BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE
MAY, 1948
25 Cents

THESE UNITED STATES . . . XVII—California
Painted by HERBERT MORTON STOOPS

THE NEEDLES OF DR. RHEINFRANK
A complete Scotland Yard novel
by DENISON CLIFT

COOROMENGRO
A novelette of Gypsy life in Texas

Many articles and features

THESE UNITED STATES . . . . XVII—CALIFORNIA

Close *to the* Terrestrial Paradise

CALIFORNIA—an island inhabited by black Amazons "lying at the right hand of the Indies . . . very close to the Terrestrial Paradise." From this description, which appears in a romance by Ordoñez de Montalvo published in Madrid in 1510, our Golden State is said to take its name. And since its first discovery by Spaniards venturing northward along the Pacific coast from Mexico, it probably has developed through wider variations of life and living than any other of our States.

In 1542-3 Juan Cabrillo and then Bartolomé Ferrelo explored the coast. In 1579 Sir Francis Drake refitted his ships at Drake Bay and named the region New Albion. And thereafter Spanish galleons occasionally visited the coast of this "island" on their way to and from Manila. Not until the Russian explorations of Alaska in the Eighteenth Century, however, did the Spanish Government support with armed escorts the missionary priests zealous to follow the teachings of Jesus and carry the Gospel to this so remote land.

It is this long, half-idyllic period of the Missions that our artist has chosen for his cover painting; for however great the changes that time has since wrought, this epoch still stands significant in the background of California life. In 1769 Father Junípero Serra, the Franciscan Superior of the Lower California Missions, was encouraged to extend his field northward. And so we see him and a fellow-friar trudging along the coast with a soldier or two as guard against possible hostility from the scattered primitive Indians.

Good Father Junípero and his successors did well. . . . San Carlos Borromeo, San Antonio, San Gabriel, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, San Juan Bautista—twenty Missions in all were established; each located in a fertile valley, and connected one with the other by el Camino Real—the King's Highway. The Indians were won to the teachings of the Gospel: they were taught simple handicrafts and agriculture; and cattle-raising prospered exceedingly.

Gradually, of course, other settlers both Spanish and American drifted into this vast pleasant quiet land. The first stirrings of unrest echoed the uprising which brought Texas independence in 1836. The Missions were brought under secular control in 1840. Frémont's raid and the Bear Flag War of 1846 were followed by the outbreak of the Mexican War: on July 7th Commodore John Drake Sloat raised the flag of the United States at Monterey; the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 confirmed our possession; and in 1850 California was admitted to the Union as a free State.

Meanwhile, early in 1848, gold had been discovered at Sutter's Mill, and the rush was on. . . . Even in our own time, of course, the development of the Golden State has continued—first gold, then fruit and wine and wheat and flowers; then Hollywood and its far-reaching activities; and latterly during World War II, an important growth of industry. . . . Let us hope that Father Junípero looks down now with approbation from his celestial eyrie upon what was once the barren-seeming land of his labors.

Readers' Comment*

To Give Our America to the Future

THE other week-end on my way home from work (I am a construction "stiff") I noticed your magazine cover. These days a picture of the past and all this includes of our history is what one needs to help him face the unrest of today. If our fathers fought and sacrificed (which they did) to give us America, we should likewise keep brave spirits to give our America to the future.

It was, then, your cover which made me buy BLUE BOOK. After I began reading, I found not only the long past but also the near past included in well-written stories which even I could understand. Therefore I read, and after reading I found I had been heartened [illegible] today. I had been entertained; I had kept my mind occupied by reading which also enlarged my education. I had a good time, and when my bus stopped in Johnson City I felt like a new man.

I know I have not properly described what I want to say, but you'll receive my subscription, if nothing happens, next pay day.

—John Churchill.

We Avert a Crisis

YOUR magazine has averted a crisis in our home. For sometime now, my wife and I have been attempting, with little or no luck, to divert our youngster from those murder thrillers found on every news-stand. We were just about at our wit's end, when your magazine saved the day.

I accidentally picked up your magazine, along with some others intended for my wife from one of our neighbors, and dropped them on our kitchen table. Our son loves to read, so he naturally looked for more of those murder mags but found BLUE BOOK instead.

I noticed him reading it and asked what, where and how? To make a long story short, he no longer reads Murder, Inc., and is digging up all the back numbers of BLUE BOOK the neighbors can produce. (So am I.)

—John M. Sommer, Jr.

*The Editors of BLUE BOOK are glad to receive letters of constructive criticism and suggestions; and for the ones we publish each month we will pay the writers ten dollars each.

Letters should not be longer than two hundred words; no letters can be returned; and all will become property of McCall Corporation. They should be addressed: Editor of Letters, Blue Book Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York 17, New York.

BLUE BOOK

May, 1948 **MAGAZINE** Vol. 87, No. 1

A Complete Novel

A Novelette

Ten Short Stories

Stories of Fact and Experience

Special Features

Except for articles and 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

DONALD KENNICOTT, *Editor*

McCALL CORPORATION, Publishers, The Blue Book Magazine

Marvin Pierce, *President* Francis Hutter, *Secretary*
Philips Wyman, *Vice-President* J. D. Hartman, *Treasurer*

Published monthly at McCall St., Dayton 1, Ohio. Subscription Offices—Dayton 1, Ohio. Editorial and Executive offices, 230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE, May, 1948, LXXXVII, No. 1.

Subscription Prices: one year $2.50, two years $4.00, in U. S., Canada and Pan-American countries. Extra in other foreign countries $1.00 per year. For change of address give us four weeks' notice and send old address as well as new. Special Notice to Writers and Artists: Manuscripts and art material submitted for publication in the Blue Book Magazine will be received only on the understanding that the publisher and editors shall not be responsible for loss or injury thereto while such manuscripts and art material are in the publisher's possession or in transit.

Printed in U.S.A.

Entered as second-class matter, November 12, 1930, at the Post Office at Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1879

The Fortune of

BURIED LONG AGO, AND NEVER DISCOVERED, THE FABULOUS TREASURE CHEST NONE THE LESS PRODUCED A REMARKABLE SITUATION.

"What's here? Do you know?"

WHEN old Cornelius Epp sold the biggest part of his land, the rumor quickly spread that he had at last found the hundred thousand dollars buried by his grandfather. Anyone who knew Cornelius, knew he wouldn't have sold otherwise; and several people had seen the rusty iron box in which tradition said the money had been hidden. Cornelius Epp himself wouldn't answer aye, yes or no to questions, until a man from the Government called and said he had been informed that Cornelius had neglected to declare a hundred thousand dollars of his income—which meant he owed the United States of America sixty-seven thousand, three hundred and twenty dollars, more or less, depending upon how much dental work he'd had done.

They heard old Cornelius howl clear down to the firehouse, and came running with the equipment, figuring it was a bad fire, or worse. By the time Cornelius had finished rioting with the firemen for driving the truck into his yard and destroying his garden—though he later admitted only the Sweet William was absolutely ruined—he had pretty well blown off steam and could talk reasonably with the Government man.

Cornelius explained that the hundred thousand had been buried underground by his own blood grandfather, and had been in the family sixty-two years, even if they couldn't exactly lay hands on it most of that time; if the Government thought itself entitled to a share, it should have come around long ago, and talked to Grandfather Epp.

"In which case we'd have a different style of government today," Cornelius said. "Grandfather was quick-tempered, and he would have changed it before he stopped to think. Why, they claim when he got mad that time at Fort Sumter—"

The Government man interrupted to say he wasn't interested in ancient history, but current taxes, and added some words about the money being in the public domain. Old Cornelius said public, hell—not that he minded people passing over the land, except the scatty females who wanted to talk about antiques and relics; but it was private land, and fenced all around except where the oak limb blew down last winter, and he'd fix that soon as he got around to it.

"I'm afraid that is a matter for the courts to decide," said the Government man.

Old Cornelius hollered some more, though not so loud this time, remembering what had happened to the Sweet William. Gradually he calmed down, and after a little more talking back and forth, he went downstairs into the cellar and returned with a brown-and-white stone jug. He uncorked it carefully and filled two glasses with a milky liquid. The man from the Government tasted his suspiciously, and then smiled all over. Even his toes turned up and grinned, inside his shoes; and in a voice of wonder and awe he asked what in the world that stuff was.

"I don't know," Cornelius said. "My great-uncle made it, some sixty years ago. He was a man who was forever experimenting with something new, and he invented this for my grandfather, who couldn't touch liquor."

"Your great-uncle was a genius," the Government man said.

Grandfather Epp

by OWEN CAMERON

"We're bound to strike it, Jack."

"He was that, at least," agreed Cornelius. "He blew himself up February 15th, 1898, same day the *Maine* was torpedoed. Just a coincidence. He left the cellar full of this balm, and I worried about it considerably during Prohibition. It ain't really an intoxicating drink, but the Prohibitionists claimed even beer was. Anyhow it's legal now, thank heaven."

"I don't care whether it's legal or not," said the Government man. "But thank heaven."

Making himself comfortable, Cornelius said: "I'm going to explain to you how it is about that hundred thousand dollars, though I wasn't going to let the facts out till I had located Harper. You don't happen to know a millionaire named Harvey P. Harper, last heard of in Saint Louis, or maybe Saint Joseph?"

In a dreamy voice, the Government man said no, he didn't, and money wasn't everything.

Old Cornelius told him the story exactly as it happened, now and then refilling his visitor's glass. Once he apologized for being so long-winded, but the Government man said it was perfectly all right; he had never been easier, or more comfortable, or happier in his life, and was willing to sit and listen all day. All night too, he said, hiccuping contentedly.

Well (said old Cornelius), maybe I never would have found Grandfather's treasure-chest, only for Jack Lake falling in love with my niece. One afternoon when I came home from the checker-game at the firehouse, here's this young fella sitting on the porch with Annie. Nothing out of the way about that, unless it was finding only the one. Times, they been clustered so thick on the front porch I had to go and come by the back door.

Annie introduced us. "This is my Uncle Cornelius—Mr. John Lake. Mr. Lake is an engineer for the city."

"The city's got nothing but streetcars," I said. "You mean a motorman. I had a brother was an engineer, on the old F. & V. He was also the best cornet-player our town ever had, till he got drowned, and once a man came all the way from Aberdeen for no other reason than to listen to him triple-tonguing. I mean Aberdeen, South Dakota."

Annie kept trying to interrupt, so I stopped talking. At that, she's got better manners than most of the young people, though it's more my doing than hers. She told me: "Mr. Lake doesn't drive a train. He's—well, I'll let him tell you about it. He called to talk to you, but he's going to stay for supper."

She smiled at Lake and went in the house. Since Annie's mother passed away, there's just the two of us, and Annie does the cooking and looks after the house. She is a fair-to-middling cook, too. Runs in the family.

I looked at Lake pretty severely, the way I do all of them, and told him: "Annie ain't of age, and I won't see her hitched up with no fly-by-night. First thing—you got any money saved and a house to live in, or are you one of them fortune-hunters? There's already been a dozen before you, hunted this place from one end to the other without finding a trace of Grandfather's fortune."

"How's that?" He looked kind of blank, but I laid that to the way Annie had smiled at him.

"Grandfather was quick-tempered," Cornelius said. "Why, they claim when he got mad that time at Fort Sumter—"

"Marriage is serious business," I says. "You got my permission to hunt for the money; but till it's found, or unless you can support Annie otherwise, you don't get permission to marry her. Ain't that clear?"

"Yes sir," he says, getting kind of red. "But I—uh—only met—uh—Annie an hour ago. Though it's an idea. However, that's not what I wanted to talk about. I've got what I thought to be good news for you. We're going to build a high school on this side of town, and we're willing to pay twelve thousand for the land. We'll leave this piece with the house on it, so you'll keep your home."

"Not at that price, you won't," I told him. "I'm asking one hundred and five thousand and twenty-five dollars. Cash."

He smiled. "It seems a bit steep."

I explained it to him. "I figure the vacant land is worth five thousand. The Model T in the shed goes extra. The axle is busted, but there's four thirty by three-and-a-half tires that ain't been used since the day they was bought, twenty-some years ago. If a man was any kind of a mechanic, he could have himself a good machine. All I want's my money out of the tires. That leaves an even hundred thousand, which is what Grandfather buried somewheres on the place."

"I'm afraid the Board wouldn't buy that, even if you included a treasure-map," he says.

"And I'm not urging them. But that's my price."

"Annie told me what your attitude would be," he says. "But I think I can persuade you. She admitted that you need money. If you were willing to sell the land itself at five thousand, our offer should look good to you."

"Not if you can find Grandfather's treasure," I says. "If you can't, it's too much."

"This is the only available acreage on this side of town," he told me. "You'll make a nice profit; you'll appear as a public-spirited citizen, and—"

"And get cheated out of a hundred thousand. Nope."

He wanted to argue, but I didn't see any point to it. After Annie called us, he was too busy eating to talk; and when the meal was over, he stayed in the kitchen, helping Annie with the dishes. When he left, he said he'd be back to see me next day.

He was. From that time on, Jack Lake was a steady customer at our house. He made out that he was trying to talk me into selling, which I would never do while that money was lost under the ground. It was just an excuse, anyhow—he came to see Annie. She appeared to be contented enough with the arrangement, though you never do know what's going on in a woman's mind.

Things went on that way for a couple of months, and I was thinking some of charging Jack board, he ate with us so regular. Then one evening instead of going into the house to get in Annie's way while she was cooking, he stopped outside to tell me:

"It looks as though they are going to build the school here whether you like it or not, Mr. Epp. I thought I'd warn you."

"That's all right," I says. "I'm no more against education than is natural, seeing how it's ruined the country. Take this here income tax! Before everybody and his brother was educated, there wasn't no income tax at all, and a man who'd tried to collect any would be shot." But I told Jack: "Let 'em go ahead and build it, so long as I keep the land. I can tunnel under their building, if I have to."

"I'm afraid not," he says. "They'll take the land."

"They'll what?" I hollered. "It's free and clear and in my name. How they going to take it?"

"Condemn it, if you remain stubborn."

"Condemn it to what?"

"A forced sale. You'll be paid, of course."

I laughed at him. "Son, there's laws. We ain't in Russia, or one of

them places where they got a revolution."

"It will be done according to law," he says. "The laws are for the greatest good of the greatest number, and they figure on having about two thousand pupils."

A couple more questions made it clear that he wasn't fooling a little bit, and I rose in my wrath, and the wrath of us Epps ain't a summer breeze.

I told him what would happen to the first un-arthurized person to set foot on my land. I got a high-power rifle, and stood ready and willing to use it. As for him, I warned him off and told him never to come back, and never to let me catch him talking to my niece, in any place, shape or form. That always fetches 'em, though I don't know why, Annie talking nothing but simon-pure nonsense, same as her mother and my wife and the rest.

JACK went off, gloomy and dejected. Fact is, he ran off, when I reached for the garden-fork. When I told Annie what was afoot, she was indignant as I was that they could dictate what a man could do with his own property, and rob him of his grandfather's money, and she promised she'd never have anything more to do with Jack Lake. I told her no engineer could be trusted by a woman, anyhow, as I knew from my own brother's example, who used to blow the train-whistle at pretty girls all along the line, unless his wife was firing for him, which she sometimes did.

Next afternoon I spotted Jack sneaking around in the bushes, and went upstairs and looked at him through the telescope, and he ran again. I expect that was because the telescope is fixed to a rifle, but I hadn't no intention of shooting him, shooting a man being a serious thing, more often than not. I just never got around to taking that telescope off, though it would have been handier.

The day following, Annie answered a ring at the doorbell. I begin to figure the caller was some deaf-and-dumb person, because for a long time there wasn't no sounds I could hear. But after I'd hollered for the fourth time, Annie says she guessed it was somebody to see me.

It was Jack Lake. I told Annie to go upstairs, and she went, leaving him there in the hallway to stare after her miserably.

"She won't even talk to me," he says. "Is it my fault you and the Board are both stubborn? I only take orders."

"Nobody gives an engineer orders," I says. "Anyhow, not on the old F. & V."

"Do I want to build a high school?" he asked me, in a loud voice. "Am I trying to rob you and turn you out of house and home like a dictator? Though that part's silly. You can keep the land with the house on it."

"And lose a hundred thousand," I says. "I'm keeping it all."

"They won't let you."

"Furthermore," I says, "I thought I warned you off this place! Son, there was two Presidents of the United States went against Epps, and they both took a licking, next election. As for common men, they wither on the vine."

