailor to row. Ricky hailed the chef, who after his first surprise at the identity of the steamer's captain, reported that the yacht's skipper had brought the schooner in, then gone below and to sleep. The police squad had landed, secured horses and ridden away somewhere. Nothing had been seen or heard of Mr. Van Beekman.

Ricky insisted that Francy go off aboard the yacht, which she did reluctantly. The captain of the port was feeling low. He seemed to fear things might not be going to work so well after all, and that Ricky had been too optimistic. Sutton looked saturnine but said nothing. He had been through all of these ups and downs before.

Ricky was about to go aboard the yacht to see the skipper, when there came a diversion that demanded his attention. A cavalcade of about twenty-five riders came down the trail and dismounted at the head of the pier. This party was comprised of a lieutenant and four police, Van Beekman, and the chief herdsman Da Silva, with his vaqueros.

Everybody appeared to be tired, angry and confused. Van Beekman, to whom Ricky first addressed himself, ignored his questions, and having assured himself that Francy was safe aboard the yacht, had himself paddled off in a dugout canoe. Ricky asked the lieutenant of police about Don Edmundo, and was told rather shortly that this gentleman was a fugitive from justice and had probably ridden for the border. The

police had found Da Silva and his men at La Bosta on the yacht's arrival. They had joined forces and ridden to the hacienda to arrest Don Edmundo for his hanging of the three ship's officers, the kidnaping of the señor and señorita from the yacht, the killing of three of Da Silva's herdsmen, and the subsequent assassination of Señor Gonzales. A busy twenty-four hours, Ricky silently opined.

The party had arrived at the hacienda, to find that Don Edmundo had just finished the interment of his mother in the ancient hacienda cemetery. The body of Señor Gonzales, a relative of the Señora, was lying more or less in state. Don Edmundo had been warned of their coming, and had mounted a spare thoroughbred horse belonging to Señor Gonzales and ridden off on a trail to the northern border. It had been incumbent on the police to bury Señor Gonzales.

IN his turn, then, the lieutenant posed some questions, and was a good deal surprised at their answers. Da Silva, listening sullenly, broke in to say with heat that Señor Gonzales had been at all times duly authorized to sell the cattle and to invest the proceeds as he saw fit. He, the chief herdsman, had seen the documents signed by the Señora, notably a power of attorney.

Ricky invited him to produce them. Da Silva answered angrily that they had not been on the person of the superintendent when murdered by Don Edmundo, who might have stolen and destroyed them. Ricky asked why, in that case, Don Edmundo should have fled? De Silva retorted that he feared justice for having hanged the captain, engineer and mate of the ship. Ricky pointed out that this act was all of a piece with Don Edmundo's other ones, and that unless the documents in question were forthcoming, then all of the action taken by Don Edmundo had been entirely within his right.

The impromptu court removed itself, at Ricky's invitation, aboard the ship. Señor Torres occupied himself in seeing that refreshments, both of food and drink, were served. Both were plentiful and good, and did much to soften the tired, hungry and bewildered men. The captain of the port managed to get De Silva aside and go more into the details of all that had happened. He rather more than intimated that Señor Gonzales in his hurried flight from the hacienda had lost from his person the packet of papers that contained the authority he possessed for his past large-scale pilferings, and that Ricky had found and destroyed all of them but one.

This sort of *coup d'état* was entirely within Da Silva's comprehension, completely altering and explaining the situation in hand. The captain of the port, who from long practice got into his stride when that of others was beginning to break, went on to describe the ovation at Puerto Cabando, and what it was all about. He painted, not so badly, for he was himself a bit of an artist, the picture that Ricky had drawn of La Bosta's future magnificence.

By this time Da Silva, though hard-boiled, was beginning to understand that the tide of affairs had turned, and that his fat little colleague in past rascality was riding the top of it. Therefore it needed only Señor Torres' assurance that Ricky was pressed for time to start operations before the rains, and was prepared to pay liberally for service, to change Da Silva's idea about the situation. The Señora was dead; Gonzales was dead; he, Da Silva, was alive by the fraction of an inch; the papers that stood between his being a thief and a faithful servitor were probably ashes. Don Edmundo was a shooting fool; but after all, he was the heir presumptive. He had fled, not knowing the papers had been destroyed. But he would learn about this and return, perhaps still shooting.

Anyhow, here was the oil. Here was the ship, loaded with the structure and machinery, and even a crew to go after it and to get it. Everything was different. What price cattle-peccadilloes, compared to petroleum?

He came back to the conference a different man. He denounced Gonzales as a tricky scoundrel whose actual authority —obtained by coërcion and fraud from a dying old lady—he had always doubted. He acclaimed Don Edmundo as heir to the hacienda, and Ricky as his wise and efficient steward.

The police officer gave it up. He began to wonder if he might not be able to get himself transferred permanently to La Bosta. . . .

There was among the party a plump young man whose pasty face Ricky presently remembered; he was the superintendent's clerk. He was named Braga, and was fairly large but unmasculine, with a voluble weak voice. At first he had been silent, from fatigue. Then as the wine and spirits revived him, he be-

gan to talk, and described a good deal of what Ricky was very anxious to know.

Braga said that Gonzales anticipated violence from Don Edmundo, who had been in a cold and deadly rage since his arrival at the hacienda. The superintendent had decided to decamp before Don Edmundo returned from his raid on La Bosta, but he did not start soon enough. Don Edmundo, furious, and the Señor from the yacht in no better temper, rode in at about midnight. The old Señora had died a few hours earlier, and the hacienda padre was in the chapel praying for her soul. Gonzales had gone to bed, but on hearing Don Edmundo enter, he got up and called Braga, ordering him to slip out and get two of the best horses saddled.

They rode off undisturbed, and traveled the rest of the night. Some prowling peon must have betrayed them, as at about an hour after daylight they saw that a horseman was following them. As his mount had the markings of the hacienda's famous Arab stock, they knew it must be Don Edmundo. Also, he wore khaki. They might have escaped, but Señor Gonzales was a fighter himself, though a man of affairs. Besides, he had not yet learned the deadly aim of Don Edmundo. . . .

The pasty-faced clerk spread out his hands significantly.

THE rest Ricky had witnessed, but would not have recognized the episode from the clerk's description:

"I begged the Señor to ride on at full speed and let me cover his retreat. I knew that he carried the papers that authorized the business transactions of the past year, and that there were no others filed. I had witnessed them. And now the Señora was dead. But he was in a rage and would not listen. Perhaps he thought that papers or no papers, Don Edmundo could still make a great deal of trouble for everybody. I started to ride back to place myself between them. But at that moment Señor Gonzales pitched from his saddle. His horse rushed past and stampeded my own. Da Silva and his men were rushing toward me on the narrow trail, and to avoid colliding with them I swerved off it and was swept from the saddle by a vine. My horse had stopped, and I mounted and rode on after that of the Señor's, which had halted farther up the trail. I caught it and rode back to where Señor Gonzales had fallen. He was dead. The packet of papers was missing. I thought it must have fallen somewhere on the trail, so I placed the body of Señor Gonzales on his horse and started back, but failed to find the papers. Nobody appears to have found them. It is very strange." He looked significantly at Ricky.

"Yes," Ricky admitted. "Very strange. It looks to me, however, as if Don Edmundo had found the papers on the trail."

"Somebody must have found them, señor," the clerk said dryly.

There was a brief silence. It was evident enough that the same opinion was shared by everybody present, and also the admission that there was nothing to be done about it. They believed that Don Edmundo had got possession of the packet, and that he had arranged with Ricky, who had been with him at the time, to use the order to transport and sell the cattle. Even Torres believed this to be the case. Ricky could have ridden off the trail and let Don Edmundo's pursuers pass, then proceeded to the port.

There was still a point, however, that Ricky desired to have cleared. He asked the clerk:

"What was Señor Gonzales' idea? Did he intend to take the ship out himself?"

"No, señor. His abilities, which were many, did not include navigation; he had learned that a large yacht was lying here while a party from her had gone to search for ancient ruins. As his need was urgent and the voyage a short one, he hoped he might be able to secure the services of one of the yacht's officers, who would be idle."

"Was it his plan to go with the ship?"

"No, señor. I was to have gone myself. But of course everything was disorganized by the death of Señor Gonzales."

"And the loss of the papers," Ricky said dryly.

"Naturally. It was necessary to have official orders."

SO that was that, Ricky reflected. As it was nearly sunset he decided to go aboard the yacht and see what could be done for Captain Tibbetts; and a native paddled him off in a canoe. As he was drawing near, Ricky was relieved to see the lean figure of the skipper standing by the rail. He looked like an animated corpse, and not noticeably animated at that. Ricky told his canoe-man to wait, and went aboard. Captain Tibbetts looked at him with a bleak smile.

Ricky saluted. "Come aboard, sir. Fairly clean and sober, sir."

"Yeah? You seem to have got promoted, Quartermaster."

"I sort of promoted myself, Cap'n. Miss Francy told you anything?"

"Quite a lot. Pretty risky business, aint it, son?"

"I aint hurt so far, as the fella said on his way down when fallin' from aloft. How you feelin', Cap'n?"

"A mite better, now my strayed sheep are back in the fold. But I been through hell, Ricky."

"Don't I know? Your nerves were all shot up to start with. But you don't look so bad, sir. Like you been through a knock-down-and-drag out, and finished it on top."

"You said it, son. All this worry sort of cleared the air. I had a good sleep. Feel weak but stronger, as the feller says."

"That's fine, Cap'n. Better'n findin' a million dollars' worth of oil—on the hoof."

"How sure can you be about that, Ricky?"

"Cap'n, I'm positive. When Sutton gives her the okay, she's ours. He's one case-hardened show-me boy, and knows his stuff. If he thought the chances were ninety-nine in a hundred that she was there, the best you could get out of him would be 'maybe.'"

"Sounds promisin', son."

"Well, I got the whole gang behind me now. There's goin' to be a little cut for you, Cappy, when she blows. But you'll have to get you another quartermaster. This thing is takin' all I got."

"We'll try to manage, Ricky."

There was a pause; then Ricky asked: "What about Mr. Van Beekman? Still mad?"

"Madder'n a cook on a coal barge with the galley struck adrift. He's been growlin' at Miss Francy ever since he come aboard. Too bad some of them spiggoty bandits didn't let daylight through him."

"Well, he gave 'em all the chance. Anyhow, he aint gun-shy."

The skipper looked aft. "Hold it. Here he comes."

Van Beekman's square face and heavy shoulders had appeared above the rim of the saloon hatchway. He stared for a moment angrily at the pair in the waist, then said harshly:

"Captain, pay that man off and tell him to pack his duffle and clear out. He's through."

"All right, sir." The charter of the yacht was in Van Beekman's name, and it was he who paid the bills. He seemed to be waiting for Ricky to say something. The absence of any protest, comment or apology appeared to enrage Van Beekman still more. He came on deck and strode to where the two were standing.

"If you think you can get away with this stuff, you must be a damned fool."

"Maybe so, Mr. Van Beekman."

"I understand that by combined bluff and trickery you managed to market this shipload of Don Edmundo's cattle. Well, that's not going to do you any good."

"That's been worrying me a heap, sir."

"Do you want to know why?"

"I'd sure admire to, Mr. Van Beekman."

"Well, then, I finally decided to take up this oil proposition with Don Edmundo myself. We drew up an agreement before he started to ride for the border."

Ricky felt as if a mule had planted a left hind punch on his solar plexus. Here at last was the first hard check, and for the moment it felt like a knockout. If Don Edmundo had signed such an agree-

ment with Van Beekman, then it would be a simple matter for that millionaire to get an injunction on all immediate operations. He could put an embargo on the material aboard the steamer, purchased with the proceeds of Don Edmundo's cattle.

Van Beekman could not fail but see the effect of his bomb. Ricky could put on a poker face as well as anybody; but he was very tired, and Van Beekman had delivered a surprise attack. Moreover, Ricky knew that the most cursory prospecting must immediately discover his location. He had told Van Beekman that he had discovered it, and it would be easy to find where.

BUT Ricky was game. He said, still cheerfully: "Well, that looks like you had my bet faded, Mr. Van Beekman. Anyhow, I figger to keep my seat in the game until she's yanked out from under me."

"Go ahead. That will save us just that much time and trouble. Let's get this much straight, though. Do you admit the validity of my claim?"

"'Course, when I see her in writin', duly signed and witnessed. So far as that goes, though, any sort of gentlemen's agreement 'tween you and Don Edmundo ought to be enough."

Van Beekman's hard manner eased a little. "I'm glad to find you've got that much sense. I understand you've worked three or four years on a drilling crew. Do you want a job with us?"

"You mean just a wage job, sir, with the usual premium when we strike oil?"

"That's it. After all, I suppose you're entitled to get something out of this."

"That's right kind and gen'rous of you, sir."

"Look here, now," Van Beekman interrupted, "if you try to give me any of your cheek, it's all off."

"Well, you see this is a good deal of a jolt, sir. Right disappointin', comin' all unexpected like it does."

"What could you expect? To load a cargo of somebody else's cattle aboard a ship and sail them off and sell them and buy yourself an oil well with the proceeds, without the owner knowing anything about it?"

"That part of it couldn't be helped, sir, because the owner was dead," Ricky said in his soft voice.

"Dead? Who told you that?"

"Nobody needed to. I was hangin' round when Don Edmundo plugged him. Shot him out the saddle, deader'n a salt mack'rel."

"What are you talking about? That thieving superintendent? What difference does that make? Hasn't a man a right to shoot a thief that's trying to run off with his property?"

"Sure he has—if it *is* his prop'ty. But if the guy happens to have plenty papers to prove that the whole works are his prop'ty, the hacienda, cattle, ship, everything, then it's sort of different. Even if he did come by 'em dishonest—by bullyin' an old lady that's checkin' out."

It was Van Beekman's turn to get the jolt. It hit him hard, Ricky could see, but not, he thought, entirely unexpectedly. It was as if he had anticipated an effort on the part of somebody to hit him that way, but had not thought that it could be Ricky.

His cold small blue eyes bored for a moment into Ricky's larger and darker and bluer ones. Any man, however hard-bitten an adventurer, would have had to admit a vast amount of compelling force behind Van Beekman's cold stare. It was like the stab of a long sharp icicle.

Van Beekman said slowly in a voice that matched his eyes and was an inheritance from generations of fat men with lean hard business wits:

"What makes you think that any such papers exist, Quartermaster?"

"I don't think it. Mr. Van Beekman, sir, I know it."

"How do you know it, Quartermaster?"

"Because I've seen 'em, Mr. Van Beekman. And I aint your quartermaster any more, 'cause you just fired me."

"Never mind that."

"I mind it a whole lot," Ricky said, in a voice that was even softer than before. "I aint your quartermaster, because you just fired me, like I said, and I'm quittin' without pay. Which says I've quit. That bein' the case, I'm free and footloose to speak my mind about all this."

"Quite so," Van Beekman said pompously. "And so am I. It sounds to me as if you were trying to spring some sort of a bluff at blackmail."

RICKY'S voice changed. It was still soft, but so is the purr of all of the big carnivora. The sweetness had all gone out of it.

"Yeah? And what about my tellin' you I'd located oil, and invitin' you to sit in, and you insultin' me, then lopin'

on ahead to fix up somethin' with Don Edmundo?"

"Well, what of it? You needn't try—"

"I aint tryin' anything. I'm doing it. What about your tryin' to tie things up with Don Edmundo, after you'd already turned him down, and turned me down when I'd put you wise. What d'ye call that, Mr. Van Beekman, sir? What name you got for a man that would spring a low-down dirty double-crossin' trick like that? I don't know what they call 'em in New York. High financiers, maybe? But I know what we call 'em in Texas, and it aint—"

"Pipe down, Ricky," Captain Tibbetts urged. "Skylight's open."

"Oh, well, then I won't tell him, Cappy. But I cert'nly wish he'd go 'way from me before somethin' breaks loose and you have to get some guy with a bucket and a swab to clean up when I get through."

VAN BEEKMAN said quietly, and steadily enough: "You had better get your stuff and go ashore. We can talk about all this—"

"Only we can't," Ricky interrupted. "You and me have had our last talk. But you can slip the word to Don Edmundo when you see him or write to him, that this country is goin' to be about as healthy for him from now on as mine-damp for canary birds. You better go chase your butterflies across the border, too."

He turned to the side. "Send my gear sometime tomorrow, Cap'n Tibbetts. Aboard the ship; I'm Cap'n Smith now."

He dropped into the canoe, and it slid back to pass under the stern. . . .

Ricky was now assailed by what comes sometimes to men undertaking a big and complicated job practically single-handed in its running: a sense of insufficiency, not in mind but in physical units of himself. The work immediately ahead appeared to call for three Rickys: one to run the ship and unload the oil impedimenta at the point nearest his location; another to handle and to drive the labor crowd that must haul and set it up, and a third Ricky to get immediately in personal touch with Don Edmundo. There ought really to be a fourth to go to the Capital and secure the concession as soon as its terms should be filled—a pay-well brought in. He could have done even with a fifth, to watch Van Beekman.

It was of vital importance, Ricky considered, to make contact with Don Edmundo, describe just what had been done, and how and why, and to learn how far this impetuous man might consider himself affiliated with Van Beekman. The last thing that Ricky wanted was for Don Edmundo to believe that he was holding him in blackmail.

AS there was only one of him, and no lawyer nearer than Puerto Cabando Ricky decided to go ahead with the setting up of his rig as if there had been no cause to fear interruption. He went back aboard the steamer, where he found the party lagging a little because some of the tired guests were asleep, or nearly so. But the chief herdsman, Da Silva, was alert. This man looked like a muscular Mephistopheles, and no doubt possessed many of His Majesty's mental traits. He would be a capable devil, Ricky thought.

He convened a ways-and-means committee of Sutton, Torres, and Da Silva, with himself as chairman. He spread out the chart and showed where the derrick and machinery could be lightered ashore. Sutton saw no difficulty about handling it if there were labor and gear enough. Torres undertook to have the lighters alongside early in the morning. Da Silva promised men and mules and ponies. A good many had been driven down with the cattle. Torres said there was a steep bluff at the head of the creek where a crane could be rigged to hoist directly from lighters. The question of wages was brought up and arranged. Then the meeting was adjourned.

Operations were to start next morning. Ricky got up at daybreak, secured a pair of ponies and took Sutton to look over his location. Sutton was an hour making his examination, during which time he did not speak. When finally he did, it was merely to nod and say: "You'll strike her."

"Deep?"

"Naw—near the surface."

"I mean do you think there's a lot?"

"The whole damn' place is sittin' on it. Why nobody's picked on it is what beats me. Dumb! I aint judgin' by this oily muck, but by the formations. It's local, though, I guess. Just this strip. Look at this shale and stuff and fossil rocks. Like Maracaibo. I set up some rigs there a few years ago. Dyin' trees and everything. You don't have to haul the stuff way up here. You'll strike it anywhere. Take that shelf below the swamp. It'll be dry to work on."

They went back to the ship, and the undertaking started. For the next few days that shore was a busy place. Ricky discovered that he had efficient helpers, even to the last mixed-breed peon. He could never have believed that these people would work like that—and keep on working. As for Sutton, he was better than any other man Ricky had ever seen on such a job. He seemed to have a fresh makeshift mechanical device for each new problem as it arose. He juggled ponderous parts and machinery with laconic ease. There was no limit to the contents of his box of tricks. Da Silva handled the hauling like a veteran sergeant of heavy artillery. Even the fat Torres was good.

RICKY saw Francy only at a distance. Van Beekman herded her close. The steamer had been taken back alongside and made fast when unloaded. The material, coal, lumber for shacks, stores for the drilling-crew, had been landed about three miles beyond the port, near a little village. The trail went up along the hillside from La Bosta, past the old ruins, then dipped down.

Once the take-down derrick that resembled a mechanical toy was erected and lined up, Ricky did not leave the camp until the first of the casing was planted and the drill started turning round. It was about time that Professor Waite and his party returned from their expedition. Then the yacht would leave, and Van Beekman with it. Trouble might be expected almost any day thereafter, Ricky thought.

Also, Francy would be leaving with the yacht, of course; but Ricky let that idea alone.

He shared a cabin with Sutton, but they were seldom in it at the same time. Ricky marveled that a man could speak so little and get so much done. When Sutton did talk, it was in spurts, oracularly. This made his remarks precious. If he said a few words unofficially to a member of his crew, that man was set up for the day. Sutton wore a straight-stemmed briar pipe as he did his hat, removing neither except to sleep; and he had developed a sort of international code system of gestures with the mouthpiece of the pipe. He could make it say: "Lay down those long balks of lumber for a track, then get your rollers across and under those T-frames, rig a morton purchase and throw a strop round the end of the girder and hook on." Ricky had seen him describe the rigging of a fisherman's purchase with the stem of the pipe alone.

But though no chatterbox, Sutton liked to listen. He silently invited conversation, and for some reason Ricky never found it one-sided.

"I declare, Sutton," Ricky said one day, "you can speak less and say more than any guy I ever knew."

"If humans couldn't talk, things would go on just the same, Mav'rick. Better, because there'd be no lyin'."

"When are we goin' to strike oil?"

Sutton's pipestem said plainly: "We've struck it. The mud turned up was full of oil."

"I mean a steady flow," Ricky said.

"Most any day."

"What about salt water?"

"We aint drillin' for salt water. We're drillin' into oil."

"Shucks, that's like sayin' your hens are bound to lay you some eggs, because that's all hens lay!" Ricky complained.

Sutton took a fossil fern from his pocket and looked at it thoughtfuly. "You could plant a derrick a hundred yards off the beach and get only oil. I've seen it done."

Once the drill was started, Ricky had explained the entire situation to Sutton, who had not seemed disturbed. Nor had he offered advice.

Ricky said presently: "I got to go to the Capital, Sutton, and find out where we stand. I aint sure even what the concession calls for and offers."

"I am. A kilometer square with the first pay-well on any part of it. One-eighth royalty based on total production to the landowner. Torres says this strip is governmental."

"Well, I got to find Don Edmundo."

"Long hike."

"Why?"

SUTTON gripped his pipe by the bowl. This meant one of his rare long speeches. "When he beat it, he didn't know anything except that he'd hanged three men and shot three more, including Gonzales. He knew that bird had papers to cover his operations. Don Edmundo couldn't be sure even that they were thefts at all. He didn't know you'd located oil. It looked to him that the game was up, and himself wanted for murder. He skipped the country, and he's apt to stay skipped."

"But there's his agreement with Van Beekman."

"If you think you can get away with this, you're a damned fool!"

"Listen, Mav'rick. Is a sound and respect'ble New York capitalist like Van Beekman goin' to tie himself up with a busted crim'nal whose father was fired out of the country? Why should he?"

"Gee—that's so. You think Van Beekman was lyin'?"

"Not entirely. He may have told Don Edmundo that he'd look into the proposition. But sign anything? Never. What was to prevent Van Beekman goin' ahead on his own? What would the cost of a shot like this be to a millionaire like him, that charters a yacht to come down here for a chance to spoon up his girl while her old man hunts for junk in the jungle?"

Ricky's face cleared. "I guess I been a dumb fool, Sut. Then how the heck am I goin' to find Don Edmundo?"

"What d'you want to find him for?"

"How can I cash in on this until he's signed up?"

"Well—there's something in that." Sutton's long face stretched a little longer. "Since he put up all the capital, I guess you better go to the Capital. That sure would be a beaver, to have all the earnings put in escrow until you can find this bird and get him to sign."

"It's all there is to it," Ricky said desperately. "A guy don't need to be a lawyer to see that when he grabs off another guy's prop'ty and sells it without the other guy's knowledge and consent, then writes him in for a half-interest on what comes from his investment of the proceeds, he's goin' to have a hard time to cash in, even if he goes and gets him an oil-well."

The pipestem admitted the truth of this legal finding. "You better go, Mav'rick; maybe there's some way to fix it."

"I'll get me a swell lawyer and put it up to him. There's acreage for twenty wells along here. I'll leave you cash enough to run on for a spell, and when she tears loose you'll be sittin' pretty. Somebody will take charge."

"Yeah, gushers aint let waste their sweetness on the desert air. Oil is a slippery game from start to finish, but this beats anything in my considerable experience. I get mine. The gang gets its. The Government gets hers. The only one that stands to lose out is the promoter that put her over the top. That's *o-i-l*, Mav'rick." And he chanted:

Old King Oil come out of the soil,
And the old king's bank never failed.
He made us all rich, every son of a gun,
But he got the promoter jailed.

"That's sure funny, Sut, but don't mind if I don't laugh. It's a three days' hike by the trail. I'll take a *muchacho*

and a pack-pony. My address'll be the courthouse—until it's changed to the calaboose, maybe."

IT was nearly sunset. Ricky got up and went to the beach for his evening swim. Then as he was lounging in the soft delicious brine, he looked seaward and received a shock. Or rather, it was a sinking feeling. The yacht was moving out under power.

Ricky had met Captain Tibbetts several times since starting operations, but had spoken to none of the others. He was a little hurt that Francy had not tried even to communicate with him. But probably even the swellest of girls of her swell sort were like that. They took what was offered them and thanked the giver prettily, even praised him a little, and went their elegant way.

Still, it was all right. If he hadn't been trying to save her from the dogs, he would not have found the oil—and besides, they hadn't got it yet. Nor sold it. Ricky's end seemed to be in a worse jam than the beginning had been, but perhaps things might break now as they had then. And perhaps not. *"But he got the promoter jailed."* Technically, legally, there was ground for jailing him. Anyhow, they couldn't jail Francy.

"Oh, Ricky—*ooo-hooo!*"

He floundered about in the water like a harpooned porpoise. His eyes blurred. They cleared again, and he saw Francy over on the beach. She was in the *robe rose*—looked like a flamingo in color if not in form. Ricky stared at the departing yacht, to make sure that he had really seen her and that she was really going out. There was no doubt. He swam vigorously for the beach, then remembered his lack of clothing.

"Wait a minute, Miss Francy—I mean, go 'way somewhere. I'm all—I mean I aint—"

"All right." She flourished her arm and walked back toward the path to the drilling-camp. Rick came out and pulled on his clothes. He wore the white drill of the country, and a near-Panama with a piece of banana leaf in it. He was dazed; yet after all this was precisely the sort of stuff he might have expected of Miss Francy. She was not the sort to sail off and leave her quarter-interest in a rich oil-field to take care of itself. She had the nerve to stay and herd-ride it. The wonder was all contained in her having been allowed to do so. Ricky could not dope that out, at all.

He went up to the camp and saw Francy sitting on a drilling-camp morris-chair, a tinned-beef box. She was conversing with, which is to say, talking to Sutton. But his pipestem was animated.

"Hello, Ricky," she called, as if he had been a small-boy hanger-on, and finished what she was saying to Sutton.

"Whatever you doin' here, Miss Francy? What's it all about?"

"The same old thing, Ricky. What else?"

"Yeah—of course. I mean, how'd you ever get leave? Do they know you're ashore?"

"Maverick, darling! I am free, white, and twenty-three. All I own in the world is six thousand dollars left me by my grandmother, and a quarter-interest in an oil proposition. The six thousand is perfectly safe where it lies."

"Gee, Miss Francy, I wish I could say the same."

"So do I. It isn't, and that's why I'm here."

"Miss Francy, Sutton and I been talkin' about that just before you blew in."

"I know. Mr. Sutton has nearly talked his head off explaining it. That sob-story took nearly as many words as the description of the world's creation, in the book of Genesis. Three hundred, I believe."

"How come they let you stop ashore?"

"I made it perfectly clear that a quarter-interest in a dead sure oil proposition was worth at least some personal effort on my part."

"Then why did they sail off and leave you here, Miss Francy?"

"Selfishness. Papa was in a tearing hurry to get home and at work on a monograph that's going to need the help of the Congressional Library, and Van gets off at Puerto Cabando to go to the Capital."

"Lookin' for Don Edmundo?"

"I don't think so. Looking to tie us up here so he can start something."

"He's a little late gettin' started," Ricky said. "She's apt to pop most any time now."

"Van's been hoping that she would before he left," Francy said.

RICKY looked puzzled, but Sutton took out his pipe, agreeing: "I get you. He figgers that a well brought in through unlawful means don't count. He's right. If a country offered a subsidy for the first company to start an air-mail service to foreign parts, and somebody stole a

plane and got going, they could cancel the subsidy when they proved it on him."

Francy nodded: "That's it."

"Then," Ricky said somberly, "it looks like we're stung."

"Not yet," Francy said. "That's what I stopped ashore to prevent."

"How, Miss Francy?"

"You ought to guess. You gave me the idea, when you were telling Van where he got off. Or where you did."

"You mean with those Gonzales papers?"

"Yes. State that some papers have come into your possession that show documentary proof why you should be acting in the Gonzales instead of the Don Edmundo interest—or half-interest. First locate and get in touch with the Gonzales heirs. They'll agree fast enough. We can square Don Edmundo, later."

SUTTON stared at her. He did not speak. Then he got up, walked over to the engine-house and stopped the rotary drill.

Ricky sat plunged in thought. This was the first time in his life that he had ever locked horns with his conscience, or even with his ethical sense. Heretofore his activities had always teamed evenly with his honor.

He said slowly: "Miss Francy, I just hate that."

"So do I, Ricky. But it seems to be that or nothing. Either for us or for Don Edmundo."

"It might be somethin' for Mav'rick," said Sutton, who had come back. "Chains. Helpin' to build a nice wide road to Van Beekman's oil-field."

Ricky shook his head. "We got no real proof, but there's never been the least doubt in my mind but that this Gonzales was a dirty thief from the start. He's been for years coilin' round the hacienda prop'ty like a slimy boa-constrictor. He'd finally squeezed the life out of her and was all spraddled out to swallow her when Don Edmundo spraddled him."

"True, Ricky."

"I never held out those papers to blackmail the Don. They were just in case Van Beekman or some other double-crosser got to him first and misrepresented what I'd done."

Francy nodded. "I understand. For a check on the other fellow, not on Don Edmundo."

"That's it. My honest conviction is that neither Gonzales nor his heirs were ever entitled to any claim to anything except what might come from Gonzales salary. If he used his savin's for brib'ry and corruption and to back his thievin' operations, then there was nothin' comin' him."

"My idea precisely, Ricky. But the point now is this: Shall we take the risk of Gonzales' heirs getting nothing, and Don Edmundo getting nothing, and our getting nothing,—never mind the jail part,—rather than try to fix it so that we'll get something and Don Edmundo something and the Gonzales' heirs too?"

"A whale of a lot," Ricky said bitterly. "A whole half-interest against our cuttin' the other half three ways."

"Maybe the old buzzard aint got any heirs," Sutton suggested.

"Then they'll make them some; don't worry. That aint just the idea, though. It's—well—" His face puckered. "I don't know jus' what the heck it is, but it don't strike me right. Sort of crooked."

Neither of the others spoke. Ricky went on as if to himself: "Here's a man that had him a father he liked so much as to follow into exile, and a mean old mother so ornery nobody could stand for, so she hauled off with this skunk of a cousin, who robbed her. Then Don Edmundo comes back and sails in to reg'late things, too late. He tackles it injudicious-like. We get a break and save him the last drippin's of his prop'ty, and are now all set to catch a long shot. A whale! And now thanks to another hydrophoby cat—Van Beekman—we're tempted to double-cross Don Edmundo."

"Double-cross him, Ricky?"

"Sure. Don't you see? Whether we get him a fortune or not, those papers make his justifiable killin's, murders."

Francy sprang up. "Gosh, Ricky, I forgot that part of it."

Sutton said sardonically: "A millionaire can't be a murderer. It's against the law."

Francy nodded. "A legal paradox. Don't you see that, Ricky?"

"Sure—but Don Edmundo might not see it."

THERE was another silence. Then Ricky said slowly: "Start her up, Sut. Let her turn round and round and round."

Francy was watching him intently. Ricky was staring into space. Sutton got up and started the drill. Ricky asked presently: "Miss Francy, can you think of any sort of clue that might get us to Don Edmundo?"

She shook her head.

"Think hard. Try to remember every little thing he said, before I butted in on you there in that river-bed."

"He hardly spoke, Ricky."

"What did he say when he captured you? Think hard!" Ricky's voice was peremptory. Also his face of a schoolboy was hard. She had never thought that he could look and speak like that.