"You won't sell till that money is found," he says with a sigh. "And the Board is determined to have this land. And here am I, in the middle. I guess the only way out is for me to find that hundred thousand. Why, she won't even give me a chance to explain!"

I shook my head. "Better men than you have searched for it. I hunted all my life, and my father before me, and Lord knows who else, including Moller, who claims to be a divining-witch, and wanted to charge me for a well because we struck water where he said to dig."

"I have to find it," he says. "There seems to be no choice, if I want to—if I ever hope to—what I mean is, I have to."

"You're welcome to try."

"The old people around all believe your grandfather buried the money. How sure are you?"

"I seen it hid, with these two eyes. I was standing as close as from here to you when Grandfather dug the hole."

"If I find it, will that make everything all right?" he asked, pretty loud, and looking at the ceiling.

"If you're talking to me, you don't need to holler," I says. "But you won't find it. Why, old Mrs. Teabow, who claimed to talk to spirits, got my father directions from Captain Kidd, and Jefferson, and Pocahontas, and a man named Peabody, and Grandfather himself, and *they* couldn't locate it."

But he wanted to try, so I invited him into the front room while I gave him all the information I had. When Grandfather buried the money, I was there, but I wasn't only three years old and didn't pay any attention. Grandfather used to look after me, Sundays, while the others went to church. He didn't attend, because when he was a boy he got shipwrecked, and converted to the Mohammedan branch of religion, and he said he wouldn't go back on it, even if they had lied to him about the women. The Mohammedan denomination don't drink liquor, which was why my great-uncle invented this balm, which ain't wine nor liquor, nor hardly even intoxicating, unless you drink several glasses of it. Grandfather got a lot of comfort out of the balm, and said more'n once it was all that kept him from back-sliding into Methodism with the rest of the family.

This Sunday, Grandfather took me outside, to watch while he buried this iron box, which was about eighteen inches long and six through, and was too heavy for me to budge. He dug a hole about as deep as I was tall, and put in the box and covered it again, and to this day I recall him telling me there was a hundred thousand dollars in it, which might be mine some day. By the time I was old enough to realize that a hundred thousand dollars was at least as important as an all-day sucker, I'd forgot where it was hid, and Grandfather was underground too.

Grandfather won the money the night before in a poker-game, from a millionaire named Harvey Harper. A day or two later this Harper went on to Saint Louis, or Saint Paul, or somewhere, to buy himself a railroad. Nobody cared where he'd gone—only about the money. Harper could well spare it, and next day when the news got around, my father heard Harper tell somebody there was plenty more where that came from, and easy come, easy go.

My great-uncle and Westward H. Brown, of the bank, was in that game, too, though I don't believe they knew where the money was buried. Anyhow, soon afterwards my great-uncle blew himself up, and a widow-woman named Marie Bourbon Olsen, who claimed she was rightfully the queen of France, refused Westward Brown, and he shot himself with the bank pistol. That's the kind he was—wouldn't use his own pistol and ammunition. People kind of suspected he didn't use his own money when he played poker, either, but the bank was sound.

Well, Grandfather buried that hundred thousand, with only him and me to see it, and me too young to realize and remember. Soon after, on his seventy-ninth birthday, Grandfather went off with the circus, saying he'd leave the money hid against his old age, and got killed in a fight with a camel. So far as we could learn, he was the only man ever to be killed by a camel in the State of Pennsylvania. By a he-camel, anyhow. Nor we didn't ever find out what him and the camel was fighting about.

I ALSO told Jack about different ones who had hunted for that money, some open and aboveboard, and some on the sly. Jack said they failed because they hadn't gone at it in a scientific manner, which he would do.

First he said that a psychoanalyst, which is a kind of out-of-season doctor, like a chiropractor or homeopath, could pry into my memory and make me tell where Grandfather done his digging, even if I didn't *want* to. This kind of a doctor tricks you into telling things you wouldn't even mention in your sleep. Still, he says there's people goes to them.

Not me. Let the dead past bury itself. Anyhow, I didn't believe they could do it. If my memory won't work for me, stands to reason it won't work for somebody else, don't it? Besides, if Mrs. Teabow has the rights of it, my wife might be standing at my elbow, unseen, at any time, instead of keeping a golden mansion swept and dusted against my arrival. Mrs. Teabow might be wrong and she might not, but it's a risk no married man in his senses will take.

So then Jack wanted to know if I was sure the box was metal, and not wood. I said I guessed I could tell wood from iron.

"You were only three," he says. "Couldn't you have been mistaken?"

"Three, or three hundred, I'm not an idiot, am I?"

Jack said he guessed not, and went on: "Perhaps we can do something along that line."

THEN he got up to leave, but in the hall he stopped and said in a loud voice: "I wish there was some intelligent person I could talk my idea over with."

"There's me."

"No," he says. "You're prejudiced. ... Well, I'll have to do the best I can alone. I'll go down to the drugstore and think it out. Also, I wish I had a chance to explain to Annie why I can't influence the Board, any more than she can influence you."

"What are you hollering for?" I asked him.

"Sorry," he says, just as loud. "I guess I'll go down to the drugstore and drink a chocolate malt and feel miserable."

"I should think you would," I says. "Chocolate malt! Gah! It gags me to think about it. When I think of the healthful and tasty malt drink Duffy made! If you imagine Annie might be going to the drugstore, for any reason on earth, think again. She'd better not let me catch her leaving the house."

Jack looked sadly at the ceiling, and sighed, and spoke in his natural voice. "I guess my only chance is to find that hundred thousand."

"You're welcome to try," I says. "But it ain't within fifty feet of the house, so don't come sneaking around by the kitchen."

"If I do find it, you'll sell, and everything will be all right?"

"I'll sell. I can't swear as to everything."

So he had to be satisfied with that. He said good-by to me, and then said it again, louder, and I heard a board creak overhead, so I suppose she went to the window to peek out at him, but he only looked back once, and I was in the doorway watching him.

We didn't see hide nor hair of him for three days. Annie moped around most of the time, not speaking, except when she was telling me she had a headache or a toothache, and wanted to go to the drugstore after medicine. I told her I could get anything she wanted, on my way to the checker-game at the firehouse. Though the best way to do with headaches, as I told her, is to ignore them. Best way to do with engineers, too, I said, because they are no more constant than sailors. Less so, in fact—not having to wait till they get into port.

Late in the afternoon of the third day, here come Jack, carrying what appeared to be a box with a barrel-hoop on a stick fixed to one end. Annie answered the door, but I didn't give him a chance to talk to her, though I let her stay by while he explained what the contraption was. She didn't understand a word of it, being a female, but by that same token she was curious. While he talked, Jack kept looking at her cornerwise, like he had done it all to please her, and hoped she approved.

"This is a locater," he says. "I made it myself. I could have put together something better, and if the box is buried more than four or five feet, I may have to, but I didn't want to take the time. This is a simple oscillator, with a regenerative detector for the monitor. These are the monitor tubes."

"Hmm," was the only remark I could think of offhand.

"It's wonderful," Annie says. "Did you really build it, Jack?"

"It's simple," he told her. "A Boy Scout could make it."

"Simple! Why, it looks like a radio! All those wires and things."

I says: "Well, what's complicated about a radio, except putting up the aerial? Remember that time I fell off the roof?"

"But Jack built it all himself," says Annie, as though nobody had ever built a radio before. There's people who do nothing else.

"Maybe it won't work," I says.

"It will work," Jack told me. "But the range is limited by the diameter of the exploring-coil. We may have to have a bigger one."

"What's it supposed to do?"

"Come outside, and I'll demonstrate," Jack says. So we trooped out into the field. There he put on a pair of earphones and fiddled with the dial, Annie looking at him like he'd invented breathing, or something. Far as I could judge, he was in the same boat with Mrs. Teabow, if he expected a radio to find that money. For one thing, radio hadn't been so much as thought of in those days.

Jack started on a line for the fence, and after going about fifty paces he stopped and begun to move his hoop back and forth. He took off the earphones and let me listen, but there wasn't nothing but static, and I told him so, and told him I used to have an old crystal set worked better.

He grinned at me. "That's metal whistling. Right under us."

Annie had to listen, of course, and she held her breath like she was hearing the heavenly choir. She says: "Oh, Jack, you did it!"

"Did what?" I says. "There's a water-pipe through under here, though I don't know how you guessed it. I found it once, with no instrument but a pick. We didn't have water in the house for two days."

Annie looked disappointed, but Jack put the earphones on again and walked around some more. After a few minutes he stopped and began to feel this way and that with his hoop.

"This is no pipe," he says. "At least, it doesn't go anywhere."

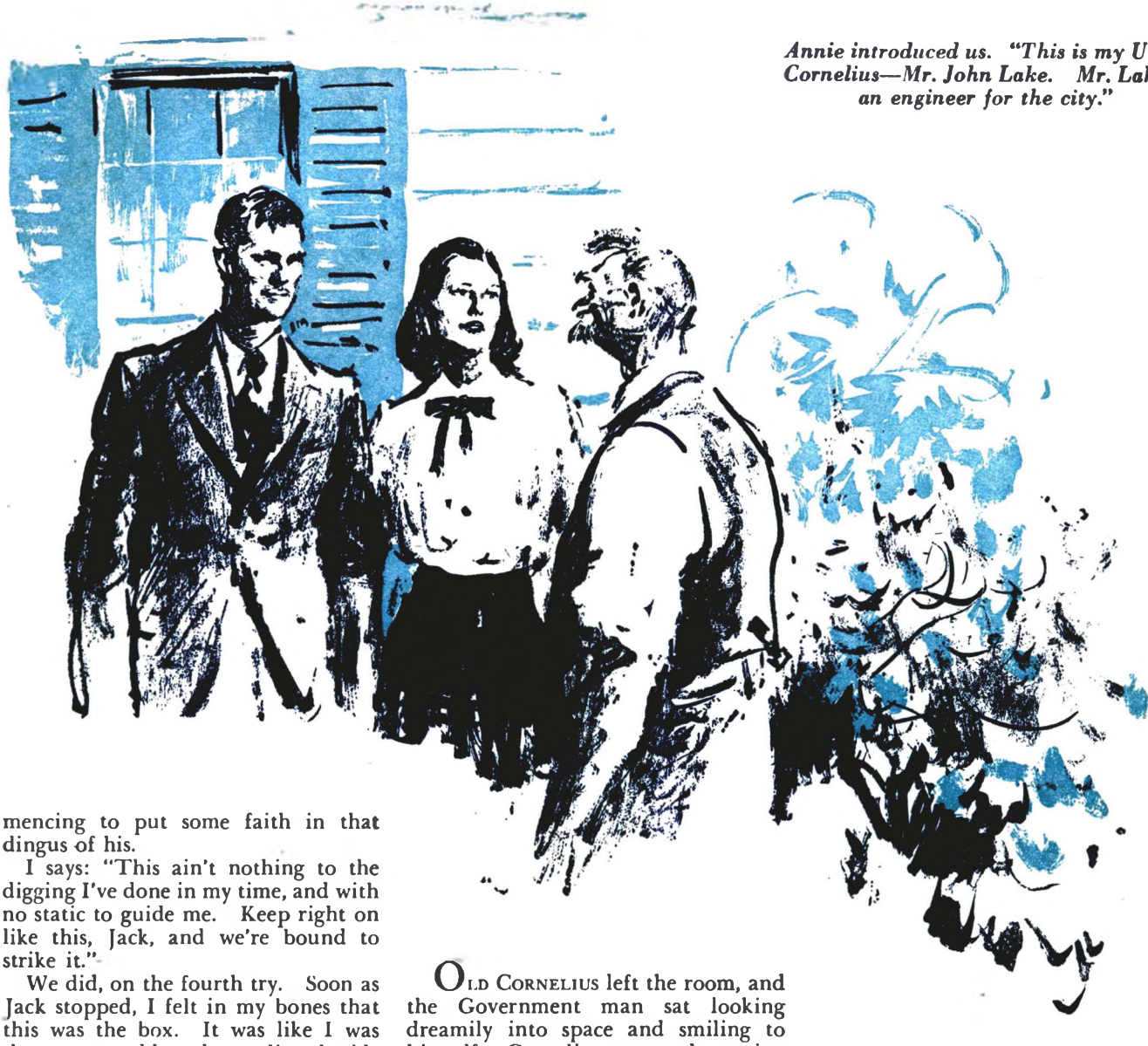
I was commencing to get interested and excited, and I says: "Jack, it may be there's things about a radio I never suspected. I often wished my great-uncle had lived long enough to invent a machine to find that money, but it may be he wasn't needed. The old well was here, and it's likely there's part of it underground yet. Go on, son—go on! Try it again."

Jack was grinning all over his face, and Annie was jumping with excitement, for which you couldn't blame her, nor me either. To find that money after all the years of searching! I will admit, here and now, what I never would admit before, that there was times when I imagined Grandfather might have sneaked out some dark night, and dug up the hundred thousand and taken it along when he went off with the circus. They tell me a camel will eat anything, like a goat, and if the camel had found that money, and ate it, that would explain why Grandfather got in a fight with it. As a general rule, he liked animals. And some such an accident would explain why we never could locate the money. I would never admit those thoughts even to myself, but it could have been. Grandfather was always mighty secretive, and so is a camel, I guess. They got nine stomachs.

NEXT time Jack stopped he asked: "What's here? Do you know? It's down pretty far, or mighty small."

There was nothing underground there that I knew of, and I went galloping back to the house for a pick and shovel. When I came back, Jack had his coat off, ready to help, and we made the dirt fly.

We went down two feet or better, excited and perspiring, but all we found was the barrel of an old smooth-bore gun, the stock gone and the barrel little more than a rusty shell. Annie said it was enough to make a person weep, and even Jack looked a little set-down-on; but I was just com-



Annie introduced us. "This is my Uncle Cornelius—Mr. John Lake. Mr. Lake is an engineer for the city."

mencing to put some faith in that dingus of his.

I says: "This ain't nothing to the digging I've done in my time, and with no static to guide me. Keep right on like this, Jack, and we're bound to strike it."

We did, on the fourth try. Soon as Jack stopped, I felt in my bones that this was the box. It was like I was three years old and standing beside Grandfather again, watching him shovel and hearing him tell me about the money.

After digging down almost three feet, my pick glanced off metal. Even before I could see what it was, I felt sure. My heart almost busted my ribs, and no wonder, after all those years! Why, when I got down on my knees in the hole, I felt as worked up and expectant as I ever hope to be, until the time I stand in line on Judgment Day.

I pulled and tugged to get the box free of the dirt, while Annie kissed Jack and hugged him. I pretended not to see. For a fact, if I hadn't been so busy, I'd have hugged him too.

I finally heaved the box out of the hole, and then we took it to the house, to open it. They had sent the key back with Grandfather's effects, after the camel got him, and it was in my way a dozen times a day, ordinarily, but you'd know it couldn't be found when it was wanted, so we took hammer and chisel and—but you hold on a minute, and I'll bring it in here.

OLD CORNELIUS left the room, and the Government man sat looking dreamily into space and smiling to himself. Cornelius returned carrying a rusted iron box, and when he set it on the table, the Government man sighed and said:

"I do wish I knew what's in this stuff."

"I can't tell you," said Cornelius, pulling up the hinged lid of the box. "I give some to a doctor once, to study, but he said science was baffled."

"What do you call it?"

"Just balm. My great-uncle called it Balm of Gilead, but Grandfather insisted Balm of Gilead wasn't nothing at all but turpentine and lard, which will cure anything curable, of course. He called it Balm of Chiquita, which he said was a girl he'd known with a similar effect. First girl he ever kissed, and he kissed her in a high swing, and would have married her, too, only they fell off, and she never would speak to him after, though on account of the scar on his lip, he never forgot her. . . . Read this—this was in the box."

Cornelius had taken a yellowed slip of paper out of the strongbox, and now gave it to the Government man, who said fretfully: "Well, somebody ought to find out what's in it. People like the Rockefellers give millions to science, and what's to show for it?"

"Read what it says there."

The Government man's eyes weren't working too good, but after a minute he got them focused and read aloud, " 'I.O.U.' This is all there was in the box?"

"That's her," old Cornelius said gloomily. "I wrote to Saint Louis and Saint Paul right away. I said to forget the six dollars, but please send the rest. My letter come back from Saint Louis, unclaimed; and a man named Harvey R. Harper wrote from Saint Paul. None of his family had ever been millionaires, and he didn't know what I was talking about—so he claimed. I been writing to Saint Augustine, and Saint Jo, and Saint Cloud, and Sault Sainte Marie, and every place like that, but I kind of lost hope. It's been a mighty long time ago, and for all I can say, Harper's home might have been in Minneapolis

or San Francisco. Nobody was interested in him—only his money."

Cornelius sighed, and the Government man hiccuped sympathetically.

"So that's how it is," Cornelius went on, after a swallow of the balm. "If the Government will help me find Harper, or his descendants, I'll be willing to split, though no such sum as you mentioned. I got enough to live on, myself, but I'd like to give Jack and Annie a big wedding present—a house, or maybe a railroad engine.... The Union Pacific got started by a man having a train and no tracks."

The Government man examined the paper, first with one eye closed and then the other, and finally said: "Under the circumstances, I wouldn't worry too much about that tax of sixty-seven thousand, three hundred and twenty dollars, less deductions. But it's a complex problem, and there are a good many points to be cleared up." Looking fondly at the brown-and-white jug, he added: "I'll probably be coming back here for years, working on it."

After a little more talk, and a final sample of the balm, the Government man stood up to leave, but he had trouble. When old Cornelius bent to help him to his feet again, the Government man cried joyfully: "Did you see what I was doing? Floating! Did you see me? Floating! I bumped against the ceiling!"

"That was the floor," old Cornelius said. "Though I know the feeling. You know, since finding that box, and the I.O.U. in it, I been wondering if Grandfather and Westward Brown and this millionaire Harper might not have taken too much balm the night of that game. Maybe Harper wasn't even a millionaire.... What do you think?"

"I'm not an idiot, am I?"

The Rusted

FOREWORD: This story is a fictional retelling of the oldest story known to Old English historical tradition. It seems peculiarly appropriate in these days when, as so many times in the past, the English face grim handicaps and prophecies of doom. (No, I am not a Limey—just a Midwesterner who admires gameness.)

After the English migration to Britain (in the days of Offa's grandson) the tale of Offa the Silent survived independently both in England (*Widsith*, *Beowulf*, the Merician pedigree), the *Vitæ Duarum Offarum*) and in Denmark (*Saxo Grammaticus*). Owing to this long separation, the elements which appear in both English and Danish tradition have the weight of nearly contemporary testimony. Credit for piecing the story together in its true historical context belongs to Prof. H. Munro Chadwick of Cambridge; but there were still awkward gaps, which can be filled only by the imagination.

This I have tried to do.

THE English are done! Their day is past, yet they cling to their old ways, their old pride. Their end is nearer than they know. Small beer and small cheer you'll find, with that forlorn folk!" King Rigan the Myrging roared out his words. He ended by pinching his red nose between horny thumb and forefinger; then his huge laughter shook soot from the rafters. His restless ice-blue eyes fixed on the gray-haired, long-robed man standing before his "high-seat." He disposed of the matter: "Ye will bide here at Hammaburg."

Deor the Gleeman shook his gray locks. "I thank the ring-giver for kindly counsel. But, ere Hel takes me, it is my wish to sing in every king's hall under the wide sky." He bowed: "I bid the Lord of Warriors farewell."

Under his necklace of pierced Roman gold coins, the King's bull neck reddened. "Farewell, then, old man!" he bellowed. "When the rope is at your windpipe, think on my words."

Deor turned his back on the King's glare, and walked calmly from his hall.

There beside the rude horse-block waited his steed. That tall and long-limbed gray had been the gift of a Langobard princeling, from the Danube plain. Deor tossed a gold half-solidus to the Myrging horseboy, who snatched it with incredulity too deep for thanks. Scorning the mounting-block, Deor laid his palms on the gray's blanketed back, and sprang astride. Crossing the village green of Hammaburg, and passing the spear-armed guards at the stockade gate, the old minstrel took the north road, the road to Engle-land. Pushing back the hood of his brown cloak, he bared his head gratefully to the keen, cold wind of northern spring. After the smoky staleness of Rigan's hall, it was good. . . . "Ermanric the Cruel also promised me a noose," he reflected. "He is dead by his own hand, these five-and-twenty years, while old Deor is still a-wandering. Heigh-o!"

A steady clanging broke upon his thoughts. It came from the clustered smithies of King Rigan, kept outside his garth as a measure against fires. Deor saw the captive smiths hobbling about like so many bent and blackened gnomes. King Rigan had all his weapon-smiths lamed, so that they might not seek a better master. Some of the more valued were also chained to their forges. A most efficient man, King Rigan! That steel clangor followed the horseman, lingered in his ears. "Aye," he told himself, "spring is coming; swords are shaping and sharpening. Now that good Emperor Theodosius is dead,* all Rome-land writhes like a headless fowl, and the North Country wakes like a wolf-pack to the scent of blood. Yes, and as ready to snap at a kinsman!"

PROUD in his carven high-seat beneath the sooty rafters of Jælling Hall sat Wermund, King of the English. His flowing white hair and beard were

*Theodosius I died in A.D. 395. Ermanric, King of the Goths, killed himself in 375, as his vast kingdom crumbled under Hunnish invasion. These indications place Deor's journey into the land of the English (in what is now N.E. Schleswig and the extreme S.E. of Denmark) somewhere close to the year A.D. 400.

Blade

THE WORLD DOES MOVE! CONSIDER, FOR INSTANCE, THIS REMARKABLE STORY OF THE ENGLISH WHO IN THE DARK AGES LIVED ON THE BORDER OF DENMARK.

by PAUL JOHNSTONE

The King's face purpled, then drained white. He choked, then shouted: "Seize this man! Flog him! Behead him! Flay him! Drown—"

neatly combed, his face ruddy and cheerful. Shining gold circled his noble brow, and hung in massive spirals over the quilted sleeves of his white linen tunic. He ate collops of roasted beef and slabs of coarse brown bread. He drained foaming amber ale from the great horn with stately dignity. His majestic head turned as he said: "There is a newcomer at our board?"

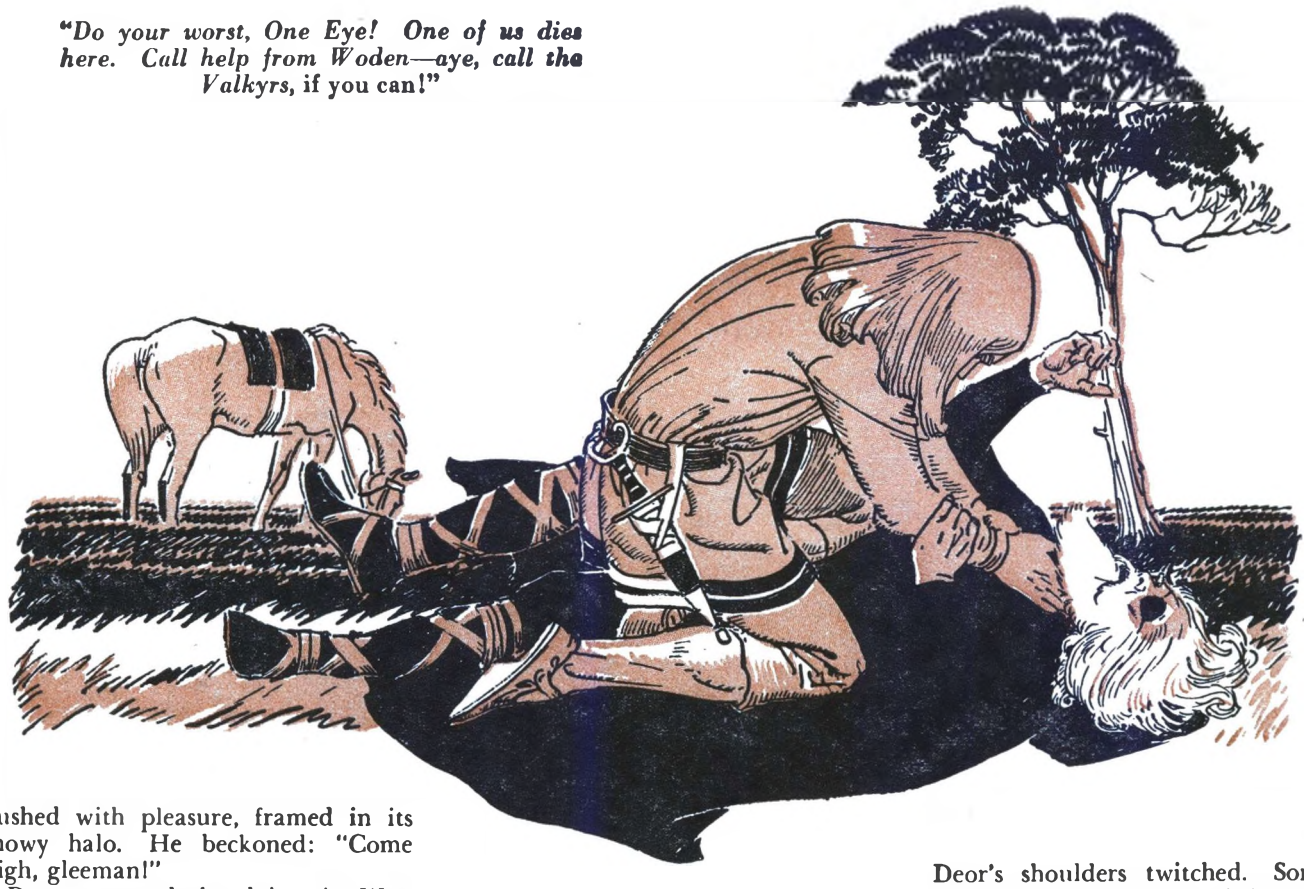
Deor rose from his bench and stepped toward the royal dais. He lifted the harp that hung always at his side. He bowed toward the King. "Deor am I called. A gleeman of the Glommas, but a wanderer over Mid-Earth these forty winters."

Wermund smiled. His voice was strong, yet gentle. "That name is known! Our hall is honored. Have you a song for our pleasure?"

Deor touched his harp, first in slow, rippling chords, then with increasing tempo. Then he sang, the deep, full tones of his alliterative chant filling the lofty hall. Beginning with a few lines of compliment, then a little song on the sweet incoming of joyful springtide, he swept on, into the verse-tale of his own youth, polished by many recitations. He sang of the dire feud that raged between his old lord Heoden, King of the Glommas by the Baltic shore, and Hagen, King of the Holm-Ryge, from Rugen isle. The long tale of blood and bravery swept on, to its woeful ending. Deor paused then, a tear on his cheek. He could not forget Heoden, the young and the strong. . . .

Wermund pulled a massive bracelet from his arm. Taking its spirals into both strong hands, he tugged. The soft gold parted neatly at a deep-scored carving. Replacing the spiral, Wermund weighed the detached ring in his fingers. He leaned forward. "No gold-wealth is worthy of such a song. But take this as token of our delight in it." He tossed the ring, a meteor in the torchlight. Deor caught it deftly, slipped it on his wrist, then lifted arm in salute: "Hail to the ring-breaker of the English!" Those at the board echoed his shout, pounding the bare table with cups and knife-handles. Wermund's plump old face

"Do your worst, One Eye! One of us dies here. Call help from Woden—aye, call the Valkyrs, if you can!"



flushed with pleasure, framed in its snowy halo. He beckoned: "Come nigh, gleeman!"

Deor mounted the dais. At Wermund's feet sat his *thyle* Bubba, a fat and pompous man, royal bodyguard and Prime Minister in one. He was the only man in Jælling Hall belted with a sword. At one glance, Deor dismissed him. He knelt before the King. Bubba shoved him closer. The gleeman's head was at the King's trousered and cross-gartered knee. Wermund's fingers, quick but gentle, touched his face. *Why, the King is blind,* Deor realized suddenly. The sensitive fingers paused at his brow, searched cheek and bearded chin, then fell away. From behind the carved pillars of the high-seat, fierce blue eyes glared into Deor's face. The gleeman blinked, saw a young giant sprawled on the dais behind the King. His golden hair and beard were tangled, his tunic torn and dirty, his huge bare legs mud-streaked and thorn-scored. Deor wondered who this might be—his long hair proved him to be no slave.

The King's musing voice recalled Deor. "A goodly face—that of a man with mind set on high things," he pronounced. "Ye be nigh as old as we. . . . Is there another song?"

"Aye—my *Song of Woes Outlived.*" Deor stepped down from the dais, stood wreathed in wood-smoke from the nearby hearth-trench, and lifted his harp again. This song was newly made, but his whole life and heart were in it—a pageant of gods and heroes and princesses, smitten by woes that seemed without end.

Theodric waited Thirty winters
At Maringa-Burg That was well-known!
That he over-went. So also may I!
This I sing For all Wyrd's flock.
For every Ill-used fellow
That he stoutly Pay his scot.
For all Hapless heroes
Unborn and Un-begot.
Mood is more Than might was ever.
Ye yet may Mend your lot!•

Deor sat down on the bench. This time, there was no ready applause, but it was long before men spoke loudly again; and the fierce blue eyes behind the throne still never left Deor's face.

Deor spoke softly to his bench-mate, a Frisian merchant. "Who is the giant that lies by the King's throne?"

Bernlef the Frisian swallowed the last of the gravy-soaked bread that had served him as a plate, and licked a greasy thumb before replying: "Giant! He is but a babe, and always will be—King Wermund's only son, Offa the Speechless."

"Was he born so?"

"Nay. It fell thus upon him in his twelfth winter. Folk say it and Wermund's blindness are the price of Edgils' bane."

•The *Song of Deor* may be read in any text-book of Anglo-Saxon poetry—the above is a very free paraphrase, justified by the conclusion of scholars, that while a "nucleus" may be as old as Deor's time, the extant version has suffered extensive changes.

Deor's shoulders twitched. Somehow the fire-bright hall, with its gold-embroidered wall-hangings, was no longer cheerful.

WERMUND spoke; "Song-shaper!"

"Aye, Highness?"

"It is known to us that gleemen recite the kindreds of the kings. If ye speak of me, I would ye knew my descent truly."

"I will hear, and mark, and hold in mind," said Deor.

Wermund smiled happily. "Then hearken: Wermund am I, that men call the Wise, son of Wihtlag, who slew Hamlet the Jute, son of Waga, son of Wathol-Geat, son of Woden, God of War and Kingship."

Deor recited the names to the King's approval, musing on something that puzzled him. The King's claim to divine lineage he understood. That meant that his ancestors were priest-kings who claimed to be the reincarnations and mouthpieces of the King of Gods. There were many divine kings in the North Country. But there was a dark mystery here. . . . Deor knew how dangerous was the ground he trod, but his was a minstrel's privilege, and he was an old adventurer. He spoke: "King Wermund—all your kinsmen were named with W?"

"Aye. That is old custom. It marks us as Woden's kin and priests."

"Then—*why is your only son named Offa?*"

A terrible silence filled the hall.

Wermund's full face purpled, then drained white. His blind eyes glared.

His brow was roped with swollen veins. He choked, then shouted: "Seize this man! Flog him! Behead him! Flay him! Drown—"

Deor stood quietly, facing the King's wild rage. A half-dozen brawny thanes stood up and surrounded him. Deor glanced at them, fingering the patch over one eye. They halted.

"I am Deor," he reminded. "Known to many. Folk will speak ill of those who harm a gleeman under their roof. I asked but an honest question. If I have offended, I cry pardon."

"Hang him—" Wermund broke out—then halted. His white head bowed. "Aye. . . . You are—Deor. I never harmed gleemen. Thanes, unhand him!" The thanes, who had never touched Deor, shuffled their feet and sat down. There was silence. Men glared at Deor.

The drinking ended; King Wermund rose, guided by Bubba and followed by the young giant. At the door, the King paused. "Gleeman, come to my bower. I would speak with you!"

And Deor rose, wondering.

KING WERMUND lay on his feather-bed, divested of his gold. His sightless eyes were on the rafters. "Deor, ye thrust me sore."

"It shall not be again," assured Deor, seated on a stool beside him.

"I will tell you the whole tale of our ruin and shame," continued the King. "Then shall you counsel me."

Deor's eye was on his pain-racked face. "Let us speak of other things. Am I, a gleeman, to bring you grief?"

King Wermund's fist pounded his bed. "No, no! Like spear in breast, it must come out. . . .

"Edgils the Myrging—that is a Saxon kin—was my full foe. He burst into my kingdom, burnt and slew and pillaged. I put Frewin, my trustiest thane, into the under-kingdom of Sleswic, to check the raids of Edgils. Edgils killed him. I set Frewin's sons, Wig and Ket, in his stead. Edgils came again, with flame and bright edges. They could not hold him. The news came to me while I held high feast here at Jælling. We leaped up from the board, snatched weapons from the wall, and took the road. Quick word, quick sword, that was our way in the old days. . . .