"He was curt—a little sarcastic. When one of the peons led over a pony for me to mount, he said: 'Sorry I can't offer you a mount from the magnolia string.' I don't know what he meant by that."

Sutton's eyes flickered and their lids narrowed. He pointed his pipestem at Francy, as if holding her up. "Sure he said 'the magnolia string,' Miss?"

"I think—no, wait—he said '*our* magnolia string.'"

"Uh-huh." Sutton's eyes held a gleam.

"What about it?" Ricky asked.

"Wait a minute. Describe this Don Edmundo. Close."

"Six feet. Weighs about one hundred and sixty-five. Forty-five years old, perhaps. Black curly hair, grizzled over his ears; dark slaty eyes; straight, clean-cut features, aquiline, I suppose. He'd be handsome if he didn't look—"

"What about his legs?"

"He wore riding-boots. Chafed nearly through, inside—"

"Sort of military guy? Like he ought to be called 'Captain,' or something?"

"He is a captain—or was in the war."

"That's enough. I got him. He's trainer at the Magnolia Racing Stables, near New Orleans. Owned by a rich old cotton millionaire, Colonel Laitue."

Ricky was on his feet. "Gee—how d'ya know?"

"I know a-plenty. Playin' the races was always my vice—like yours is playin' square. Both can bust you. I made money all over the Southern States two winters ago. Trotted round under the race-horse trucks. I know 'em all. Then at the end of the season they took it away."

Ricky said: "You got some baggage, Miss Francy?"

"Yes—that new baby trunk. Over at Señor Torres' house by the wharf."

"Come on, then. We're goin' another journey, startin' now. To this Magnolia Stables place. Just another bet. Looks like you and me was fated to travel together, Miss Francy!"

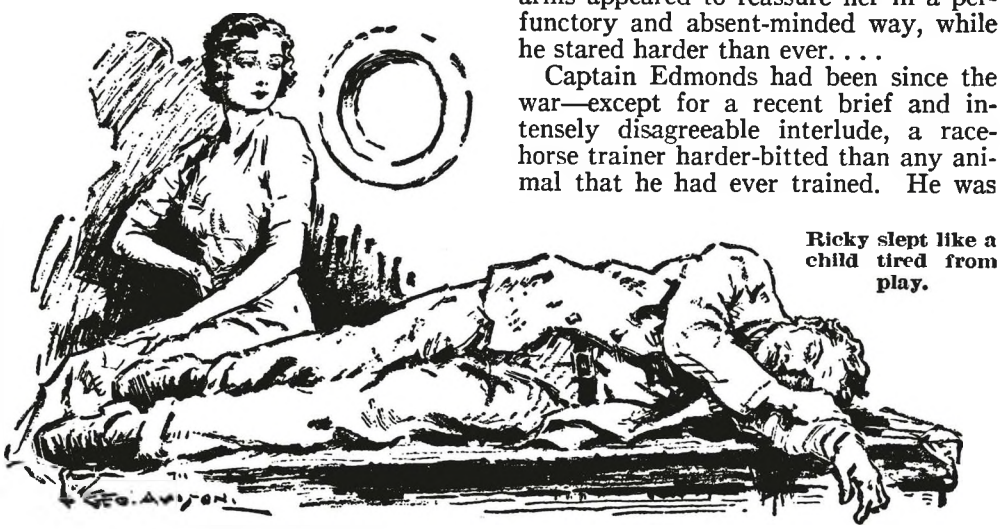
"Why, yes, Ricky, so it does," she said.

AS Don Edmundo José Miranda de Trujillo,—known locally as Captain Edmonds, and at the stables as "Cap'n" but never as "Cap,"—was moodily watching the try-out of a three-year-old that was disappointing in form, he saw from the corner of an eye and then from the center of both of them, two people approaching.

Captain Edmonds stared. He had a habit of staring at very pretty young women, and one of these was that. The other was a boyish-looking young man in flannels and a white felt hat. The trainer saw that his stare was returned, with a great deal of interest. The pair stopped, as if to brace themselves for the projection of an even harder stare.

Then the pretty girl turned, suddenly flung herself against the wide chest of her companion, and embraced him. His arms appeared to reassure her in a perfunctory and absent-minded way, while he stared harder than ever. . . .

Captain Edmonds had been since the war—except for a recent brief and intensely disagreeable interlude, a race-horse trainer harder-bitted than any animal that he had ever trained. He was



Ricky slept like a child tired from play.

respected, to some extent admired, and generally feared. He was usually hard up, because while nobody could teach him anything about race-horses, nothing could ever possibly have taught him how to bet.

At this moment he was terribly depressed. The genial old owner had not long before caught a long-shot bet, and the shock had been too much for arteries tempered for years and years by old rum, but in recent ones by new alcohol. A stroke—of luck—had been his bad luck. It finished him. The estate was selling off the stables—and Captain Edmonds was soon to be out of a job. Nobody was apt to want him. People were afraid of him, less for anything that he had ever done than for what one felt that he might do at any moment. Some men seem to bear the stamp of killer, and he was one of them.

For a moment it seemed to Captain Edmonds that this boy and girl were afraid of him, especially the girl, to judge from the way she had given him a look, then clung to her companion. But the trainer saw that he had been wrong about the boy. That youth was staring at him as a schoolboy whose parents are of limited means would stare at a shiny new roadster given him as a surprise graduation present.

There came then a rush—an exclamation that sounded like "Donnymundo!" and the astonished trainer found himself grasped by both elbows. By the young man! It was a familiarity unparalleled in the Captain's experience.

Suddenly he remembered. The yacht girl—and the—quartermaster. What the devil! The girl was lovely. But the quartermaster—damn his cheek! Captain Edmonds might be a mere hard-boiled trainer, but he was also Don Edmundo José Miranda de Trujillo, heir to a vast plundered and lost estate. He was not at all anxious to meet anybody who knew him in both identities.

HE drew himself up with a military stiffness. But before his tongue could pierce into the crass consciousness of the yacht's quartermaster, that young man said:—

"Gee—but Sutton was right. That guy couldn't be anything but right."

"Look here, sailor, what's all this about? What do you want of me?"

The girl said demurely: "We want to give you a half interest in a producing oil-well, Don Edmundo."

"She's gushed, but she's capped for the moment," Ricky interrupted, then explained lucidly: "Sut got a wire through to me that she'd gone over the top, hard. A big baby. He capped her quick, and he's waitin' orders. Van Beekman aims to trim us."

"Van Beekman—that ugly-tempered, insulting—"

"*And* worse, Donnymundo. That pig-hog was mean enough—say, we got no time to stand here: you tell him short and quick, Miss Francy."

"Ricky—the quartermaster—and I took your shipload of cattle to Puerto Cabando and sold them for cash, and bought an oil-derrick with the gear, and brought it back and set it up near La Bosta, and now we've struck oil—lots of it."

"That's fine, Miss Francy, but you left out somethin'. It's all in your name and mine, fifty-fifty. That seemed only fair, since I located the oil and did most of the work."

"Hold on. For God's sake, what are you two—"

"Listen, Donnymundo. To start with, just get a load of this: You are a millionaire. A multi-one, maybe. But you've got to act quick. You got to get signed up with me down there, and quick."

"But—oh, *madre de*—oh, gosh! I'm wanted, down there! I shot the damned place all up. Hanged those three men, and killed a couple of that scoundrelly da Silva's men—and Gonzales—"

"That's all right," Ricky interrupted soothingly. "All that was fine. Great stuff."

"But the brute had papers—Gonzales, I mean. My mother told me as she lay dying—asked me to forgive her—" The emotional Latin in him looked out for a moment, then closed the visor again. "She had signed away about everything to him. I choked his clerk into telling me where he had them hidden, and I burned them. But he'd had the most important ones on his person—"

"I know," Ricky interrupted. "I took 'em off him. A power-of-attorney and two mor'gages on the hacienda—"

"You—you took them!"

"Yeah. Just after you bumped him out of the saddle. That was sure one good shot. There was a bullet found the right billet."

"Do you mean that you have got those papers, Quarter— What's your name?"

"Ricky Smith, often called Mav'rick. Now see if you can get this, so's we can save time." His voice was suddenly curt as Captain Edmonds' own. Ricky was getting a little tired of being spoken to as if he were one of the stable gang. "I sold those beautiful humpbacked cows that had been driven off your range, for sixteen thousand dollars, and bought me an oil-rig at a bargain and loaded it aboard the ship. Now here's the point." Ricky leveled his finger at the trainer's chest. "I had a lawyer draw up a declaration in our joint names, not tenants in common, to drill a test well to try for the concession. I signed her, and filed her with this lawyer, name of Castries, in Puerto Cabando. And now, if this goes with you, then we got to get your signature on that document, and quick."

"Are you trying to tell me that you've done all this since I left there?"

"No, I'm tellin' you."

"And struck oil? But it's impossible."

"Look-a-here, Captain, I didn't come here to argue about all this, but to tell you. We've got everything but the concession. Van Beekman is down there in the Capital waitin' for me to claim that. Then he aims to invalidate the claim on the ground the well was drilled with stolen money."

"I see. So that's why you're so overjoyed to meet me."

"Yes—and it's why you ought to be tickled to death to see us. But we better do something. Soon's the news gets out 'at the well's come in, Van Beekman will attack the claim. He may charge me with financin' it on the proceeds from stolen cattle, and technically he'd be right."

"Half right," Captain Edmonds corrected, "since you entered me for a half-interest. I begin to get this through my head. Business was never my strong suit. Go on—please." The last word was a little unusual in the Captain's vocabulary.

"Well, if you see fit to repudiate my action from the start on the ground it was done with no knowledge or sanction of yours, he'll be entirely right."

"I see. Then what?"

"Search me. It looks, though, like you might have a pretty good claim to the whole works."

CAPTAIN EDMONDS gave him a searching look. "What would you do about that?"

"S'posin' we let that lie for the moment. Tell me somethin', Don Edmundo: Did you make any sort of agreement about oil with Van Beekman?"

"Yes. Just before I cleared out, I signed a privilege for him to drill where he liked on the hacienda property."

"Does that run down to the shore?"

"No. There's a strip of littoral a kilometer deep that's governmental."

"Then that's all right. Well, what about it?"

"About what?"

"About your backin' us up—Miss Francy and me. We worked this thing together, and she's in for a half of my half share."

"Mr. Smith, now that my head is clearing a little I'd like to hear the story more in sequence and in all its details, from the time we got separated. Let's go over and sit down."

He waved his crop toward a bench in the shade of a big liveoak.

"You tell him, Miss Francy," Ricky said. "I get things sort of scrambled when I'm feelin' up in the air. You talk good."

Francy and Captain Edmonds seated themselves. Ricky remained standing. As might be expected of the daughter of generations of classical instructors Francy's diction was excellent, when she forgot to inject it with modern argot. In her rather low-pitched throaty voice she described practically everything that had happened since they had been separated by the rush of Da Silva's band. She even injected the narrative with a spice of mocking humor.

RICKY, watching its effect on Don Edmundo, but covertly, saw the man's hard mask relax. The Latin in him began to glow. But when in due course Francy came to the final scene in the drilling camp where she had suggested the switching of the Don Edmundo to the Gonzales heirs' interest—and she did not spare herself—the face of the trainer looked for a few moments like that of some *conquistador* ancestor. Francy told of how Sutton had got up and stopped the drill, tacitly taking Ricky's consent to the plan for granted. Don Edmundo looked like an Andes eagle.

Then, as Francy described Ricky's flat refusal, gave his oration on ethics, commercial honor, almost verbatim, the captain's features relaxed and his eyes burned. So did Ricky's face. Francy

was overplaying the dramatic stuff, he thought. But Don Edmundo did not appear to hold a similar opinion.

"Well, I think that covers it," Francy said with an attempt at lightness of tone that was not a success. She had not described their subsequent journey.

DON EDMUNDO sat silent for a moment or two, looking at his spurs and tapping his chafed riding-boots with his crop. He said then in a voice that sounded at first a little like the steamer's whistle when filled with the water of condensation, before she cleared it:—

"This makes me feel like—like a damned fool."

"You aint the only one," Ricky said. "I felt that way every so often for days on end."

"We've got to get off some cables, Smith. One to a friend of mine at the Capital, and one to the Minister of the Interior, and to your lawyer at Puerto Cabando—and your driller, Sutton. Then we will scout round for a plane." He looked at Ricky. "All this is going to cost some money—and as usual I'm nearly flat."

"I got a pretty good wad left, Cap'n. Yours."

"Call it ours." He looked curiously at Francy. "Your people must be in a stew about you."

"I cabled her pa," Ricky said, and added dryly: "When we got married."

Don Edmundo laughed. "I've been wondering about that wedding-ring!"

"You see, Don Edmundo," Francy explained, "there never was the slightest reason in the world why Ricky should have split his share with me. I hadn't done a thing but get in the way."

Ricky interrupted: "Shucks, Miss Francy was all that kept me goin'. Without her I'd have bogged down at the start. I just couldn't bear the idea of her marryin' this Van Beekman guy."

"So when we had to wait a few days for a ship to load fruit I managed to persuade him to let me keep on getting in the way, indefinitely."

"How you talk, Miss Francy! As if you didn't know by that time how I felt!"

"Keep still, Ricky. It wasn't so easy, Don Edmundo, but I had my passport and Ricky had a license to drive a truck and a receipt for an oil-drilling rig and an order to command a ship and sell a load of cattle, so we managed to get married by offering a small bribe."

"You only said the half of it, Miss Francy. I had these, too, but I thought best not to offer him all I got." He took a packet of papers from his pocket. "Here's that power-of-attorney and a couple mor'gages on your hacienda, Donnymundo, and a lot of other truck."

He handed the packet to Don Edmundo José Miranda de Trujillo, who took it like a man in a trance. Francy looked frightened for an instant—until her swift glance at Don Edmundo's face. Then she decided that Ricky knew his Latin America. Ricky knew everything. Besides, he had that unerring intuition of the horse, the dog, the woman and the little boy.

Ricky said hurriedly, for like a little boy, emotion distressed him: "Soon's we get producin', Donnymundo, you can stock up your hacienda again with those beautiful mouse-coated humpbacks and start you a stud of race-horses, since that's your high line, and get you a yacht or airplane or somethin'."

"And maybe you'll invite us again—as you did before," Francy said, "but more hospitably—and offer me a mount from the Magnolia stables."

"EXCUSE me," Don Edmundo murmured. He opened the packet and ran his eyes rapidly through its contents. Slowly his face congealed again; his dark eyes grew slaty.

"Worse even than I'd thought. This scoundrel simply wolfed everything. I don't see how he dared—"

"Don Edmundo," Ricky said, earnestly, "I'd have touched a match to the corner of that record of crime long ago, only for one thing."

"What, Mr. Smith?"

"Oh, call me Ricky. We're partners—I hope."

"You bet—Ricky. More than you know just yet. Why didn't you burn them?"

"Because I thought that later on when you were fixed right you might want to give 'em to your lawyer."

"Why?"

"To prove you had every just cause and reason to plug this shark Gonzales. I'm no lawyer, but the whole business seems to me so raw that those papers, even signed like they are, might do you more good than harm."

"By gad, I believe you're right."

"You might want to run for President—or maybe Minister to the United States. That case you'd want you a

clean record. There'd always be the feelin' that maybe Gonzales had been actin' within his right. But if you get you a good lawyer and have the case tried out and show how this crook got round a poor dyin' old lady and her kin at that and drained her like a—like a—"

"Like a filthy vampire. I'll do that."

Ricky raised his hand. "But not yet. Let's get a nice flock of derricks workin' first. Let her lie for a couple years."

Francy said softly: "You see, Don Edmundo, my boy-husband is not so dumb. Neither does he give everything away. He holds out even on his bride, sometimes. This is the first time I've heard anything about this."

Don Edmundo nodded.

"Yes, he talks like a rodeo peon; but he acts like an American high financier."

"Oh, say," Ricky protested, "don't call me that. Van Beekman is one of those orn'ry things."

Don Edmundo shook his head. "Ricky is not the Van Beekman type of financier. He is the type of the sort that made this country what it is. A combination of vision, daring, opportunism and always swift action. He is not afraid to do a legally wrong thing in the knowledge that he is morally right . . . even if it lands him in the penitentiary. I should say that he had also his share of that, without which no man, however great, can succeed."

Francy nodded. "L-u-c-k. Luck."

"That's the first true thing been said 'bout me, Miss Francy."

"You oughtn't call your wife that, Ricky. Really. It's going to give some Don Juan a wrong impression."

"Then he's going to find out his mistake, Donnymundo," Ricky said grimly.

A FEW years later Francy said to her husband as they came on deck after dinner:

"Ricky, do you remember what you said one night, ages ago, when I asked you what you would do if you ever got your oil and became enormously rich?"

"Back there in that river-bed? When you got hysterics so's I had to hold you from topplin' off that lop-ear pony? Sure."

"Well, what?"

"That I'd get me a nice big yacht like this, and go careerin' roun' the world."

"And what did I say?"

"That that was 'xactly your idea of a real time. You aimed to get you a yacht, too, you said."

"Right. Then do you remember my asking you what you'd do about your wife if you were so busy with your papers and things that she felt herself neglected?"

"I sure do." Ricky grinned. "I remember every little thing you said about that time, Miss Francy."

"What, then?"

"I said that in a sad case like that, maybe your husband might take her ashore and sort of cheer her up. That's when you went on a laughing spree."

"YOUR memory has always been a fresh source of wonder to me, Ricky. Like your prophetic sense. Well, that's what's come to pass. Your wife has felt a little neglected recently."

"Gosh, Miss Francy!"

"So your neglected wife has decided to break loose tonight—"

"Gee!"

"With my husband. He may not know it yet, but he's apt to find it out before the evening's over."

"Maybe not, Miss Francy. Your husband is one dumb guy."

"Yes, a poor dumb beast about some things."

"F'r instance?" Ricky asked, a bit uneasily.

"Well, my spoiled husband thinks that all he has to do is to scratch on the door and whine when he wants your wife to take him for a romp. But if he is busy with his bones when she happens to feel like making whoopee she has to wait."

"Selfish mutt, aint he? But maybe he's buryin' bones for my wife."

"Bones aren't everything. Neither, I admit, is whoopee, though nearly. But anniversaries really ought to be observed, and this day happens to be an important one. A triennial."

Ricky looked startled. "Gee—it aint our wedding . . . no, nor Mav'rick Edmundo de Trujillo Darling's birthday, and yours was las' month, and mine don't count." Then he sprang up. "I got you. It was three years ago today the Miss Francy well roared off in the pourin' rain and put a crimp in the mosquitoes far and wide. Gee, what a night! Oil goin' up in a geyser and water comin' down in floods."

"Yes, and after our thinking we had a pay-well all capped and finding that we hadn't—"

"And then goin' down six hundred feet deeper with the old drill borin' like a bumble-bee into a dry log and Sutton

down with fever and babblin' about bettin' the oil-well on Magnolia Belle when he ought to have picked him a mud-lark mare with feet like a flamingo—"

"And then my husband getting desperate and hoisting out the drill and putting in a shot of soup—"

"And—whoopee!" Ricky embraced her violently.

"That's what your wife wants to make," Francy said in a smothered voice. "That's why she's all dressed up in a *robe rose,* and everything."

"Well, your husband is comin' a-runnin'." He put away his papers, knotted his tie and reached for his coat. "Go get us some money out of the safe. A lot."

He went on deck. Captain Tibbetts was seated on the low cabin house talking to the French chef, who was half out of his hole, like a fat grizzled badger.

"Away the gig, Cap'n. I got to take Miss Francy ashore an' buy her a gusher of champagne and get hold of Don Edmundo and buy him fifty ponies of cognac, on the hoof, and let him take us for a ride. I just been reminded this is an important anniversary."

"I was achin' to tip you off, Ricky, but got orders from Miss Francy to hold my jaw-tackle—"

"Well, next time you kind of smuggle it through, Cap'n. Say, Cooky, if Mav'rick Donnymundo wakes up and starts squallin', prance him up and down the deck a few laps. His teeth are botherin' him."

"I geeve him a bacon-rind to bite."

"Yeah, that's good. He's a sailor. What's that?"

FROM the shore a speed-launch was tearing a long strip in the velvet of the night. She glided alongside. A quartermaster said in Spanish:

"Don Edmundo's compliments to the Señora, and everything is ready and we are come to take her and the Señor ashore."

"Okay—come on, Miss Francy. Seems you folks put one over on me. Gee—listen!"

He looked shoreward. The dark opacity of land that three years ago had presented from the sea the form of a sleeping panther a quarter of a mile long now looked more like a cage for that animal. A line of tall skeletal structures stood out in silhouette against the sky.

But the panther was there, and something had roused the beast. The deep vibration of her growl disturbed the stillness. The crew of the yacht came pouring on deck. Many had heard that sound before . . . and found profit in it. Ricky's generous impulses had not been paralyzed by great wealth any more than had his natural democratic ones.

LIGHTS were weaving in and out like fireflies over on the shore. Yells and acclaims and *vivas* were drowned in a swelling and stupendous roar that was far enough away to undertone the sound of voices on the yacht's deck, without absorbing them. The faint night-breeze off the land pulsated and became impregnated with a curious odor that had become an olfactory delight.

Francy came on deck. She began a stately dance the length of it; a High Priestess of Oil performing a ritual of office. She careened into Ricky.

"Oh, Ricky—just listen to that! On our anniversary! Why did I remind you?"

"Old Sut will be askin' that . . . and Don Edmundo. I'll bet Sut had her all loaded with a shot of nitro and blew his whistle the minute and second that the Miss Francy came in."

"Like him, to put one over on all of us," Francy said.

A new hand who had been signed on when the yacht was north asked the chef in an awed voice: "Say, Chef, what d'ye call that?"

Ricky answered him. "Let's call it a gusher, Dave. Now she's let out her first whoop we got to christen her. All that string of tall young ladies are named 'Miss' something. The first was Miss Francy. The next was Miss Mav'rick, because there was some argument just then about the brand. Then came Miss Cue, because she got out of plumb and made some trouble. Miss Spent blew the casin' out and ran wild for a spell."

"She wasn't the only bad girl of the family," Francy interrupted. "Miss Understood sulked, and Miss Anthrope didn't like the drill crew."

"No, she mistreated them shameful."

"Miss Calculate was a surprise, and a splendid example of how a good well ought to act. What shall we call this one, Ricky?"

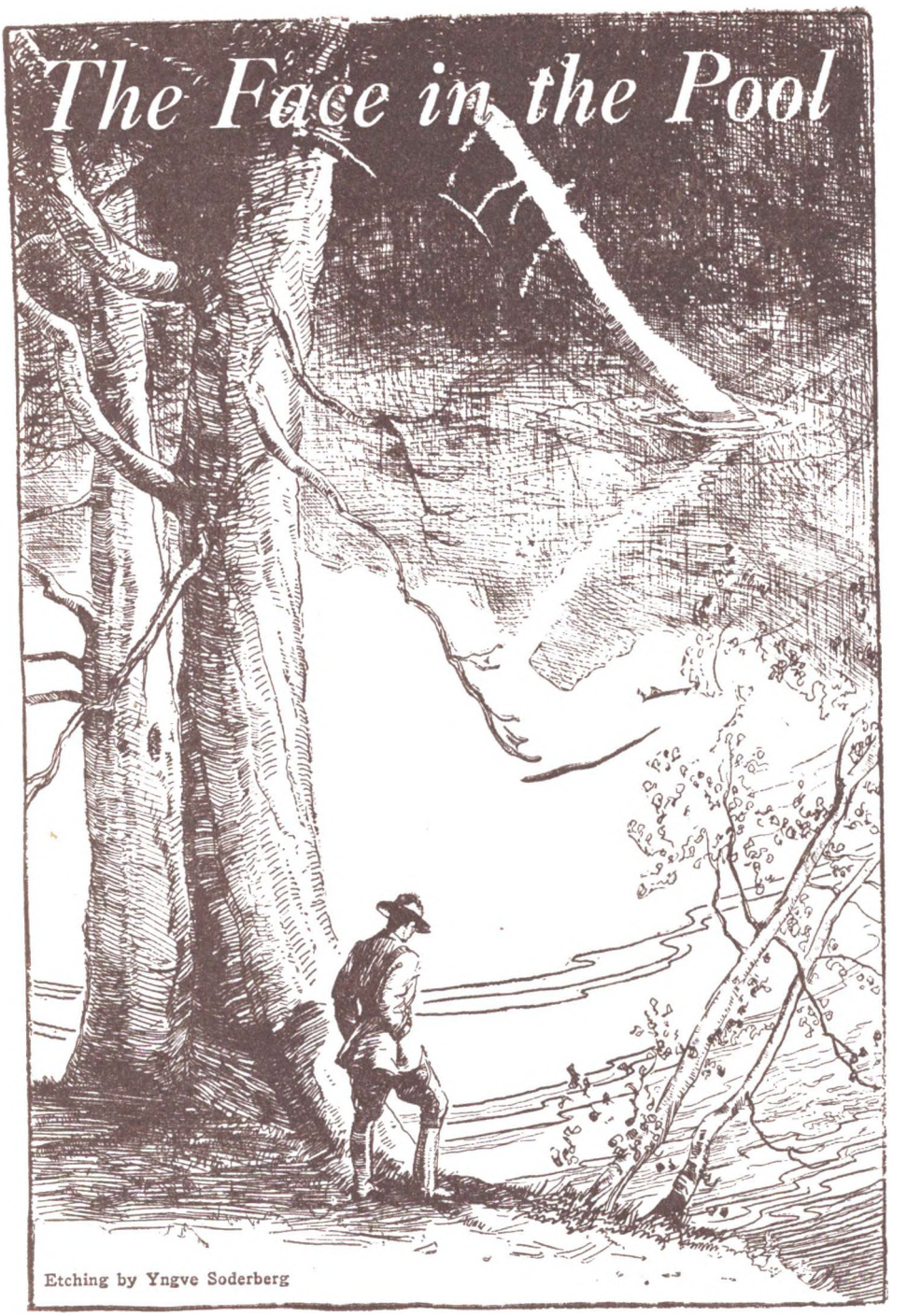
"Let me think. Since she's the last we got room for on this miserable strip of shore where nobody's ever been able to grow any fruit or coffee, let's call her—"

"Miss Fortune!"

"Yeah, that's good, Miss Francy."

THE END

The Face in the Pool



Etching by Yngve Soderberg

IN the high sierras was a deep, old, dark and very lovely pool. Around it great trees reached their stately tips toward heaven, aspens paled and shivered, and little piñon trees hummed with eerie tenderness in the keen clear wind.

Close down to the verge of the water came a brownish carpet of pine needles, disturbed only by scampering chipmunks or more dignified gray squirrels. Fed by unseen springs, the surface was at most times marvelously clear and still. To a casual glance this pool seemed serene and blue as the sky itself; but on closer acquaintance its aspect changed in a singular manner. . . .

A lonely figure appeared near the edge. When one stood here, as stood the forest

The able writing-man who gave us "Life's a Fight, Kit!" here offers a brief but memorable drama of the West today.

By GORDON KEYNE

ranger Luke Crane, those clear empty depths altered. They became distinctly dark, perhaps from some reflected color-blend of the brown carpet, the green trees, the invisible rocky bottom of the pool. And there was something else:

Normal water is rippled and uneven with touch of breeze or leaf or insect; this was not. The stillness, the unruffled round of these vague crystal deeps, struck the beholder as something ominously outside nature's current. One fancied strange glints and shadowy movements in these profound waters. As the vasty depth of a crystal ball attracts the imagination, so this clear yet apparently sinister bowl of water wakened singular mental reactions in one who gazed into it for any length of time.

AS Luke Crane stood here today, he felt this more strongly than usual, though he felt it only vaguely, subconsciously; for his mind was wholly dominated by another picture—the image of a man who lay behind a clump of brush not far away, a tiny blue hole in his forehead, his eyes peering forth eternally and unwinking, all mysteries solved.

Now, as always, the pool was the same, yet never twice alike. The mirrored length of Crane's lean figure, clad in trim ranger uniform, looked up from the verge. Beyond this reflection lay nothing, but the word was a misnomer; it was not *nothing*. It was a formless something so utterly illusive and fascinating that now, as whenever he came here, Crane found himself gripped and motionless.

He had remembered old stories, heard when he first entered the ranger service; how in the Indian days this pool had been held sacred, and used only by medicine-men, or when young warriors were initiated. Old stories, today forgotten as the red men who worshiped the Great Spirit were forgotten.

"Forgive me, Great Spirit! Forgive me; it was done by necessity."

Conscious of his thought, of his actual muttered words, Luke Crane flushed slightly and awkwardly. Childish nonsense! Yet he frowned again at the water, and again the words came to his lips:

"Great Spirit, forgive me."

Shapeless forms, before his very eyes, were certainly to be glimpsed there. Slowly, surely, upon him advanced and grew the uncomfortable sensation that down there in the depths something was assembling and taking shape. It was impressing itself upon his consciousness. It was holding him in an increasingly powerful spell before which he was quite helpless.

Beneath this still surface the clear, dark water seemed mistily alive and writhing, as though the far deeps were taking on an actual expression. Across Crane's mind stole a gradual feeling of chill numbness. The sinister aspect of the pool deepened, became more acute.

Most undeniably he had the impression that an eye, a pair of eyes, lay there wide open and staring up through the water. Not nice eyes, but malefic, filled with an ironic and evil glitter. Crane's fingers twitched; they felt cold and clammy. Useless to touch the pistol in his pocket; it would do him no good. The impulse rose and died away in his brain, and his hand remained motionless.

Of course this queer sensation was all very absurd; yet within himself he could feel it more and more powerfully. Evil—a leering, exultant evil beyond words. A merry, laughing horror that chilled thought and action, and yet inspired frightful shapes within the brain; mere shadows of thoughts, ghostly wraiths of fancy, formless and terrible in their very lack of coherence.

CRANE had come here to do something, but the purpose momentarily escaped him. His grim, finely carven face lacked its usual alert tenseness. He was abstracted, lost in the singular mental caprices evoked and provoked by this dark, still pool. As he gazed down into the deepling vagueness, his eyes were unconsciously filled with a reflection of the lurking, leering horror that seemed to twinkle up toward him.

"Pa-sak-ah-na-ta"—the syllables dimly recurred to him as part of the forgot-

ten name given this pool by the vanished race. "Water Where the Great Spirit Speaks" was the old lost name. It had no meaning to the occasional tourists in this forest preserve. To them, the name was a fanciful relic of untutored Indians.

Luke Crane was not so casually sure of what he knew. During his lonely vigils he had discovered much that was beautiful, incomprehensible yet vitally true, in these conceptions of the redskins. And in the name they had given this pool he could dimly sense a tremendous meaning.

Now he found himself shaken and nerve-twitching. Tiny rivulets of sweat were gathering at his temples. The leering, evil eyes in those vaguely luminous curls of water were more pronounced. They were assuming new shape, slowly settling into the simulacrum of a face.

Sheer nonsense as was such a mirage, Crane found himself more and more certain of it. The slow accretion of horror began to heighten within him, as he fancied that the lips of that shadowy face were moving, were speaking. In all truth a voice was crying out at him, a human voice, slow to reach his brain with reality.

"Luke! Don't you hear me? Wake up, ranger man!"

CRANE stirred, and the spell was broken. He turned, and astonishment fell upon him at sight of her there in the fitful sifted sunlight beneath the trees. A smile broke on his lips and warmed his features; yet under the smile lingered something cold and fearsome, as though the deep pool's mirage were still reflected in his eyes.

"You!" he ejaculated. "Why, Betty! Hello, there. I was seeing things in the pool."

"Seeing me?" she said brightly, joyously, coming to him with both hands outstretched, with eager gaze alight and shining. "Dreaming dreams? But that's barred, ranger man. We made an agreement about all that."

"Oh, sure." Crane's tense, drawn look relaxed and vanished. "What on earth are you doing here, Betty?"

She sobered. "The ranger station was empty; I thought you'd be here. I came to say good-by all over again, Luke; and to make sure you aren't taking it too hard." Her gaze met his in brave unflinching question. "After sleeping over it, I know that we were right. It was a brief, beautiful vision, but it can't come true now—not if we're to be really happy always. And a little waiting won't hurt."

HE nodded quietly. With gusty horror, he remembered the thing he had come here to do, and why. He put the thought hastily away, lest she see it in his face.

"Right; I'm not unhappy about it, my dear," he said quietly. "You don't love Paul; but you're engaged to him, and at the moment you must remain with him. He's a sick man, mentally and physically. But where is he, and his sister? I thought you were all breaking camp and pulling out this morning."

They turned together, facing the pool. Crane's eyes struck quickly down at the water, and jerked away as quickly.

Lies, lies! He felt a little heartsick and shaken; but there was nothing to be done about it. The thing had happened. He could not help it now. He could not tell her about it—not now.

"We couldn't get packed so quickly," she said, holding his hand and looking at the water. "We'll leave this afternoon. Paul took his rifle and went out to have one more try at the deer he has a permit to kill. So I came here. Do you ever kill deer?"

"I never killed one," Luke Crane said slowly. "I tried, once, and couldn't do it: a queer thing. You know, when the Indians killed any creature for food or protection, they told the Great Spirit about it, very simply. They asked Him not to be angry."

He checked himself. She pressed his hand quickly.

"I know; you're protection, not menace. It's been glorious to know you, Luke. We mustn't pretend now. Reverses, family troubles, worries, have put Paul in terrible shape. He's not himself. He's wildly nervous, apt to do anything. For his own sake, I must stick with him. Not for marriage, of course; but right now, I can't leave him. I've talked it over with his sister. She understands. She'll help. It only means that you and I must wait awhile."

"Loyalty," said Crane, "is the rarest thing in life, my dear."

"Perhaps; but until I have everything out, break the engagement, tell Paul the truth, you and I must wait. I'll not see you or write you until then. I want nothing false or underhand in my life."

"That's you all over," he murmured. She was still looking down, staring into

the water with wide and abstracted eyes. Presently her voice came low, restrained, hurt.

"I must be honest with you. I don't know whether he heard something of what I said to his sister, or whether he merely suspected something; but before he left this morning, Paul mentioned you. Flung a sneer at me. I told him frankly that I liked you very much, but did not expect to see you again. It was true, then. He shrugged and went off. After that, I wanted to find and tell you. My dear, Paul's horribly jealous—"

"Never mind," said Crane quietly.

She still looked at the pool. Presently her voice came softly, very slowly, as though she spoke to herself in unawareness how time slipped past them.

"Strange! Every time I look into this pool, it's always the same, dark and queer and soft like watered velvet. And yet it's always different, somehow."

"Gives you the shivers?"

"Oh, no! Not at all. There's something delicately lovely in it; perhaps a water-fairy or naïad lives in this pool. Luke, I do believe that's it! Why, sometimes I can even see her face looking up at me." Smiling, she was silent for a space. Then: "A lovely, lovely face, the kindest and most beautiful eyes in the whole world, Luke! So unutterably beautiful—no words to express it—"

LUKE CRANE drew at her hand and pulled her aside, so that she blinked at the white sunlight, then burst into a laugh at sight of his face.

"Why, you're positively angry about it! So I've discovered your secret, have I? When I'm gone, you'll be flirting with this mermaid— Oh, my poor Luke!" Swift contrition seized her; there was a deep hurt, almost a terror, in his eyes. "I'm sorry, ranger man."

Crane again remembered the thing he had come here to do. He forced a smile.

"It's nothing, my dear. . . . See here, run on to the station, will you? The chief ranger is due sometime this morning; there are one or two notices I must put up, then I'll be along. If he's not there, we'll tune in the radio, have a bit of music and a last dance all to ourselves, and say good-by."

With a bright nod, she clapped him on the arm.

"Right."

Crane walked to the trees with her and sent her on along the path with a hand wave. Then he came slowly back to the pool, hand in pocket, fumbling with the heavy pistol there.

His gaze was compelled by an irresistible fascination to those cold clear depths. He started slightly, a frown springing to his brow. A lovely mermaid? Not much. Rapidly, without hesitation, those crystal waters were taking on the same leering hint of diabolical mockery he had seen before.

WITH a subdued oath, Crane jerked the flat automatic from his pocket. Now was the time, the moment imperative. While this pistol was loose in the world, there could be no safety, no evasion, no peace of mind. Ballistics experts would make it talk in a voice of shouting. But with one swift fling, it would be gone beyond recall! Resolutely he drew back his hand—

"Luke!"

His head jerked around. There was the chief ranger, striding swiftly down the path toward him.

"Hi there, Luke!" came the hearty voice. An erect, deep-eyed man, this chief ranger, very wise in all things, as one who had lived and learned. "Who's the lovely lady I just ran into?"

The pistol forgotten in his hand, Crane turned.

"Eh? Oh, that was Miss Martin. She and her party are camped up by the spring. Pulling out today. I didn't expect you so early, Chief."

The other put out his hand and took the pistol.

"An automatic, eh? Let's have it. I've done no practice with one of these new-fangled things for a long time. D'you know your tunic has a bad rip?"

Crane twisted and looked down. Under his left armpit, from back to front, there was indeed a rip in his tunic.

"Thanks. Snagged it in some brush up above, but I didn't realize it was ripped. Want me for anything right now?"

The chief ranger shook his head.

"No. Run along, if you like. I may do a little practice with this gun of yours. I'll be back presently at the station."

Crane looked at the gun, at the man. He nodded, and turned away.

"All right, Chief. I'll be up there."

The chief ranger, left alone, went on to the edge of the pool. For a little while he looked reflectively into the formless depths of the water. Then he lifted the pistol and sniffed at it.

"He did it, sure," the chief ranger decided, with a grimace. "He was going to throw the gun in there. He didn't guess I'd stumbled on the man's body. Hm! That rip in his tunic began at the back, and a bullet did it. And Brady's rifle had been fired once. He lay hid in the brush. An inch of difference, and his bullet would have gone through Luke Crane. As it was, Crane had a chance to turn, whip out his gun, fire. But why? The girl, of course. Betty Martin. Engaged to this fellow Brady. Hm! A bad actor, from what I've heard of him."

He shook his head slowly.

"Attempted murder, yes, but all guesswork on my part. If Crane talks, it's plain and evident self-defense. If he doesn't talk, he may not be involved. Either way, might be bad for his future. I'll leave the choice to him—"

Abstractedly frowning, he stared at the water; and some far eddy in the still depths caught his attention. Shadowy movement was there, not reaching to the surface, yet taking shape from nothing.

"Queer!" he muttered. "It's impossible. Yet I could swear—"

He leaned forward intently. Impossible or not, something was actually taking shape there, to his imagination. Perhaps some play of the sunbeams, striking down athwart the deep empty spaces of water. Into the chief ranger's gaze came an expression of startled wonder and awe.

Mere fancy? The outline of clustering rocks far down beyond sight? He straightened up and drew back a pace, his eyes still wide and fixed.

"No, by God!" he said, but not with decision. His words were hesitant.

Again he frowned in meditative, balancing thought. His hand weighted the pistol up and down as though balancing this too in the pan of some invisible scale.

Then his face cleared. He suddenly nodded. His hand flicked the pistol out into the air. It struck the water and shot down like a plummet, lost to sight, as ripples broke and widened and broke back again.

The chief ranger drew a deep breath, and shoved back his hat.

"There! The decision's up to him—I hope you're satisfied," he said, and with a last look into the pool, turned and strode on back toward the ranger station on the hillside.

The pool amid the trees was still again, unmoved, crystal-dark.

Walking

A true son of the old West tells the vivid story of a strange and little-known range-land phenomenon.

By BIGELOW NEAL

ON the extremity of a scoria-covered butte, Glen Conroy dismounted. Stretching himself at length on a clump of sand-grass, he tilted his hat against the Dakota sunshine and lapsed into troubled contemplation of the drama at his feet.

Nearly five thousand head of cattle in a single herd—a multitude that filled the natural amphitheater below, from bluff to bluff, a vast ever-shifting carpet of red and brown. Up to his ears came the roar of bellowing steers, the blatting of lost calves and the anxious calling of worried cows. It was this last which caused the troubled look in the rider's eyes. There should have been no cows. This was supposed to be the steer herd. But owing to a single moment of negligence on his part it was the combined herds of the 4X.

At the sound of hoofs behind him, Conroy rose to his feet. Turning, he found himself facing the man of all men he most dreaded to see then—Bill Dailey, grizzled, wind- and sun-scarred veteran of the prairies, manager of the 4X. Glen Conroy knew what to expect. The other cowpunchers had told him the inevitable result of his neglect.

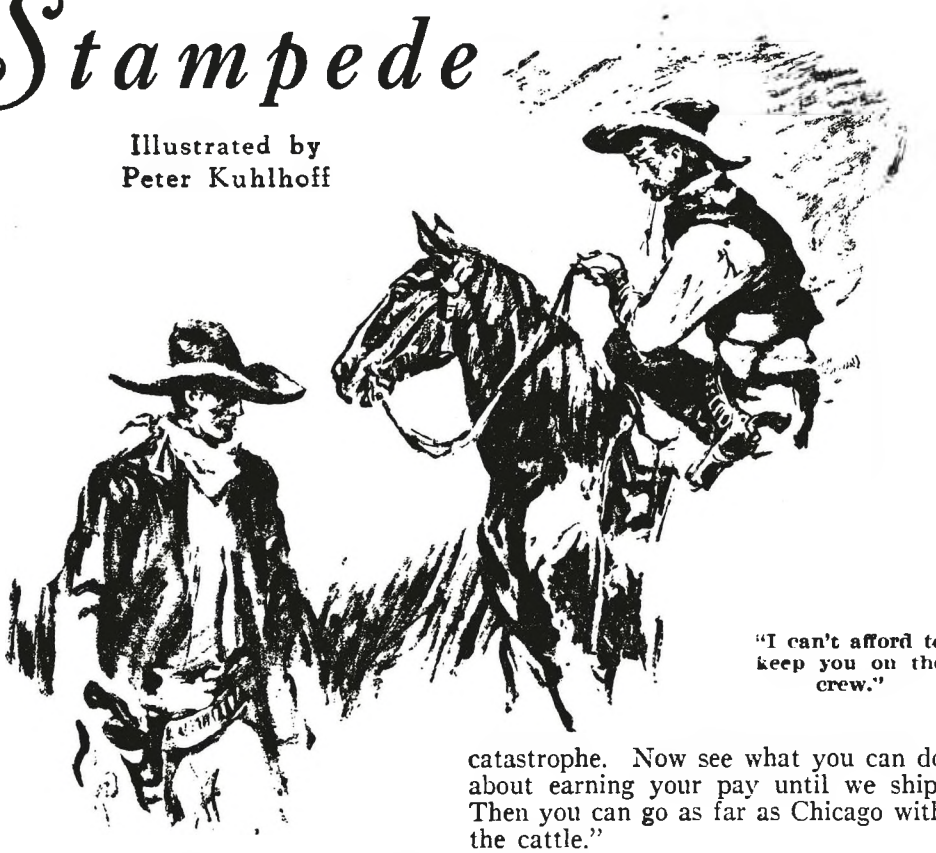
He lifted his gaze to the stern face of the cattleman.

"I suppose, sir, this means I'm fired."

Bill Dailey threw one knee across the horn of his saddle. His forefinger spun the rowel of a spur. "Well, I shouldn't put it exactly that way. It isn't half so bad as being fired. It's merely telling you I can't keep you after we ship the beef. I'm not calling any names. I'm not even angry. You went to sleep, and the herds got mixed, and your neglect

Stampede

Illustrated by
Peter Kuhlhoff



"I can't afford to keep you on the crew."

cost me a lot of money. Accordingly I can't afford to keep you on the crew."

"It wouldn't do any good to say I had been riding hard all day and was pretty—"

"No, I don't believe it would bring us to the real difficulty. You were brought up in the East, and had things easy. While your intentions are good, you haven't the physical make-up to carry them through. Out here on the prairies and in the Bad Lands, you have run into conditions beyond your strength and endurance. I had a young fellow like you once before. He was alone with the herd when a blizzard came up. He figured his first chore was to come to headquarters for an overcoat. Meanwhile the herd drifted with the wind. They got blinded by the snow, and nearly five hundred head went over that hill and piled up on the ice." Dailey raised his hand and pointed to the south where the benchlands along the Missouri ended in a precipitous drop to the water.

"I let him go, because he cost me around fifteen thousand dollars. Sooner or later you'd do something even more expensive than you've done already. I am letting you go to avoid another catastrophe. Now see what you can do about earning your pay until we ship. Then you can go as far as Chicago with the cattle."

Glen Conroy knew Bill Dailey too well to argue further. The "old man" was a just man, but he was also a stern man. The youth withdrew his gaze from the glimmer on the distant river, and returned to his moody contemplation of the herd. Dailey turned his horse and rode away.

THIS, then, marked the end of Conroy's cherished ambitions of a log cabin somewhere in a timber-filled valley, where a spring flowed from a vein of lignite coal. Beginning in a small way, time and hard work would bring herds of his own. But now there was no place for him on the 4X; nor was there an alternative, for while he might find work elsewhere in the spring, there was no employment to be had during the winter. There was nothing to do but go back East as Dailey said. But it was a bitter disappointment.

After a time something touched him gently on the shoulder. He looked up. It was his horse. Probably a fly had brushed across the big bay's lip, but it felt like a gesture of sympathy. "Ginger," exclaimed the youth, running his hand over the velvety nose, "it's kind of tough,

isn't it? I can't stay here because Bill Dailey won't let me; and we can't go away together because I don't own even you." Ginger cuddled his nose deeper in the shoulder of his temporary master. "It looks like good-by, unless something—"

Suddenly he sat bolt upright. He had heard nothing and seen nothing, but from somewhere came a vague feeling of something about to happen; he was alert now, studying the scene before him.

HE glanced to his left, where the bluffs swept in a great semicircle ending in another high point similar and opposite to his own. To his right the bench-land sloped away to the Missouri. The bulk of the herd was within the semicircle, and as sections moved to climb the bluffs, only to be turned back by mounted men, it gave to the whole the appearance of brown water splashing up the slopes of a deep basin.

His was the duty of guarding the western side. It was not difficult, because the bluffs were too steep to scale. Farther to the north a small clay hill rose from the herd like a coral island in a sea of brown. On top of the hill a saddle-horse stood head down, evidently asleep. Beside him a cowboy lay stretched on the clay. Farther on, three horses stood in a group, their riders out of sight. To the right, down on the flat, a lone rider on a sorrel horse moved along the edge of the herd. Conroy recognized him as Chuck McArthur, the range boss.

Still with that feeling of something amiss, Conroy turned his attention off to the south. There the warm October sun was dulled by a band of heat-waves dancing above the timber. Beyond he saw the liquid blue of bluffs on the farther shore. For a time he watched three tawny specks against the background of water. He judged they were deer, moving from point to point. Then, below him on the flat, a ripple in the tall grass attracted his attention; probably a coyote stalking a rabbit. Still he saw nothing wrong.

Aware of some change in the light, he glanced up at the sun. A haze overspread the sky. Sitting up, he looked to the west, but heat-waves cut off his view.

Conroy fired wildly into the column. And this time he heard a hoarse bellow of agony.

When he turned back to the herd, the saddle-horse had disappeared from the clay hill. The three horses beyond were gone also. And then Conroy was on his feet, for Chuck McArthur had vanished. Nothing remained but a hazy ribbon of dust stretching across the plain and ending in the mouth of a timbered coulee.

What had happened? Why had the entire crew dropped suddenly from sight? Again Conroy's gaze swept the semicircle, only to confirm his original impression. Not a man remained.

Genuinely interested now, he mounted his horse and rode back along the hogback to a higher peak. Still there was nothing to see, but here a cool breeze from the northeast fanned his cheek, and he suddenly stiffened in his saddle. It carried the odor of burning grass and sage. Now he understood the haze across the sun, for he saw rolling clouds of smoke piling up in the northern sky.

That some signal had come to the others, he could not doubt. Whether he should follow or remain with the herd was the immediate question. He finally decided to stay. At least there could be no charge of neglect.

Returning to his original position, he threw his knee across the pommel of his saddle and rolled a cigarette, but his senses were alert. There would be no daydreaming or fretting at his own ill luck. With the crew called away to fight a fire, the responsibility of guarding the herd rested fairly upon him. They never would catch him asleep a second time.

For some inexplicable reason the day grew darker. He was puzzled, because the smoke from the fire did not drift in a line to cover the sun. There must be some other explanation. A glance to the west told him the startling truth. From horizon to horizon stretched a rolling, pitching, white-crested cloud. Below the crest the cloud was as black as night.

CONROY realized that he faced a formidable combination of prairie phenomena. He had a feeling that an older head than his might have become rattled under the sudden responsibility. Undoubtedly he would have no help in his dilemma, because the men who had been withdrawn to fight the prairie fire, working desperately in a smoke-filled atmosphere, would see nothing of the storm until it burst about them. At the thought, he smiled in spite of his newborn troubles. At least the storm would nullify the fire. When the rain began, the problem would be cut in two. Even then it would take time for his comrades to retrace their steps, and he could expect no immediate aid.

He turned again to the west. The cloud was much closer, and the crest mounted higher in the sky; the white mass along the front revolved like a giant roller. The background, blacker than ever, was shot with green and crisscrossed with flaring ribbons.

Conroy could not repress a shiver of dread. And now as he began to hear the faint rumble of thunder, he was startled by a new phenomenon behind him. The bellowing roar from the basin died away. Not a sound came up from the flat. Turning, he saw the cattle were all on their feet, and that here and there eddies were forming in the herd.

Nervously he looked to the north. But there was no help in sight. Nor would there be. Whatever was to be done, he must do himself. And he knew that the field of his efforts must lie somewhere out on the flat, on the side of the herd unprotected by bluffs where the storm would have a clean sweep. Out here he could see neither rock nor tree nor bush. Taking to the open, in the face of that awful thing coming out of the west, taxed his courage to the utmost. He was alone on the open prairie with the heaviest

artillery of all rending the air above his head. For a moment he hesitated. Then his hand tightened on the reins. Bending low, he spoke to his horse:

"Ginger, we've got to get out there and take it."

Because he was old and the regular riders avoided him, Ginger had become Conroy's horse. But there are things beside decrepitude which go with age. Ginger was fearless, loyal and had the resourcefulness of long experience. At the pressure of the reins he swung about and plunged down toward the flat.

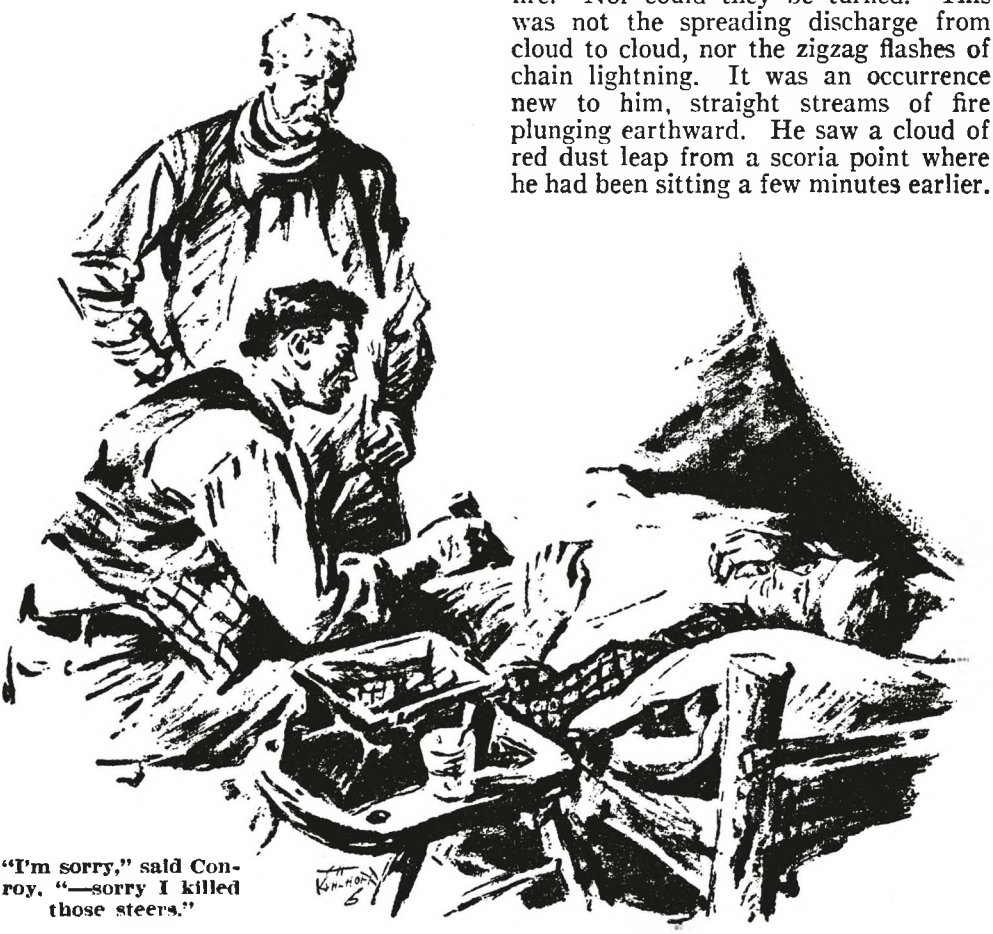
Hurriedly Conroy skirted the edge of the herd. Turning the stragglers back as he passed, he found it useless to attempt an impression on the main body. For some reason the animals were sluggish, yielding before him only to stop the moment he went on.

IT was growing dark: the light changed from yellow to dull orange; then, as the cloud swept up to cover the sun, to dusky green. Now he could hear the hammering of thunder, not in long peals and rolls, but in short, sharp crashes, echoless jarring, like the distant booming of artillery. Now there was no bellowing from the herd, no calling from cow to calf, only the clicking of hoofs, the subdued murmur and rustle of moving bodies and the swish of sun-dried grass.

He crossed the front of the herd and faced about. Snapping the rope which dragged from the horn of the saddle, whistling, yelling and waving his hat, he started back along the line. Suddenly a blinding white flare burst above the amphitheater, and a single crash shook the earth. He heard pebbles rattling down the face of a cliff, the hissing of leaves as a choke-cherry tree trembled under the concussion.

Within easy reach were the timber-filled ravines on the face of the bluff. He checked his horse and half turned toward the shelter they offered. Then he gritted his teeth and turned his back on temptation.

He made little impression, for the cattle resisted his every effort. Their senses seemed stupefied as the clouds opened fire. Nor could they be turned. This was not the spreading discharge from cloud to cloud, nor the zigzag flashes of chain lightning. It was an occurrence new to him, straight streams of fire plunging earthward. He saw a cloud of red dust leap from a scoria point where he had been sitting a few minutes earlier.



"I'm sorry," said Conroy. "—sorry I killed those steers."

Near the top of the bluff a dead cottonwood, a landmark for years, suddenly became a tree of fire; and out on the flat, a wide area of buffalo grass exploded and turned to a sea of flame. Now between the terrific discharges he heard a weird sound: the roar of the battling winds yet high above the earth.

UNDER the combined effect of the lightning and the unearthly roar the cattle began to move. To Conroy's relief, they were heading in toward a common center. It seemed that the danger was over, and he turned Ginger back toward the shelter of the bluff. Then out of the corner of his eye, he saw something that halted him in his tracks. At the far end of the line, like meat from a sausage-press, a stream of cattle issued from the milling thousands, headed straight for the river.

The heart of the youth throbbed painfully. This was the thing of which he had heard around the campfires: This was the most inexplicable phenomenon of all, the walking stampede. And here he was again alone and without experience to guide him. With the river ahead, it seemed that history was about to repeat itself, and the loss of which Bill Dailey had spoken would come again, this time charged to the account of Glen Conroy.

At the touch of the spur Ginger sprang into action. From the comparative protection of the bluffs they headed out where the lightning flamed like a canopy of fire above the prairie. But the jaw of the rider was set, and Ginger showed no signs of fear. With outstretched nose, his ears low against his head, the gallant old horse thundered ahead. Once a blinding bolt burst in front of them; and as they plunged on through a mist of dust and gas, Conroy caught the pungent odor of ozone.

He had nearly reached his objective when some change in the upper atmosphere stopped the static barrage. A silence followed the deafening crashes, a silence broken only by the increasing whine and roar of the winds overhead. And out of that silence came another and to him even more terrifying display. Down through the still air came streaks of white. Dull thuds sounded from the ground as jagged pieces of ice bounced and rolled across his path.

He reached the head of the column. He rode in front of the leaders, yelling and waving his arms. He expected them to turn or at least to stop. But they did neither. With heads low, with eyes glazed they moved steadily on. Conroy had heard of a silent stampede, of that strange state of the bovine mind which once in a lifetime causes cattle to strike out in a definite direction as if driven by some hypnotic force beyond the control of either man or beast. From the description he recognized the reality. Numbed by fear, forced into motion by the pressure of the herd, the animals were marching slowly, calmly, inexorably toward the river. It was actually a march of death. On that last mile across the plain he must stop them or turn them from their course. The alternative was a cascade of living bodies pouring over the bluff to certain destruction in the yellow flood of the Missouri.

Left to his own devices, Conroy might have been caught in the maddened host as it opened to sweep by on either side. But Ginger pivoted without guidance and sprang ahead. Simultaneously a wall of water engulfed them. The wind struck with the roar and force of a hurricane and out of that welter of mist and driving water the bombardment of ice became a thing of pain and terror.

Again and again Conroy crossed the head of the column. Buffeted by wind and water, pelted mercilessly by hail, one moment blinded by lightning and the next plunged into darkness, he shouted until he was hoarse but his efforts made no more impression upon the cattle than did his arms against the power of the wind. But in complete disregard of his presence, veering neither to the right nor left, they persisted in their blind course to certain death.

Conroy grew desperate. Again and again he charged the fear-crazed advance guard. Under the impact of Ginger's assaults the leaders staggered and wavered in their course but it was all useless. Apparently nothing could check their silent, inexorable march to the river.

THE wind rose to a velocity which staggered Ginger, forcing him to stop and brace himself or be rolled end over end. Time and time again it nearly swept Conroy from the saddle. The hailstones, at first the size and shape of eggs, increased in bulk and altered their form until they were jagged pieces of ice, some the size of a man's palm. The smaller ones stung and confused the rider; the larger shocked and numbed, cutting the flesh like knives. Back to

the wind, Conroy could see dimly and breathe; facing it he was blinded and suffocated by the driving sheets. But in spite of the all but impenetrable wall of water, he fought on.

The leader of the column was a red-and-white steer. Conroy beat the animal about the head with his shot-loaded quirt. It had no effect. Urging Ginger to the attack, they crashed against the steer's ribs, knocking him from his feet but he got up again and moved on, still with that dazed expression in his eyes which betrayed only the purpose to go on and on, in spite of elements or man, to certain destruction.

Now a momentary rift appeared. A flash of lightning gave Conroy a fleeting glimpse of the scene ahead. A few rods of grass drowned in water and choked with bobbing hailstones, then the brink of the bluff. Beyond and far below the flood of the Missouri was lashed into foam by seething ranks of white-crested waves.

TO the youth, choked by rain, beaten nearly into insensibility by hail, exhausted by repeated efforts, the cause seemed hopeless. Nothing could stop them now. They would go on to death with unbroken ranks and again he would be held responsible. The thought brought a mixture of anger and desperation. And with it another memory—Chuck McArthur telling how he had stopped a silent stampede years before.

"I'll tell the world," said Chuck, "you can't stop 'em with nothing on God's green dirt unless you can make one of the leaders beller. If you shoot one and he squawks, you got a chance. That's all."

It was a desperate chance, but Conroy was forced to the edge of the bluff. It was now or never. Urging Ginger to one more charge, he leveled his revolver at the head of the red-and-white steer and fired.

The steer wavered, dropped to his knees and rolled to his side. For an instant he lay rigid, his legs stiff, his hoofs trembling in the air. Then he disappeared, merely a stumbling-block under the blindly plodding feet of the herd. Conroy fired again, wildly now, emptying the chambers of his revolver into the head of the column. And this time, even above the roar of the storm, he heard a hoarse bellow of agony.

The heads of the leaders came up. They swung with the wind, falling over one another in a wild attempt to avoid the stricken animal. Tearing off his slicker, Conroy charged again, waving the yellow garment and throwing it over the top of the column. A hailstone struck his shoulder, and he saw it was a three-cornered piece of ice as large as his fist but his hat was off now, he was oblivious to pain, leaning from the saddle, yelling and beating the frightened cattle across the backs. They were turning too, swinging with the wind and streaming away parallel to the river. If only he could hold the pivot and prevent the lines from bagging over the bluff. His voice was no more than a croak, lost in the storm. His arms felt like lead, but he fought on.

Suddenly the wind increased to a tornado. He was under the tail of a hailstorm. Even as he saw a burst of orange light in the west and a line of mounted men tearing down upon him, a piece of ice came hurtling down to cut a long gash across his forehead. It made him sleepy. Somehow he felt he could do nothing worth while and he might as well rest. His head dropped to Ginger's mane and the roar of the storm faded. . . .

When he awoke he was puzzled. The thunder no longer rolled. His head was wrapped in something tight. He opened his eyes and saw the familiar roof of the 4X bunkhouse. The Cottonwood Indian Agency doctor stood by his bed. Bill Dailey was there also, looking down, it seemed grimly, at the injured youth. To Conroy's jumbled senses came the thought of the steers he had killed.

"I'm sorry," he said, and thinking of nothing more appropriate, he said it again: "I'm sorry."

"Sorry for what?" It was Dailey speaking, and somehow his voice did not sound so harsh as it had when they parted in the afternoon.

"Sorry I killed those steers."

DAILEY grunted and looked out of the window.

Conroy tried again. "But you may have all of my pay, if you'll take me as far as Chicago so I won't have to buy a ticket."

The cattleman withdrew his gaze from the night and dropped his hand on the youth's shoulder. "Sure, you can go as far as Chicago, go to New York if you like. But remember, son, you're traveling on a round-trip ticket."

While he was trying to make sense out of this, Glen Conroy fell asleep.

Another authentic drama of the cattle-country by Bigelow Neal will appear in an early issue.

The Stolen Blimp

A strange flight and a desperate battle high over the Atlantic.

By CHARLES B. PARMER

CAPTAIN LESLIE froze in his tracks. That sound—it was like something slumping to the floor, on the other side of the baby blimp. He listened.

"What's that noise, Sergeant?"

No answer. Leslie glanced across the gondola. A moment before, Sergeant Hume had been on the other side, tightening a shroud. They were trimming the little ship for a two-man flight at twilight. No one else was supposed to be in the dirigible shed.

Sergeant Hume had disappeared.

"Sergeant!"

Still no answer.

Leslie turned, and started around the end of the blimp. It was darkest there.

"Both hands up!"

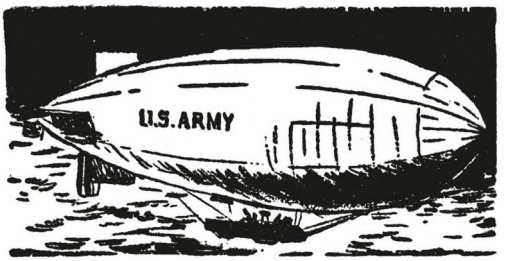
A figure loomed out of the blackness. An automatic in Leslie's face backed up the harsh command.

"I'm darned! Put that gun down—"

The order died on his lips. Another figure crouched in the shadows by the helium tanks. An arm rose—fell. Something crashed on the back of his skull.

Captain Roy Leslie, U. S. Army Air Corps, crumpled.

Everything was black when he came to. His wrists were bound, his feet shackled, his mouth gagged. His head—feeling as if a red-hot comet had struck it—was lying against something warm. He tried to breathe; his breath at first came in gasps—gasps filled with the stench of burnt oil and gas-fumes.



His head and shoulders felt warm, almost hot; but his feet were icy cold. He moaned, tried to turn. A silvery-black mass above him; but to one side, now the other, were faint pin-pricks of light.

Suddenly he realized his position: he was lying on the gondola's floor-boards, against the cradle of the radial motor. They were high in the air! That's why his feet were so cold. And the motor had been running. The faint roaring in his ears, the heat from the power-plant, told him the power had just been shut off.

He had been knocked out, and shanghaied on his own airship!