"We caught Edgils and his Saxons on a barren moor, and fought a long summer day, till the purple moor ran red! Then Edgils fell wounded, but his thanes lifted him up and cut their way out. Too many of our men had scattered to plunder, or he had died there. . . .

"But Edgils escaped, was healed, and still boasted he was Frewin's banesman. That irked the sons mightily. No timid youths were Wig and Ket! Without a single thane, they fared into Saxonland—and came back to lay Edgils' head at my feet.

"I was merry to be rid of Edgils. I sent his slayers home loaded with gifts. I did more. It was handfast that my Offa should marry their sister, when both came of age. I knew not the whole tale. . . .

"It came out later, when the brothers fell out, that Edgils fell in no fair fight but by foul waylaying, two against one. Folk put shame on us, that we had broken down the ancient principle of combat. Yet I could not drive into exile the twin pillars of my realm.

"Offa, my lone son, was born when I was already old—too old, mayhap! A tall lad, but slow and over-gentle. I thought two such wed-brothers would be his support when I was gone.

"Hear me, Deor! That winter, as Offa stood in the house of Woden for the rites of manhood, dumbness seized him. He could not speak the words. . . . His man's-name would have been Werfrith, but now he is child forever. He wed Thrytho, for all that, but she tired of his silence and went home. I bade her brothers send her back to her husband. They sent word he was no husband who was no man. . . . Thrytho has been shield-maiden since. There has been no trust between Jælling and Sleswic from that day.

"Years have gone, and ever it fares worse. Crops fail; cattle die; my old eyes—I gave horses and men to Woden and his fellows, to no help. I feel minded to give them one more gift. . . . I will cut runes on my breast, spill my blood in the temple bowl, and go to ride Woden's horse. Think you the curse would then be lifted from Offa's head?"

"The King held the torch to light the victim. . . . They pulled him up. He did not kick at all. I said, 'I give—'"

Deor considered: "Can a gleeman counsel a king and a priest as to the will of the Osas? Yet I will speak my mind. I saw your hanging-tree in the garth. . . . You give much to Woden—too much, I think. Do not trust Frigg's husband too far! Live and wait for better days."

RIDING across the forlornness of Jælling Heath toward the Dane-Mark, Deor looked back and saw himself followed. A lone man, tall but unarmed, coming with tireless lope. Puzzled, the gleeman halted. What message could there be?

The runner came nearer. He loomed through the gathering mist like a giant of old tales. . . . Why, it was Offa! "Atheling, what tidings do you bear?" he asked.

Offa came to a stop beside the gray horse. His breath came easily. He looked at Deor with bright blue eyes. *Eyes of blue flame,* thought Deor. . . . Two huge hands closed upon his throat.

Lifted from horseback, then pinned with his back in the new heather, Deor fought for breath and life. Travel-wise and skilled in wrestling, still he could not break that grip. Already his senses were going—it seemed that Offa the Silent spoke: "Do your worst, One Eye! One of us dies here. Call help from Osgard, Woden—aye, call the Valkyrs, *if you can!*"

Deor found Offa's little finger, and tried to break it. Too late. Offa was hammering his head against the ground. With each bump, showering meteors dimmed his sight. Everything faded. . . .

Deor gasped, coughed, blinked. He was still alive! A blond giant-face peered down at him, filled with amazement and dismay. "You have *two* eyes! Ye're not Woden!"

Deor managed to chuckle faintly. "Nor are you dumb. We are mummers well met." He saw now, that the leather patch he wore had been knocked askew, revealing the sound eye beneath it, and thus unaccountably saving his life. He still did not understand the reason for that.

"Why," thundered Offa, "do you" —his voice broke, became thin—"hide your good eye?"

"So folk might wonder if I might be Woden, wandering abroad as is his wont. Thus a weaponless old man, loaded with gold, roams safe—or so I thought! Be warned, Atheling: Deceit will deceive the deceiver. Why would you throttle the Wanderer?"

Offa pondered glumly. "Only you know my secret. Mayhap I should kill you anyway." Then the shaggy head jerked back in sudden decision. "No! I hate killing folk. And there was new heart for me in what ye sang. I have done amiss." His voice dwindled to that of a child.

"That being so," croaked Deor, "would you kindly get off my chest? Ah—that's better!"

Offa stared at his big hands, broodingly. "Would you *had* been Woden! With my hands about his weasand, it might have been long ere Frigg saw her husband."

Deor swallowed painfully, "I will not gainsay that." He massaged his throat. "Prince, your secret is safe with me."

A hand gripped his shoulder. "My heart's thanks! I was fearing that."

Deor looked at him. "You *fearing*—who would fight the King of Gods with bare hands!"

Offa shook his head. "They call me *nithing,*" he whispered hoarsely, "and they say right. When I thought to end all in a moment, then I was bold. It passed like a lightning-flash. Now there is no heart in me any more." His voice wavered oddly, as if long unused.

There was a long silence, the two men sitting side by side on the darkening heath, while Deor's gray horse nibbled the moor-grass. The gleeman was recovering his breath and his wits. "Prince," he said, "I am an old exile. I have never played any man false. . . . Could you trust me?"

Offa looked at him somberly. "I must trust or slay, and I have no guts for slaying harmless folk. Aye, it is in my bones that you are the one I could trust."

"Then hearken! Dark evil is woven like a web over Engle-land. And at the center of that web is—you. Yet you are neither evil nor a *nithing.* That is a riddle hard to solve. Will you help me find it out?"

"How?"

"Tell me—why do you feign dumbness?"

There was long silence. A cool wind blew over Jælling Heath, ruffling the gray's mane. He looked at his master and whinnied softly. Offa spoke at last: "It was long ago. . . . A tale I would not tell. First it was dire need; then fear grew on me. *Nithing* —that is what I am."

Deor sighed. "Atheling, you are no man-of-naught! That I know, who have seen many brave men and many *nithings.* You have an old hurt, that is all."

Offa looked at his huge limbs. "I never had a wound."

"There are wounds not of the flesh. Such is yours. Yet the remedy is the same as for a broken limb. You must use it again, however much it hurts. Only so is wholeness won again."

Offa shook his head. "I have not the wit to know what you would counsel. Nor the bravery to do it if I knew."

"Atheling!" Deor spoke sharply. "What is your feud with Woden, the father of your kin?"

"He stole away my heart," said Offa, his voice quivering. "I would the Fenris Wolf had him! They are alike, greedy and bloodfed."

"When? How was it done?"

"It was when I was twelve. On the Night of the Nine Men. . . . No! I cannot tell you—now."

Deor sighed deeply. He had little faith in Woden or any of his ilk, but—here was dark magic. How could he break the spell that fettered the Athelings? He thought of the White Christ, whom Wulfila preached among the Goths, as a god's son, a great hero and breaker of evil spells. It would be good for Offa, if he could put his mind on such a one. . . . But no, that was not it. Deor knew too little of that new teaching. Now he was sorry he had not paid more heed to Wulfila's words; but then, in the days of Ermanric the Cruel, there had been other things on his mind. . . . He must deal with Offa in terms of his own beliefs.

"Prince," he asked, "if Woden is your foe, in what god do you trust?"

"None—unless it is poor old Tiw."

"And why Tiw?"

"I've heard my father say Tiw is not of Woden's kin, that he was our war-god ere Woden came. . . . Besides, we are brothers in woe. Tiw put his hand into the mouth of the Fenris Wolf, and I my heart."

"Aye. But Tiw had his way—the Wolf was bound! Now hear me well, Atheling! Every man of us has his own Fenris Wolf, that we must bind. If we dread to put our hand into his mouth, then he is boldened, and tears out our heart. Offa of Angel, *put your hand in the Wolf's mouth!*"

OFFA lifted his head, to stare at the old man. "What means that?"

"I do not know, because you will not tell me. But you know, or will if you think on my words. You can be a warrior bold as Tiw himself, if you let yourself. Go into the Wolf's mouth—you might find there what you have lost!"

Offa pondered. "I will think. . . . I would I might talk with you more. It grows dark."

"Do you fear darkness?"

"No. I will guide you toward the Danes. I know the Heath well."

Deor got onto the gray's back, and turned the horse about. Offa touched his shoulder. "You are headed wrong —that way lies Jælling."

"So it does," said Deor gayly. "Prince, that is where I will bide awhile; it was good that you came upon me when I was lost upon the Heath, and had twisted my knee, so that I can scarce ride or walk until it heals."

Offa stared at the gleeman. "Ye are mumming still! What of your eye-patch?"

Deor grinned, pulled the black patch over his eye. "Aye, Prince—glee-

Illustrated by Frederick Chapman

"They break or bend double if I even shake them," Offa grumbled, disgust written on his face.

men are mummers all. But such games ill befit an Atheling. Mayhap this mumming of mine will make an end of yours!"

At Thorsberg Hill, in the heart of Wermund's realm, the English folk were gathered, for their springtide moot, forefather of Parliament and Congress, Supreme Court and King's Bench. Here were decided cases of straying cattle, manslaying, inheritance, abduction, gang-robbery, and the sale of diseased hogs. Throned on his ancient seat of stone, his white hair tossed by the wind blowing fresh from the Baltic, King Wermund heard each case, conferred with his Wise Men about him, then gave judgment. Gold and silver changed hands; oaths were taken; former foes clasped hands in agreement. The old King was in his element.

Bubba, the King's Spokesman, glanced importantly at the birch stave where brief runic notes indicated the names of suitors. "This case closes the list. Men of Angel, I hereby proclaim the springtide Moot to be duly cl—"

"Hold! We bring weighty tidings." Into the Doom-ring stepped twelve men, richly garbed, each with a green branch in his hand. They were not English, Bubba knew from the Saxon twang of their spokesman's voice. Several of the men were a trifle white-faced and shifty-eyed, but their leader's insincere smile masked arrogance, not fear.

"Whence is your tidings?" asked Bubba.

The leader smoothed his white linen tunic and cleared his throat importantly: "Hem! We come as the envoys of a friendly king, in time of peace and under safe-conduct. We say what our lord bade us say. Have we full protection and security of speech?"

"First," said Bubba, "we must know your name, and that of your king. Advance notice of your visit should have been given."

"And was," said the envoy smoothly; "we are not blameworthy if the message went astray. Herefrith is my name. I am spokesman to Rigan the Fearless, King of the Myrgings and all their subject folks. My sending is to Wermund, and to all the English."

"You may speak," said Wermund, "under full herald's-right."

Herefrith inflated his chest: "Rigan, King of the Myrgings, greeteth King Wermund kindly, saying:

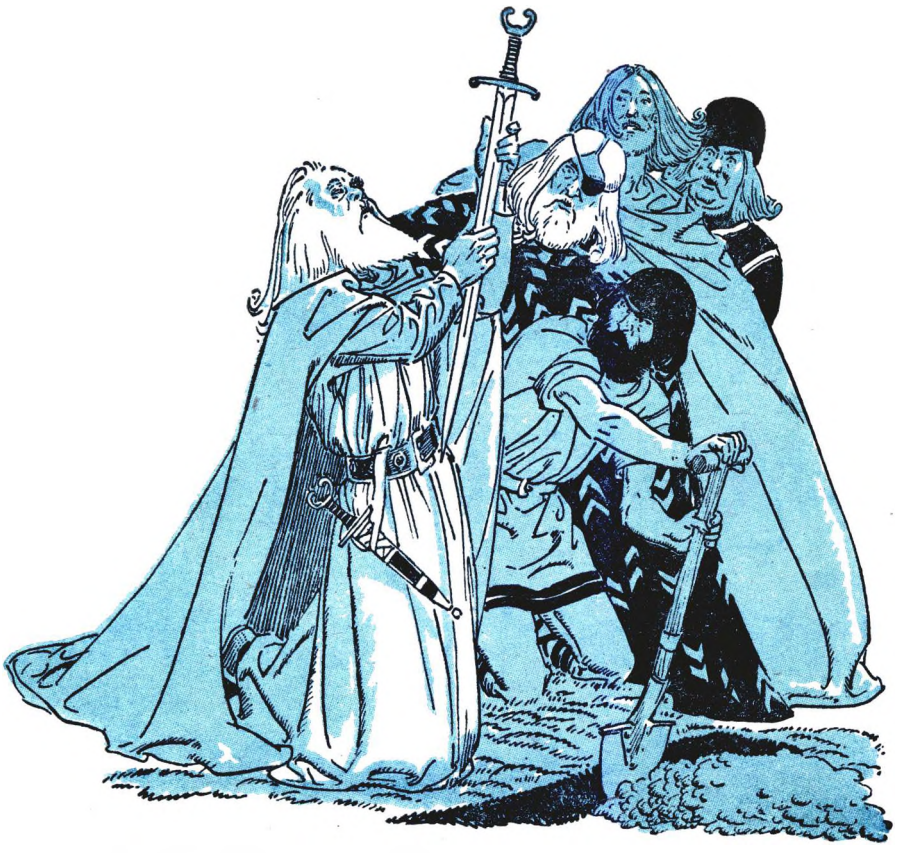
"Long have you reigned, King Wermund. Ill fares your land beneath a dotard king! You thirst to hold sway beyond due term of life, stripping the English of laws and defence. For how can you be reckoned a king, whose spirit is darkened with age, and eyes with blindness? For these and like reasons, do we call upon you this day to surrender into the keeping of our thanes the kingdom which you hold beyond the natural span of years."

Herefrith paused. A growl of anger rose from the Engle-folk at this ultimatum, but no one spoke out, and the envoy continued:

"If you refuse this reasonable request from your loving neighbor, then you must be dealt with by weapons instead of warnings. So you will be forced to surrender unwillingly what you were too proud to give. For what wise man would march under the banner of one alike aged, incompetent, cursed with blindness, and banned by all the gods?" He finished with a mocking bow, and stood grinning round the circle of his hearers. The crowd muttered and seethed in dismay.

Bubba, who should have replied, was speechless with sheer indignation. Snowy head high, the King gave his own answer: "This is the foulest and most churlish speech that ever passed between king and king! If I am old, it is not because I ever shrank from battle, though age has brought me to this misery. It would better beseem Rigan to await an old man's death, for it is better to succeed the dead than rob the living.

"That our ancient freedom may not be flung away, I accept the challenge. He shall be met in single combat—"



The thin blade was scarfed over with rust from point to hilt.

Wermund paused, awaiting the gleeful roar of his subjects. Instead, a confused babble faded into silence. "He shall be met in single combat by the best man of the English folk," said Wermund. "Let me hear the voices of those who would defend our folk-right." He waited, turning his head from side to side in pathetic eagerness. There were no voices. The old man seemed to wilt, then rallied. "With my own hand I will fight!"

Herefrith looked around the circle, smirking and wagging his head in commiseration—and there were those who nodded in agreement as the Engle-folk wavered between anger and resignation.

Herefrith spoke smoothly: "My lord Rigan, true battle-knight that he is, and ever careful of his honor's luster, would shrink from the mockery of fighting against a blind old gaffer. Surely it would be better to settle this matter by means of the sons of either party. Now King Rigan hath a son, Hildebrand by name, a brisk, trim, keen young warrior, whose deeds are told afar. Three times has he fared West-over-seas to win spoil from Britain—a thing no Englishman has ever done. Now if—and I say *if*—there was here a son to Wermund, let him fight Hildebrand!"

Free Englishmen stamped their feet and ground teeth at this studied insult, this painstaking allusion to Offa's debility. King Wermund sat with head in hands, not speaking. He had done his best. The silence grew oppressive. The English nobles shifted and whispered: *"Shame put on us all. . . . Aye, but they're right! Time the old King rode Woden's horse. . . . What! And have a wittold for King? Now this Hildebrand—fight him in a minute, if it wasn't for the curse. . . . What we need is a whole new king-kin, not one whose luck's run out. Maybe then our wheat would ripen, and our cows calve. . . . Why didn't Wig or Ket come to Moot? I'll wait to see what they do. . . . Might as well look the thing in the face; the Myrgings are too strong for us. Best ask Rigan to give us Hildebrand for our King, and be done with it!"*

Among those who gave ear to these shamefaced whispers was a gray-haired man, muffled in a woolen robe. Now he flung back the robe, lifted a little harp, and struck a single rippling chord. Then he waited, listening. There followed a momentary silence.

From well back in the crowd came a deep-throated shout. "Have I King Wermund's leave to speak?"

The white head lifted wearily: "Who asks?"

Bubba stared into the crowd. His eyes bulged: "It's Offa!" he gobbled.

Wermund groaned. "Must my own men join the foreigners in vexing me with jeers?"