The gondola gave a lurch. They were drifting high in the air. It was long after dark. The silvery-black mass above him was the seventy-foot bag, filled with fifty thousand cubic feet of helium. Those pin-pricks of light were stars, seen through the shrouds from which the gondola swung.

Stabbing head pains increased. He was regaining full consciousness. Some one was bending over him—some one smelling of gin and cheap tobacco. "So you bob-tailed me!" In the dark of early night Leslie could not recognize the face; but he knew the voice: the voice of Jukes, private second-class, dishonorably discharged a year ago, with a record splotched with everything from thievery to A.W.O.L.

The man was taunting: "Took six months' pay from me, didn't you, Cap? And made me the chambermaid of the guard-house. Now's when we get even."

A heavy shoe cracked against Leslie's ribs.

"Hey! Lay off!"

Leslie gasped, turned his head. Some one was sitting in the stern. Leslie could see the dim outlines of his head and shoulders. The man spoke again:

"You louse! I'm paying you to do a job—not to rub him out."

The stranger stood up, grasped the shrouds. "Get him at those controls!"

Jukes seized Leslie's shoulders. "You got to help me," he muttered.

The tall man stepped gingerly to Leslie's feet, as if he feared he would topple over the gondola's side.

"Come on!" he commanded.

One man at his head, one man at his feet, Leslie was half lifted, half dragged, forward to the pilot's seat, and dropped into it with much cursing.

"Get back, you!" The tall man gave the command to Jukes.

Then he leaned over Leslie. The pilot felt something jammed against the back of his neck.

"Sure! You know what it is," the tall man said. "Now listen: give me your word not to shout, and I take the rag out of your mouth. Nod your head. If you don't nod—you stay tied. Take your choice."

There was nothing to be gained by refusing. Leslie nodded.

The steel was taken from his neck. Hands fumbled about his face. A foul cloth fell from his lips. He worked his jaws and tongue until they felt halfway normal. He tried speaking:

"Guess you know you're flying straight into Leavenworth pen—"

"Shut up!" Once again the steel was against his neck, and the stranger said:

"You'll fly straight to hell yourself if you double-cross me. Now, listen: Jukes handles the motor; you navigate this baby. Here, take this paper."

A hand reached over his shoulder in the blackness.

"How can I take anything, when my hands are tied?"

"Unloose his hands, but keep them feet tied," Jukes called from the rear. "That way, he can't fight back."

THE stranger took out a knife and cut the bonds. Leslie rubbed his wrists, then swore. "You'd better tell me—"

"Shut up! Take this paper."

A sheet was put into his hands. The tall man flashed on a pocket light, shielding it by the gondola's side.

"You don't need that—switch on the control-lights," Leslie said. He reached out to do it himself.

Something tapped his head. He jerked back.

"Not so fast, buddy," the stranger cautioned. "Maybe the field's searching for us—maybe your sergeant's come to. We don't want 'em seeing our lights. Now look at the paper."

Leslie did no such thing. He started to lean over the gondola's side.

"None of that!"

Hands jerked his shoulders back.

"No jumping overboard—ground's a long way off."

Leslie turned his head. His eyes now were accustomed to the darkness. In the reflected glow from the shielded light he saw the face looking down at him—a heavy, youngish-old face with a jagged scar straight across the chin; broad, thick lips under a wide and coarse nose. He couldn't see the eyes under the long-visored cap.

"You said you wanted me to navigate, didn't you?" Leslie demanded. "How can I orient myself, find our relation to the ground below, if I don't get my bearings on something?"

"All right."

The man snapped off his light, stepped back, and warned: "If you touch those control-lights, I'll bean you."

LESLIE guessed what had happened: The unusual sound had been Sergeant Hume's body slumping to the concrete floor. Hume had been struck first, and hidden in the hangar. Jukes and the scarred-chinned stranger had then crept upon Leslie, slugged him and thrown him into the gondola. They had warped the vessel out into the open with the electric tram. Jukes knew how to do that. The main guy had been released; the blimp had shot upward. No doubt the hangar sentry had been at the other end of his post. If he saw the ascent, he thought nothing of it. Orders of the day said Leslie and his flight sergeant would make the take-off at twilight.

Leslie glanced quickly from right to left, forward and back. Not a light in the skies, save those of the stars. He was praying to see spurts of dull red—exhausts from pursuit-planes—and the gleam of their riding-lights: to hear their roar.

He saw nothing, heard nothing.

"What did you do with my sergeant?" he asked—then jerked his head back again, as the man with the scarred chin tapped him smartly with the butt of his automatic.

"Get ready to navigate," was the only verbal answer to his question.

They had knocked Hume out—and dragged him into the hangar's shadows. Hume had not been discovered. The field didn't know Leslie had been shanghaied on his own ship! No use to turn those lights on; nothing would be gained. He needed all his wits now—to get out of this mess with his ship intact.

"Got your bearings?"

The man asking the question was educated, to a degree—not the common run of criminal.

"In a minute," Leslie told him. "Which way you been flying, Jukes?" he demanded.

No answer came from the disgruntled ex-soldier. Evidently he had merely shot the bag up and turned the motor on—had flown until it was black night. Jukes could handle the motor—nothing else.

Leslie looked over the side. Utter blackness below. That meant they were probably over the great Dismal Swamp of Virginia. If Jukes had flown north or west, lights from scores of villages would be blinking upward.

Far to the west were dim glows—towns nestling in the Blue Ridge foothills. To his left—east as the ship now swung—were faint, irregular flashes: lighthouses along the Atlantic seaboard.

"Read this paper now."

Again it was thrust at him, and the light flashed on it.

Leslie ignored it. "When I get my bearings, I'll look at it—not before. If you want to navigate yourself—"

"All right—all right!"

The light was snapped off. But in its momentary gleam Leslie had spied the altimeter—they were up twenty-eight hundred feet.

Whatever they were going to do tonight, they needed him badly, to navigate to some distant point. Why? He could guess a dozen reasons even with his half-numbed brain, but the paper might tell him.

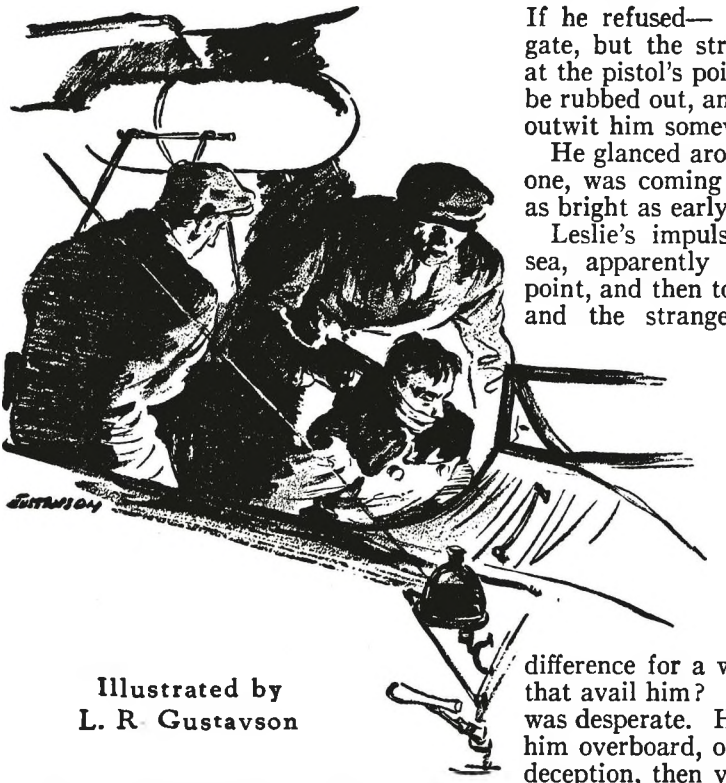
"Let's see that paper now."

Once more it was given to him; the light was again snapped on and shielded. One typewritten line stood out:

Fly to Lat. 36 degrees 30 minutes No.—Long. 75 degrees 30 minutes W.

He read those flying directions again, and said:

"You've got to give me lights over the instrument-board; I can't see to navigate without them. No one's chasing you. Either we have lights, or we drift here till morning."



"Give me your word not to shout," said the tall man, "and I take the rag out of your mouth. Nod your head."

Illustrated by
L. R Gustavson

"Don't you turn them lights on." It was the voice of Jukes.

"Shut up!" the scarred-chinned stranger broke in. "I'm running this circus —you 'tend to your engine." And to Leslie he grudgingly said:

"All right—turn 'em on."

Leslie turned the switch—peered at Aviation Chart V-235, tacked to the instrument board: Latitude 36 degrees, 30 minutes north, longitude 75 degrees, 30 minutes west, was a point on the ocean twenty miles off the North Carolina shore.

As he located it on the chart, the stranger beside him ordered raspingly: "When you reach that point—tell Jukes. There'll be a tramp steamer under you. Shut off power there. And keep your nose pointed straight ahead. Get me?"

Leslie nodded, threw on the starter, opened the gas throttle. The nine-cylindered motor roared with four hundred horsepower. Gently he jockeyed the throttle, warming up the engine gradually. The ship had a cruising radius of four hundred miles, and was fully fueled.

The man with the scarred chin was fleeing the country—had hired Jukes to aid him; this was Leslie's best guess as to the situation.

There was nothing to do but follow orders and fly to the designated point. If he refused— Jukes could not navigate, but the stranger would force him at the pistol's point to try. Leslie would be rubbed out, anyway. Better to try to outwit him somewhere, somehow!

He glanced around. The moon, a full one, was coming up. Soon it would be as bright as early daybreak.

Leslie's impulse was to head out to sea, apparently toward the designated point, and then to turn northward. Jukes and the stranger wouldn't know the difference for a while. But what would that avail him? His unknown passenger was desperate. He and Jukes would toss him overboard, once they discovered his deception, then valve down themselves.

There was nothing to do but go out and see what would happen—and pray that he could save his ship, and himself from eternal disgrace.

He gave the engine full gun. The tachometer read twenty-four hundred revolutions a minute. The gondola quivered and swayed with the full-throated power. The air burst against his face as the blimp surged forward.

In a moment of exultation, feeling himself master of his vessel, he almost forgot the painful head, the bruised ribs, the insult of his position. Tonight wasn't ended—yet.

They had licked him physically. Be hanged if he'd admit they could master him. He'd beat them with brains!

He threw the wheel over, and pointed the prow of the AO-17 due east. Far, far ahead, and a few points south, was a steady white point of light, a lighthouse. In a few seconds it flashed red. He began counting the seconds: One—two—five—ten—twenty. . . . At forty-five, there was another red flash.

He peered at the chart. That should be the Currituck Beach Light. He'd make sure. He read:

"F. W. & R. ev. 45 sec. 158 ft. Currituck Beach."

Right! Making swift calculations, he figured his destination eight or ten miles

north, and twenty miles due east of the light. He set his course accordingly, and roared through the night at two thousand feet altitude.

His feet felt frozen, and he kicked them against the prow to stir circulation. He was in flying togs when shanghaied; but he had not put on his moccasins—always he waited till just before stepping aboard. Those moccasins now were somewhere on the floor of the deserted hangar.

Jukes was well buttoned up. Leslie had noticed the stranger was also—against the cold of high altitudes. But neither, he knew, would have moccasins; he smiled grimly at the thought of their suffering too.

This stranger: murderer, kidnaper?

Unless he used rightly the wits the good God gave him, Captain Roy Leslie, U.S.A. was ruined forever, tonight. But if he'd get a break, just half a break—

The moon was now riding high in unclouded skies. Gradually the darkness had withdrawn. Below was a silvery expanse of ocean reaching to the far-distant horizon. And there, ahead, was a slender black form riding the sea. Pinpoints of light gleamed—riding-lights of the tramp vessel they were meeting. Starboard green, port red, and stern white, rising and dipping in a gentle offshore swell.

Now it was time to act.

THEY had lost altitude—the altimeter read eighteen hundred feet—because of condensation of the helium over the Atlantic. Leslie twisted in his seat and glanced behind him—glanced only an instant; for an automatic was raised and leveled momentarily at him: a pistol in the hand of the scarred stranger, propped against the starboard gunwale. Jukes was sitting on the port side of the engine, his knees drawn up within clasped hands.

Leslie again turned his face to the front. Beneath the instrument board was a pedal—a pedal he meant to reach. Though his ankles were shackled together, he slumped back in his seat and slung both feet forward—hard forward against that pedal, and held them there.

The pedal controlled the water ballast, and he held his feet against it until the last drop had gushed from the storage tank. The roar of the motor drowned the rush of water. The altimeter needle was rising; with a spurt the blimp soared upward on even keel to twenty-eight hundred feet, and hung there.

Leslie grinned to himself, despite his bursting head, his aching ribs. He was almost above the motionless tramp. He closed the throttle, again glanced behind him. Both men were getting to their feet, clinging to the shrouds as they came forward.

"What now?" Leslie shouted, knowing the engine's roar had temporarily deafened the stranger. The latter motioned with his gun for Leslie to face forward again. Leslie felt the chill of steel against his neck, heard words shouted into his ears:

"Listen! Bring this baby down to the water—near that ship. Get me?"

LESLIE nodded, but pointed to the altimeter:

"See that? We're too high to force down by dynamic power."

"What do you mean, dynamic power?"

"We're almost three thousand feet up. The engine won't force her down."

"Bring her down!" The pressure increased on his neck.

Leslie sat motionless.

Jukes now was leaning over him. "He can valve her—let some of the gas out. That'll bring us down," Jukes shouted.

Once more the stranger's hand shot out. The butt of his pistol tapped Leslie on the temple. "Get busy—valve her."

Yes, valve her! Below, he saw a long boat putting out from the tramp steamer—to take off his passenger, no doubt. Yes, valve her! And let escape from American shores a man the police of the country were searching for.

But what could he do? Put up a fight? A dozen times he'd had that impulse. Fight with his feet tied? They'd brain him and escape. Now was the time to keep his head—if any head was left. So he valved her. Tomorrow—or the next day—a blimp would be blown ashore somewhere, and he'd be telling a tale no man would believe—

"Faster—faster!"

Again the pistol was pressing against his neck. If he only could get a break—half a chance—

They were settling down gradually.

"Going to be all night at this?"

Despite the pressure against his neck, Roy Leslie turned his aching head. He tried to look up. "You want to splash in the ocean?"

"Get us down—get us down!"

The gun was taken from his neck. Gradually the AO-17 came down. . . . Now they were within fifty feet of the

surface—the altimeter wouldn't register that low.

"I can bring her still lower, but it's dangerous."

"Lower still, buddy!" was the reply.

Very, very gently he valved the blimp again. She sank to within fifteen feet of the surface. Leslie had a strange hunch: somehow he was going to get out of this mess—and not with disgrace, either.

He was keeping his head.

"Hey! Catch this line!"

The voice came up from the boat now beneath them. Six hundred yards away rode the tramp steamer. Leslie's chance would come when the stranger started to step overside. Leslie would make a lunge at him; they might fall together—but it wouldn't matter, if Leslie got to him.

Leslie spoke quickly, as both men snatched at the line tossed upward:

"Make the line fast here in the bow —there's a ring for it."

They took the suggestion.

Now they were drawing up a rope ladder; it was lashed by Leslie's side.

Leslie half turned in his seat. The stranger was sheathing his gun under his left armpit. Jukes was holding to the shrouds, looking down.

"Ready to leave us?" Leslie called to the older man.

He stood back from the top of the rope ladder, and said: "Keep your trap shut."

A jerk was given to the rope ladder—some one was climbing up! The gondola tipped under the weight.

Leslie looked down. A round little chap was coming up quick as a monkey. Hands reached the gunwale. A head popped into view. In the moon's clear rays Leslie saw a swarthy, thin-lipped, heavy-jawed face, with eyes that looked like glass balls. For an instant the man swayed with his feet on the rope ladder, and looked straight at Leslie. The latter saw the thin line of lips tighten. Then a leg popped over the gunwale, another one, and in a flash he leaped to the gondola's floor.

One rapid look, and he went into high profanity.

"What in the name of the seven idiots of Hades do you mean by meeting me with an Army blimp, Perone? Stolen!"

SO Perone—the scar-chinned stranger —wasn't leaving the country, but was bringing some one in!

"Now listen, Chief," the tall man said quickly, "I had to do the best I could. We had it fixed to hire a commercial blimp. The last minute, they got blinky. Backed down. Didn't like the color of our money. So we—"

"You fool! Why didn't you buy it? We could use it again."

The tall man spoke evenly and angrily: "I said they didn't like the color of our money, didn't I?"

"Why didn't you use a speed-boat?"

"Because you said not to—you said we'd run into a Coast Guard. That's what you said. You said this was too valuable—"

"So you meet me with a blimp that has U.S.A. painted all over it!" the chief broke in. "Trying to fly me into the Federal pen?"

The answer was a surly one: "Best I could do—you said meet you. I know Jukes. He's been in lighter-than-air service. Said for half a thou' he'd borrow this—"

"You borrowed it, all right! Who's this pilot?"

LESLIE turned around. He felt his break had come. "I'll answer: I don't know who you are, but I'm Captain Roy Leslie, United States Army Air Corps, Lighter-than-air pilot, and commander of this blimp. Now I'm telling you what your bright men did this afternoon—"

In short and crisp sentences he told.

Whoever and whatever the little chap was, Leslie saw he was a born leader of men.

"Untie the Captain's legs, before I spot you, Perone." He spoke with deadly calm. Then to Jukes: "You, throw off that rope ladder."

Both men began to obey—grudgingly.

Across the water Leslie saw a plume of smoke from the single stack of the tramp. Getting up steam to leave! The boat pulled out beneath them, and the crew labored swiftly toward the mother-vessel.

Perone was taking his time loosening Leslie's shackles. At last his feet were free. He stood in the pilot's box, and faced the man who had come aboard. A little chap he was, truly, scarce reaching to Leslie's shoulder. He stood well away from Leslie and Perone and Jukes.

"I put the three of you under arrest—"

Leslie's speech was cut short by the little man: "Wait! Never mind the arrest business. I've got you covered from my pocket, Captain."

A hand in the right coat pocket did bulge.

"Sorry you're mixed in this—very sorry." The words came soothingly from the thin lips. "But there's nothing I can do about it now. Just fly us to shore, come down at the nearest level spot, and we sha'n't worry you any more. I've got a little packet in my pocket—it'll make good your trouble."

"Yes? Keep your packet!" Leslie retorted. "I've arrested the three of you in the name of the U.S.A.—stealing Government property. But I don't think we'll ever see shore again."

"What's this?"

"Watch!"

ABRUPTLY Leslie sat down in the pilot's seat, threw the motor on, pulled the wheel over, and set elevators for a slow climb. The motor roared; the propeller caught the air; the blimp surged forward. He opened the throttle full, and glanced over the side. They weren't rising at all. They had dropped closer to the water, were almost skimming it.

He shut the throttle, turned to the group behind him.

"Why don't you take this ship up?"

Leslie merely looked at the small man.

"Well, why don't you?"

Still Leslie didn't answer. The spurt had sent them half a mile from the tramp: now it was slowly pulling away.

Leslie answered: "How can I take her up, when we're overloaded? This blimp was trimmed for a two-man flight. There are four aboard. Two too many."

"Dump that there water ballast!" The words were Jukes'.

Leslie looked at him with disgust. "You fool, there is no water ballast. You should have seen to all this before you stole this bag."

"No water ballast, eh? He should have seen to it, eh?" The chief spoke as calmly as though in an office ashore.

"That's what I said," Leslie answered.

The chief went into action. "There's one man too many here," he said crisply. The right fist came up from his pocket. It caught the slow Jukes on the button. The renegade crumpled, fell against the gunwale, and slid to the floor.

The right hand went back into the chief's pocket.

"Throw him overboard, Perone," he commanded quietly.

A splash sounded beneath them a moment later. Now there were only three men on the blimp.

"We've lightened her—now let's go up," the chief suggested casually.

"Look here—"

"Don't talk—act!"

The muzzle of the chief's gun was catching the gleam of the moon.

Leslie stood still.

"Now listen, you!" The chief's manner became hard again. "You take this ship up and get me to land. If you don't —over *you* go. That tramp back there has orders to watch us. If we're not up in fifteen minutes—well, it'll be too bad for a certain captain of the U.S.A. I'm trying to be nice to you. See?"

Captain Leslie shrugged and again took the pilot's seat. He thought his break had come, but the wheel of chance had turned and passed him. He'd have to keep his head, and wait.

Again he worked the controls. The motor bursting into power behind him, he slowly pulled the wheel over until the blimp was headed south—not toward the shore-line. Out of an eye corner he saw the chief leaning over the port gunwale. Perone was standing beside him.

The ship rose a few feet, but it was still overloaded. It skimmed over the water minute after minute.

THEN Leslie felt a tugging at his shoulders—it was the chief, motioning for him to shut off power. He did so.

"Can't you get this ship up?"

"See that elevator-control turned to ascent, don't you? Not my fault if your men steal an Army blimp and overload it. Might take a look around—see where we are."

Those spurts had carried the blimp far southward. The tramp was dropping below the horizon behind them. At sea-level they were out of sight of land. Far to the eastward Leslie saw the lights of a passenger vessel making for Cuba.

"I can take you to that liner—if we don't sink before we get there," Leslie said sarcastically. "But there'll be some explaining." He got to his feet and faced the two men.

"What's the matter with you skimming the water till we get to land?"

"Plenty! We won't skim twenty miles—we'll pick up water and sink. I won't try it. The only hope is to get in the air. And if you want to know, you're responsible for our fix."

"Me?" Perone stepped forward, grasping the shrouds.

"Yes—you! You told me to hurry and come down, didn't you? I told you that meant we'd have to valve out a lot of gas. You said to get busy and valve

her. I did. If we had some of that gas in the bag, we'd be in the air now, heading toward land."

Perone took another step forward. His right hand moved slowly upward.

"Perone."

The name was spoken softly.

Perone swung around, still grasping the shroud. The chief was smiling—Leslie could see the lips parting slowly.

"You always were a fool, Perone," the chief was saying, ever so deliberately. Not until then did Leslie see what was in his hand. But Perone had seen it. His free hand stopped in midair.

"I didn't think you were fool enough to put yourself on a spot."

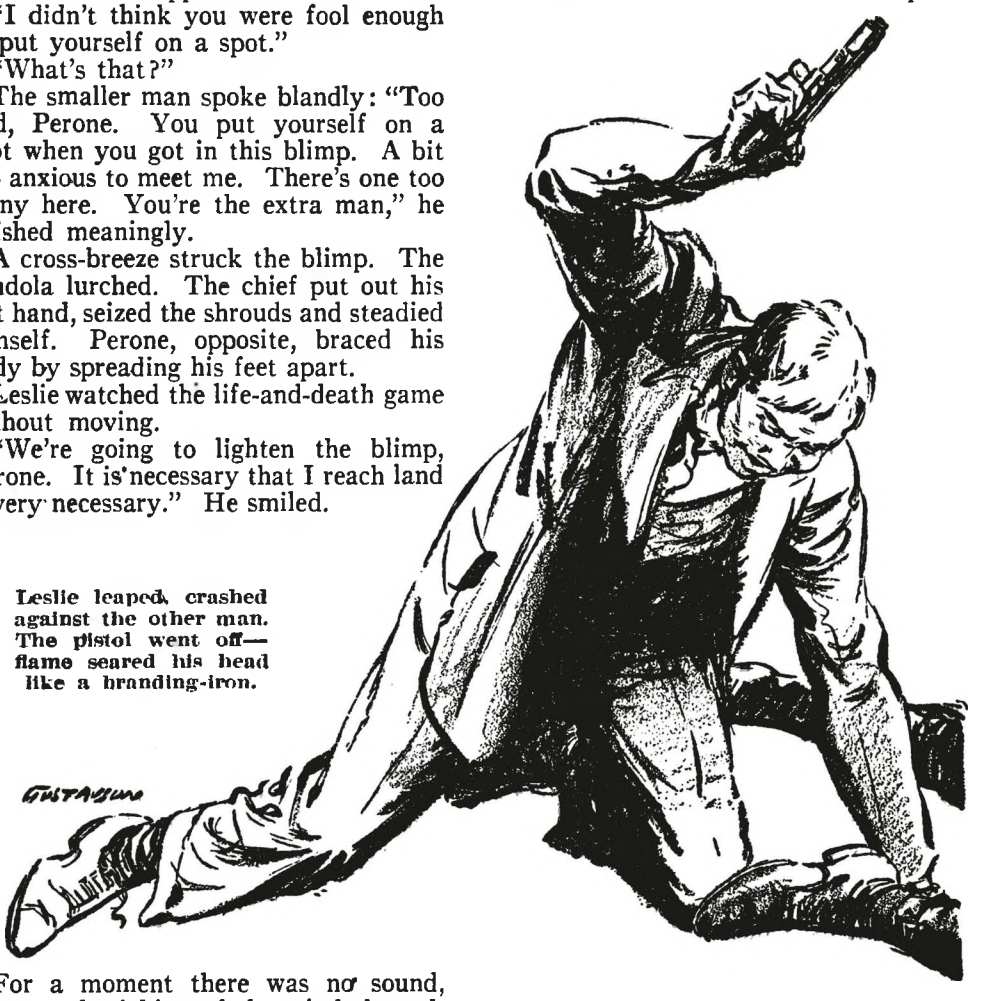
"What's that?"

The smaller man spoke blandly: "Too bad, Perone. You put yourself on a spot when you got in this blimp. A bit too anxious to meet me. There's one too many here. You're the extra man," he finished meaningly.

A cross-breeze struck the blimp. The gondola lurched. The chief put out his left hand, seized the shrouds and steadied himself. Perone, opposite, braced his body by spreading his feet apart.

Leslie watched the life-and-death game without moving.

"We're going to lighten the blimp, Perone. It is necessary that I reach land—very necessary." He smiled.



Leslie leaped, crashed against the other man. The pistol went off—flame seared his head like a branding-iron.

For a moment there was no sound, save a soft sighing of the wind through the shrouds. Far to the rear was the tramp, steaming off: Overhead, the silvery bag billowed gently. The moon's rays, falling from a cloudless sky, gave softness to the scene.

"You are not an air pilot, are you, Perone?"

No answer. The tall man stood immobile, his right hand over his chest.

The chief's right hand raised slowly. A gleam on something metallic—something raised and pointed toward Perone.

"Too bad, Perone. You can't pull your weight."

A sharp crack, a flicker of yellowish flame. Perone's hand—it had almost reached his armpit—dropped. The chin with the scar on it fell slightly. His eyes widened with surprise. He gasped once. Slowly his fingers untwined from the shrouds, and his knees buckled.

With a cat's lightness the chief stepped across the gondola and raised a hand. It touched Perone's chest. For a split-second the tall man swayed. The chief gave him a light push—barely more than a tap on the chest—and stepped back.

The body toppled backward between the shrouds, and over the gunwale.

A heavy splash sounded below them.

"He turned a somersault, made it belly-buster," the little man commented. "Well, let's go."

Leslie didn't move. He didn't speak.

"What's the delay? We've taken off the extra weight. Let's go, man."

At last Leslie spoke. "I'm not anxious to get back to shore—now."

"What's this?"

"I don't know who you are—I don't know your game; but I do know that you and your pals have disgraced me for life. Back in a hangar is my sergeant—slugged by your men. When he's found, and when I get back to the field, what kind of a tale can I tell? You've made a fool of me—"

"Now, wait! Look here, Captain, you're a soldier. Used to seeing tough things. Forget what's happened. Get me to land—anywhere. Before I hop out, I'll drop a packet—you'll find it. Twenty-five thousand in it."

With his free hand he took an envelope from his pocket.

"I'll drop it now." He did.

Leslie shook his head. "You are used to dealing with politicians. I'm Army." He straightened, drew in a deep breath. "Not for twenty-five million!"

The chief looked appraisingly at him. "I've got pull—plenty pull. A word to the right man—"

"And I'll be made a general? You may know politics, but you don't know us. You're going to learn tonight, though. . . . I can fly this ship—you can't. You're under arrest. Understand? Throw that gun overboard and be quick about it."

No move from the bland man. At last he spoke: "Get me to land—twenty-five thousand on the floor—you can count it now—"

"Get you to land and let you shoot me as you hop out? Not a chance!"

"Word of honor—"

"Don't make me laugh! And I don't need your money. Uncle Sam pays me every month."

Silence again.

"I'd throw that gun out now—if I were you," Leslie advised in low tones. "Bad enough for you to be caught on this blimp; it's going to be hanging, if they find the gun—*and there they come, pursuit-planes, searching for me!*"

He broke off—nodded toward the west.

For a fleeting instant the little chap turned his eyes.

LESLIE leaped. His body crashed against the man. The pistol went off—flame seared his head like a hot branding iron. The gondola swayed suddenly—both men collapsed to the floor.

The stranger writhed like a wildcat.

As they rolled, a thumb jammed into Leslie's right eye. He threw his head back—the man was trying for Leslie's throat. Leslie smashed him in the face. . . . Again they rolled; the officer landed on top, got both hands around the man's windpipe—gave one gigantic squeeze.

The wriggling body seemed to crumple and collapse.

One more squeeze, another smash in the face—and Leslie let go.

Leslie picked up the automatic, dropped it into the pocket of his flying-suit, and staggered to his feet. Holding to the shrouds, he glanced down at the still figure.

For a long while he stood there, looking down, waiting for strength to return. At last he spoke, as though the inert body could hear:

"By all the laws of war, I'd be justified in dumping you overboard. Let's see."

He glanced around him. Not a vessel on the horizon. Not a plane in the sky. He smiled as he looked upward. Odd that a man as shrewd as this one should be taken in by such a simple ruse!

"Fooled you!" he exulted.

The chill of late night had further condensed the helium; even without the other two men, they had not risen.

"Yes, I could toss you overboard," Leslie reflected. "But first I'm going to tie you up." He found the ropes which once had bound his own limbs. Taking

these, he trussed up the fellow, dragged him to the rear of the swaying gondola, and laid him athwart the stern.

Now heavily weighted in the rear, the bow of the blimp rose slightly. By setting the elevators for quick ascent, Leslie could force the blimp up. But—

"Pity you don't know anything about blimps," he chuckled. "Now watch me."

Leslie went forward amidships, opened a trap in the floor, revealing a lever. This he pulled back. There was an answering splash—two of them in quick succession—in the water below. He had dropped two dummy bombs, each weighing one hundred pounds.

The blimp was shooting upward.

He lowered himself into the pilot's seat. He was going to have a bad half hour explaining things to the old man when he returned to the field. He knew what he was going to hear: "You permitted your flight-sergeant to be attacked; yourself to be knocked out and shanghaied. Gross carelessness!"

Oh yes, he'd catch merry-jerry.

He swung the wheel over, set his elevators for ascent,—already they were five hundred feet from sea level,—threw the motor on, and turned the nose of the blimp toward a white light with red flashes he saw far to the west.

FLOODLIGHTS flared over the field as he approached. They were waiting for him. A skeleton ground-crew ran out. He shut off the motor and drifted a moment, then forced down with the motor, and carefully valved her. He tossed out his line. They caught it. Slowly he was dragged to earth. Gently, ever so gently, the bag settled down. Now they'd walk her into the hangar.

"Captain Leslie!"

He turned. That was the commandant's adjutant.

"Commandant's compliments, sir; you will not superintend the housing of the AO-17—the sergeant of the ground-crew will do that. You will report to the commandant at once, sir. I'm to escort you. He's waiting up for you."

"All right—all right."

Leslie climbed from the gondola. The adjutant warned: "Don't wait to change —commandant says to come instantly."

"We're coming," Leslie answered. He lumbered alongside the trimly uniformed adjutant. Hang it all, these flying-togs were as cumbersome to walk in as diving-suits. And he was tired, and his body was sore.

"Quite a little jaunt you had, eh?" the adjutant hazarded.

Leslie made no answer.

IT was past midnight as he was ushered into the commandant's office.

"Sir, the adjutant reports with Captain Leslie."

Leslie came to attention.

A straight-backed field officer glanced up from his desk. For a moment he said nothing. Then:

"Where in thunder have you been?"

"Over the Atlantic, sir."

"I thought so! You're the man who bedeviled me to let you try a one-man flight in the new blimp, aren't you? I turned you down—so you did it anyway. Rank insubordination!"

"But sir—"

"No excuses! Your sergeant, Hume —you have him well trained! Know what he told when the sergeant of the guard found him in the hangar?"

"No sir. I can guess."

"Of course you can. But I'm telling you: he said he thought he was knocked out—he had noticed a couple of men approaching the hangar: civilians. Said one looked like the Jukes we bob-tailed last year. He said—and we can't change him—that somebody sneaked behind him, slugged him—and when he came to, you were high in the air.

"He thinks you were shanghaied. As if anybody would steal an airship!"

"But—"

"Wait! I'm speaking," the voice came in cold, unemotional tones. "It's as pretty a story as I've heard. You have your sergeant well-trained. You did make a one-man flight, didn't you? Even if it was a success, you disobeyed orders. You are under arrest, sir. Report to your quarters."

"Yes sir!"

But he did not about-face and stride from the room. He stood motionless, and looking straight into the eyes of the grayed commandant.

"Well?"

"Perhaps the commandant would like to have the gun taken from my pocket," he hesitated, and finished: "—and given to the owner, the man who's tied up in the stern of the AO-17."

The commandant leaned forward. His thin lips creased into a straight line. He gazed intently at Leslie. Then he went into swift action:

"The arrest order is vacated. Be seated, Captain." To the adjutant: "Call the

Officers' Club—tell the medical major to hotfoot it here—the Captain's injured."

"No sir, I'm not—just had a singe."

"You are!" Once more to the adjutant: "Call the officer of the day! Tell him to take a detail to the AO-17 and put under arrest a man he'll find tied up in the stern. Bring him to me."

As the adjutant went out the door, the commandant spoke in a different tone:

"Tell me about it—from the beginning."

First Leslie took the automatic from his pocket and placed it before the commandant.

"Sit down—sit down."

Leslie sat down. He began: "My fault, sir. I should have been more careful. But as we were trimming the ship—"

He had reached the point where he dropped the dummy bombs, when the medical major entered.

"I'm all right—you better look at the other fellow," Leslie told him. The commandant smiled. The medical major looked professional; as he started to examine Leslie's head, the officer of the day reported with his prisoner.

"I'll say you gave him a shellacking," the commandant commented, seeing the glassy-eyed face caked with blood. "A good job, Leslie.

"What have you to say for yourself?" he demanded of the prisoner.

No answer.

"Search him."

The man started to fight. A smack on the jaw stopped him.

"Say! This is funny," the officer of the day said. "He's got on a mighty funny vest."

THEY stripped off his coat, then the bulging vest. Beneath it the man's body was bound by a bandage half a yard wide.

A knife ripped through the bandage.

"Say!" The officer of the day was excited. While the man's hands were held, the bandage was taken off. One—two—a dozen long tins dropped heavily to the floor. One was snapped up by a corporal of the guard.

"Let me take a look." The medical major was pushing forward. He took the tin in his hands—a long, heavy tin. He pried it open. It was filled with white powder. Wetting the tip of a finger, he stuck it in the powder, then placed the finger in his mouth. He grimaced, and as he spat, spoke one word:

"Heroin!"

He turned to the commandant: "Heroin—the highest-priced drug in the world today. Forbidden in America. It's the worst narcotic known—drives men crazy.

"The underworld is filled with heroin addicts. Since it can't be sold in America legally, anywhere at any time, you can name your own price on this quantity. Maybe it's worth a hundred thousand—maybe it would bring half a million."

"SIR!" broke in the dapper little adjutant. "We received word today from the Commercial Blimp Co., saying a suspicious character was trying to rent a blimp for a strange journey—"

"Why didn't you report the message to me?" the commandant asked.

"I—I didn't think it was of interest to us, sir. No one would try to steal an Army blimp—"

The sergeant of the guard gave a packet to the officer of the day, and whispered something. The latter gave it to the commandant, reporting:

"The sergeant found this on the floor of the blimp, sir."

The commandant took it—a plain, thick white envelope.

"Yours, Captain?"

"No sir!" Leslie denied. "It belongs to the prisoner. I saw him drop it."

"Then we'll open it."

For a long moment he looked at the bills in it—bills of thousand-dollar denomination, then glanced up at Leslie.

"He tried to bribe you with this."

He spoke the words as fact—not as a question. Leslie said nothing.

"You didn't tell me this, Captain."

"No sir. I—I forgot."

The commandant placed a hand on Leslie's shoulder, saying:

"You would forget it—you would!"

But his voice was harsh again as he turned on the prisoner:

"Know what we are going to do with you?"

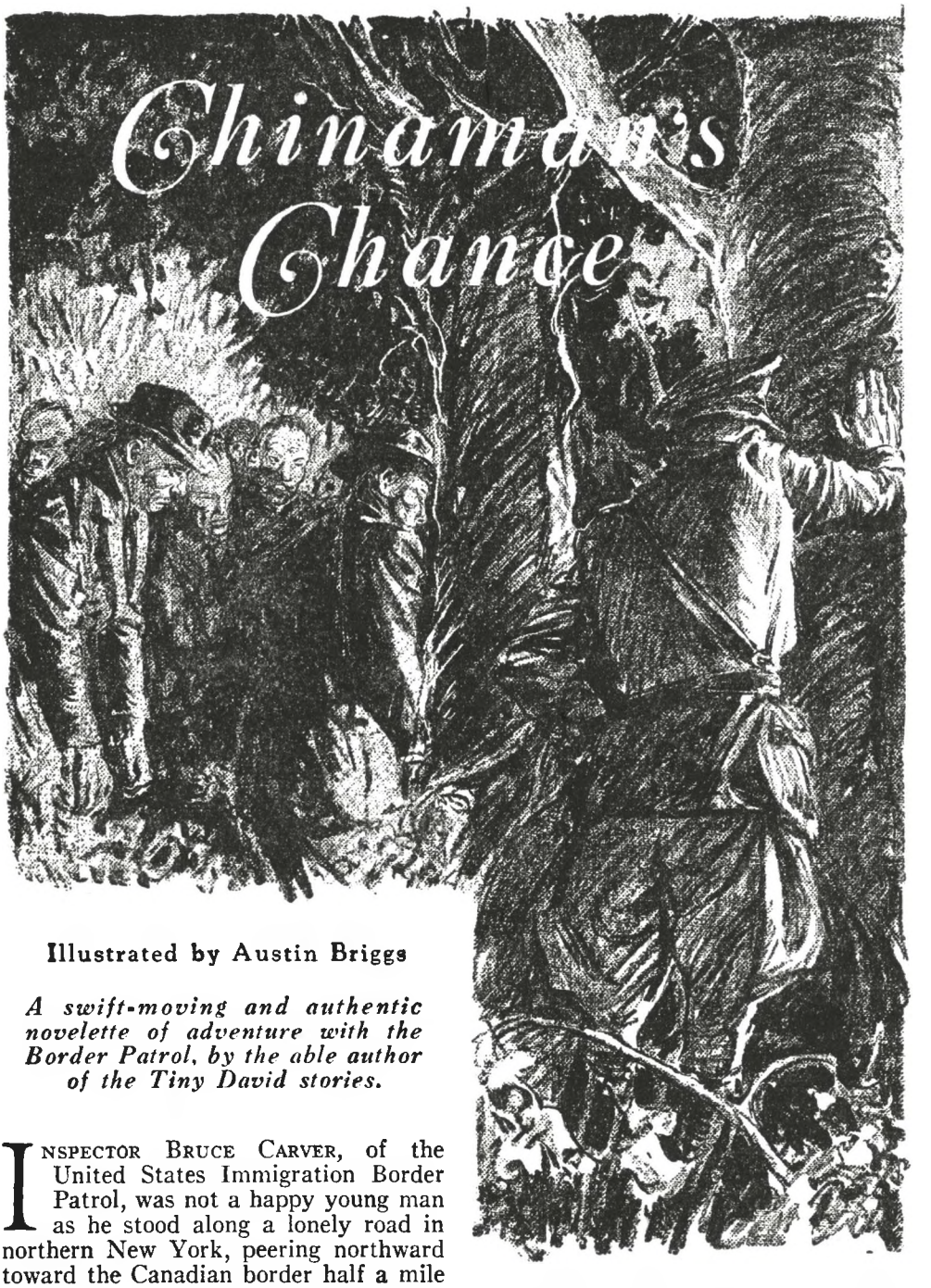
The prisoner merely blinked his eyes.

"We're going to send you to Leavenworth for stealing a blimp, and for smuggling—send you there for life. But first we're going to hang you for murdering two men. Take him away."

As the prisoner was led out, the commandant spoke once more to Leslie—spoke in formal tones:

"Last week you made request, Captain, to try a one-man flight with the new blimp. I think you are the man who can do it. You have my permission. That's all, sir."

Chinaman's Chance



Illustrated by Austin Briggs

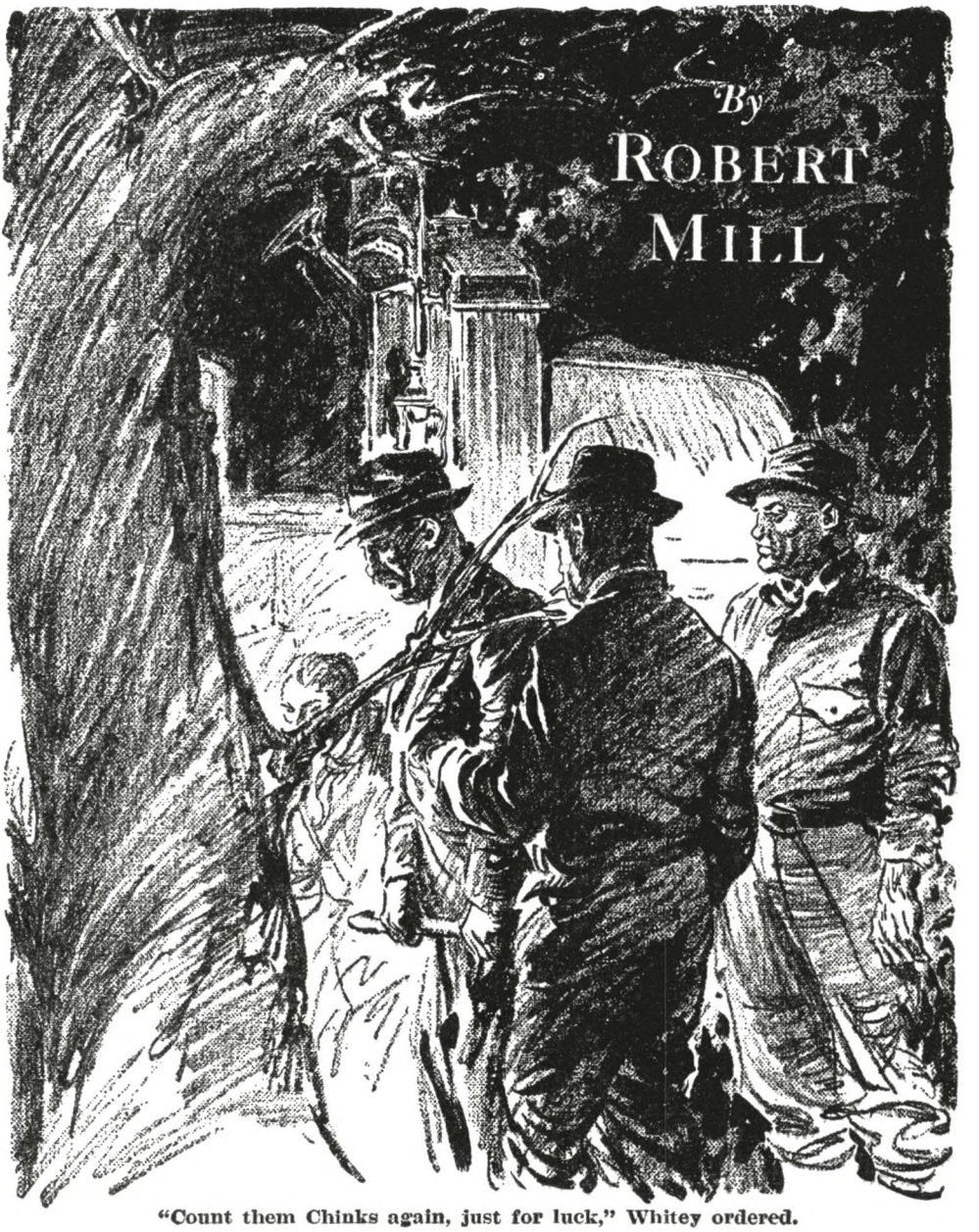
A swift-moving and authentic novelette of adventure with the Border Patrol, by the able author of the Tiny David stories.

INSPECTOR BRUCE CARVER, of the United States Immigration Border Patrol, was not a happy young man as he stood along a lonely road in northern New York, peering northward toward the Canadian border half a mile away. Down this road, and along almost countless others like it, and across a few rivers, for added good measure, a constantly increasing stream of illegal aliens had been moving southward. Some of those aliens had been halted by Carver and his comrades. Others had not. It was those others that had caused the high officials of the Border Patrol to take drastic action. There had been a firm ultimatum:

"Stop those 'wet ones,'"—that is Border Patrol slang for illegal aliens,—"or there will be some new faces in the organization."

Chief Patrol Inspector Louis Grant, who was Carver's immediate superior, had been given that ultimatum firsthand; and he in turn had passed it on to Carver, adding sage words of his own:

"There are lots of roads, some rivers and lakes, and only a few of us. But



"Count them Chinks again, just for luck," Whitey ordered.

you can't point out that fact in an official report. So about all we can do is keep on guessing, and hope for the best."

He sighed softly, because he was genuinely fond of the young man to whom he was breaking the sad news.

"You had one bum guess chalked up against you last month. You picked the wrong road, and Nick Popalouse's outfit came through with thirty wet yellows."

Grant's manner became more official.

"The month before that you guessed right, and nabbed twelve. The big shots have convenient memories. They forget that, but they will remember the thirty you missed. You better guess right this month—or else."

So Inspector Carver stood in the road meditating upon the injustice of it all. Grant was right: that was just what it was, a great guessing game. Quite unconsciously his thoughts strayed back several years to the time when he had been engaged in playing another game.

Then thousands of football fans had affectionately known him as "Speed." The name was both paradoxical and descriptive. With the ball tucked under his arm, and headed toward the far end of the field, Mr. Carver appeared to be

Her lips trembled. "I am not the least bit interested in your work."

making little progress. Yet the tacklers who pursued him, all of whom seemed to be moving at a terrific clip, seldom were able to overtake him. Also, when that rare accident did happen, Mr. Carver evaded their rapid thrusts at him with what the crowds saw as a slow and awkward motion. But this seemingly awkward gait had carried Mr. Carver to the Rose Bowl and the All-American Team.

His love of action and the outdoors had carried him into the Border Patrol. Once there, the work had fascinated him; and he had, like most of his companions, intended to devote his life to it, earn the promotions offered in a "career service," and grow up with a comparatively young and enthusiastic organization.

Now, after two years on the border, Speed Carver had grown to regard the Border Patrol not only as a job, but almost as a religion. The Border Patrol doesn't specialize in failure. Speed's face became grim as, still thinking in terms of the football field, he planned means of wiping out the stigma of his last fiasco.

It was like giving you a two-man line, and telling you to halt the progress of a Notre Dame team that included the Four Horsemen. They expected you to be the entire secondary defense, playing a short distance behind your thin line, from that point unerringly diagnosing and breaking up every play the offense could launch. Yes, they wouldn't even allow you four downs in which to hold the progress to less than ten yards. They expected you to throw each and every play for a loss.

All of which, Speed Carver mused bitterly, made everything just swell. He glanced ahead to where Inspector George Homer, a very junior member of the organization, was stationed.

"Any signs of business, George?" he asked.

Homer continued to gaze northward for a moment before he replied:

"Car coming, Speed."

Carver walked forward, and blew a shrill blast upon his whistle.

"Halt!" he cried. "United States Immigration."

AN open roadster, piloted by a girl, came to a slow stop.

"Was I speeding?" the driver asked.

Speed Carver grinned.

"No," he admitted, "you weren't speeding. And I am not a speed cop."

He stood by the running-board, subjecting the car and driver to a searching glance. Beside him stood Homer, gazing at the girl with appraising eyes. She was young, in her late teens or the early twenties. She was also beautiful, with wavy dark hair and sparkling eyes.

"Where do you live?" asked Speed Carver.

"Why—about half a mile back on this road. At the Barnel place."

Speed Carver became alert, for the so-called "line house" run by Steve Barnel was part in the United States and part in Canada, and was a notorious hangout for aliens. All the while, however, he was studying the girl. And he couldn't reconcile what he saw, to Barnel's line house.

But Homer was young. He ignored the fact that the girl's beauty was not of the sort that is usually the property of girls who are found in line houses, and allowed himself to be influenced by the fact that she had given one of them as her home. So he made the assertion with conviction in his voice:

"A musician!"

He was conveying to Speed Carver his belief that the girl was a follower of the oldest profession. The men of the Border Patrol encounter many members of that calling attempting to cross and recross the line as they move in obedience to the laws of supply and demand created by racing-meets, expositions, conventions and similar events. The immigration men use their term instead of a shorter and uglier word.

"No!" snapped Speed Carver, who was studying the girl with older and more experienced eyes.

"I'll settle the argument," retorted the girl. "I play the piano a little, but I certainly am not a musician. Not that it is any of your business; and I certainly wouldn't play for either of you."

Speed Carver made no attempt to explain to himself the feeling of relief that swept over him. He was glad to have his decision verified, but this was more than that.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"June Barnel."

He nodded.

"You are Steve's—"

"I am Mr. Barnel's daughter."

Again came the feeling of relief.

"I see. We call on Steve rather often. Strange we haven't seen you before."

"Not so strange," she retorted. "I arrived yesterday. I've been away at school."

Carver fought back the impulse to tell her to proceed.

"I'll have to take a look in that rumble-seat."

He saw the color mount in her cheeks. Her voice was icy:

"What could I have in there that would interest you?"

The knowledge that his duty as an officer was forcing him to do something against his desire as a man caused him to answer in an abrupt manner usually foreign to him:

"Two Chinese. Yes, there might even be three."

He saw her start of surprise, and deliberately misinterpreted it.

"We didn't believe it could be done, either. But the informer who told us about it showed how the trick is worked. Clever packing, great suffering for the freight, and only a yellow would stand for it. But then, a yellow will stand for anything."

Her lips trembled. "I am not—I am not the least bit interested in your work."

He bowed.

"Suppose I refuse to unlock the car?" she asked.

Speed Carver spoke quietly:

"That would be unfortunate—from your standpoint."

She opened a glove-compartment, fumbled for a key-ring, and tossed it in his general direction. The keys landed in the underbrush. He recovered them without comment and walked to the rear of the car. He worked quickly, efficiently. When he returned and offered her the keys, she made no attempt to accept them. He placed the ring on the seat beside her.

"Thank you." The same feeling of relief, which had doubled when he found the rear compartment empty, had him in its possession. "That is all. Sorry to have troubled you, Miss Barnel, and I hope you enjoy your drive. We have some great scenery around—"

The girl spoke from between clenched teeth:

"Never mind the pleasantries. I have sense enough to know that you don't do this to everybody who comes along in an automobile. Get out of the way. I am going—going home."

The car shot ahead, then moved backward. Carver jumped aside just in time to avoid it. The roadster came to a stop momentarily as she blindly fumbled with the gears, then tugged at the wheel.

Carver stepped forward. A growing suspicion gained mastery over his former feeling of relief. He tried to put the suspicion aside. His experience on the border caused it to form again. The conflict between man and officer made him bitter, and that bitterness prompted the words:

"I understand, Miss Barnel. Your mission has been accomplished. Tell Steve we will be working this road for the balance of the day. Or maybe you report direct to Nick Popalouse."

The car jumped ahead, northward bound. It swerved from one side of the narrow road to the other.

They stood watching it.

"QUITE a looker," Homer ventured. "Think she is wise to her old man's racket?"

Carver shrugged.

"I'm not a mind-reader," he snapped. "She's had two days to get wise. Our performance helped. She's a smart girl." He hesitated a moment. "And a beautiful one."

Homer's eyes were twinkling.

"The last time it was a bum steer that took us fifteen miles to the east while thirty wet yellows slipped through. I am betting Nick has changed the bait. And offhand, I'd say he's had a strike."

"Maybe," his superior admitted. "I'll even lend support to your theory by telling you we will drop in at Steve's joint tomorrow."

"A raid?" asked Homer.

"Nope."

"I get it—just a social call."

Tiny wrinkles were forming about the corners of Carver's eyes, but his tone was quite official:

"You have been with this outfit long enough to know we never make raids. We conduct investigations. This is going to be just that, an investigation."

Mr. Homer relaxed against the trunk of a convenient pine tree.

"You are my idea of a boss," he admitted. "I can't think of anything better to investigate."

NICK POPALOUSE had no more use for rowing than he had for any other form of physical exertion. Greater than his aversion to exercise, however, was his unwillingness to give anybody a chance to become too familiar with his many varied business transactions. Therefore, Nick was at the oars, and the only occupant of the small boat that pulled away from a Greek freighter anchored in the murky waters of the St. Markos River, and headed for a pier in Vorneal, one of the leading ports in eastern Canada.

He rowed along with his back toward the shore, and regarded the forward deck of the receding ship with satisfaction. There, in crudely constructed pens, were two sheep, a goat and a cow. Four crates of chickens occupied more of the deck space. This deck cargo would constitute fresh meat on a long voyage, killed as needed; and Nick, in his capacity as ship-chandler, had supplied it all. It was a profitable business in its own right, with tidy offices in the city. Years ago, however, Nick had discovered that the contacts it furnished were even more valuable.

First there had been seamen who wished to jump their ship, make their way to the border, and then enter the land of promise, the United States. Nick had helped some of them—for a price. The word went out. Before long he had a second profitable business, which was constantly growing.

The next step was logical and inevitable. Canada, at that time, was encouraging immigration to the western provinces. Many of these immigrants chose Canada only because the United States was barred to them. Sailors, acting for Nick, made contact with them while the ship sailed the Atlantic. Nick, in his capacity of chandler, met the ship when it arrived in Vorneal. A few of the immigrants would disappear there, and enter havens operated by Nick. Others would desert the train on the way west, and double back to those havens. All paid the price—Nick's price.

That price ranged from a top of $250 all the way down to the exact amount the poor immigrant was able to produce; and the service he received depended largely upon the amount of the payment. Some were merely led to the border, told what direction to take, and allowed to shift for themselves, while others were "walked across." That is, they were allowed to make the dangerous crossing alone, then picked up on the American side and guided to the agreed destination. Still others—they paid top rates—were run across by automobile or boat.

A few, those with scanty funds, or those who bargained too long, were made victims of a cruel hoax. They were driven back and forth over unfamiliar Canadian roads at night. Then they were turned loose on the outskirts of Vorneal, and told it was New York. Nick, who had a fiendish sense of humor, rather enjoyed that. Only the knowledge that word of it would spread, and that it would be bad for business, restrained him from making it a regular feature.

All these aliens, Danish, Greek, English, French or Russian were designated by Nick and his associates as "bohunks." They dealt in "bohunks" exclusively for a year or two; then they were graduated to "yellows."

CHINESE, unable to enter the United States because of the Exclusion Act, were able to gain entry to Canada upon payment of a head tax of five hundred dollars. Once there, leaders guided them to Nick, and the contact brought him joy and profit. Their top price, instead of a miserly $250, ran as high as two thousand dollars. They paid it willingly, and cheerfully accepted hardships that the average "bohunk" would balk at.

Most of the Chinese belonged to the coolie class, and many of them came from the Canton district. Where they got the money was a mystery, but they all seemed to have it. Nick knew the answer, of course. He was a wise guy. He knew "yellows" just as he knew "bohunks." He knew that entire large families in far-off China would slave for years, endure almost unbelievable hardships, and go in debt for the rest of their lives, in order to send some favored member to the land of promise.

Once there, this chosen son was expected to do his part; and the Chinese sense of honor being what it is, he usually did. Before long a flow of gold would begin to trickle back to China, and in another period of years a second member of the family would arrive hopefully—more fodder for Nick.

It was this stream of "yellows" halted by the depression, but now beginning to flow full force again, that had made it possible for Nick to enlarge and perfect his organization. There were more havens in Vorneal. There were drivers who specialized on the trip from the city to the border. There were men who devoted their talents to negotiating the invisible line that divides the Dominion of Canada and the United States. There were havens close to the border on the Canadian and American sides of the line. There were female decoys. There were farmers, supposedly law-abiding, who acted as lookouts for the drivers who ran from the border to the American city of the alien's choice; and if the alien paid enough, and if no particular extra danger was involved, he sometimes actually was delivered to that city.

All these members of the ring operated independently of each other, receiving their orders direct from Nick. Many of them were unknown to each other. They were paid by "the piece," their share depending on the price paid by the alien. Nick's share was the largest, of course. He smiled complacently as the boat neared the slip. That was as it should be. Wasn't he the brains?

The boat bumped against the wharf, and the sight of the city streets caused the smile to fade from Nick's plump face as he faced the reality of the present. There was a bit of trouble in the organization. The gink who ran one of the hide-outs on the border was acting up. The fool wanted to quit. He hoped the gink would listen to reason. Nick's pulpy lips were framed in a grim smile. The damn' fool better get it through his thick dome that when you cut in on this racket, you never were able to quit.

MOORING the boat, Nick made his way to an automobile parked in the street before the pier. He headed south, drove over the bridge that spans the broad St. Markos, and soon was moving along a lonely road leading to the border. He halted the car in a clearing on the Canadian side, stepped from it and walked forward warily toward a house. One door of that house was in Canada, the other in the United States. Nick avoided both doors, and made his way through a clump of trees that extended to one side of the house on the Canadian side.

When he was close to an open window, the alien-runner halted, and listened intently. He patted a revolver in a shoulder holster. Then he made his way to the door on the Canadian side and entered the house, in which the voices of a man and a girl rang out as they quarreled bitterly.

STEVE BARNEL was a weakling, with weakness his outstanding characteristic. It penetrated his good looks, even flavored his admitted charm of manner. He was one of those unfortunate creatures with the best of intentions, who always would take the easiest way. Fate had done nothing to temper her blows to his weakness. The first was the death of his wife, whom Steve adored. That made his daughter, then in her early teens, his greatest problem. Steve solved it by packing the girl off to the best school money could buy. It was an easy solution, for at that time Steve was doing very well indeed.

Then fate struck again. The doctors shook their heads gravely, murmured vague things about the North Woods, but were quite definite in the statement that if Steve remained in the city, there would be no Steve. . . . He wanted to live; so he turned everything into cash, and went up along the Canadian border, where he happened to drift to Chateauville. His rather twisted sense of humor prompted him to buy property, part in Canada and part in the United States, with a house that was cut exactly in half by the border. There are many places of that type in the section, the so-called "line houses."

He had only vague ideas about this new life; but as he followed the path of least resistance, it was not long before he discovered that living, even in the backwoods, cost money, and that daughters and schools are really expensive. He delayed action after making this discovery, and in a short time his available cash was almost gone.

It was natural that he would turn to some source for help, but it was blind chance that he consulted a friend who traveled continually between the United States and Canada. This man had a suggestion, and after but slight hesitation Steve acted upon it. He had only scant trouble in justifying the step to himself. It was a fool law, anyway. Everybody broke it. So the Canadian side of the house was stored with liquor, which at occasional intervals was loaded into cars, all of which remained parked on the American side of the line. And

while that was going on, money was no problem at all for Steve.

But June, his daughter, was. Even with the elastic code he was developing, Steve was unwilling to bring a young girl from an exclusive school to a resort that was becoming known far and wide along the border as Barnel's Line House. Like most of Steve's problems, however, this was solved by outside sources. A schoolmate invited June to her home for the first vacation that followed Steve's entry into the liquor traffic. The girl, after asking her father if he would care too much, and being assured he would not, accepted the invitation.

Some of the future vacations were cared for in the same way. If bids failed to materialize, Steve suggested places to visit, and on some of those trips he accompanied his daughter. He appeased her natural desire to see her father by appearing at the school at stated intervals. Always he was well-bred, well-dressed, handsome and gay. He was a father the girl was proud of, an ideal companion whom she addressed gayly as "Steve"; and mutual love blended with mutual pride, for Steve adored the girl with all the fervor of which he was capable.

He had a set speech with which to parry her requests to come home:

"It's a rough place, June. Not at all suited for a fairy princess."

Then fate shot another bolt at Steve in the form of Repeal. His income vanished overnight, leaving in its wake only expensive modes of living, which he had imparted to his daughter, and which had been based upon the lush profits of Prohibition.

IT was then that Nick Popalouse entered the picture. His plump hands dripped the same sort of easy money, which Steve now firmly believed was his right. Therefore he had few qualms to be quieted. This, even as the other enterprise, was very simple. Every now and then some men arrived at your place. They stayed a day or so. Then they went away. That was all you knew. You really were only running a sort of hotel or boarding-house.

Later, when United States Immigration men and Canadian Mounties became troublesome, Steve, acting upon the suggestion of Nick, built a shack well out in the woods, about half a mile west of the house, near the Canadian shore of the winding St. Markos River, which at that point served as the border. Once this house was built, Steve conveniently forgot about it. He recalled it, however, when he knew it was occupied, and had members of his staff carry meals there, always making sure their movements were unobserved.

So things had gone along very nicely until fate decided Steve's number was showing again. This time it was a letter from June, which, after the usual expressions of gratitude and love, contained a statement of fact:

> *I am coming home. This time there will be no* if's, and's *or* but's. *Whatever the place may be, Steve, it is your home. That makes it my home. Don't try to stop me, because the letter and I are running a race.*

It so happened that the letter arrived first. Steve, gripped by panic, put in a telephone-call to the school, only to be informed that June had departed.

Perspiration streamed from his forehead as he turned away from the telephone. Then he reread the letter: *"It is your home. That makes it my home."*

Some of the submerged fineness in Steve's make-up, which had been blunted by years of traffic in liquor and aliens,

struggled to the surface. The panic was gone. Steve the weakling became for the moment the man of action.

He seized writing materials and penned a note to Nick Popalouse. He chose the mails because he knew Nick's dislike for telephones; the letter he wrote conveyed the flat declaration that he was through with the alien traffic. . . . Steve was still the man of action as he drove to Chateauville, five miles away, and posted the letter.

June arrived shortly after his return. She was laughing as she ran to his arms. Her dancing eyes took in the rustic house, framed in the pines.

"So this is the place you are ashamed of! You're a fraud, Steve. You live like a bloated millionaire. Lead me to it."

He made a desperate effort to answer her in kind, but was unable to recapture the ease of their meetings away from the house. He sparred for time by leading her about the place, and guiding her westward to where the waters of the St. Markos thundered over the rocks and dashed madly down for a sheer drop of seventy feet.

She stood facing him with troubled eyes.

"It's swell, Steve. But what is the matter with you? You talk and act like a guide on a personally conducted tour. This is June, your daughter. Don't you remember me, Steve?"

He tried to laugh. Then he led the way back to the house, and pointed out the border.

Her voice was casual: "This is a line house, isn't it?"

"What do you know about line houses?" he parried.

She confronted him with the easy cynicism and sophistication of youth.

"Miss Bailey's girls get around. And there are always books."

SHE kept her voice and her manner light and bantering, trying to mask the pain that was stabbing at her heart.

"Let's see. They are useful to ladies who want to acquire a residence, and get rid of a husband. Spies dote on them. They were the bootleggers' delight, but there are no more bootleggers. Just what is your racket, Steve?"

He covered his confusion by throwing his arm about her shoulders, and piloting her to the dining-room.

"My racket," he told her, "is trying to do everything to contribute to the happiness of the best daughter any man ever had."

As Carver crawled slowly forward, the voice of the alien-runner carried to him: "Barrels . . . boat . . . holes . . . Chinks."

But things weren't the same afterward. There was a feeling of constraint that would not be denied. They met only at meals. Their conversation was formal. The second day Steve suggested she take a ride. She returned in a short time with the trace of tears in her eyes, and her cheeks flaming.

"I think I know," she told him. "Rather low, isn't it?"

Then, before he could answer, she was gone to her room, and the door was locked. She remained there the rest of the day, refusing to admit him, but accepting the tray of food he ordered carried to her.

Just a few hours ago, she had appeared for breakfast. The meal had been eaten in silence. Afterward, she had paused in the doorway.