"But it is your son!" insisted Bubba. "Deor! Hey, Deor! Come here and tell the King who speaks there."

"Offa the Atheling—up heart, King! Old Engle-land is not done yet." Deor laid a hand on the King's trembling arm.

King Wermund sighed a deep sigh. "Whoever he is, he can say what he thinks."

A young giant strode into the circle, bowed to the King, then faced the Myrging envoys. Clad in white tunic and blue trews cross-gartered with red, his golden hair and beard aglow in the spring sunshine, Offa was the picture of confident vigor. His voice pealed like a trumpet-call:

"Idle it is to covet a kingdom supported by the arms and wisdom of valiant thanes, as is ours. The King does not lack an Atheling, for it is Offa of Engle who speaks—speaks to give this challenge: I will fight *holmgang* with not one but two Myrgings. Let Rigan and his whelp meet me at Fifel-door!"

Silence—then a great roar from the English. When it faded, Herefrith laughed scornfully. "Lip courage! Name your day."

"A moon hence. And mind—*two* Myrgings!"

The Myrging envoys were gone, in elated haste. Wermund spoke quietly. "Where is the man who spoke so boldly? Whoever he is, he is a better King for the English than Rigan."

"Offa, your own son," said Deor.

"That is past belief." Wermund shook his white head sadly. "Let the man come; my hands will know Offa."

Offa knelt. Trembling old hands felt his huge thews. The blind King sighed, a long sigh of joy. "Son—why did not you speak before?"

"I had no need!" Offa was gruff, but his face worked convulsively.

"But—why challenge two men?"

"To pay the scot for Edgils' bane. This way we stand free and clean in the sight of all men, whatever befalls."

The King gripped his son's huge shoulder. "Rigan and Hildebrand are skilled in war. You have never held a sword. So—this is the end of our kingdom and kin!"

"If it is my end," said Offa, "it is a good end for me."

The King sat musing long. Then he said: "You have judged all things rightly."...

Robed and gold-ringed, trousered and sword-belted as befits an atheling, Offa put his great hand on Deor's shoulder. "So—I have thrust my hand into the wolf's mouth. You it was showed me my path. If you have a boon to ask, ask now!"

"A gleeman," said Deor, "is ever ill-content with half a tale. My boon is to know the reason of your long silence."

Offa groaned. "Why didn't you ask for gold, or horses? But since it is you—this is the tale:

"I never knew my lady mother, but my father reared me well and tenderly —too tenderly, maybe! At twelve, I had scarce seen a blow struck, or blood flow. It is very peaceful at Jælling. . . . Then, on the Night of the Nine Men, my father led me into Woden's house. I had never been inside that red house before. There was a fire, and a great caldron seething, with horseflesh in it. At my father's urging, I smelled of the steam, said the right words, ate horse's meat and drank some of the broth. That was not so hard. But then—"

"I know." Deor nodded. "The nine men under the hanging-tree, with nooses round their necks, and their hands and feet tied."

CLEARING his throat, Offa went on: "My father lifted his hand. The Woden-priests hauled on the rope, and up would go a man, his bound feet kicking, writhing against the night sky. Then 'I give you to Woden,' the King would say, and spear him through the body. A priest would stand with the great wooden blood-bowl in his hands beneath the hanging man. Then a white horse's tail would be dipped in the bowl, and I was sprinkled on face and hands, while the priests chanted, and the King with them."

"And then?" said Deor, after silence.

"Then the same was done with the second man, and so, one by one, until the last of all. Then Woden's spear, long and heavy and sticky-wet, was put into my hands. I must speak the words and strike the blow, and so come into manhood and priesthood. I did not love that deed! But I had been instructed as to its necessity."

"So?" prompted Deor.

"My fa—the King—held the torch to light the victim. I saw his face. It was old Duda. . . .

"You would not know of Duda. He was a slave—my slave. He went with me, when I ran over the heath. He shaped bows and arrows for me. He carried me on his back, when I was tired. He taught me to swim. He made a little ship for me, with real oars, and a little wooden man to each oar. He told me the old tales. Now he stood under the hanging-tree, with hands and feet bound with ropes of stout bast—ropes he himself had woven for us!

"I never knew—whether Duda was chosen by lot, or whether he had asked to be the one. . . . But there he stood. He smiled at me, and motioned with his head for me to go on with it. I lifted the long spear. They pulled him up. He did not kick at all. I said 'I give—' "

"And you speared him?" asked Deor gently.

"No! There I stopped. And the priests let Duda down. The King begged me to go on. Then he beat me, till his staff broke—broke on my back, that never had been whipped before. I think Fa—the King—wept sorer than I did. They fetched another staff. I would not speak. My jaws locked, like a dead wolf's. They were desperate for me to go on, for no one but I could speak the word or strike the blow. They were still flogging me at cockcrow. The Night of the Nine Men was over, and the ninth man still lived. That had not ever been before."

"Then you could not speak?" asked Deor.

"I dared not speak, or all would be done over. And Duda would not run away! Faithful as any hound, he waited till I could make myself man and priest by shedding his blood. He lived ten years more; then he died of the coughing sickness, in the spring. So after all, Hel got him, and not Woden. I was glad of that.

"With Duda dead, I had been still too long. The thought of speaking save to myself, alone on the Heath, made me sick. Woden had stolen my courage, because I had cheated him. But now I have snatched it back, from Woden's mouth, or the Wolf's, I know not, nor care!"

"It is—" began Deor, when Offa's hand checked him.

"Harken, gleeman!" Offa spoke with fierce determination. "I will never be Werfrith, Woden's priest! Always will I be Offa. If life betide me, I will be King of the English. I will keep my frontiers straitly, and take scot of outlanders. I will build goodly steads, and keep the land's law. But I make my avowal—I will never dip hand in the blood of helpless folk!"

"Atheling," said Deor, "you have found your road."

OFFA had one month to learn the craft of sword and shield. There was no more talk of unfinished ceremonies; by speaking at the Folk-Moot, the Atheling had come into full majority. There at the Moot, King Wermund girt him with a sword. And the next day the sword was broken. Offa had shattered it on the tall stump that served King Wermund's thanes for a pells. Another was brought to Offa —and as soon broken. And another, and another, turning into scrap-metal in Offa's huge grasp.

"They break or bend double if I even shake them!" Offa grumbled, disgust written on his face. "And every mail-shirt I try is too small to pull over my shoulders—and even if I did squeeze into it, then I couldn't breathe."

"I had never realized," mused Deor, "that a man might be too big and strong to fight. . . . Don't look so glum, Atheling! We'll fix you up, somehow."

"I'm not worried," grumbled Offa. "I can fight baresark. But unless I get something better than these puny little swords, I'm going to fight with a wooden club!"

"How about a battle-ax?" asked Bubba.

Offa groaned. "I tried that first. The handle always snaps!"

Deor glanced at Sindre the Smith—no captive like Rigan's but a free man, who spoke his mind to all, red whiskers bristling and soot-streaked. "Sindre, couldn't you make a new mail-coat to fit Offa?"

HANDS on hips, the little smith squinted up at Offa's bulk. "Aye—in a year or so! War-shirts must be forged and fitted, link by link. I was a year and a half piecing together the King's sark, and I was younger then."

Old King Wermund groaned aloud. Then he sprang to his feet, clapping his hands together. Deor turned, worried lest the strain was undermining the old king's mind. "By Hild!" Wermund shouted. "Listen, Sindre! If you cut my old mail-shirt up the left side to the shoulder, then fastened it with a strap and buckle, wouldn't it go on Offa?"

"Aye, but leave a gap at his side."

"Which his shield would cover."

Old smith looked at old King in sudden admiration. "By Weland's tongs! They don't call ye Wermund the Wise for nothing! It can be done, and I can do it for him." Sindre hurried off, roaring for his bellows-boy, and for the King's armor.

Offa straightened a sword-blade of soft, many-pitted gray iron under his foot, struck one blow at the pells, then flung the twisted sword away in disgust. "Sindre would do better to forge me a sword."

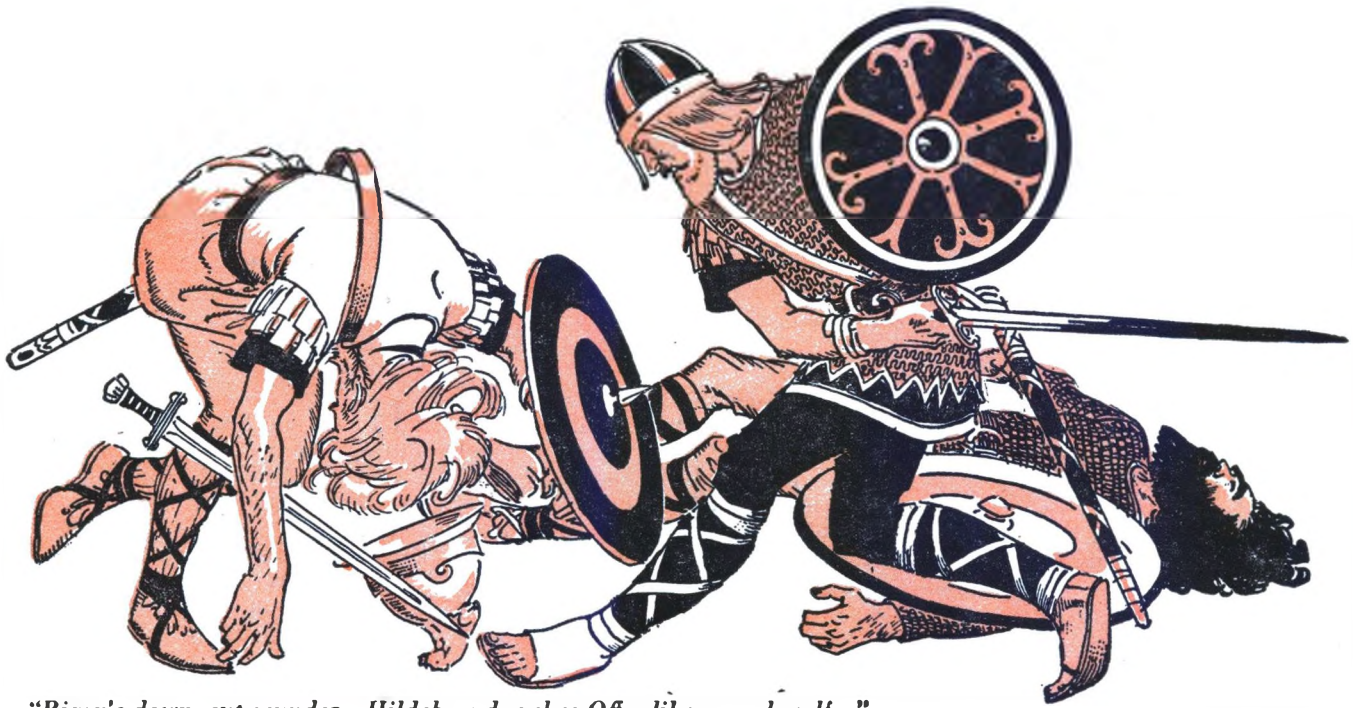
"But that one was his best!" Deor scratched his gray head. "Northland smiths have not the craft of forging sharp steel. Now I have seen Roman swords in the Rhineland that would bend and spring straight again, like a green wand."

"Once I had such a sword," King Wermund said sadly. "A big, long sword, too. Scrap, he was called. He was better than his name."

"I have heard of sword Scrap," said Deor. "Was it not the sword of Hamlet the Jute? What became—"

"Hild, yes!" said Wermund, his face flushing. "My father won Scrap from him, in the battle of Hamlet's Heath. Like a shining serpent, was that blade! When I grew old, and lost hope that Offa would ever stir the red broth, I loathed the thought of Scrap in a stranger's hands. So I took Scrap out onto the Heath and laid him in grave, like the old warrior he was."

Offa heaved a gigantic sigh. "Then Scrap is gone, as in the sea. You could not find the spot now."



"Rigan's down, cut asunder—Hildebrand rushes Offa, like a mad wolf—"

Wermund stood up. "Lead me over the Heath!" he ordered. "Now, tell me what you see."...

They had been walking slowly for hours, and the gray heath was red with sunset, when King Wermund gave a cry, and fell on hands and knees. With trembling hands he tore at the soft, moist soil, careless of his robe. He would dig and pause, shake his head, shift position, dig again. Night was over the heath when at last he sprang upright, in his hands a long parcel, swathed in moldy wrappings. Many hands tore off the tattered oil-soaked clothes. . . . It was dark, but Deor ran his hand over Scrap's blade, caught his breath in dismay. The long, thin blade was scarfed over with rust from point to hilt. "Stand back, friends, all!" Old Wermund lifted the sword high, slashed downward. The ancient blade tore the air with an odd sound—not so much whistle as angry, high-pitched shriek.

"Aye!" exulted Wermund. "That is Scrap's song. Son, here is the sword for you." He thrust the hilt into Offa's hand. The tall prince carried it back to Jælling, bare at his side. Then, in the firelight of the Hall, he gazed long and intently at the red-crusted steel. Sindre was called, and set to work, scraping and polishing. The old weapon-smith worked all through the night, singing at his work.

With morning, red-eyed Sindre laid sword Scrap in Offa's hands again. Burnished and shining, the damascened blade seemed woven of rippling serpents of light. "Old giants forged that blade!" said Sindre. "I know not how they did it—mayhap with dragons' blood." Deor thought it more likely a matter of hammering steel wires together, but held his peace. Meanwhile, the Atheling turned Scrap over and over in his great, clumsy hands. The hilt and blade, for once, did not seem too small. But all Sindre's burnishing could not hide how deeply the rust had eaten. Always thin, the outland blade now seemed the mere phantom of a sword. In Offa's restless hands, it rippled and vibrated to every motion, graceful, sinuous, frail.

"Try it, son!" urged Wermund. "See if old Scrap is strong enow for you."

Slowly, Offa shook his head. "Scrap needs no trial. He is the sword for me."

In Rendsburg town, beside the river Eider, there is a field called *Kunungskamp,* the Kings' Battleground. Fifteen and a half centuries ago, that field was a grassy island-meadow, cut off from both banks by arms of the slow-flowing Eider. Here, where the Eider widens toward the western sea, its olden name was *Fifeldor,* the Seamonster's Door. It was already famed as a resort of duelists. At dawn a boat would put out from either bank, and the wooded shores were lined with watchers. . . .

Deor rode the gray Langobard stallion through the crowd on the northern shore, heedless of execration. He reached the bank as Offa stepped into his boat and picked up the paddle. In the cold blueness of foredawn, he saw for the first time that Prince Offa could smile. "Hail, gleeman! Here I go, into the wolf's mouth. Aye, and glad to go."

"Wait!" begged Deor, slipping from the gray's back. "I am from Sleswic. I bring—"

"From Sleswic. . . . Then—"

"Yes. I went to Thrytho. The gold-bright shield-maiden lifted her sword over my head when I spoke your name. I spoke on, and she did not strike. Tall she is, and nobly shaped, slenderly strong, with cool gray eyes and pale gold ropes of hair."

"I have seen Thrytho."

"She heard my tale to its end. Then—she sends this to thee!" Dramatically, Deor whisked the sheathed long-sword from beneath his robe. Offa took the sword, with its dangling baldric, glanced at it in surprise.

"It is her father's sword."

"Aye. She bids you take, and smite boldly, then bring it back. Prince, you have much to fight for!"

Offa shook his helmeted head. "I fight for my father's right, and for Old Engle-land. That is enow for me—and Scrap is my sword."

"That rusty relic!"

"We are akin. For life or death, Scrap is my sword."

Deor sighed a long sigh. "Atheling, you are fey—drunk with the strange joy that makes doomed men spurn a chance of life. Wake and be wise!"

Offa laughed, as a happy child laughs. "I have been wise and fearful long enow. . . . I am merry now—a patched war-shirt and a rusty sword, and two champions against me! Is this a *nithing's* game?"

"Atheling—here!" Bubba proffered a filled horn. "Good is ale to warm the blood, but first spill a little. The Givers of Victory like a taste of a hero's drink."

Offa took the ale-horn. "And here is one man who does not care what they like." He drained the horn to its last drop.

"The sun of noontide is warm on my head," declared King Wermund. "Will no one tell me how they fare?"