"This can't go on. I suppose we have to talk it out. How about at lunch?"

Steve nodded, miserable in the realization that what he had dreaded for years was close at hand. When June was gone, the tinkle of a telephone-bell increased his panic. He heard the rich French-

Canadian brogue of Marie, Nick's office girl:

"Meestaire Popalouse, he zay you not go 'way. Heem come ver' soon."

After that, the hours of the morning dragged along for Steve. He, the weakling, who dreaded conflict, and who would sidestep any vital decision, soon would be face to face with two major crises.

There was Nick, suave and oily when things were breaking his way, but a sinister engine of destruction when he encountered opposition. He needed Steve because of this place, which had become an important factor in Nick's operations.

Then, there was June. . . . Steve loved her devotedly. He believed that her love for him would help melt her icy silence and the hurt look in her eyes, if he would make a frank confession, follow it with the flat declaration that he was through, and back up those assertions with action. But that would mean open conflict with Nick, and in the near future.

The booming of a gong summoned him to luncheon. June entered the room, and took a seat. They toyed with the really excellent food served by a silent man with furtive eyes. Then, when the man left the room, Steve made his bid for a fool's paradise, a brief respite that would last only until Nick appeared, and as Steve well knew, bend him to his will.

He told her of the struggle he had gone through. He described his first venture in the liquor traffic. He studded the tale with excuses, with explanations and with apologies.

JUNE cut in on the recital with an emotional indictment: not of what he had done, but of his failure to tell her of his problems, and to allow her to face them with him. She scored him for allowing her to remain at school. She recalled their former basis of comradeship, and accused him of acting a lie during all of it. She begged him to break away from whatever he was doing, and in the same breath demanded that she be told just how deeply he was involved, so th_y could attack the problem together.

But before Steve could reply, there was an interruption. Nick appeared in the doorway, and walked into the room. He was a gross figure of a man, but he moved swiftly and lightly.

"Ullo, Steve."

Steve and June had leaped to their feet. The man found his voice:

"Hello, Nick."

Popalouse stood to one side, his beady eyes glistening. Then he spoke:

"That one damn' fine piece of goods. You got swell taste, Steve, you bet! She make even Nick do many things. She the one try make you quit. Sure! But like hell you quit!"

STEVE fought back an impulse to send his fist crashing into the puffy face.

"June is my daughter," he began lamely. "She has been away at school."

"So!" There was untold satisfaction in the single word.

Steve stiffened. "Let him have it now!" was the message telegraphed by one portion of his brain. "Wait!" was the word of caution from another.

Nick's smirk was more pronounced.

The girl, at first abashed by the sinister appearance of the man, now regained her youthful courage.

"Who is he, Steve?" she demanded. Then, without waiting for his answer: "I know; he's the man the Immigration officers told me about." She groped about for a straw of hope and comfort. "Don't be afraid of him, Steve, no matter what he thinks he has on you. They'll help you—"

Nick glided forward, his greasy face distorted by a snarl.

"I give you the low-down, keed. You aint no baby. They know lots of things at those schools, I bet. I read them in books. All right. Lots of damn' fools, they pay good money to get in United States. I help them. Your old man, he work for me. One year, two year, now going on three. He, like you say, in soup right up to his neck. Now damn' fool say he quit. Like hell he is. I no let him quit. You think he go to them cops, and they fix him up so I can't get him. You all wrong. They cops all the time. They just want chance throw him right in can. They smile at pretty girl today, and make nice words. Tomorrow they just as happy when knock off her old man. Steve quit on me, I see they get stuff about him they want. Me, I stay right in Canada. Fine country, Canada."

His vanity prompted him to believe he was reading her thoughts.

"You think you smile at cops, tell them your old man sorry and want to quit. They don't teach you cops at school. You pull cop out of water when he drown; he say, 'Much oblige!'—then he pinch you because you walk on grass to get him out of water. You see."

"Speaking of cops—"

They wheeled to face the speaker. Speed Carver, followed by Inspector Homer, entered the room.

"Good afternoon, Miss Barnel." He removed his cap. "Hello, Steve." He addressed no word to the alien-runner, who hastily retreated to that portion of the room that was in Canada; but his glance was directed at Nick. It never wavered as he shot the question at Steve: "Care if we look around?"

Steve Barnel hesitated. His first wave of relief at their unexpected appearance subsided before the knowledge that they were officers. They, and all the world, were against him, stretching forth greedy hands to tear from him what he loved most, his daughter.

"What do you expect to find?" he demanded.

Carver smiled.

"I could tell you I am looking for Dorothy Arnold; but we understand each other, Steve. I am looking for wet ones. You handle them. You handle them for that guy at the other end of the room, who works overtime living up to the last half of his name."

NICK choked back a retort, and contented himself with:

"Me, I'm a Canadian subject. You—"

"I never heard Canada bragging about it," snapped Carver. He turned to Steve. "How about it? We have no warrant—this time."

Steve shrugged. "Help yourself."

Carver sighed.

"Too willing. Charbart, the farmer down the road, didn't telephone you we were on our way here, because he's taking a day off in town. But one of your other lookouts probably did, and you are clean." His face brightened. "Feeding time. I'll just take a look in your kitchen and see how many lunches your cook is putting out. You might have some wet ones parked out in the woods."

He was back in short order.

"No luck," he informed Inspector Homer, who had remained in the room. "And while we're fooling around here, a dozen wet ones probably are being walked across at some other place."

He turned to Steve: "But we will catch up with you soon. And some day our pals the Mounties will catch up with your pal, the papa louse. Meanwhile—"

He broke off as the furtive-eyed waiter entered the room.

"Where were you born?" he demanded.

"Savanner, Georgia."

The accent caught the attention of the two officers.

"Wet!" was Homer's snap decision.

"That man—" began Steve Barnel.

"You keep out of this!" ordered Carver.

June Barnel stepped forward, her cheeks flaming.

"Can't you be civil?"

Carver turned.

"When it doesn't interfere with my work," he said. He shrugged. "What's the story, Steve?"

Steve moistened his lips with his tongue, and found his voice:

"He was born in Georgia, but his family moved to New York when he was very young. That explains his accent. I met him in New York, and brought him here with me."

"Good enough," was Speed's careless admission. "You have too many brains, Steve, to lie." He turned back to the girl, gazing at her with eyes saddened by knowledge that the circumstances prevented any thought of romance where she was concerned.

"I'm going to be civil now," he told her. "You are in a sweet mess here. I don't know whether you want to get out of it or not. If you ever should, send for me."

She stood facing him. All the relief she had felt upon his entrance had been banished by shame and humiliation caused by the manner in which he had treated her father. The knowledge that he had included her in that treatment added anger to her other emotions. So strongly did these emotions sway her, that they triumphed over fear of Nick Popalouse. They even overrode her inherent desire to be on the side of law and order.

He was speaking again: "And even if you don't send for me, I'll be back."

Her low voice was full of contempt.

"You will be welcome," she told him, "—as welcome as the plague."

THE day following the departure of Speed Carver and Homer was marked by conflict in the line house. June retired to her room. Nick proceeded to bend Steve to his will, bringing into play all his forces—fear of physical harm, fear of exposure, and offers of even greater rewards if he continued in the traffic. Steve was helpless before him.

When the evening meal was served, June reappeared long enough to declare that one dining-room table was not large

"If I do all I can to help your father, Miss Barnel, will you do something for me?"

enough to accommodate both her and Nick Popalouse. She ordered her father to make his choice. Steve, secretly glorying in his daughter's courage, and inwardly bemoaning the craven spirit that kept him subject to the gross man lolling at his ease in a chair drawn up to the table, remained silent. Whereupon June promptly walked to the kitchen, helped herself from a serving-table, and retired with her spoils, locking the door of her room after her.

Steve pretended to dine. Nick noisily stowed away great quantities of food. Then they retired to the room which Steve used as a den. There was a bottle on the table. They both drank steadily.

THE evening passed, with the silence broken only by an occasional outburst from Nick.

"Them damn' schools! Learn lot of monkeyshines. Too damn' good for this. Too damn' nice for 'nother thing. Not eat at table with me! Huh! Plenty broads think they hot stuff they get chance eat with Nick."

And again, some hours and many drinks later:

"You say you quit, Steve. I say you never quit. This racket just like—

He broke off suddenly as a bell rang loudly. Steve answered the telephone, which was on the Canadian side of the house, and connected with an exchange in the Canadian town of Sherry near by. He spoke a few words, listened intently, and then turned to Nick:

"It's Marie, from your office. She says to tell you Whitey has twenty boxes of fish that are beginning to smell so bad they have to be moved right away. She says Whitey is afraid the Mounties know about them."

"Jeese-crise!" stormed Nick. His inherent distrust of telephones caused him to transmit the order through the other man. "Tell Marie tell Whitey he quick slam 'em back to Joe at Vorneal."

Steve relayed the message. Then, after a brief pause, he turned to Nick:

"Marie says they smell so bad Whitey wouldn't dare take them north again, because a Mountie would be sure to pick them up."

Popalouse hesitated just a moment, then made a snap decision. "All right. Tell Marie send 'em south. Start right 'way. We ship by boat."

Again Steve transmitted the order.

"She wants to know if they are to be sent to the regular place."

"Sure. You bet."

Then, as Steve returned to the table, Nick, with no trace of his former annoyance, began a pleased monologue:

"That guy Carver think he hell smart fellow. Maybe so. But Nick Popalouse hell smart fellow too. Carver raise hell on roads and here at house. That suit me fine. Nick no fool. He all ready."

Steve Barnel leaned across the table.

"You are smart, Nick," he admitted. "But if you ask me, I wouldn't care to be on that river right now with a bunch of Chinks. And once you get them over, you have something on your hands. I wouldn't—"

Nick snorted with indignation.

"Nobody ask you, Steve. You listen me, and not try talk."

He pulled a notebook from his pocket, proceeded to copy numbers on a sheet of paper, and when he had listed about twelve, he tossed the list to Steve Barnel.

"Here! You call them fellows on Canadian phone. When they come on, you tell 'em all same thing: You say Nick say tomorrow fine day for trip. They get start early, soon as Customs fellows open, and bring girl friends."

Steve showed his surprise.

"Did you say as soon as the Customs-houses are open?"

Nick smiled indulgently. He was a little drunk with power, with belief in his own cleverness, and with delight in the originality of the scheme which he had worked out.

"Sure. You bet."

He waited until Steve returned from a session at the telephone, saying:

"Raised them all but one. He didn't answer."

Nick nodded carelessly.

"That plenty." He chuckled. "Listen, Steve: Every time Carver and his damn' fools knock off car with Chinks in United States, it United States car. They know Canadian car stick out in United States like hurt thumb. They find one, they just give quick look to see it goes by Customs guys okay. They see that, they not bother much."

Nick's laugh echoed in the room.

"We give them plenty Canadian cars. They come through Customs six, eight places tomorrow morning early, just like anybody else. They get permit. Some have girl with, just like ordinary guy. Over here, they load Chinks under back seat and move 'em south. They get stopped, they show permit. Cop know they don't get that only after good search at border, so he say, 'Go on.'"

Nick leaned back with satisfaction. "How that?"

STEVE hesitated. The plan was clever. Barring accidents, it would work.

"Pretty good, Nick," he admitted. "The weak point is getting the Chinks across the river and into the cars. We had one dose of that."

Nick's smile was contemptuous and patronizing.

"You let Nick Popalouse do worries about that. You live right here all time, but I know country hell sight better you ever know. Down Canada side of river, mile from here, find old shed and wharf. My men ship potatoes from there to United States every day now, going on week. Every morning Customs guy come, count barrels, and stick paper on 'em. Every day my men make sure they not take all barrels across. Next day Customs man come, he pay no mind to those with paper on from last day. He just stick paper on new barrels."

Once more Nick's laugh sounded.

"Right now we got twenty, thirty barrels there with paper stuck on. We take potatoes out and put Chinks in. Do that tonight soon as Whitey show. No use try cross river till tomorrow morning. Look funny at night. But in morning go across just like regular load. No matter Customs guy not there when we start, 'cause barrels all got paper stuck. If guy there, he see paper he stuck day before, and say, 'Oakey doak.'

"Get 'em across river, take Chinks out. Walk 'em through woods to cabin on road leads to Deanville. Cars all meet there. Plenty places hide in woods. Damn' fool Carver busy this joint and roads near here. We go through like slick grease. You bet!"

Nick leaned back with satisfaction.

STEVE BARNEL was fighting an inward battle. Two fears were striving for mastery: he was afraid of Nick; he also feared the Immigration men, and he hardly shared Nick's contempt for them. Then, there was June. His love for her balanced the scales in favor of an attempt to block Nick's plan, but his fear of the alien-runner was strong enough to cause him to resort to guile, rather than direct opposition.

"If you ask me, Nick, I still wouldn't touch it at this time. You can put Chinks in barrels, call them potatoes, and put Customs stamps on them; but the fact still remains that you are out on the river with a lot of wet Chinks. If they catch you with them—"

Nick's laugh was even deeper this time. "How they catch me? How they catch anybody else? How they get the Chinks?"

He was standing now, his dark eyes flashing, and his swarthy face distorted with rage.

"Chinks in barrels, aint they? Barrels got holes cut so Chinks can get wind. Chinks all pay head tax to Canada. No law smash' till they get out of Canada.

"We run boat east in Canada water till we get so damn' near rapids before falls it no more safe. Then make quick trip across. Any trouble then, just roll barrels off boat. Water come in holes and they sink, but water run so quick even on bottom it carry barrels right over falls. Those barrels drop on rocks down bottom and go smash. Carver and his damn' fools go pick up what they find. All right. What it look like? Maybe potatoes. Maybe Chinks. Who the hell—"

"No!" The cry came from Steve Barnel. His weakly handsome face was white. His voice arose in a shrill crescendo. "That's murder, Nick! I'll have no part of it! I'm through!"

Nick brushed a chair away with his foot. He advanced toward Steve, walking on the balls of his feet, and moving with grace that belied the bulk of his gross form. One hand strayed inside his coat and came to rest above the shoulder holster.

"You close that damn' mouth shut!" he ordered. "I got plenty troubles without taking more with you. Whitey gets here now almost right away. You come along. Nick no fool. He don't leave you here to rat. You come along. You make one more words too many, and I let you have it right away. You bet!"

White and shaking, and moving like a man in a trance, Steve Barnel followed the alien-runner out of the house. They walked west toward the river. Nick Popalouse was in the rear, and his hand remained inside his coat.

IN the underbrush on the fringe of a clearing, Speed Carver squirmed about until he obtained a view of the windows in Steve's den, the shades of which were not drawn. The grass about him was wet with night dew. The cold night winds that prevail even in summer in this section cut through his uniform. He ignored these discomforts as he concentrated on the problem at hand.

Nick Popalouse and Steve Barnel were visible inside the room. That was all to the good. He intended to keep those two gentlemen in sight from now on—even if that involved giving up eating and sleeping.

He had completed a sixteen-hour stretch of duty when he returned to the

hotel in Chateauville several hours before. Homer, weary, had gone to bed. That was all right; Homer was just a kid.

But Speed, after stretching out for a moment or two, pulled on his tunic and went back to the job. Nick Popalouse was in the neighborhood. Things happened when Nick was around. The next thing that happened, and wasn't broken up before it happened, would be just too bad for one Speed Carver.

HE hid his car in the woods a half-mile from the line house, and went forward on foot. Twenty feet from the edge of the clearing, he dropped to the ground and wormed his way forward to his present position.

Here he had a good view of the two men in the room. They didn't seem to be doing much of anything, except making rather frequent references to a bottle. Speed debated the wisdom of crawling along to a point in the open where he could overhear the conversation inside the open windows, and then gave up the idea; Steve might have some good watch-dogs in the house.

Carver grew uneasy as the minutes ticked along. Apparently nothing was going to happen—here. And while he was wasting his time here, plenty could happen in other places.

He began to check off the various danger-spots in his mind. He discarded the various roads. There had been considerable activity on them, quite enough to convince Nick they would be far from healthy. That left the river, and Speed mapped it out in his mind:

It appeared from the west, flowing along well within the boundary of the Dominion of Canada. Then the river swerved to the southeast, and at a point about three miles west of the line house, it became the international boundary. For two miles it followed along evenly toward the east. Then came dangerous rapids, followed by a falls, where the green water became white as it thundered on the rocks seventy feet below.

A short distance below the falls the river veered sharply to the south and ran in that direction until it made a sharp "U" turn south of Chateauville. Then it flowed almost due north, crossed the border again, east of the line house and continued its northeasterly course to Vorneal, and later to the sea. The danger-spot, obviously, was the two miles where the river was the boundary line, west of the falls. No boat could live in that short portion of the river which was on the line and beyond the falls.

Speed had purposely neglected that danger-spot up to this time. Nick and his men had been given a good lesson on the river only a few months previously. One of their boats was caught in the rapids and went over the falls. The net loss had been two of their own men and ten yellows. That, the Immigration men had decided, had given them about all the river they wanted.

Now, however, the unusual activity of the Immigration men had altered the picture.

"Common sense would tell the gang to drop everything, and lie low until we get tired," Carver mused. "We are tired right now, as far as that goes. But you don't make money lying low. And that outfit has to make money."

He shifted about in the wet grass, trying to put himself in the place of Nick, and decide what he would do under the same circumstances.

"We figure they've had their fill of the river. There's no reason why Nick shouldn't dope it out that we have arrived at that conclusion, and take advantage of it. Some of his outfit may be doing just that right now."

CARVER debated the advisability of discontinuing his present vigil, and hurrying to the danger-spot by the river; but the sight of the two men, one of whom was the brains that would direct anything which might happen, held him like a magnet.

"I'll give them half an hour," he mused. "If nothing happens, me for the river."

But almost as he reached that decision, something did happen in the room. Steve was at the telephone. It was a lengthy conversation, during which he made frequent appeals to Nick. Now the two men were talking. Then Steve was back at the telephone, apparently making a series of calls, for he pressed the hook of the instrument at irregular intervals.

Carver left the shelter of the woods, and began to crawl slowly across the clearing toward the house. This was a gamble he was loath to take, for quite aside from the danger involved, discovery would mean that present activity—he was certain something was getting under way—would cease, and he would be on the outside of things again, groping blindly for some opening with which to win a round of the game.

He knew, as he crawled slowly forward, that Nick and Steve were talking now. Or rather Nick was talking, for the steady rumble of the voice of the head alien-runner carried to him in a jumble of almost intelligible words:

"Barrels . . . boat . . . holes . . . Chinks . . . falls . . . smash."

That was enough for Carver: His guess had been right. They were going to use the river. He concentrated upon pulling himself to a safe hiding-place beneath the window, and in so doing missed a statement from Nick. But he heard Steve's agonized protest plainly:

"No! That's murder, Nick! I'll have no part of it! I'm through!"

He sensed the drama, now hidden from him, that ended with Nick's threat:

"You come along. Nick no fool. He don't leave you here to rat. You come along."

Before that speech was ended, Carver drew himself up so he could gain a view of the room. He saw the two men move toward the door. There was no doubt in his mind regarding their destination. He groped his way around the east side of the house, and was hidden in the shadows formed by the north wall of the building when the two men emerged from the door on the west side of the house.

Nick and Steve walked westward, toward the falls and the river. Carver remained in the shadow of the house, waiting to give them enough start so his presence would not be discovered. He was about to take up the trail when the door of the line house opened again, and June Barnel was framed in the light.

SHE stood on the porch for a moment, apparently giving her eyes time to become accustomed to the change from light to the comparative dark of a night that boasted a full harvest moon. Then he saw her stiffen with excitement as she discerned the shadowy figures of Steve and Nick. They had a start of about fifty feet when she followed them.

Carver followed the girl. She was doing an amateur job of trailing, but nature was lending her every assistance. First, there was the roar of the falls; then when the river was reached, there was the irregular shore-line, with frequent wooded points which, once Steve and Nick passed them, shielded her from the two men as she trailed in their wake.

The Immigration man plunged into the woods, away from the shore. There, moving along with the quiet, easy tread of the woodsman, he kept almost abreast of the girl, a position which enabled him also to keep the two men within sight.

Carver saw Nick and Steve pause before a shed on a wharf. He watched the girl come to a quick halt, and then enter the woods for a short distance. She passed so close to him he could have touched her with his hand. She was having tough going. Her skirt hampered her progress. She bent and held it up. Vines and underbrush slashed at her legs. Branches bent before her, then snapped back and stung her face. She ignored all this until she had reached a vantage-spot where she was hidden, and from which she had a view of the wharf.

CARVER gave her time to get settled. Then he slipped away, taking a station where he would be unseen by the girl and the men on the wharf. Nick and Steve sat on the wharf, waiting. For a while they conversed in low tones. Then they were silent. Perhaps half an hour had elapsed when they heard the sound of an approaching motor and stood up.

A large closed truck bumped its way over a narrow truck-trail and came to a halt before the wharf. Hasty greetings were exchanged as three men jumped from the cab and made their way to the rear, where they opened the back of the truck.

"Come on!" commanded one of the men. "Hop out!"

A stream of yellow men poured from the truck. They huddled together uncertainly at one side of the trail, blinking in the rays of flashlights that were trained upon them. Then the lights were snapped off, and only what moonlight seeped through the foliage lighted the scene.

They stood there quietly, the Chinese, strangers in a strange land, and embarked on a desperate gamble to enter still another alien place. Undoubtedly their hearts were beating faster. Certainly they were filled with bewilderment and wonder. It is not unlikely that real panic gripped some of them. But they stood there quietly, with a dumb sort of patience that seemed to exceed that shown by animals, and with no trace of any emotion visible on their inexpressive Oriental faces.

"What's next, Whitey?" demanded one of the men.

"Count them Chinks again, just for luck," ordered Whitey, the man who had directed the Chinese to leave the truck.

The man he gave the order to passed along the huddled group, easing his task by moving the yellow men about as if they were wooden blocks.

"Twenty," he announced. "No more, and no less. What's the big idea? Think one of 'em had pups on the trip down?"

Whitey grinned. "Chinks pull funny stuff; and I aint taking no chances. Nick don't like surprises."

Nick's hearty laugh sounded.

"That's right! You bet!"

The alien-runners conferred, shifting about nervously. The Chinese stood as motionless as bronze Buddhas in an outdoor temple. Most of them were clad in shapeless suits of thin black cotton. The night air was raw and damp with the mists from the river. The white men, wearing topcoats and accustomed to the climate, cursed the cold. The Chinese appeared to notice it not at all.

Then one man remained with the Chinese, while the others entered the shed. First screening windows and doors with sacks, they lighted lanterns. Then they began to work. Carver worked his way through the woods, skirted the truck, and came out on the far side of the shed. Lying flat on his stomach, he crawled to a crack in the wall and peered at the scene inside.

The alien-runners fell upon barrels standing upright and pushed them over. The bottoms were knocked out, and the potatoes the barrels contained were added to a pile in one corner of the shed. Seizing a brace and bit, one man began to bore holes in the side of a barrel.

"Two holes to a barrel," ordered Whitey. "That's enough. To hell with them!"

"For each barrel, eight holes," countermanded Nick.

"Going soft?" asked Whitey.

Nick smiled, a smile full of meaning. Then he stepped to the door, opened it, and called:

"Herd 'em in!"

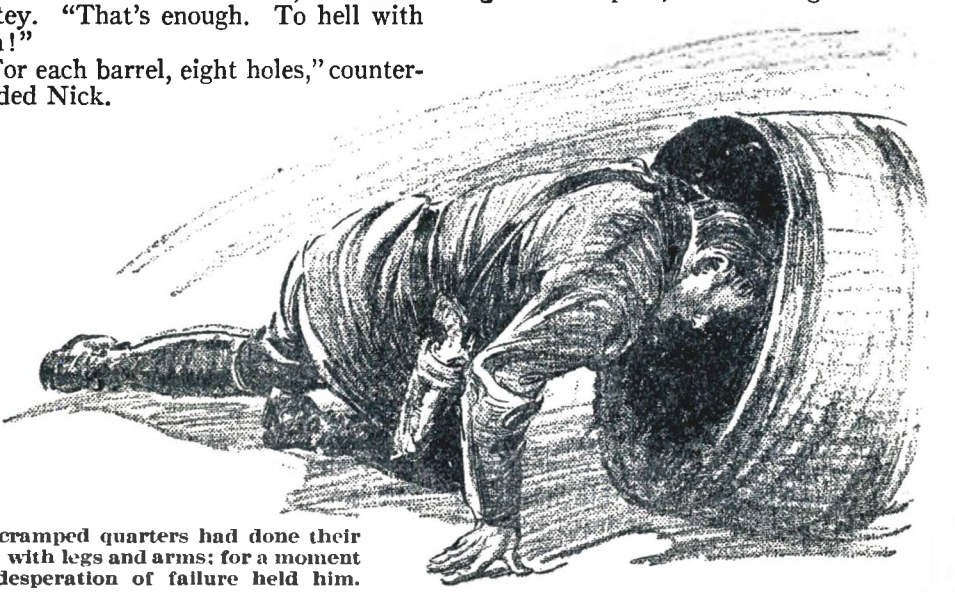
The Chinese shuffled in, blinking in the light, but with the curiosity they must have felt regarding this next step in the great adventure hidden behind their yellow masks of faces.

Whitey placed both hands upon the shoulders of one of them, forced him to a kneeling position, and used his foot to propel the Chinese head-first into the open end of a barrel. The white man bent over and used his hands to double up the legs of the Chinese so his feet no longer protruded from the end of the barrel. The top of the barrel was fitted into place and nailed fast. The barrel was righted and rolled to one side.

That process was repeated until the last Chinese was placed in a barrel. Not one of the yellow men offered remonstrance or resistance. Not a sound came from the closed barrels.

They rolled the barrels from the room with a fine disregard for their human contents. There was a path leading down to the wharf. They upset the barrels, and allowed gravity to start them on their way. "Roll along, little Chink!" called one of the men, as he used his foot to aid the progress of a barrel.

Fastened to the end of the wharf was a barge, its deck fully three feet below the level of the pier. They handled the barrels as carelessly as if they were freight, apparently taking joy in inflicting needless pain, and making no effort



The cramped quarters had done their work with legs and arms; for a moment the desperation of failure held him.

to ease the fall as the barrels rolled from dock to deck. But there was no cry from the barrels.

Carver crouched in the darkness, his fists clenched, and his teeth gritted tight, as he watched the brutal process of loading. He saw Steve, who had come to this rendezvous with a gun trained upon him, working with the others. There was no attempt to guard him.

Soon the barrels were piled in orderly fashion amidships on the barge. The alien-runners stood back and observed their work with satisfaction.

"Get that truck more in the woods," Nick ordered.

They obeyed him.

"Enough to be good," was his verdict. "No more should we hang around here to give somebody tips that there is funny business." He glanced at his watch. "Just time enough we got to go for Steve's place and a cup coffee. Them potatoes stay alone all okay till we come back. Then we ship 'em across. Slick grease. You bet!"

They chuckled hoarsely as they followed Nick along the shore.

HIDDEN in the shadow formed by the shed, Carver watched the five men disappear in the growing half-light of dawn, and settled down to what in a less serious moment he would have described as some plain and fancy thinking.

This was the break! He had Nick and his bunch cold—that is, he had them if he played his cards right. The fact that he was in Canada, and had no official status, worried the Immigration man not at all. The officers of two nations that dwell together as neighbors without need of fortified boundaries have a working agreement that requires neither treaties nor international law. It is an unwritten pact. It is in force solely because the officers of the two countries respect each other, coöperate whole-heartedly, and are the best of friends when off duty.

Legally, the arrest could be made right here. To comply with the technicalities, he had only to get in touch with Sergeant Henry Devons, of the Mounted, a red-haired, two-fisted gentleman who loved an alien-runner even less than Speed did, if that was possible. But Devons, even as the Immigration men, had a large territory to cover. Once he received the word, he would drop everything else; but it might take an hour, or three times as long, for him to reach the scene. The time element was a factor, and becoming a more important one with every passing minute.

Furthermore, sound procedure dictated that the arrest be made on American soil, with the crime actually completed, and with the possible penalty greater. Carver's personal inclination supported that plan. Nick, he reflected grimly, was his baby—he wanted Nick strictly for himself.

But the Border Patrol has little sympathy for personal feuds or personal ambitions. So Speed knew that whatever plan he followed, he must go through the motions of summoning help from both the Canadian and American sides. He chuckled at the thought. Homer, who was only five miles away, and who was readily available, was an inexperienced kid, anxious enough to help, but far more likely to hinder.

The real man to turn to was Grant, his chief patrol inspector. But Grant was likely to be in almost any part of his considerable territory. And now more time had ticked off. It didn't stop ticking, Speed reflected bitterly, even while a hard-working boy was doing what he jokingly called thinking.

"Going for a telephone is no dice," he decided. "I stick with the yellows."

Then the crackling of branches and undergrowth recalled him to the fact that he had a second problem to deal with. That noise marked the progress of June Barnel as she left the woods and emerged on the shore of the river. And Carver, guided by the noise, and moving quickly and quietly, soon was almost at her side, but screened by bushes, as she stood gazing at the barge.

She was crying. It was light enough for him to see the tears that stained her face, and her shoulders moved as she sobbed convulsively. He only vaguely realized that all this only served to add to her beauty. It seemed to break down the barrier between them.

CARVER stepped forward, his cap in his hand.

"Good morning, Miss Barnel."

She recoiled in fright, then stood her ground and faced him.

"You are after—after Steve?"

The barrier was back.

"I am doing my duty," he retorted.

"Your duty!" There was fine scorn in her low, throaty voice. "You'll love it. What does it matter to you that Steve fought with Nick about this deal tonight? What do you care that Nick used

a gun to drive him here? What do you—"

He silenced her hysterical outburst with his upraised hand.

"Just a minute, Miss Barnel. I saw and heard some of that. But I still don't understand. Can you explain?"

She was calmer now.

"No," she admitted bitterly. "I was in my room. Steve and Nick were talking in the room below. I couldn't hear most of it, but I did hear Steve cry out that something was murder, and that he would take no part in it. Then I heard Nick threaten to kill him. I followed them here. I—I didn't know what I could do. But I had to save Steve. I—I must save him. He isn't a criminal, only weak. You must believe me. You—"

SPEED stood gazing at her thoughtfully. Gradually a plan was forming in his mind. It was the perfect out. As a man, he believed her implicitly. As an officer, he still feared this was part of some trap. His plan would send her in the direction in which she could do the least harm. It would be his alibi to his superiors, even if she failed to obey his instructions.

So he broke in upon her protestations.

"Just a minute, Miss Barnel. I'm a cop. I took an oath when they gave me this job. I can't promise to let a guilty man escape. But judges and prosecuting attorneys can be mighty human, at times. If I promise to do all I honestly can to help your father, will you do something for me?"

Her eyes met his frankly.

"Word of honor?" she asked.

"Word of honor," he repeated. A slow smile played over his handsome face. "Word of honor as a man, not as a cop."

She made a brave attempt to answer his smile.

"I—I believe you."

"Good." His voice was purposely matter-of-fact. "There is a road, barely more than a trail, starting at the shed. I'll put you on it. About half a mile north, on the right-hand side of the road, there is a house. A woman we call Mother Donough lives there."

He had paper and pencil in his hands, and was scribbling rapidly.

"I'll write down these names. You wake Mother Donough, tell her I sent you, and get busy on her telephone. Tell the operator to get you Sergeant Devons, of the Mounted. She'll know where to find him. Tell Devons that Nick and his mob have twenty Chinks in barrels on a barge at the Tebo landing, and that they are going across near the falls early this morning. Tell him to cut in on the party near the falls. He'll understand. Got that?"

The girl nodded.

"Good. Next, ask for the Chateauville operator, and tell her to get you Chief Patrol Inspector Grant, of the Border Patrol. Give him the same message, but tell him Homer is at the hotel in Chateauville. Tell him that even if he can't make it, I'll ride through with the load and do the best I can. Got it? It's all here on the paper," he added.

"Right!"

He checked a smile at the efficiency that sounded in her clipped reply. The barrier was lifted once again.

All his doubts had vanished. He believed her story, knew this was no ruse to trap him. He was sure she would carry out his instructions. That knowledge caused a wave of tenderness which he sought to hide in brusqueness:

"Another thing—this is the most important of all: When you are through telephoning, you stay right in the house with Mother Donough. Tell her all about it. Have a good cry on her shoulder." His voice broke a trifle. "She looks like a sour-faced old Scotchwoman, but she comes as close to being an angel as any human being I ever met."

ALL this while he was leading her toward the trail. He pointed it out.

"Now it's up to you. Make it as quick as you can. Don't try any long explanations. They'll understand. Off you go!"

But she remained standing at the start of the trail.

"How about you?" she demanded. "They'll—they'll kill you."

He was grinning; his calm confidence was contagious.

"Not a chance," he told her. "But I might need a spot of help somewhere along the line. That's why I am asking you to speed it up."

She took a quick step forward, but then turned back. Her eyes met and held his.

"I'll be praying," she said. "Praying for you."

Then she was off along the trail at a dog-trot, which, as he watched her out of sight, changed into a run. . . .

Carver darted into the shed. He gathered up a hammer, a chisel and a

quantity of rope. His quick glance fell upon an old sail, which he proceeded to tear into strips. Then he picked up the things he had collected, and ran to the deck of the barge.

He walked forward, gazing at the barrels.

"Eeney, meeney, miney, moe—" he muttered.

He seized the third barrel from the bow, and pushed it over. He used the tools to remove the bottom. He tossed the tools aside, and pulled out the cramped Chinese.

The yellow man gazed up at him stolidly, and attempted only feeble resistance as the Immigration man went to work. Carver bound the arms and the legs of the Chinese securely with rope, and used the strips of sail to fashion a crude but effective gag. Then he tossed the helpless man across his shoulder, carried him into the woods, and placed him beneath a tree.

He chuckled as he said:

"See you later—maybe."

Back on the barge, he gathered up the tools, the left-over rope and scraps of sail, and the bottom of the barrel. He returned the tools to the shed, and carefully closed the door as he emerged. The other articles he tossed into the woods.

Again he leaped to the deck of the barge, located the empty barrel, and rolled it back to approximately its former position. He removed his gun from its holster, examined it, then placed it on the deck at his feet. He took a quick look around, then knelt in exactly the spot where the barrel had been.

His hands went out, seized the empty barrel, lifted it up, and then allowed it to slide down about his body. He twisted and squirmed to fit his form to the tight quarters. He craned his neck and found one of the air-holes. His right hand found the revolver, and pushed it to where it would be ready for instant use.

Then he settled back, trying to make himself as comfortable as he could. Ironical thoughts flashed through his mind. He recalled a dance in one of the border cities in which he had been stationed. A sweet young thing had said:

"Your work is so thrilling. You must take all kinds of chances."

He smiled wryly. "All kinds of chances!"

This came under that heading, all right. This was— He chuckled grimly: this was a "Chinaman's chance!"

NICK was in the lead, with a watchful eye on Steve, as the alien-runners arrived at the wharf shortly before seven. A quick glance about satisfied them.

"Let's go!" said Whitey.

Nick, however, calmly seated himself.

"We make no hurries," he declared. "First should the guys what work here come. That looks more good. And then the push-boat comes."

The group draped themselves about convenient resting-places. They spoke of various things, but not once did they mention the Chinese in their cramped prisons.

Shortly before eight the three men who had been shipping potatoes put in their appearance. They greeted Nick without surprise, but as they started work, they exchanged knowing grins.

The "push-boat," which arrived a short time later, proved to be a large motor-boat, broad of beam and slow, but equipped with a sturdy heavy-duty engine.

The crew of two proceeded to attach a hawser to the bow of the barge. Nick held a whispered conversation with the man in charge, who nodded his understanding.

"We mofe now," said Nick.

The rush of Steve's body struck the two men full force. They made the mistake of attempting to grapple with him.

Nick, Steve, Whitey and the two men who had arrived on the truck with him, boarded the barge and cast loose the mooring lines. The motorboat pulled the barge clear of the wharf, made a turn to the left, and chugged its way eastward, hugging the Canadian shore of the river.

Nick and Whitey stood in the stern, talking in low tones, but finding it necessary to raise their voices as the boats drew ever nearer to the thundering falls.

"I don't trust that Steve so much," Nick was explaining. "The damn' fool think he quit. Nobody ever quit on Nick. You fix your two boys all ready. I don't see we have some trouble, but best be ready, all same. If cops come when we start across, you roll barrels right off-board; then river do the work. They go down fast, but water push them over falls just same. Them damn' cop guys don't find nothing to prove nothing. You see? You bet!"

Whitey spat into the water. He did it in a manner that spoke eloquently of his respect for Nick's genius. Then he held whispered conversations with his two companions, and they took stations among the barrels at the forward end.

Steve sat on a plank, looking out across the river. Not another craft was visible. The only sounds audible were the steady *putt-putt* of the motor of the boat ahead, the straining timbers of the barge, and the roar of the falls.

Conflicting fears gripped Steve: he was afraid of Nick; he feared the officers. He was afraid their appearance would cause Nick to carry out his threat of the night before. He was worried about June. He had knocked on her closed door before starting out, received no answer, and then hurried away in response to a gruff command from Nick. The steady roar of the falls, constantly gaining in volume, seemed to Steve a harbinger of doom.

Now the current of the river was growing swifter, and the motorboat veered sharply to the right, drawing the barge after it in a wide arc that just escaped the first rapids, and headed directly for the American shore. The men on the barge became doubly alert as the boats entered American waters.

THE first hint of danger came from the Canadian shore. Timed with the turning of the barge, a powerful motor came to life, its staccato barks sounding above the din of the falls. A boat with a knifelike bow shot into view from an invisible station on the shore, and roared its way across the river toward the convoy.

The appearance of the Canadian boat was followed by a roar from a boat that darted out from a hiding-place on the American shore, slightly to the west of the barge. It too bore down upon the alien-runners.

Nor was that all. A third boat, which appeared from the American shore, off to the west, also darted toward the scene.

BUT it was the Canadian boat, manned by Mounties, that constituted the most immediate menace. Seated astride the bow was Sergeant Henry Devons. White spray swirled about him, and his red hair formed a halo in the sun.

Aboard the barge, Nick was the first to transform sudden fear and indecision into action.

"Off-board with them barrels, you fools!" he roared.

Whitey and his two mates literally threw themselves upon the first barrel in the bow and heaved it overboard. It sank below the surface of the water, left a wake of bubbles, and bobbed up again. The current caught it, carrying it irresistibly eastward, toward the falls. It floated on, sinking deeper and deeper as the water entered the holes cut by Nick and his men.

The men on the barge stood spellbound, a little appalled by their act. The barrel, gaining speed, disappeared into the cloud of spume that floated above the top of the falls. Over that cloud of spume circled a gigantic rainbow.

Nick danced about in a frenzy of rage and fear.

"Faster!" he screamed. "I look, you fools! You poosh!"

They rushed toward the second barrel. But they halted abruptly as the third barrel, untouched by human hands, toppled over. And they drew back aghast as a pair of legs, encased in black puttees and uniform trousers, began to back from the open end of that third barrel.

Speed Carver, taking Nick's first cry as his cue, had attempted to lift the barrel off his body. But the cramped quarters had done their work with legs and arms. It was no go. The desperation of failure held him for a moment. That delay had made it possible for them to throw off the first barrel.

Now Carver summoned all his strength in a wild lurch. The barrel fell over,

carrying him with it. He started to back out, trying to hold his revolver in fingers so numb they could not feel the trigger.

Again Nick was the first to recover.

"Poosh him off-board, you fools!"

Whitey and one of his men rushed forward to obey the command, but the third man held back. The two men had bent to grasp the barrel when Steve Barnel threw himself upon them. All the fineness that remained in him had struggled to the surface. It was a faint spark, for it had remained dormant while the luckless yellow man went to his death, but now it was burning full flame.

The rush of Steve's body struck the two men full force. They made the mistake of attempting to grapple with him, but the force of Steve's charge carried him over the side of the barge. Whitey and his man were carried with him.

They struck the water as a confused human mass. When the mass untangled, the barge had slipped away, and they were swept on toward the falls, helpless in the rushing current, just as the barrel had been. There was one despairing, high-pitched scream—and all Steve Barnel's debts to life were canceled.

FLEXING arms and legs, but still on hands and knees, Carver was just clear of the barrel when Nick, momentarily spellbound by the fate of the three men, wheeled about. He read death in Carver's eyes, knew that if he attempted to draw his own gun, Speed's gun would fell him in his tracks. The Immigration man, still numb and groggy, was watching Nick's hands; but the alien-runner kept them motionless—and dropped upon him like a huge cat.

They were locked in a tight grip as they began a desperate struggle, during which they rolled back and forth across the slippery deck of the barge. The remaining alien-runner ran to the bow of the barge, and made frantic signals to the men in the motorboat.

The craft swung to the left and pulled the bow of the barge away from the American shore until it was headed directly toward the falls. The man on the barge seized an ax and drove it through the hawser connecting the two boats. The motorboat made a quick half-circle, and pulled up beside the barge. The man on the barge cast one glance amidships, where the struggle still raged, and leaped into the motorboat, which roared off toward the west.

The barge had lost forward motion when it was swung about. For a moment it seemed almost stationary. Then the current had its way. The barge gained speed slowly at first, but that speed increased with every foot of progress; and ahead was a cloud of spume, a rainbow, a sickening drop of seventy feet, and a landing-place of rocks. On the deck of the barge two men were engaged in what each knew was a struggle to the death.

ON the river there was plenty of action. The Canadian boat and the first American boat were nearing the barge. The second American boat, however, had altered its course to intercept the motorboat that had been towing the barge.

The Canadian boat tasted action first. Sergeant Devons, blending commands, curses, prayers and action, had woven belt life-preservers, ropes and fenders into an improvised collision-mat, which he swung over the bow. They were near the barge, and dangerous rapids were close off their port bow. In the American boat, some distance away, stood Chief Patrol Inspector Louis Grant. His fists were clenched, and his teeth bit into his lips. Then he roared out a heartfelt cry of admiration.

The pilot of the Canadian boat deliberately swung it to the left, and into the rapids. By some miracle it lived. He swung it about again, and pushed its bow against the blunt forward end of the oncoming barge. He waited only until the collision-mat had taken up the force of the impact. Then the powerful motor of his boat was jumped to its full strength, and it roared out a deafening challenge to the swirling waters.

Devons had gone into action even before the two boats met. He vaulted the water between them with monkeylike agility, landed upon the deck of the barge, slipped, recovered himself, and leaped upon the struggling mass amidships. He pried them apart. He seized Nick, swung the gross form up, then hurled it to the deck. Then Devons stood over him, his feet apart, presenting a picture of outraged justice, until he saw the alien-runner was unconscious. His face softened as he pulled Carver to his feet.

"All right, old son?"

Carver staggered, seized a barrel for support, and nodded assent.

Devons wasted no time. His stout arm supported Carver as he led him to the bow, where a gasoline engine and a river were staging a grim battle. The onward

rush of the barge was slowed, but its forward progress continued. The engine had no more to give. The river grew stronger every foot.

But the battle continued, for the grim-faced men in the boat had never learned the meaning of the word *quit*. The falls roared only a short distance away. The rapids were clutching at them. Once in the vortex at the head of the falls, the heavy barge would crush them and carry their boat with it. There was time now to take Devons and Carver aboard and pull away. Only a man who was their enemy, and a bunch of Chinks—law-breakers all—would be lost. But the Mounties hung on.

"God love 'em!" murmured Speed Carver, his hand resting on Devons' shoulder. The big sergeant grinned. "Stout lads," was his only comment.

Then the American boat pulled up. Grant stood in the bow, a coil of rope in his hand. He shouted to Devons, and heaved the rope. The Mounty caught it, and made it fast to a stanchion.

The American boat, speeding away from the stern of the barge, took up the slack almost at once. The length of the line allowed the boat to remain in relatively calm water. The motor coughed uncertainly, then settled down to its task.

The forward motion of the barge ceased. It hung motionless for just a moment. Then Devons and Carver felt it quiver beneath their feet, and it began to move westward. Only then did the Canadian boat ease off, and fight its way back to smooth water.

Mounties vaulted to the deck of the barge and began to attack the barrels. They pulled out the Chinese with rough cries of sympathy. The noise of the falls was lessening. A Mounty pointed westward on the river. The second American boat had captured the motor-boat that towed the barge.

THE voice of Chief Inspector Grant carried over the water:

"This *is* a haul! Good going, Speed."

And in the next breath:

"Wait until I get you on the American shore, Devons. You and your blooming heroes!"

Devons flushed a fiery red. To cover his embarrassment, he turned to Speed.

"Everything tophole, Yank?"

Carver grinned.

"Righto, as you blooming Britishers would say. By the way, I parked a yellow in the woods near the shack at the landing when I traded places with him. We better—"

"One of the lads will pick him up," Devons interrupted. He lowered his voice. "Better make tracks for Mother Donough's. Somebody is waiting." He removed his hat, and stroked his flaming red hair. "You are a lucky blighter."

MOTHER DONOUGH stood blocking the doorway of her house. Before her stood Speed Carver, his uniform disheveled, and his usual smile missing.

For the last two hours Mother Donough had made a general nuisance of herself on the telephone as she sought word regarding the safety of this and other young men, Canadian and American, all of whom she regarded as "my boys." Now, however, her face was even more dour than usual, and her tongue had lost none of its accustomed sharpness.

"There you are, and a fine-looking object, to be sure!"

Carver brushed by her.

"Where is Miss Barnel?"

"Asleep. She dropped off after drinking a cup of coffee into which I had slipped a few drops of something quite harmless. Self-defense made me do it. She had me groggy listening to her worries about your worthless self and her worthless father."

She cocked her head to one side and looked him over.

"You look as good as you ever do. How's her father?"

Carver lowered his voice.

"Steve went over the falls, Mother Donough. He saved my life. I—"

"Humph!" growled the woman. "It's the best story could be told to that poor lassie upstairs. I'll tell it to her myself, so she hears it told in a convincing manner."

"Thanks, Mother Donough," replied Speed. "She'll want to be alone for a time, so I'll wait here." He hesitated. "She may never want to see me after this, but tell her I tried to keep my promise, and that I'll always be waiting."

Mother Donough snorted her scorn.

"March your big feet into my kitchen," she ordered. "Keep your greedy hands off everything but the scones you'll find cooling on the table. Take just one of them. 'Tis all that elephant's stomach of yours will be able to digest, before she'll be wanting to see you."

THE END

In this department we print each month the best true stories of personal adventure contributed by our readers. (For details of our true experience contest, see Page 3.) First a sea-captain describes the burning of his ship and the long subsequent voyage in an open boat to St. Helena.

Afire and Adrift

By CAPTAIN GEORGE GRANT

ON the cross-bunker hatch we mates and engineers had gathered to sing chanteys and songs of the sea. The moon, full and red, had come out of the sea, while beside it a rugged stretch of cloud seemed like a ship on fire. The captain laughed when some one drew his attention to it.

"It's the Lady in the Moon up to her tricks," he mused, "She's a queer one, but always kind to sailor-men."

He took the two apprentices over to the bulwark rail, and with the aid of his binoculars, showed them the profile of the Lady in the Moon. Then with a curt good-night, he went up on to the lower bridge and into his cabin. It was quite apparent to us all that he was disturbed. After leaving Trinidad where coal was taken on board for the run to the Cape, fire had broken out in the lower cross bunker and it had resisted our efforts to extinguish it for three days. We concluded that the reaction to the terrible responsibility of those trying days was having its effect upon him—for this was the year 1915, and we were bound for Australia laden with military supplies; but we shrugged our shoulders, for we were young, and went on with our songs for a time, and then to our bunks.

Seven bells were struck on the bridge. They were answered in deeper notes from the forecastle head, and distinctly down the wind came the lookout-man's, "All's well. Lights are burning bright, sir." The third mate answered, "Aye! Aye!"

One bell at a quarter to twelve was struck—time for me to get up to stand the graveyard watch. I stretched wearily on the bunk, then closed my eyes. The sweetest slumber is that of the stolen moments.

Boom! The vessel vibrated throughout her length to the force of a muffled explosion. Then followed a silence so intense that I could hear the pounding of my heart.

Boom! Again the smothered roar filled the air. Doors banged open. Wild cries mingled with the steady voice of the captain, shouting orders. Boots clattered on the iron decks.

Throwing my legs over the bunk-board, I waited bewildered, and for a second afraid. Had we struck a bridled mine? Had an armed enemy cruiser found us in the darkness? Was she bombarding us at close range?

Boom! The bunk heaved up beneath me. A brilliant flash from the direction of the after well-deck illuminated the small cabin. Through the after porthole I saw a sheet of flame leap up abaft the mainmast, carrying on its yellow-bright crest hatches, packing-cases and fragments of torn tarpaulin which resembled the wings of gigantic bats. Against the iron side of my cabin falling particles beat a sharp tattoo.

As I reached for the door to swing it back, it opened to reveal the bosun standing without, carrying a lighted hurricane lamp.

"All hands on deck, sor," he cried. "It's the devil's work we're fightin' tonight."

He was gone before I could question him. A tongue of flame shot up through Number Four hatch, then disappeared, leaving behind a film of pale blue smoke. I could smell fire. Standing in my pajamas by the open door I became aware also of a glare on the water, of a stillness in the vessel, and I realized that she was stopped. Men were tumbling out of the after forecastles with bundles on their shoulders.

The mate came around the corner of the deck-house, wiping his eyes with a wet handkerchief. Over his pajamas he had pulled his blue uniform trousers. His pajama jacket was torn, scorched in places, and wet as if a hose had been turned upon him.

"Get a move on, young fellow," he advised, halting before me. After coughing chokingly he continued: "I've been down in her forward. Can't do a thing with her. She's ablaze fore and aft. Bombs in her, I believe. The Old Man wants you on the bridge. He's going to leave her—the only thing to do."

AS he left me to go to his room to change his clothes and procure what valuables he possessed, I grabbed up my clothes from the settee and put them on quickly. A lamp was unnecessary now, for the whole of the after hatch was ablaze, and a stream of fire came from under the deck on which I stood, to run along the starboard scuppers. Barrels of tallow in the side bunker pockets were the cause.

Wrapping a handkerchief around my mouth and nostrils, I raced up the ladder on to the lower bridge, pulled open the chart-room door and entered. The captain, who was leaning over the chart on the table, looked up. His face was pale and deeply lined.

"Lay off courses to the land," he ordered. "Jot them down on three pieces of paper, one for yourself, one for the mate, and the other for me. Then take what gear you can to the boats. Hurry! The storeroom underneath here is afire, and we'll have to leave her soon."

He went into his cabin; and hearing the door of his safe open, I knew that he was gathering the ship's papers, his money and possibly the photographs of his wife and children.

I laid off courses. The nearest point of land was on the west coast of Africa, six hundred and fifty miles away. In almost the opposite direction lay the Island of St. Helena, seven hundred miles away. The first course lay across the track of vessels from Europe to the Cape; the second lay through the unfrequented sea to the westward. . . . Next I took the chronometers from their box, the sextants and nautical books from their locker, and divided them into three piles, one for each boat.

All the boats were lowered to the bridge-deck rail when I left the chart-room. The captain met me by the rail.

"When your boat is in the water," he ordered, "pull clear, then lay to until daylight."

I nodded and hurried away. My feet were being scorched through my boots, and a light wind was blowing the smoke from the blazing holds over the deck where I was. My boat, suspended in its davits from the lower bridge, was waiting for me.

I threw the nautical gear to the men, then ran around the deck to my cabin. Opening the wardrobe, I grabbed all the clothes, wrapped them up in the blankets from the bunk and hastened back to the boat. Throwing everything on board, I jumped up on the rail, stepped into the boat and gave the order to lower away. I knew from a previous experience how cold it could be on the water without food to generate heat from within.

Sitting in the stern, I looked at the men in the boat before me as the rope whined over the pulleys. All of their faces had the self-same anxious expression which plainly told the course of their thoughts. They seemed like men condemned to die.

The boat settled in the water with a splash. The fall men slid down.

"Cut the painter," I cried, "and shove off."

The oars were manned, and slowly the boat drew away from the scorching heat —away out of the range of the blinding light, away into the darkness of night and the terror of life's uncertainty.

I GAVE the order to lay to, on the oars, when about three hundred yards from the vessel. She was burning fore and aft, the flames lighting up the whole length of her. Slowly I became fascinated by the spectacle of destroying fire. In defeat the old vessel took on a grandeur she had never possessed. She was only an old tramp, yet I imagined her a vessel of war, fighting defiantly to the last. You

will understand if ever you have made a vessel your home. That's what she had been to me. For many months I had been a part of her, as vital to her as the engines which would never turn over again. A mist came over my eyes as I sat silently watching.

With a crash the foremast went by the board, suffusing the sea with blinding red; the bridge, now a skeleton structure of iron beams, bent in the center, tightening the whistle lanyard as it sank. A long, prolonged blast sounded a farewell—the old ship seemed calling us back.

DAWN rose yellow, to spread a garish flush on the smooth face of the sea. From the east the cirrus spread in long, gnarled tentacles toward the zenith, where it hung like a great, clutching hand. The air grew chill.

"Rouse up!" I shouted to my men on seeing the other two boats drawing together. "Get out the oars and give way."

As they obeyed, I looked them over. Twenty-four men all told. Now I recall about half a dozen. There was the bosun, a true son of the sea; the carpenter, a Finn, fat and jolly; Jorgensen, a Norwegian; and Matzudaira, a Japanese, both sailor-men; and an apprentice boy, fifteen years of age. The others were a motley crew of Chinese who had been firemen, two Arabs who had left the land and religion of their fathers to seek wealth among the unbelievers, an engineer and a few more who were the rakings from a seaport in war-time. It was not a crew to inspire confidence; yet I felt a touch of pride as the bosun placed them on thwarts, two men to each oar, and the boat began to gather headway and proceed toward the others which lay waiting for us.

The roll was called. Five men were missing. We concluded that they had been killed by the explosions. There had been plenty of time for them to reach the boats if they had been alive when we left the vessel.

After a few perfunctory remarks, the captain stood up in the stern-sheets. His back was bent as if under a heavy load; his eyes shifted uneasily from the east, from the vessel, to us, and to some distant place we could not see.

"We shall try to keep together," he shouted. "But you know where you are, and each boat must take care of itself. I have no instructions to give, for I am no longer the master. Good-by and good luck to you all."

"Good-by, sir! . . . Good-by, boys! . . . Best of luck, everybody! . . . See you in Glasgow, Rennie! . . . Remember me to those back home!"

Across the ever-widening expanse of water the farewells drifted. Vividly I see that parting. The mate, hunched and weary, waved his hand, then turned away to give orders to his men; Rennie, my pal, looked at me steadily, yet said not a word; the apprentice-boy in my boat wept unashamed. . . . Somehow, at that time, I knew what our separate fates would be. Yet with the passing of the years, the mystery of my own salvation is still with me.

A puff of wind disturbed the smoothness of the sea and fell upon my cheeks as I sat and watched with misty eyes. The faces became blurred by distance; the boats tiny specks upon the water.

"Ship the mast!" I ordered. "And hoist the sail!"

The command roused the men from their lethargy. The mast was unlashed from the thwart and stepped. The sail filled to the wind. The boat began to make way through the water. I laid a course to the eastward, after the other boats, and ordered the bosun to the tiller.

The water-breaker was passed aft and lashed in the stern-sheets at my feet. A sack of bread which had lain in the salt water was dumped overboard. The biscuit tanks were opened and their contents found to be dry. The axes were stowed away in the stern locker, out of the reach of the crew. All the oars and spare gear was lashed snugly so that none of it would be lost if the boat capsized. Water was bailed out, and four men told off to keep the boat dry.

MEANWHILE the wind had increased and the sea risen so the boat would not lie her course. She was drifting to leeward as much as she was going ahead. I could see the other boats were also in a similar fix. A lifeboat is not constructed to beat to windward. The sail is so small that it can only be used to advantage when going before the wind. At the rate we were proceeding, it would take months to cover the six hundred and fifty miles to the coast. And St. Helena, a tiny island, eleven miles long by seven broad, lay practically dead before the wind! I toyed with the thought. Could it be made? Would the men mutiny if I decided to leave the company of the other boats? The wind was increasing, carrying the tops of the seas over the gunwale.

The ugly blackness of a squall lay to the south and east. It would fling its weight upon our beam. . . .

"Let her go off before the wind," I shouted, and waited for a dissenting voice. There was none. Instead I saw a look of relief pass over many faces.

"We're off for St. Helena," I explained. "I believe we'll make a better passage."

For us, St. Helena! Twenty-four men cramped together in a small boat with little water and little food heading out into a world of tumbling water in search of a speck of land, standing like a solitary sentinel in a wilderness. Today I would not take the chance, but in that heyday of youth, it seemed the only course.

Most of the men became sea-sick, for few of them had ever been in a small boat in choppy seas. Although it meant discomfort to them, it meant the saving of a day's rations!

The other boats were soon lost below the rim of the horizon, and I felt the loneliness of our position. Luckily for us all, it was too late to turn back.

EARLY in the afternoon I found that Jorgensen had been a fisherman off the Norwegian fjords, and there was little he did not know about a boat. The others had had little experience, so I decided to share the long night hours with him, relieving each other after four-hour watches.

Jorgensen was a sailor among sailormen. During that first long night when I would be sitting, cramped up, in the stern-sheets trying to catch a wink of sleep, I would hear him singing a wild sea-song, or a plaintive air of the saddened fisherfolk, and gazing up toward the tiller, I imagined him to be a Viking of old, setting forth on a voyage of discovery or pillage. The tiny light of the compass lent a glow to his face which was a symbol of confidence and courage.

At nine o'clock A. M. a biscuit and a mouthful of water was issued to all hands. The water supply had to be conserved, for if St. Helena was missed, there lay beyond the doldrum calms through which the boat would have to sail to reach the coast of Brazil. It would take a month, perhaps two, perhaps three—but maybe some would survive to tell the tale.

The night had been cold; and as some of the men were poorly clad, I ordered all the clothing, such as overcoats and blankets, to be pooled. It was then distributed to the most needy. . . .

In the early night the wind came, puffy at first as if to delude us into a feeling of false security; then, steadying, it freshened until it was blowing strong and carrying the spindrift over us in a constant shower. Our clothes became saturated. Colder and colder it grew, until the men huddled together for warmth.

Throughout the night the wind held, growing stronger every hour; and in the morning, there was a high following sea.

The waves grew precipitous while the wind went whistling by in fierce squalls. Still on we held! On and on for our lives; the sail half furled, the boat driving along like a mad thing, now rising triumphantly on a crest, now sunk in the hollows.

Foam snarled at the gunwales; live water tumbled on board, half-filling the boat as she drove along. The men bailed frantically. They forgot the danger, forgot their misery and their plight. They were living, fighting!

Early in the day I ordered Jorgensen to the tiller. I could not manage it myself. Throughout the day he held our lives in his hand and he did not fail.

How he nursed that boat! An eye to windward and an eye ahead! A smile on his face and a laugh from his lips as the broken water hurled over him. Down into the hollows or up onto the crests he guided the frail craft at the proper angle. One mistake, and all would have been over, our journey at an end.

Then three waves in succession broke. The boat filled to the gunwales and sank heavily, like a sea-bird stunned by a blow. We wallowed about, struggling to help each other to free her from the water that displaced the buoyancy. We used our hats, our hands. We scooped it out with wide sweeps of our arms, yet all availed little against the slippery enemy. I yelled encouragement until my voice cracked and a numbness took possession of my throat. I became afraid to look up from my task lest I should find the men had ceased to fight.

BUT they had not ceased; the water was bailed out until not more than a foot lay above the bottom-boards. I thanked them with a wave of my hand, and tried to smile—but it was hard to do, for all looked so wretched, like cats struggling to the shore after being thrown into a pond to drown. Wild-eyed they looked at me, their clothing dripping wet and clinging to their bodies, and they seemed to ask:

"Have we a chance to live?"

Another wave curled high above the stern, roared as it broke, and flung on board, knocking me from my feet. Rising unsteadily I realized that the boat could run no longer; unless she was hove to, head on to the sea, she would be filled up, smashed because the weight of water inside would not allow the planking to give before the mad assault of the water without.

I looked astern; the waves came on in a mad succession. I looked at the sky; it was hard and gray. I looked ahead; there was no light above the horizón, no glint of the sun, no sign of the end of the storm.

"Get the gear ready to heave her to!" I said to the carpenter and the bosun.

THEY unlashed the sea-anchor, which is a conical canvas drag held open with an iron ring to which lines are attached, and made fast to it a small canvas oil-bag, which was pricked with a knife to let the oil ooze out. Half a dozen oars were unlashed, shipped in their rowlocks, and the crew were given instructions what to do with them.

The bosun clambered over the thwarts, and in the bow, hitched the lines from the sea-anchor to a length of rope coiled down clear for running. When all was in readiness, he made a signal with his hand to me.

I hesitated, in a quandary. The boat seemed to be making better weather of it, and I was not sure just how she would act with the wind and sea square on her nose.

"Better you do it!"

It was Jorgensen who spoke. I looked up at him with a question in my eyes. The smile had gone from his face. He turned his head slightly over his shoulder to windward and slowly shook it as he faced me again.

"Stand by!" I shouted as loudly as I could. If a chance had to be taken, the sooner the better.

I watched anxiously. I counted the waves as they flung upon us and carried us forward. I sought the whirlpools of eddying wind, became blinded as the spray dashed into my eyes, wiped them free, watched and waited for the lull that comes between the squalls.

"Let her go round!" I yelled, urging the men on with a sweep of my arm.

Over went the tiller; the sail was hauled amidships and lowered; the men on the starboard oars laid back on them, those on the port side backed-water when they could; the sea-anchor was dropped over the bow, and dragged out ahead as the boat came round and began to drift astern. I watched anxiously while waiting for it to take charge.

The waves, which before had seemed so high, now attained the proportions of mountains as the boat took their slanting sides head-on. Destruction seemed inevitable as the sea-anchor, reaching far ahead, dragged us against them. But in a splutter of spray the boat was up and over them, and diving down into the hollow to await the one that followed after.

Suddenly, and without warning, the rope of the sea anchor parted with a chug. The boat swung beam-on to the wind as a wave towered high, shutting out the sky.

I sprang to my feet as the breaking crest reached the boat. The white, churning foam dashed against the side, heeled her over until I looked down over the heads of my men, at the sea.

"Get oars out," I yelled, grasping the weather gunwale, and unable to see any longer, for the water was over me.

As the wave passed on, the boat righted herself. Feverishly we manned oars and pulled for dear life. The sail was hoisted, and in a smother of spray, we were away again like a shot before the wind before the succeeding waves could engulf us. All danger was forgotten; the thrill of action had taken its place.

HOURS of anxiety and suspense passed as the storm was fought. At dusk the wind moderated, and the sea fallen away to a lazy swell. A few stars came out between the patches of driving cumulus. They were friendly stars. I thought of them as the eyes of God, they were so bright.

A mouthful of water and a sea biscuit was issued. The men drank the water, but the biscuits were thrown into the sea. With mouths dry from thirst, they were too hard to chew.

I relieved Jorgensen at the tiller at eight bells. The night settled in cold, and wet to the skin, I sat in the stern and shivered and steered, and longed for the comfort of a great feather bed. Jorgensen and the engineer sat against my legs dangling in the stern-sheets.

I held my course by the stars, for the small colza oil lamp in the compass had gone out. I liked the deeper darkness much better; I was so much more alone.

Rousing from a dream, I looked at the compass with the aid of a small pocket

torch to check my course; for the star, I knew, was traveling across the sky. Almost immediately one of the men sprang to his feet.

"A light! A light! There's a light!" he cried, pointing away to starboard. I could see him in silhouette against the sail.

All hands awakened, and all saw the light which was not there. I wanted to tell them what I had done, but they yelled and demanded that the boat be headed more to the westward, toward the light. I pretended to run her off, and they saw the light drawing ahead. Flares were lighted, and a hurricane lamp lighted and hung at the masthead, and the light was lost in the glare. It frightened some of the men to know that the boat was alone in a world of water again. I could hear the Chinese swearing and talking excitedly together, no doubt blaming the disappearance of the light on me.