"I cry pardon!" It was Deor's voice, crisp with tension. "Since dawn, Offa has withstood two proven warriors, nobly and stoutly and wisely. . . . Ha! Hildebrand missed his head again! Now they are circling, slowly, slowly, swords aloft. . . . It was Hildebrand began the fight alone in his pride, but now King Rigan has come in, and still they cannot trap Offa between them—"

"Strike, Engle! Strike, Engle!" boomed a distant voice. That would be grim old Killing-Styr the referee, calling the strokes. But no clang of metal or *chock* of steel on wood followed.

"Why does not Offa strike?" Wermund's voice shook. "Not once have I heard Scrap speak."

"He holds his stroke, waiting for vantage," said Deor.

"Tell truth, gleeman!" blurted fat Bubba. "He knows not how! Well has he guarded with his shield, but he handles Scrap like a milkmaid with her churning-staff. Swording takes time to learn, and Offa had no time. You have sent your son to his bane, O King!"

"Strike, Myrging!" The referee had lost patience. *Clang!*

"Where—where fell that stroke?" gasped the blind King.

"On Offa's helm—it turned Rigan's blade. A blessing on Sindre's smithcraft! Now Offa goes reeling like a drunken churl at Yule, the Myrgings following like hounds on a noble stag. . . . He recovers—his shield is up. Now they clash, with shield-buffets—" Faintly the sound of wood hammering on wood came from across the water.

Like figures in some stately ceremonial dance, the four men moved slowly, ceaselessly, across the trampled grass of the little island-meadow. Rigan and his son, squat, trim figures in bright armor, sought always to take Offa front and rear. Circling behind them came Killing-Styr, his long-handled ax poised. In case of fouling, he would split the offender's head. His was the duty of calling the strokes, each side striking in turn. The striker could strike quickly or wait—but if he waited too long, he lost his turn. *Offa had lost every turn.*

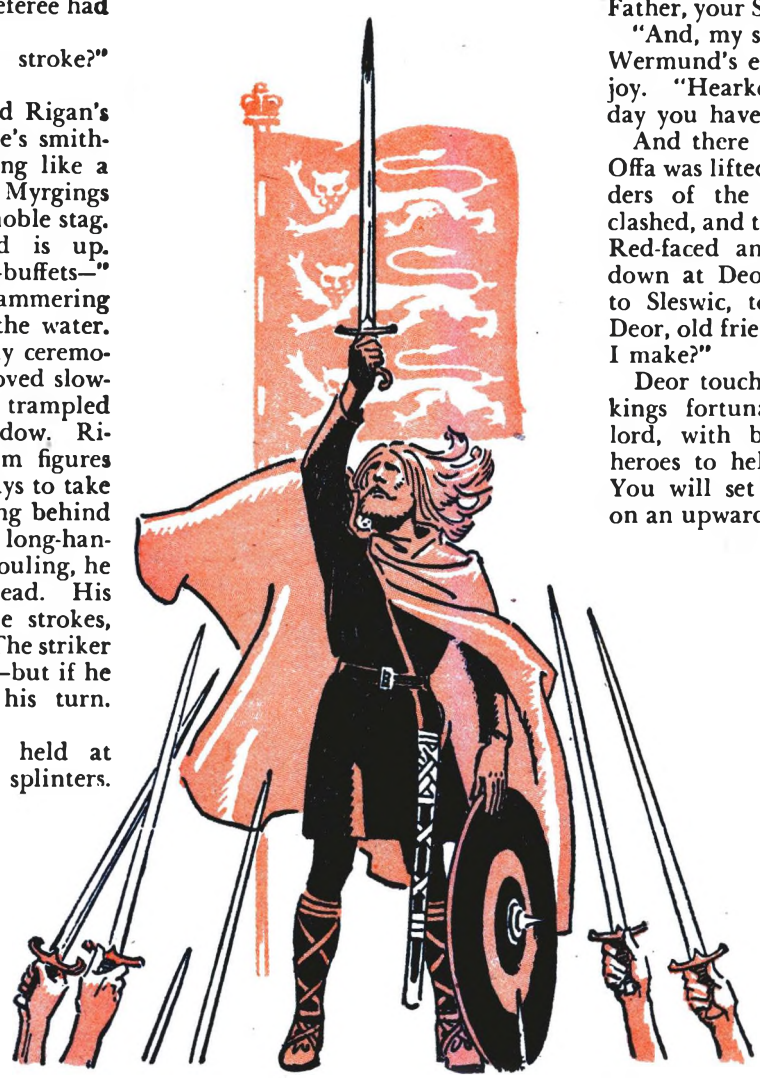
The Atheling's buckler, held at arm's-length, was hacked to splinters. His Phrygian helmet's crest was gashed, yet the Myrging blades had not touched him. Still, he was not unscathed. No rule of combat restricted the use of buckler-rim, or the spiked boss, and Rigan and Hildebrand knew how to use both. Offa's right eyebrow was split, his whole face and ring-mailed chest smeared with red. Once he had almost been caught, when he paused to wipe his steaming face on his arm. He had learned much, in short and bitter tutelage. Now Rigan's mouth was bleeding, too. . . .

Wermund moved softly to the edge of the jetty. This could not go on—when the stroke fell on Offa, he would go down too, down into gray Eider water. . . .

"Now Offa and Hildebrand clash shields! Now Rigan is in, with a long slash—over Offa's head, as he bobs. Strike now, Ath—*agh!*" Deor snarled, as the brief chance was gone. Offa continued his endless slow retreat.

"They have him penned on a spit of land—if his foot should slip—" Bubba groaned.

"Look!" whooped Sindre the Smith. "Offa knocks Hildebrand flat with the edge of his buckler. There's our lad!"



"Now—Rigan!" Deor was breathless. "He's crouching, feinting at the legs. Watch out, Offa! He'll feint your shield down, then jump and slash. Watch—here it—"

From across the smooth gray water came two sounds: First, a soft *chock*, and blending with it, a witches' scream that ended in a metallic *ping*. A great shout rose from both banks of Eider.

King Wermund leaped upright in joy. "There spoke Scrap! Where did he bite?"

"Offa bent, took Rigan's chop on his buckler, then whipped Scrap around like a scythe—right through Rigan! He's down, cut asunder—Hildebrand rushes Offa, like a mad wolf—"

"Strike, Myrging!"

Clang!

"Strike, Eng—"

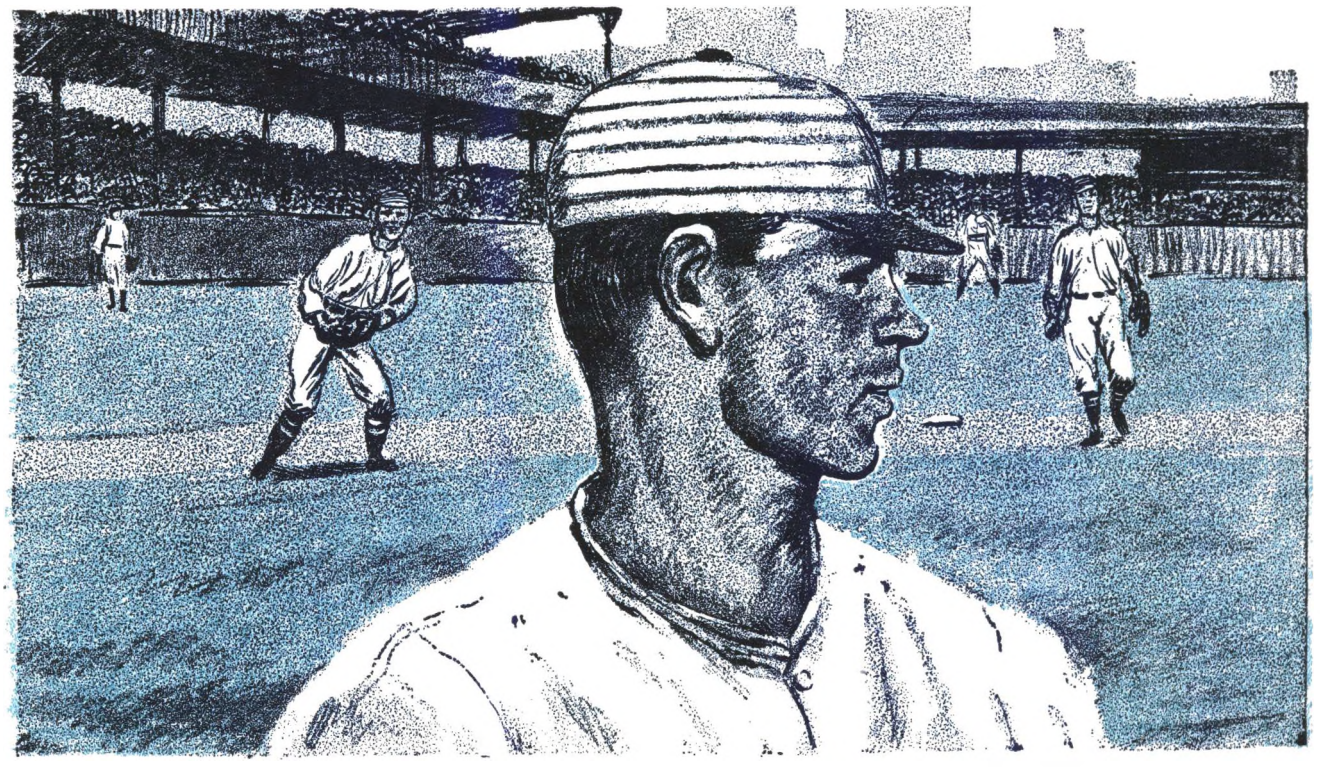
Wheep!

"They were stout fighters," said Offa gravely, as he stepped from the boat with Killing-Styr. "There will be bench-room for them in Walhall. I kept Scrap for a clear stroke, not knowing how he would hold. After Rigan, I turned Scrap in my hand, to use the other edge for Hildebrand. But see, Deor! That thin old blade has cut ring-mail and bone without notching. Father, your Scrap is a king of swords."

"And, my son—you a king of men!" Wermund's eyes were streaming with joy. "Hearken, all Engle-kin! This day you have a new King!"

And there on the jetty by Fifeldor, Offa was lifted on a shield to the shoulders of the King's thanes. Swords clashed, and trumpets brayed in salute. Red-faced and sweaty, Offa grinned down at Deor. "Tomorrow we ride to Sleswic, to return a certain gift. Deor, old friend, what sort of king will I make?"

Deor touched his harp. "A king of kings fortunate. A spear-keen warlord, with boons and with battles, heroes to help and wisdom to hold. You will set the feet of the English on an upward path."



Last Inning

THE umpire droned: "Ball three!" The batter grinned and tugged at the peak of his cap. Young Carson took the ball from the catcher, glanced fretfully at the base-runner dancing off second, then at the dugout. Manager O'Hara grunted, spat, looked down the bench. "Ward—" he said.

Old Tom Ward rose slowly. As he moved to O'Hara's side, he pulled his glove from a loop of his belt, kneaded it with hands as seamed and brown as the leather itself.

"Warm up," said O'Hara curtly. "An' make it snappy. Carson's losin' his stuff." He looked away, then back again as the other man hesitated. "Well?" he demanded.

Tom said carefully, "It's mighty hot today, Hank. And I pitched yesterday."

O'Hara scowled. "Two innings. It's up to you. If you're gettin' too old to handle a relief job—" Lips tight, eyes hard, he let the sentence and its implication dangle.

"I'll pitch," said Tom. He left the dugout, walking slowly down the third base line to the bullpen. As he passed the sun seats, a leather-lunged rooter hooted gleefully: *"Left turn to the Old Men's Home, Pop!"* Tom gave no sign of having heard. . . .

Kramer, the Blues' bullpen catcher, lay with shoulders propped against the low board fence that separated the pen from the diamond. As Tom appeared, he flicked away a cigarette, rose languidly and picked up his mitt.

"How we doin', Pop?"

Old Tom said: "End of the seventh. We've got them three to nothing, but Carson's wild. He just walked two."

"Carson!" snorted Kramer. "The six-inning wonder! Okay, Pop—let's warm up the old soupbone." He crisscrossed his shinguards, crouched behind them and slapped a heavy fist into his mitt. "Take it easy," he said.

The first few pitches came hard. Then came the welcome sweat that loosened stiff, taut muscles. Sweat on brow and throat and chest, under his arms, staining his shirt between his old shoulderblades. The lubricating sweat that had enabled Tom to stick with the game long years after others of his generation had bowed out.

"Goin' good today, Pop," approved Kramer. "You're a bearcat in the heat, ain't you?"

Old Tom smiled, but said nothing. Kramer's comment was pleasant but unimportant. Long years before the kid catcher had been born, others—far greater – had admired his ability to bear down on scorching afternoons. Matty, even. In *those* days Old Tom had been Young Tom; Mathewson had been the old-timer. But the memory was still young and fresh. The day had been a broiler—like this one. Tom, coming in from the pen to take over in the ninth, took the ball from Matty. And Big Six had grinned at him.

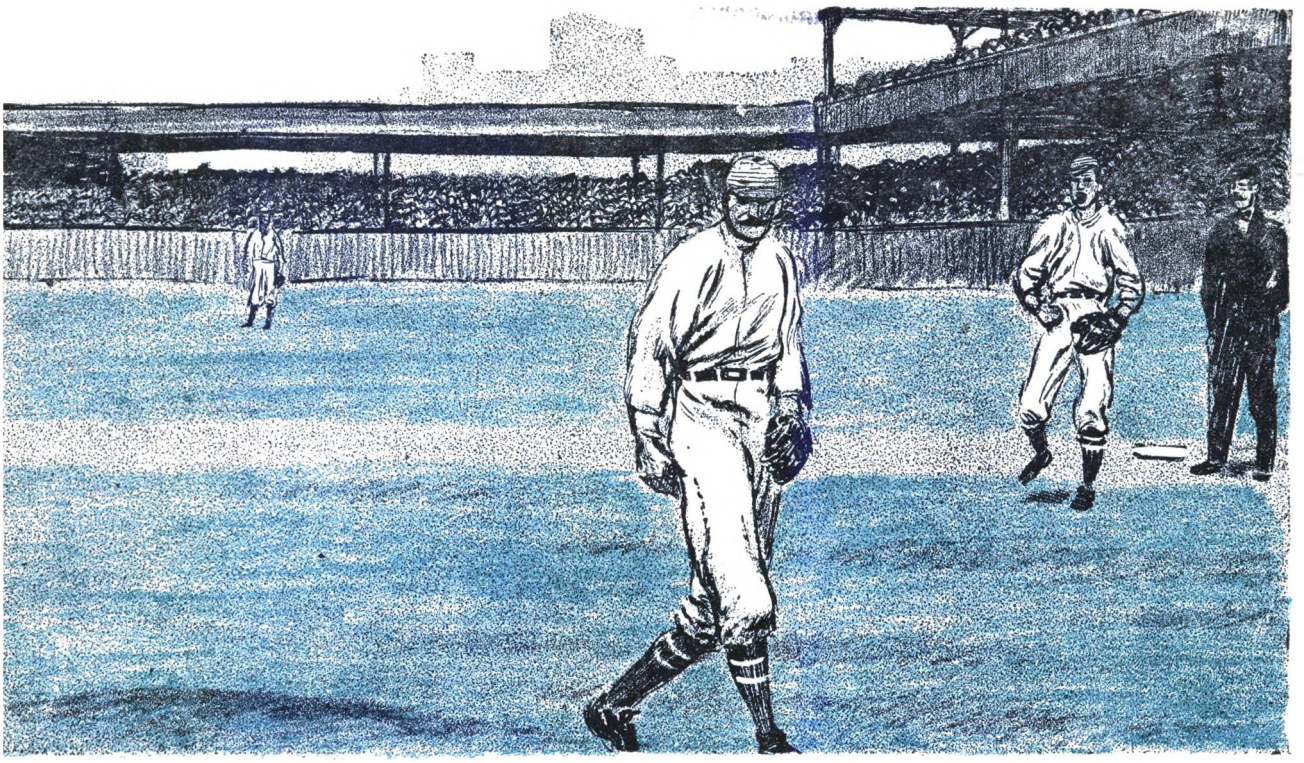
"Go get 'em, son," said Matty. "It's a new game. *Your* game—"

MATHEWSON, thought Tom. And Addie Joss and Eddie and the Rube. So many who were great, and now were gone; so many who had taken the final pitch-out. Fifty didn't seem old, really, until their names passed in parade: Delehanty and Chase. Lou Gehrig. Wee Willie Keeler.

Their names were tatters of an old, remembered glory. But they were gone, and here he was, Old Tom now, still tossing 'em up. No longer for a major-league team. Not for many years now. Time had eased him down the rungs of the baseball ladder. The Double-A leagues, then the Class B's and the C's. Finally – inevitably – this. The Blues. A semi-pro outfit. Five bucks a game.