Jorgensen relieved me at the tiller when the excitement died down and remained there until daylight, when the carpenter took over. The wind had fallen light, and the sun came up out of the sea in a burst of burning glory. The boat was bailed out, and we took off our topclothes and spread them out to dry.

After issuing water I took a sight, and at noon a latitude. Four hundred miles of the distance toward St. Helena had been made good, but the boat had been blown off her course to the westward. With a feeling of trepidation I held the course up two points to make, if possible, a windward course. Our chances of making St. Helena had decreased during the storm. I told the men that two hundred miles had been made on the previous day, but said nothing about my fears, and they were somewhat cheered.

In the forenoon five sharks kept us company. They swam leisurely along, close to the boat, and their small cavernous eyes seemed to be appraising us. I shot at them with my small revolver to create a little diversion, but the amusement soon palled, and anyway, they were companions, and every bit as friendly as the Chinese sitting up in the bow, looking aft with inscrutable hard eyes.

IN the afternoon the heat grew intense; one of the Arabs signified by a motion of his closed hand to his lips that he wanted water. I shook my head and turned away. He began to pray in a monotonous chant and the men up forward drew away from him until he knelt alone in the space between two thwarts. After praying an hour or more, he scooped up a bailerful of salt water and drank it down before he could be restrained. It didn't seem to have much effect on him, either for good or ill, and I became very much concerned for the other members of the crew who were watching the Arab as closely as I. But soon froth appeared on his lips and his prayers were punctuated with wails of woe. At dusk, when the second issue of water was made, I gave the Arab a double whack but did not make it known.

ALL night the Arab prayed. Occasionally other voices would join in the monotonous chant; they were like the voices of men half-asleep. I felt an urge to join in myself, drawn toward it against my will. It was like a drug, soothing and offering relief; yet something deep down within me held me back.

At dawn, which was hard and gray, the Arab besought me to save him. He leaned across the thwart with his arms outstretched toward me. I looked at his wild wet eyes; I looked at his mouth, which was twisting with an agony I could almost feel; and his cries struck into my being with the pain of a dagger-thrust. But beyond him and around him I could see other eyes, all gazing stoically at me. They were Chinese eyes, sailor-men eyes, and the weeping eyes of the apprentice boy. Above them they could see the gray skies, around them the limitless expanse of water, and behind them they could feel the heat, the cold, and the wretched loneliness which combined built up a cell from which there seemed no escape.

I looked at the Arab, told him to take a hold of himself, and shook my head. He looked back at me bewildered; then there passed over his face a vague expression as if a curtain had been dropped between him and me. He knelt again and prayed; then lurching to his feet, he stumbled over the gunwale and into the sea. No one put out a hand to save him. It came as a great relief. I did not look astern. I was afraid I might be tempted to put the boat about and try to rescue him from the end he sought. The sharks left us for a time, and the wind freshened.

The sixth day came in clear with the trade wind blowing briskly from the south and east. Two rain-squalls hung over the horizon, one to windward and one to leeward, but too far out of our way for us to gain any benefit from them.

If only one would settle over the boat so that we could drink our fill, and expose our tongues to the cool draught from the cloud!

"We should see the Island today, I think," I whispered to the men when the water was issued. Biscuits were not given out, for no one ate them, and they attracted the sharks when thrown into the sea.

I took a sight and ran it up to noon, when a latitude was obtained. The results cheered me.

"The Island is only thirty miles away," I whispered, looking around at the men, and there must have been something of awe in my voice, for they did not see, at first, the significance of what I stated. Instead they looked at me as if I had proclaimed their doom.

"The Island! The Island! It is only thirty miles away!" I shouted, and my voice broke.

Some one cheered; some one laughed. All turned around on the thwarts and faced ahead with eyes glued on the far horizon. I took the tiller, for the boat was sagging to leeward, and I was a little bit afraid. If the Island could not be made, if it should be passed within the range of our vision and no one should see us, what would become of us? I knew the coast of Brazil could never be made.

But a tiny cloud was seen away ahead. We all thought it was the land, but no one voiced the thought. We must be sure. The tiny cloud, or that which resembled a tiny cloud, grew in proportion and became more dark. The land! Yes! Yes! The land! Matsudaira climbed to the top of the mast the better to see it.

Yes! It was the land!

All hands turned to me. I nodded, and I felt the tears surging into my eyes. The faces of the men before me had changed. I saw only compassion, friendship and trust where but yesterday was enmity. I wanted to say a few words of cheer, but words choked in my throat. Nodding toward the water-breaker, I said:

"Drink your fill, men."

EACH man filled the dipper to the brim, raised it with a shy, awkward motion, and drank my health in stale and tainted water; but the most expensive wine could never have been so sweet nor as welcome.

Hugging the land, the boat wafted along toward the northwest promontory, and rounding it, I saw a searchlight sweeping the waters of the harbor off Jamestown. I ordered oars shipped and the boat was rowed into the lee of a cove, where I decided to lie until daylight. There was just a chance that the lookout men would mistake us for a German submarine in disguise and fire on us in the excitement of discovery before our legitimate business could be disclosed.

THERE in the cove it was peaceful, and the smell of the land was a gift from God. It came down from the high hills, strengthened by the dampness of night, and laid upon us like a warm covering. One by one the men fell asleep. I watched them, thinking all the while of the wonder of our salvation. Were the others' boats as fortunate? Or were they drifting towards the doldrums, the faces of their occupants blanched with the proximity of a lonely and terrible death? Faithless to my duty, for I had promised to keep the first watch, I felt sleep coming upon me and I let it come.

A slap, a stirring, roused me. Looking up I saw the dawn was in the sky, coming up out of the sea. The sail flapped. I looked up and saw the wind was filling the peak of it and tugging at the gaskets. Over my shoulder the land lay about three miles away! The boat had drifted off while we had slept.

"Rouse up, everybody!" I shouted, thumping the thwart with the tiller.

The wind came away as the oars were shipped. The men laid back on them but, weakened, little headway was made.

"Pull, blast you!" I shouted and jumped from one man to the other, encouraging, cursing, and lending a hand.

Two surf-boats came off from the mole and met us half-way to the shore. They handed over a demijohn of cold spring water, then took our boat in tow. We drank the water; we laughed; we joked; some of us cried; and some of us sat silent, with eyes straining toward the land.

The Islanders crowded on the mole to meet us. When our legs gave way they picked us up and carried us to homes in the town. A fussy little doctor, with spectacles on his nose, cautioned me not to eat very much. I thanked him. But when he had gone to examine the others I plunged into a bath of cold water and freed my skin from a coating of salt; then I ate and ate until I thought that I would burst. Then I ate a little more. On a great soft bed I rolled and slept between two sheets for twenty-four hours and, when I wakened, it was as if the past week had never been.

Memoirs

Not the melodrama of fiction, but sober facts of a dangerous career.

I JOINED the Ranger service at Austin, Texas, under Adjutant-General W. H. King in March, 1883.

At that time I was a mere boy of twenty, but like most boys, I wanted adventure and the romance that goes with it. I was always expecting the impossible—such as rescuing some pretty girl from the Indians in a daring attack, or from the bandits who infested the Texas border along the Rio Grande. But such romance never happened to me.

After my enlistment I was sent to Uvalde as a member of Company D, Frontier Battalion, under the command of Captain L. P. Sieker. This company was made up of a fine lot of boys, some almost as young as myself. Our work was mostly in the counties bordering the Rio Grande, I might say from the Pecos River to Rio Grande City, some eight hundred miles.

The first fight I was ever in took place near the mouth of San Ambrosio Creek in Webb County, eighty miles above Laredo on the Rio Grande. I had then been in the Ranger service about a year.

It was early one morning when seven of us were scouting for some horse-thieves who were making their way to a certain crossing on the Rio Grande. Ben Riley and I were on pack drive that morning—as you know, all recruits get plenty of that. We had been talking that morning, and unintentionally let our pack-mules drop some distance behind, which was strictly against the rules. Corporal Lindsey, who was leading the scout, suddenly sighted two men with lead horses riding toward the river. They saw us about the same time we noticed them, and dropping their lead horses, made for a high and rugged hill on the banks of the river.

Corporal Lindsey and the other boys ahead took up the chase. Riley and I sized up the situation at a glance; by taking a cut-off, we had about the same distance to go as the others in order to get in line. However, the boys ahead had crossed a creek, and to get back in line for the chase, they had to recross it.

Because the creek was very boggy and the boys were racing at break-neck speed, all the horses bogged down and fell except that of Frank Sieker, a younger brother of our Captain. C. W. Giffin's horse fell on him and broke his collar-bone and wrenched his shoulder badly. That left only Riley, Sieker and myself in the chase. Riley, having a very fast horse, overtook the Mexicans about halfway up the hill. I was close behind him, and Sieker followed me.

Riley rode right into the group, explaining that we were Rangers and wanted to arrest them. Without a word of warning they shot him off his horse. Riley fired at them as he fell. I had my rifle out of its scabbard, and commenced firing as the Mexicans turned on Sieker and myself. Sieker got into action with his pistol about the same time I did, and one of the Mexicans was hit in the shoulder and lost his gun. He lay down on his horse's neck and kept going.

About that time I heard a cry from Sieker, close behind me:

"Oh, my God!"

It seemed to me like a death-cry, and I could not help but look around. Sieker was reeling backward off his horse, pistol still in his hand. He had been shot through the heart.

I then determined to do some better shooting; and to my delight, my next shot hit the Mexican in the right hand, shattering the stock of his rifle. He threw himself down on his horse, like his companion, and at break-neck speed went over the hill.

OUR horses had been trotting up the hill all during the shooting, jumping over brush, rock and cactus. When I got to the top of the hill, I saw Sieker's horse standing on the hillside, and Riley's farther down where the shooting had commenced. At the bottom, about half a mile away, I could see three men coming full speed up the hill.

# of a Texas Ranger

By SERGEANT IRA ATEN

On the other side of the hill where the Mexicans had gone I could see some adobe houses, and many men running about. I well knew that I had no business going down there alone, and decided to wait for the rest. When Corporal Lindsey and the others came up, he said: "Where are they?" I pointed to the houses. He said: "By God! Come on, let's go and get them."

We then rode cautiously down to the houses, keeping our guns ready for action. A big Mexican came up to us and said he was the deputy sheriff of Webb County, and would arrest the men for us. In those days it was the custom of some sheriffs along the Rio Grande to keep plenty of Mexican deputies at some of the ranches to protect the Mexican bandits in their smuggling, cattle-rustling, and horse-stealing from citizens on both sides of the river.

One of the Mexicans engaged in our battle had been badly shot through the shoulder, and the other through the hand. After much parley it was agreed that the so-called deputy sheriff was to take the two wounded prisoners in a buggy to Laredo, the county seat of Webb County, and we were to follow as guards and turn them over to the sheriff of Webb County.

Before leaving, we made arrangements to have Riley taken to the Votaw ranch, a large cattle-ranch fifteen miles away; and a call was sent for a doctor, fifty miles distant. Riley, shot through the thigh, hovered between life and death for months, but finally recovered. We also arranged to have Giffin taken to Eagle Pass for treatment of his injuries.

The only vehicle at hand was a light ramshackle wagon drawn by two Spanish mules only slightly larger than burros. In that way Giffin, and the body of Frank Sieker, were taken to Eagle Pass, eighty miles up the river. Our job, not yet completed, was to take the prisoners eighty miles down the river to Laredo and turn them over to the sheriff. We arrived there on the second day and turned our prisoners over to Darrio Gonzales, sheriff of Webb County. And then a bunch of Mexican deputy sheriffs arrested us for assault with intent to murder, and put us in jail!

Now we were in a bad fix, looking out through the jail bars. After talking things over with the deputy sheriffs, we demanded that the sheriff come to see us. Finally he came, at his own good time, and we asked that he take us out and let us see if we could find some one to go our bond. None of us knew anyone there, or had ever been in Laredo before. Going down the street, reading all the signs as we came to them, we finally saw an American name on a sign which read: *"The Grant Feed Store."*

Our hearts leaped into our mouths at the name of *"Grant,"* so in we went. We told Mr. Grant of our predicament. He said, "Sure, I will go on your bond," and told the sheriff to turn us loose, which he did. The sheriff turned the Mexican prisoners loose also, and they went across the Rio Grande. I understand the one who had been shot in the shoulder died later from blood-poisoning.

NEARLY all the people living along the Rio Grande in the early '80's were Mexicans, or Americans who had married into Mexican families. Most all the county officials were in this class.

There were two strong factions in the city of Laredo at this time, one led by the sheriff's office, and the other by the city marshal's office. The sheriff was a Mexican, and the marshal a mixture of negro, Mexican and white. However, he was all white at heart, and befriended us in many ways. A year or two later the two factions ran together, and in a general street fight that followed, many people were killed or wounded. The sheriff's faction got no sympathy from us. The Governor sent the attorney general to Laredo and had our cases dismissed. We were glad to return to our camp after this unusual experience along the Rio Grande. The Governor knew very well that Webb County was not large enough for us, the Mexican sheriff, and his many Mexican deputies; so we were soon moved back to Uvalde.

The Umbrella of

By GENERAL SMEDLEY BUTLER

ALL valor awards are not won by bravery—nor worn on the uniform breast. Not by a long shot! I have an award of valor, given me for a mixture of curiosity, "no talkee Chinese," and ignorance of what confronted me—but mostly curiosity—while I commanded five thousand Marines in China in '27 and '28, during the great civil war there.

And I can't wear this medal on my breast—I have to keep it in the hallway of my home. It is an umbrella. And what an umbrella! It measures some fifteen feet in height and is of the finest silk, with lots and lots of tassels and ribbons, all properly inscribed in Chinese. In China they call it a "Blessing Umbrella." This business of presenting "Blessing Umbrellas" is an ancient custom in China, but they are given only to great public benefactors, with the unanimous consent of the entire population of the town so benefited—and as far as the records of the Consul-General at Tientsin and the Legation at Peiping are concerned, no entry can be found of such an umbrella having ever been given before, to a foreigner.

One afternoon in the fall of 1928, finding time idle on my hands at Tientsin headquarters, I drove off unaccompanied toward Ta Chih Ku, known to foreigners as Boxertown (the scene in 1900 of a skirmish between a mob of Chinese fanatics known as Boxers, and our troops, during the course of which three of our men were killed and nine of us, including myself, were wounded), where the Standard Oil Company has a tremendous plant. We had a detail of Marines on duty at the oil works, as some months before the place had been fired, and burned for four days before the Marines could stem the blaze.

At that time the then Southern (Cantonese or Nationalist) Army, having conquered the rich Yangtse Valley, was on its way north to take over Tientsin, Peiping and the surrounding territory.

As I drove along the bumpy old dirt roads, I saw groups of men, women and children, all carrying their meager belongings on their backs, coming from Boxertown toward the heart of Tientsin. I paid no attention to them. Reaching Boxertown, I found myself on a very narrow street, with no interesting thoroughfares its whole length. Many of the natives, who seemed to be much agitated, recognizing the brigade flag which flew from my car, motioned to me, apparently trying to signal that I should go back. I was moving very slowly, because of the condition of the road, and several of these friendly Chinese ran alongside the car, and this time unmistakably motioned for me to go back. I saw no reason for doing so, however, and I couldn't have turned in that street, planned for nothing larger than a rickshaw drawn by a coolie, because of its narrowness—it was less than twelve feet wide. Besides, I was curious to see what the hubbub was all about. So I continued on, puzzled as to the reason for the insistence upon the part of the friendly villagers that I turn back.

Soon I realized why they had so urgently waved me back.

Before me suddenly loomed the head of a column of the Southern Army. This was the army we feared most, for they had shot us up at Nanking (the Nanking incident of 1927), and we never knew when some of these troops, many of whom were undisciplined and uncontrolled by their commanders, would break loose and attack Americans and other foreigners. There were about fifteen thousand men in this particular army, which was marching in to occupy Boxertown, and incidentally, to loot the townspeople.

Victorious armies in China always loot a town when they occupy it. This particular army, I afterward learned, had not been paid in six months. Since the men lived on loot, they were most eager to get into Boxertown, after the long march through the interior, northward from the Yangtse valley. The presence of the hostile troops accounted for the groups I had seen hurrying toward Tientsin with their worldly possessions. They were endeavoring to escape the

Honor

We gave him the Congressional Medal of Honor; the Chinese awarded him an umbrella.

wrath of the invaders and, at the same time, trying to save their belongings.

There I was, face to face with the Southern Army, and I didn't like it a bit. I halted my car. Indeed I could not have continued, unless I wanted to run down the generals at the head of the column. Also, I was curious to know what would happen. The army halted, for it could not proceed while my car blocked the entire thoroughfare virtually from house-wall to house-wall.

The generals of the army did not speak English, and there was no interpreter. The generals and other high officers glared at me. For want of something better to do, I scowled at them. They continued to glare for a few moments, and I continued to scowl in my very best Marine Corps fashion.

The officers finally got in a huddle. Here, apparently, was a case not covered in their military regulations. So they glared some more. Tired of scowling, I tried a smile, but it was a very weak one probably, for I must admit I was exceedingly nervous.

At my smile they went into another huddle, and at this I scowled some more —and I have a bit of a reputation in the Marines as one of their very best scowlers. Then, without further ado, the order to "About face, march on" was given; and the army that had been intent on looting, marched right out of Boxertown, to my amusement and gratification.

I could not turn back. I did not want to abandon the car and return on foot, and I was curious still; so I followed the army until the outskirts were reached, where I halted to watch the column march off into the field. Then I turned the car and sped back as best I could over those roads to Tientsin.

So these friendly Chinese decided I had saved Boxertown from disaster!

FOR that reason these good people voted to present me with a Blessing Umbrella, and one afternoon shortly thereafter the elders and principal merchants of the same community of Ta Chih Ku (Boxertown), led by a Chinese

band making the usual weird noises called music, and followed by quite a throng of residents, marched up to Marine headquarters. I sent my interpreter out to learn what they wanted. After a bit of conversation he informed me they had come to present me with the Blessing Umbrella. I could not understand why these people should so honor me. With great formality, however, and many long addresses in Chinese, the notables offered this very elaborate umbrella, because they said I had saved Ta Chih Ku from being invaded and looted by a hostile army.

After the visitors had finished with their speech-making, which the translater had interpreted sentence by sentence, I started on my own little speech of acceptance. In the course of my talk I recalled the incident of twenty-eight years before, when we had been shot up, and I even pointed to that part of my anatomy where one of the bullets had found its mark in me. Several of these fine dignified old Chinese gentlemen bowed their heads and put their hands to their faces as I related the details of that skirmish. I thought I had offended these good people by my recital, and I asked the interpreter to learn if I had, and if so, to offer my humble regrets.

After a brief conversation he turned to me with a grin and said the visitors were very Chinese who had fired upon us in 1900. They were merely trying to be polite and conceal their amusement(by laughing up their sleeves) as I recalled to them the incident, the interpreter added. I don't know Possibly they were chuckling over the thought of what I would do with this two-story silk umbrella.

Get the Picture!

A COURIER delivered a message to me while I was eating breakfast in the officers' mess of the Second Cavalry. It was a letter from my partner; he could sure put a lot of trouble into a few words. In this case they were:

"Why don't you send some pictures taken in Ojinaga, showing Federal troops? Papers demanding them."

For two weeks the Federal troops of President Huerta of Mexico, had been besieged in the town of Ojinaga. They had retreated from the city of Chihuahua, closely pursued by the rebel forces of Pancho Villa. All the prominent leaders of the north were cooped up in the little Mexican town: Governor Mercado, General Pasquale Orosco, General Inez Salazar, and a long list of others.

My partner was holding down his end of the job in El Paso. For months I had traveled the plains and deserts of north Mexico with Pancho Villa, photographing him and his troops, in action and out. Several times I had crossed the trail of General Inez Salazar, the original leader of the Red Flag revolution. Salazar believed that my picture-making was a side line, and that my real business was to furnish information to General Villa. As a result he held me in very low regard. Once when I had met the General in El Paso, he gave it to me right from the shoulder:

"Señor Dorman, I don't like you. You are a friend of Pancho Villa's. If I ever have the pleasure of catching you on the Mexican side of the border, I will take your skin off in little pieces. You understand, no?"

I understood, all right, and I was taking good care that he did not catch me in Mexico. And Salazar was in Ojinaga, and that was where the pictures were, and orders were, "Get the pictures."

I hadn't had a razor on my face for over three weeks, and sleeping in my clothes had not improved my appearance. I had been dressed in "city clothes" when Salazar saw me in El Paso, so there was a chance that I might get by.

No correspondents had been permitted to go across into Ojinaga, so we did not know just what was going on. I applied to the Major commanding the border control for a pass which would permit me to cross the river. He gave me a good cussing—but no pass; things were hard enough for the soldiers without having to worry about a crazy photographer getting killed in Mexico!

Day was just breaking when I was challenged by a sentry at the Mexican end of the ford which crossed the Rio Grande from Presidio to Ojinaga. He paid scant attention to me other than to ask for a cigarette, and permitted me to go on toward the hill where the defense was being made. Around the camp-fires, sheltered under the high bluffs of the river bank, were huddled big-hatted sandal-shod Mexican soldiers, wrapped in their serapes as a protection against the cool night air, eating their morning meal of jerked beef, beans and *chile*.

JUST before I reached the top of the mesa I was stopped again; this time it looked as though I would stay stopped. An officer, of better appearance than most of the army, would not let me proceed without a pass signed by General Salazar; and I had just about as much chance of getting a pass from Salazar as I would have had of passing through their lines with a pass from Villa. I was trying to argue my way through when a horseman rode down the trail. An officer, I surmised, but the blanket thrown around his shoulders like a coat concealed his features.

"Que pasa?" he demanded of the officer, and I almost fell off my horse at the sound of his voice. "What's the trouble?"

"No trouble, *mi Coronel,"* replied the officer who had stopped me. "This American wants to go into town. He says he is of the *prensa,* but he does not have a pass, so he must go back."

The newcomer rode closer to me and looked me over. He lowered the blanket from his face—to reveal the features of an American, Tracy Richardson, colonel in charge of the machine-guns for the Federals in Ojinaga. Not an expression showed on his features as he spoke to me.

"You are a newspaper correspondent?"

"Yes," I replied. "Photographer."

A news-photographer risks sudden death to get pictures of revolutionists in Mexico.

By BOB DORMAN

"Credentials?" he demanded in that same cold unemotional voice.

I produced my papers and handed them to him. He examined them as though he had never seen them before, then turned to the Mexican officer.

"His papers are all right. It will be just as well to let him go into camp and get what pictures he wants. He can do no harm, and he may do us some good later. I'll be responsible for him."

That settled the thing, and the Mexican retired to his fire; but Tracy turned to me. "You damned fool, what are you doing here? You know that if Salazar finds you here, the chances are ten to one he'll bump you off. Best thing for you to do is to make tracks back to the other side of the river while you are all in one piece."

I knew it was foolish, and that he had given me good advice, but I had come this far and I was determined to get some pictures; so against his advice I left him and continued up the trail. Tracy called after me: "If they grab you, try and get word to me at the ford; and for God's sake, if you get a chance, change the name on your papers to something else than Dorman."

I'm over six feet tall and rather hard to hide, but I slumped down in the saddle and tried to make myself as small as possible. I threw my blanket over the camera, and carried on to the top of the plateau. There was nothing much to see in the way of excitement. Trenches had been built around the edge of the hill, and soldiers were lazily firing at some foe I could not see. I heard a few bullets whine off the rocks, but there was just enough firing on each side to let each other know that they were still there. It was too early in the morning for exertion.

WITHOUT hindrance I wandered over the town, snapping pictures here and there—pictures of the trenches, of rifle-pits, of the wounded, of whom there were many in the various buildings and many camp scenes. I interviewed Governor Mercado and several of his staff, and made pictures. Then, not wishing to press my luck too far, I made tracks for the American side. I had my pictures.

Halfway down the trail I ran squarely into General Salazar and Tracy Richardson. The General pulled up his horse as we came abreast. "Who are you and where are you going?" he demanded in Spanish.

"I'm sorry," I replied in English, and I had a hard time keeping my voice straight, "I don't speak Spanish."

Salazar turned to Richardson. "You talk to him, and if he don't tell us the truth, I'll shoot his guts out. How did he get here?"

With Tracy acting as interpreter I told them I had come over to get a picture of Governor Mercado, and now I would like to get one of General Salazar and go on back to the American side of the river and get them off to my papers. I again produced my credentials; and Salazar, who, as a matter of record, could speak, read and write English as well as I could, examined them, and I thanked my lucky stars that I had taken the time to change the name from *Dorman* to plain *Jones*.

"All right," he finally grunted, "just so long as he is not representing one of those El Paso papers, I'll let him go this time. But señor, haven't I seen you somewhere before? There is something very familiar about your face." And he began scratching his head as though in an effort to remember. Tracy translated, and I hastened to inform him that I had never been in Mexico before, had in fact just come from the East for my paper.

"All right," he growled the second time. "Now get to hell out of here." He and Richardson started on up the hill, and I lost no time heading for the river.

I looked back and saw Salazar pull up his horse and stare after me. I used the spurs, and was doing very well when I heard a shout. I saw Salazar coming down the trail after me. Only one outpost was between me and the river, and I was going to make it if possible. Again I heard Salazar shout, but that just added power to my heels to drive home the spurs.

Just as I thought I was going to make it, a dozen horsemen broke out into the

road, and my way was blocked. There was nothing I could do but pull up and wait for my fate, for I felt sure that my old enemy Salazar had remembered me at last.

The General and Richardson pulled up in a cloud of flying gravel, and Tracy hastened to break the news that was to put me out of my suspense. "Mister, you forgot something. You said you wanted to make a picture of the General. He wants to know, if he lets you make the photograph, will you deliver a half-dozen copies of them to him?"

"You tell him I will give him a dozen copies," I hastened to inform him, "but I am not sure about delivering them."

I made several poses of Salazar, on horseback, on foot, full length and bust. Then I waved them good-by—and the muddy waters of the Rio Grande had never looked so good as they did to me when I reined my horse in on the American shore, and waved good-by to Mexico.

That night Villa received heavy reinforcements and attacked Ojinaga in force, and the Federals fled to the American side of the river. I saw Tracy Richardson pulled out from under his horse when it was shot in midstream, and carried away by the American soldiers a prisoner. I helped receive the governor as he made it to safety, but Orozco and Salazar did not show up.

The Federal soldiers, their women and children, some five thousand all told, were taken to Fort Bliss and placed in a stockade. There, several days later, Salazar, captured down-river, joined them. I selected the best picture I had made of the General, and made an enlargement, which I took out to Fort Bliss.

Salazar had been honored with a barbed-wire camp all to himself. Shaved, hair cut, and dressed in clean clothes, I went to his quarters. He recognized me at once and called me by name. "Well, Señor Dorman, we meet again, and still in the United States. When I get out of here, you must come over to Mexico and see me."

"Sure, General," I told him. "We'll make some more pictures." And I passed the enlargement over to him.

Salazar looked at the picture and then at me. A frown gathered like a cloud over his face; then he burst into laughter. "So you did come over to see me. Too bad I did not recognize you! What fun we, or rather I, could have had. All right, gringo, *mañana* is another day. Next time you may not get your picture."

Their Tiny Light Kept Life Aglow

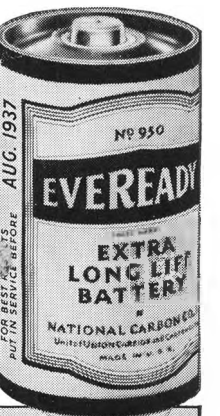
Entombed 12 Days in Moose River Mine, Scadding Now Tells How Pair Survived

"Our miner's lamp went out when the mine crashed around us on Sunday night," writes C. A. Scadding, one of the two survivors of Moose River, the most famous mine rescue in history, in telling of critical moments that dragged into 12 despairing days in the crumbling underground blackness, 142 feet below the surface.

"From then until other flashlights, candles and matches were lowered to us through the drill hole on the following Sunday, our only source of light was the 'Eveready' Boy Scout flashlight I had brought for an emergency. It was just as wet as we were at all times, and without its light I would never have been able to even locate the drill hole, much less to get to it for the food and medicine that kept the doctor and myself alive. The hole broke through 40 feet away from us and to get to it required a dangerous crawl through broken rocks and timbers and down the shaft about 18 feet. If that flashlight had failed us during that horrible week, the doctor and I would not be alive today. But for those *fresh* DATED 'Eveready' batteries the heroic work of the rescue crew would have been in vain. (*Signed*)

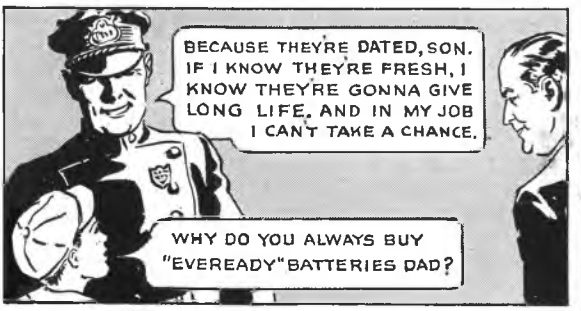
C. A. Scadding"

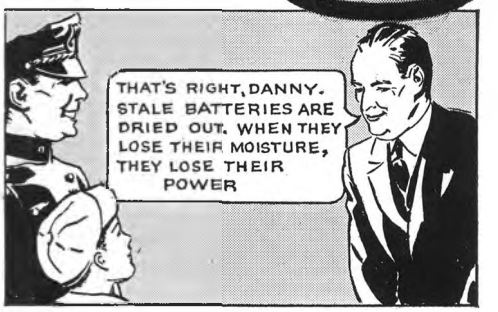
"EVEREADY" BATTERIES ARE *FRESH* BATTERIES



The Date-Line Guarantees Freshness

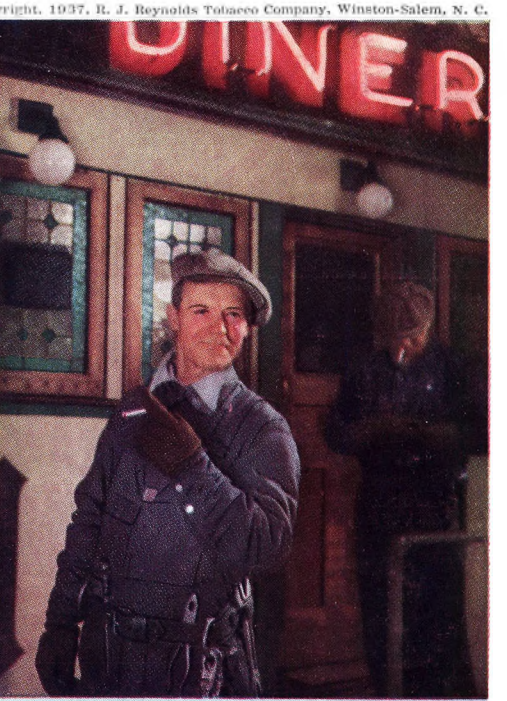
NATIONAL CARBON CO., Inc.,
30 E. 42nd St., New York, N.Y.





11,000 VOLTS

AL TAFFT works in a maze of high-voltage wires. Around him—11,000 volts lurk. A tense job that will test digestion if anything will! Here's Al's comment: "Sure! Working among high-voltage cables isn't calculated to help digestion. But mine doesn't give me trouble. I smoke Camels with my meals and after. Camels set me right!" Smoking Camels speeds up the flow of digestive fluids—*alkaline* fluids. Being mild, Camels are gentle to your throat.



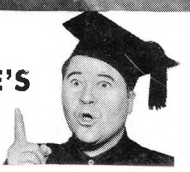
WELCOMES A "LIFT." "I have my hands full," remarks Mrs. Richard Hemingway. "When I'm tired, I smoke a Camel and get a grand 'lift' in energy."

COSTLIER TOBACCOS

Camels are made from finer, MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS—Turkish and Domestic—than any other popular brand.

FOR DIGESTION'S SAKE... SMOKE CAMELS

HEAR JACK OAKIE'S COLLEGE



A gala show with "President" Jack Oakie in person. Fun and music by Hollywood comedians and singing stars! Tuesdays—8:30 pm E. S. T. (9:30 pm E.D.S.T.), 7:30 pm C.S.T., 6:30 pm M.S.T., 5:30 pm P.S.T., over WABC-Columbia Network.