He shrugged. Well – it was still baseball, even if only the outermost fringe. It was still baseball. The game he loved. The only thing he knew. . . .

A flood of sound spilled into the bullpen from the playing field. Kramer moved to the fence, squinted into the sun, returned pounding his mitt disgustedly.



ON THE DIAMOND AN OLD PITCHER MEETS THE GREAT ADVENTURE —AND OLD FRIENDS IN THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUND.

by NELSON BOND

"They scored again. Three to two, now. And Carson's still in the hole."

"We'd better speed it up," said Tom. He went into a full wind-up, hurled himself into the pitch. The humid air was like a solid wall. He strained himself against that wall, slipped awkwardly to one knee. Kramer started forward.

"Hurt yourself, Pop?"

Tom shook his head slowly, blinking to rid his eyes of a dancing, sun-speckled cloud. He would not, *could* not—he told himself sternly—give in to this idiotic weakness. He must pitch today. He was needed. And O'Hara had told him only yesterday that he must "show some stuff—or else." He didn't want to leave the game for good. He still had plenty of stuff left in the old whip. No speed, perhaps, but craft and guile.

He forced a smile. "I'm all right."

Young Kramer growled, "O'Hara ought to have his head examined. He shouldn't pitch you in this kind of weather. You're too—" He stopped, looking over his shoulder. "He's waving you in, Pop."

Old Tom glanced over the parapet. O'Hara had moved to the duckboards, was motioning toward the bullpen. As Tom nodded, the manager walked stiff-legged toward the umpire.

Kramer said, "Take it easy, Pop. Last inning."

"Right," said Tom.

He moved out onto the playing-field. As he stepped from the bullpen the raw and brazen sunlight struck at him as a solid fist. A wave of sudden nausea trembled through him, and a lancet of pain brought a gasp to his lips. He scrubbed the back of his hand across his eyes to erase the swirling darkness that threatened to engulf him. He felt curiously light and giddy; as from light-years away he heard Kramer's anxious cry, "Pop? Are you all right? Pop—"

THE vertigo passed as swiftly as it had come. Tom recovered himself, ashamed to discover that in his moment of weakness he had stumbled and fallen. He picked himself up, dusted gravel from his uniform. He felt better now. Much better. "My second wind," he thought gratefully. He moved forward confidently, strongly, eagerly. . . .

It was odd, though. The diamond seemed larger than he had remembered it; despite the parching heat, the grass seemed fresher, greener. And the throng that filled the grandstands—Tom had not realized there were so many fans at the game. Their voices, roaring tumultuous approval, drowned out the umpire's announcement.

"Ward now pitching for—"

Tom glanced at the scoreboard. In the bright sunlight the players' names shone too white for reading, but the score stood clear. Three to two, still favoring his team. End of the ninth.

His pace quickened. He stepped carefully on third for luck, moved out to the pitcher's mound. From the basepaths yelped a shrill and nasal voice: *"Attaboy, Tom! We'll get 'em now. Eee-yaah!"* Old Tom grinned. That was pepper, indeed; pepper from the past. He had heard nothing like it for years. It reminded him of old Hughey's battle-cry—old Hugh Jennings.

Jennings? Slowly Tom turned, recognizing the familiar figures that encircled him. Frank Chance at first. Ed Grant behind him. Big Ed Delehanty in the garden . . . Buck Ewing grinning from behind the plate—all the others who belonged there. . . .

The departing pitcher stepped down from the mound. Old Tom—Young Tom, now—met him face-to-face with no great surprise, but with a gladness and a singing warmth. Somehow he had expected it would be this way at the end. It was the only way it *could* be—here in a ballplayer's last inning.

Matty smiled and stripped off his glove, tossing to the newcomer the ball.

"Go get 'em, son," said Matty. "It's a new game. *Your* game—"

The Humpbacked

by MUSTAFA TUGRUL UKE

OMAR KHAYYÁM called the camel "the philosopher of the desert," and despite his poetic license, it was probably with the same swearing respect that miners in Colorado used in referring to their mules. The camel, however, is less sweet by nature than the philosopher of the sagebrush. He's clumsy, stupid, and capricious—and has no particular love for mankind. Not only do you have to build a bigger fire, figuratively, under him to get him going, but woe betide the man who does, for the camel has a memory, if not much else in his mind, and there are plenty of scared camel-drivers who can testify to this in recalling a slight difference between themselves and this four-legged means of locomotion.

Although the camel's Arab masters (who incidentally have sixty names for him, and not all of them complimentary) have for centuries been trotting him across the Sahara, he's still the most important native system of transportation from the wastelands of Tibet through the deserts of the Near East to the Atlantic coast of Africa.

Besides being used for arid long-distance hauls and farmwork, the more slender, swifter camels are often members of various African military camel corps—such a corps is a permanent branch of the Egyptian Army. Camels have another occupation too, more on the sporting side. They fight. Professional camel-fighting is banned by many Governments in westernizing Asia, and because of this it's not often that a city man can get a good look at the real viciousness of the humpbacked fighters. My opportunity came unexpectedly while I was traveling among the villages of western Turkey, near Izmir (Smyrna), on a newspaper job.

It began aboard a bus going from Izmir to the olive town of Ayvalik. Although the busses that run this route do a pretty good business, this one was extraordinarily jammed. A short, black-mustached fellow whose coat strained to button across his well-fed torso was sitting on my lap. There wasn't much he could do about moving off it, so he excused himself with embarrassment, in an ingratiating manner, and began to talk into my ear.

"These camel-fights—these camel-fights! They're nothing but trouble—trouble all around," he said bitterly.

"Why camel-fights?"

"Don't you know?" he gasped in surprise. "Why, you must be a stranger." And he eyed me carefully. "Government?"

"No."

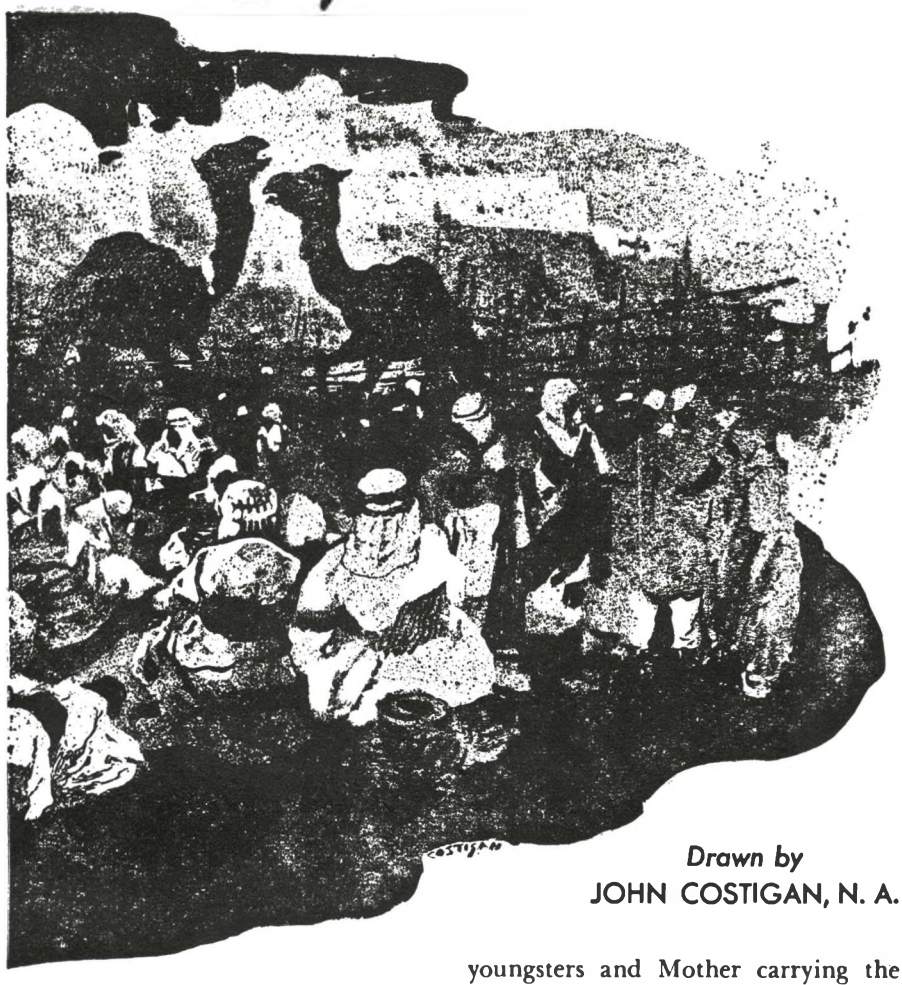
"Well," he said, "this promises to be a good one. Old Ali Aga, the chief of the village over the next hill from Ayvalik, has a real challenger. Twice a year he comes into Ayvalik with his villagers and a choice camel. Up to now he has never lost, but last time he met up with a professional camel-fighter. The camel-fighter's champion lost, but he swore that next time he'd beat Ali Aga. It's said that the camel-fighter has gone through all the southern provinces, searching for a good fighter. He must have found one, all right, for he's bet two thousand lira on it. That's enough to buy a good-sized farm, in this district."

"I thought the Government wasn't allowing camel-fights any more!"

He chuckled, close to my face. "Laws can't stop nature. When the Government forbade them, they were held secretly. In the end the Government usually looks the other way. After all, you can't change in a few months or even a few years what has been customary since Crœsus and Homer." He shifted nervously on my lap, excusing himself again for being there. "For myself, I have no objections to fighting, but the betting is terrible. That's something the Government should put a stop to. Why, if a peasant is too enthusiastic—and naïve—he can lose all his family fortune. But"—and he wagged his head—"it's hard not to bet a little. . . ."

Fighters

A Turkish newspaper correspondent tells about the quaint Oriental sport of camel-fighting.



Drawn by
JOHN COSTIGAN, N. A.

When we got off the bus at Ayvalik, he caught up with me and grabbed my hand. "Mustafa is my name. If you're going to the fight this afternoon, I shall be very glad if I may be of any assistance to you." I thanked him, and crossing through the narrow cobblestone streets of this ancient Greek-built city, in the Ionian section of thousands of years ago, I came to the town's little semi-weekly newspaper, the Ayvalik *Times*.

The editor was an old friend of mine, and after a little persuasion, he agreed to come along with me to the fight.

About 2:30—which would give us an hour until the fight started—we headed out in the hot afternoon sun toward a flat piece of ground slightly outside the city proper. People were already hurrying out of their white stone houses—whole families, dressed in their best with Papa herding the youngsters and Mother carrying the baby. Boys ran along close to the buildings, shouting excitedly to one another. And here and there, mixed in the stream of people, were splashes of red of the shirts and sashes of villagers who were cutting through the city to the fighting-grounds.

While we walked along, Ahmet—the editor—continued explaining where Mustafa, of the bus ride had left off:

"Camel-fights, as you know, come only twice a year, when the males are full of energy and ready to mate. A few days before the fight the owners glut the animals on food containing red pepper and spices and a special dough made of white flour; and although camels don't drink often, the peasants have a special brew that when mixed with water brings the camels up to near-delirious state by the day of the fight."

Gradually we had come to a large grassy platform encircled by a primitive wooden fence. The ringside territory was already packed with hundreds of standing spectators, and the late-comers were climbing the surrounding hills for a better view.

Vendors were plentiful, particularly the favorite with the cart full of hot coals. He would accost a group of gayly-clad villagers with his product—shish-kebab, spiked and dripping hot. And who could resist that fragrance? They pulled off the seared-lamb chunks like hot pennies, squealing and laughing.

"Come on," Ahmet said, "let's get an ice cream." We hailed a stocky fellow who was balancing two swinging buckets on a long rod across his shoulders. As he dished out the ice cream from one bucket into the glasses from the other, a "*boom-boom-boom*" rose above the racket of the spectators. Ahmet gulped his ice cream, and led me running up one of the hill-slopes. Below us to the right came Ali Aga's forerunners—a drummer and two Oriental clarinet players—banging and tooting out local melodies as loudly and as exaggeratedly as they could. In the distance, marching in uneven columns, were about two hundred of Ali's villagers. Behind them and in front of the camel strode Ali Aga himself, with a long white beard, and in the traditional gray pantaloons and wide red sash of the peasant. Here was the chief whose camels had never been beaten. He looked confident.

Ali Aga's camel, large, young and robust, was dark—as camels go—and they called him Kara, meaning "Black One." His temperament fitted his coloring. Over his mouth was clamped a muzzle, a heavy chain dragged from his foreleg on the right to a hindleg to keep him from running, and four husky men were trying to hold him in order. He looked on the verge of madness.

The music hammered away, the clarinets swirling to a nerve-shaking pitch—for, as the peasants said, it kept the camels on edge too. Ali Aga and his group stopped on the side of the arena nearest us, and his villagers moved the crowd back to give room to stake the delirious camel.

Just then from the city side came more cries of clarinets. Enter the challenger, Ömer, and his party. Ömer's camel Boncuk, meaning "Bead," was smaller than Kara and older. The scars that grooved the fur on his throat and chest testified that he was much more experienced than young Kara. The challenger's group stopped and faced Ali Aga's from across the arena.

Someone tapped me on the shoulder. It was Mustafa.

"Hello, friend," he said. "How do you like it so far?"

"Pretty noisy—and hot."

Mustafa chuckled good-naturedly. I noticed he was carrying his coat, and his collar was open. "Have you bet yet? No? Well, it's a good custom not to gamble. Mohammed said that; it's against the wishes of Allah. But is it not also against the wishes of Allah to drink? Yet everybody drinks. So just as information I'm telling you that if I were you I would bet for Boncuk. He's an experienced fighter."

EVERYTHING grew quiet, as if a giant hand had hushed a thousand mouths, for there were easily that number of people here. Ömer, the professional camel-fighter, was walking toward the center of the arena, and Ali Aga advanced to meet him. The tall white-headed Turk and the short swarthy one shook hands.

Ahmet spoke softly: "They are promising each other that this is going to be an honest fight. I hope so."

I looked around for Mustafa, but he was gone.

Both camels were now on the verge of insanity. They didn't try to attack their keepers because their attention was on each other. Nevertheless, the keepers stood clear. A camel's bite and kick command a lot of respect from men who have seen the results. The bands, which momentarily had been silent, struck a new crescendo. And leisurely, haughtily another camel entered the arena—a female. She lumbered easily behind her keeper while he led her around the encirclement. As she neared the male camels, they jerked at their ropes. Then she was led to a small enclosure with a special fence through which she could see and be seen. Her presence affected both camels so wildly that it was impossible to hold them any longer. The music began to dwindle, and the keepers slashed the camels' ropes.

Both of them charged for the caged-in female. There they met, stepping back and forth and eying each other with bulging blood-red eyes. Kara thrust out his neck in a slash at the other's throat. Boncuk dodged and with a wobbly dance tried to circle Kara—who at this moment was primarily interested in the female. But Kara gave up his advantage and moved away toward the center of the arena. Suddenly he dug in sharply and raced toward Boncuk. They hit with such force that I was sure the noise of their impact was made by cracking ribs. The second attack was again at the ribs, but this time they were less quick in separating. And as they moved apart Boncuk raked his teeth across Kara's long neck.

The townsmen and villagers reacted simultaneously—yelling, swearing, acclaiming. The young peasant girls were pulling at their prized necklaces—some were of old gold coins of the Sultan's regime—as if they were chains that bound them. Some peasants reached into their wide red sashes for tobacco and absent-mindedly began rolling cigarettes.

I saw Mustafa again.

"You'll see that Boncuk is going to win. He's an intelligent beast, all right. I know Ömer, his owner, and he says he has stopped at nothing to prepare him for this fight. He says Boncuk will smash that young Kara in less than fifteen minutes." He looked around, shaking his head. "Ah, some hard money will be lost here today because these fools would believe old Ali Aga couldn't lose.... Still not betting?" He pulled money from his trouser pocket. "I've been made stakeholder by some of the people from Izmir who know me. If you want me to, I can place a good bet for you."

OVER the objections of my cautious friend Ahmet, I gave him ten Turkish lira to put on Boncuk.

Meanwhile the female guarded in her small enclosure began to cry in a manner that drove both fighters crazy. Boncuk made a sudden grab for Kara's neck, forcing his teeth in deep. Blood gushed out and Kara retreated, visibly surprised. But Boncuk hung on. His partisans—which now included me—screamed enthusiastically. Ali Aga's crowd took it calmly except for a few side remarks to the wildest of us. Just at this moment, Kara twisted vigorously and Boncuk let go. Kara escaped to the far side of the arena—as far as he could get away from Boncuk.

"What's the matter, is he through?" I yelled irrationally at Ahmet.

But Kara himself answered me. He turned toward Boncuk so fiercely that Ahmet clutched my arm and said: "Until now Boncuk was the winner. He shouldn't have let him go. Now it's youth against age, and the old one is tired. Watch this!"

"Hey, I bet on Boncuk!"

"Too bad."

In the arena Kara was slowly maneuvering Boncuk toward the railing. Then he attacked. Boncuk swerved; as he did, so did Kara, sinking his strong teeth into Boncuk's heretofore clean throat. A strange wild cry that silenced the crowd came out of Boncuk's bleeding throat. His eyes bulged until they almost popped out of their sockets. Kara hung on and kept pulling his forelegs across Boncuk's, trying to force him down. We could hear their groans of pain. Slowly, stubbornly, Boncuk was sinking to his knees.

A huge cry rose from Ali Aga's villagers as Boncuk sank painfully to the ground. Ali Aga stood calm and smiling. Kara waited one second, his teeth still in the defeated camel's neck, before he lifted both his front legs onto Boncuk's shoulder. Then he raised his head, and called his victory. Sedately he trotted toward the female.

"Why didn't Boncuk try to escape just then?" I asked Ahmet.

"They sometimes do. But nothing can stop a winning camel from going through that final ritual. He'll follow the loser until he catches him and forces him down in surrender—if it takes miles."

Ahmet looked at Boncuk. "He'll live. They'll take care of him."

I saw Mustafa and called out to him: "We didn't have much luck!"

But he was all smiles, straightening his tie, straining that button on his coat again.

"You mean *you* didn't have much luck—eh, friend? I did, and rightly so; this is my business. I made one thousand lira today."

"What do you mean?"

He chuckled, and I liked it less and less. "I've known Boncuk for years. He *was* a good fighter, but now he's too old to do anything but lie down. Too bad these villagers are so naïve—and some city folks."

Blood rushed to my head. But Ahmet stepped in front of me, and Mustafa took his leave, waving airily.

Down on the arena the bloody winner was making love to his heart's desire. Ali Aga was traveling proudly around his fighter, examining his wounds. I didn't see Ömer; Boncuk, too, was gone. The bets were all collected, I presumed. The less naïve would be flush for a week, while others would have to scrape by for weeks or even months. But whatever the case, all of them would celebrate tonight. Now the peasants and townsmen were wearily dispersing, moving slowly homeward in small groups, reviewing and arguing the merits of the fight. Ahmet and I walked away without talking.

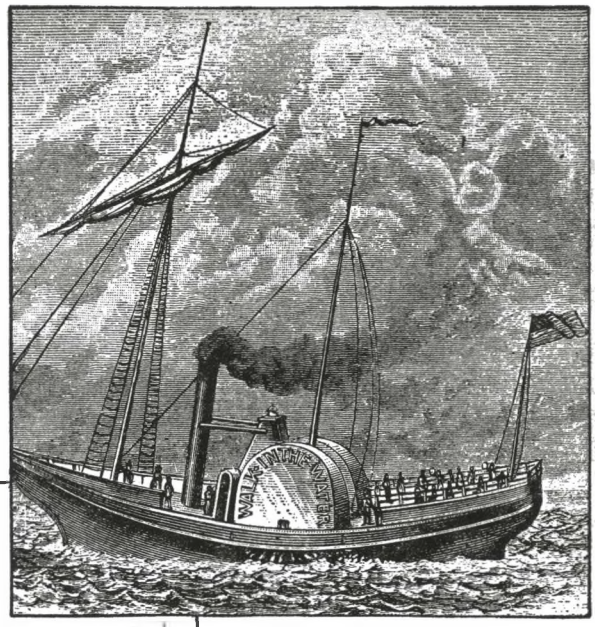
AS we entered the Ayvalik main street and turned at the corner of the wide avenue that faces the city hall, we saw Mustafa. Only this time he wasn't smiling, and on either side of him was a policeman. When he saw us, he stopped for a second, and called out to me: "Shall I see you again next season, eh? But then I'll tell you the truth. I can't fool an old friend twice." The guards nodded to us and tugged him onward. He shrugged. "Oh, well, they say it's going to be a cold winter."

Ahmet and I looked at one another. Ahmet grinned.

"Ah, well," he said mockingly, "it was ten lira well earned."

Wisconsin's Centennial

Old prints from Three Lions, Schoenfeld Collection

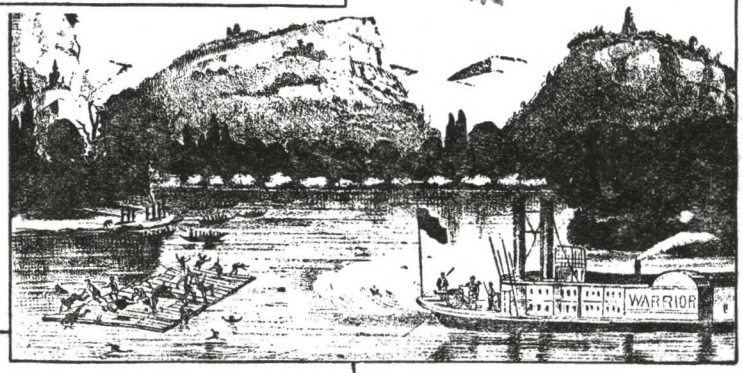


The first Great Lakes steamer, *Walk-in-the Water*, left Detroit in 1821, for Green Bay.

Coming to the first session of the territorial Legislature in Madison on November 26, 1838, it was found that only fifty strangers could be lodged there.

Below: Prairie du Chien, with Fort Crawford, about 1830. Wisconsin in 1800 had nominally been attached to Indiana Territory; in 1809 it was attached to Illinois, and in 1818 was incorporated in Michigan Territory.

Below: Final defeat of the Indians under Black Hawk at the mouth of the Bad Axe River, on Aug. 2, 1832.



Below: Lt. Jefferson Davis—later President of the Confederacy—waltzing with an Indian girl in presence of Col. Zachary Taylor—later President of the United States. Jefferson Davis, a West Point graduate, served seven years with the U. S. troops in Wisconsin and Illinois. He did not meet his adversary Abraham Lincoln, who also served in this Indian War as a captain of volunteers.

At left: Father Marquette and Louis Joliet made the portage from the Fox to the Wisconsin River on June 10, and reached the Mississippi on June 17.

Below: Wisconsin Indians who participated in General Braddock's defeat on the Monongahela, July 9, 1755, return with their spoils.

The BOAR HUNT

FRANCISCO was small and slight and always looked a trifle worried. Like most Guamanians, he was outrageously polite, and the impression that he gave you was one of troubled gentleness. Since Guam had been under foreign domination almost since Magellan's starving men sailed into the harbor at Umatac in 1521, one might assume that Guamanian politeness is servility, but one would be wrong. Neither three hundred years of Spain nor forty of America nor three of Japan has taught the Guamanian subservience, as the Japanese can tell you.

Francisco came to us by chance. Two other Navy men and I wanted to go wild-boar hunting in the boondocks (bush, jungle or what have you). Arrangements had been made with one Luis to act as our guide. We made our way early that morning through half a mile of mud and brush and up a grass-covered slope to the "ranchhouse" of Luis. The ranchhouse consisted of a thatched roof, over a piece of heavy matting bound to bamboo poles and held by stakes about two feet above the ground.

We were greeted politely by Luis' pregnant wife, who was stirring something in a pot over the fire. It started to rain, and to avoid getting wet we ducked under the thatched roof and sat down on the matting. Luis' wife, still the perfect hostess, brought us boxes to sit on.

Still there was no sign of Luis. At last his wife admitted that he had gone to town. She was most embarrassed; obviously he had forgotten all about the boar-hunting party. She suggested Francisco, and we quickly agreed. A small boy, who had been hovering about for no apparent reason, hurried off to fetch him.

Now José came up the path with a gallon jug over his shoulder, his morning's catch of tuba. Luis' wife brought out a glass and a cracked cup—plainly all that she had—and insisted we have a drink. We did.

By the time we had finished our drink, Francisco appeared. He was carrying a rather rusty rifle which didn't look as if it had been fired in years. Its appearance was deceiving, I learned later.

The rain had stopped. Francisco was quite willing to take us hunting, so we started out along the path, now muddier than before, down the hill and into a valley which part of the time was jungle and part of the time had been planted to corn and vegetables. The rain began again, this time ominously as if much more were coming.

Francisco broke into a run. We followed; twisting among the trees, slipping on the muddy path. Just before the downpour, we came out into a small clearing—and found another "ranchhouse." As no one was in sight, and Francisco was leading, we got ourselves under the thatched roof of the kitchen without any ceremony.

I had learned by now that these huts in the muddy jungle were not the customary mode of Guamanian living. Before the war about half of the population, something over eleven thousand people, had lived in the capital city of Agaña. Most of the remainder lived in smaller villages. A great many had retained a few acres of ground in the country, and came out each week for a few days to work the ground. These were really their country cottages, built in the ancient Chamorran style.

Agaña had been a fairly modern city with houses of concrete and adobe done principally in the Spanish style, with a fine old governor's palace and with gardens and a village square. Now Agaña was rubble. It wasn't the Japanese who had reduced it, either; it was our own guns and bombs prior to the landing.

I am told that some Guamanians sat on the hilltop and watched the destruction of their houses with joy—because the Americans had come back, and they felt that in sacrificing their homes they were contributing to the victory. One would expect some bitterness now that they were still forced to live in squalor while fine military installations were going up all about them. But I found none.

We sat and drank tuba and discussed the weather and the crops. The five little girls sat in a row on a bench and watched us, smiling. They had learned their hygiene lessons well at school, I noticed: above them on the wall, as neatly arranged as themselves, was a row of five toothbrushes.

The rain lasted no more than ten minutes, but the tuba held us a little longer. From this time on, as we continued through the boondocks, Francisco kept an almost perfect record. Every big rain came when we were near a hut whose owner dispensed tuba.

The exception was a ranchhouse that we came upon on the far side of a slope. We were pretty well into the boondocks by now. At first the place seemed deserted, but as we came abreast the house a head was thrust out of one of the windows. It belonged to a cheerful-looking lad of about sixteen. He greeted us and we stopped.

"Where's your father?" Francisco asked.

"Oh," said the youth, "he's gone to the Parent-Teachers' Meeting."

"That's fine," we said.

"You know," said the boy, "next month we're having a 'Be Kind to Your Parents Week.' I'm chairman of the committee."

My only proof that I heard this are three witnesses, and I don't know where to find them.

Presently we were following a well-defined path with no need for guiding, and Francisco fell back a little, obviously wanting to talk to me.

"I have been sick," he explained.

I asked him what the trouble was.

"It was a cold," he said, "just a little cold and a fever. But my wife does not want me to work again."

I guessed why his wife was worried. Tuberculosis and pneumonia are almost the occupational diseases of Guamanians. Long ago the Navy set up a system by which one or more pharmacists' mates were stationed in each village of any size, with periodic visits by doctors; native nurses were being trained by the nurses and doctors of the Navy; and for the most part the Guamanians cooperated well in the Navy attempts at hygiene. But at this time, soon after our return, the effects of malnutrition and lack of medical attention under Japanese rule were everywhere apparent.

"But if it were light work," Francisco said. "I could do light work without hurting me."

WE asked Francisco if we were getting into Japanese country now, and he said he thought there were still some ahead and to the left. And how about to the right? There was a Marine camp there, he said, so there would be no Japanese. And which way would the wild boar be, we wanted to know.

Francisco said they were likely to be anywhere, and deer too, but he had hesitated before answering. Plainly the wild boar, if any were in the direction he least wanted to go—to the left. But we were well armed and did not believe we were likely to encoun-

This postwar expedition reveals how it was with the natives on Guam during the Japanese occupation.

by CHANDLER WHIPPLE

ter Japanese in large numbers. Besides, the Marines might arrest us, for there was a new rule against men going armed on the island unless they were actually on patrol—but the Japanese certainly wouldn't arrest us. . . . We told Francisco we wanted to bear to the left.

Francisco nodded, and started out, and after a fashion changed the subject. He wondered sometimes about his brother, he told me. I asked why.

"The Japanese took him away," he said. "It was six months ago, before you came back. I don't see him since. Perhaps he is still alive, somewhere on the island, I don't know."

I couldn't reassure him much. The Japanese had not taken men away just to impress the Guamanians with their power. During the first year of the occupation they had made an attempt to treat the people rather well, hoping to win their friendship. But the Guamanians had thwarted them in many little ways, and there was always the fact that one American sailor was still free on the island. No one knows just how many Guamanians were killed or tortured for helping him or concealing knowledge of him; some said at least fifty men were beheaded. In time it was not the man himself, apparently, so much as the symbol that they protected. As long as one American was left alive, they did not give up hope that the Americans would come back.

SO I didn't feel like saying anything when I saw Francisco's heart was not in going to the left. Like a car with a soft right wheel, he seemed to keep edging just a little to the right. We couldn't be sure of it at the time, there in the jungle, but we soon found we were skirting the Marine camp.

We got past this hazard, but found no tracks, of boar or deer or anything else. Soon it began to rain again, lightly this time, and so in keeping with our past good luck or Francisco's careful gauging, we came to the last outpost of civilization, the hut of Jesus.

Jesus was the type of Guamanian one encounters but seldom, and then, I am told, usually far from the towns. He was taller than Francisco, thickset and strong, dark with flattened nostrils. So looked the ancient Chamorrans, according to such bits of island history as are still extant.

It was noon, and we decided to pause here and eat our sandwiches. The wife of Jesus wanted also to cook us some eggs, but we politely refused her offer. Fresh eggs were a rarity on Guam then, for most of the chickens had been killed by the Japanese, and it seemed to us that the children were more in need of them than we were. Their mouths were all but watering at sight of the sandwiches, and we gave them some.

Jesus mentioned casually to us that he had spotted a Japanese prowling about two days before, but the Jap had gotten away. Jesus was afraid he would kill the pigs. Did we suppose we could get him a flashlight from the Navy? He would like to have a flashlight when he heard someone prowling about in the night. We said we would do our best.

The wife of Jesus asked us if we would like to come to their Christmas party next week. She spoke through Francisco, as much because of shyness as because her English was not too good. It would not be much, just a few people they knew. We accepted.

It seemed to us that it was time to bring up again the subject of hunting.

We were really in the jungle now, and for the next two hours did not see another human being. Neither, for that matter, did we see either the track of a boar or a deer. Probably the Japanese had long since killed them for their meat.

We came finally upon a long-abandoned native hut. Around it were scattered a profusion of empty .45 cartridges. Francisco had no explanation for this, but a hundred yards beyond one of the boys waved me over to where he stood, and pointed to the ground.

There in the mud was a track, a Japanese track, as we could tell from the separation of the big toe from the rest in the shoe. It looked fresh. Quite possibly the Jap had seen us and made a run for it.

We thought it would be a good idea to follow the track. Francisco did not.

"This way," he said, quite firmly, "I do not know. This way I cannot take you back to camp. I only know the way we came."

We were a little annoyed, in spite of the fact that Francisco was probably showing more sense than we. But Francisco's statement permitted of no argument. We turned back.

ON the way back through the jungle, we tried out our Jap-and-boar-hungry carbines on a few birds. These we carried back and gave to the thin children of Jesus to eat.

We went the rest of the way back by a slightly different route, still skillfully avoiding Marines, Japanese, wild boar and deer. There was something else we did not avoid. At first I thought Francisco must have wanted us to see it; actually, I don't believe he had known it was there. He glanced to the left of the trail, hesitated, seeming surprised, then walked on.

I was just behind him, and saw what he had been looking at. It was a sign beside a mound of earth; it read:

FRANCISCO KILLED TWO
JAPANESE HERE

We called Francisco back. "What's this?" we asked. "Tell us about it."

There was nothing to tell, Francisco said. The Japanese had been prowling around his house; he was afraid for his wife and children. He got out his rifle that had been hidden away all during the Japanese Time, and killed them.

When was this, we asked him. This was just after the Marines landed. There wouldn't have been much chance before that.

"I didn't put up the sign," he added. "I buried them, but Luis must have put up the sign."

THAT was all we were able to get out of him. A bit later we spotted a Navy garbage-truck that would take us the last two miles back to camp. Since Francisco was near his home, we parted with him there.

I was ordered north from Guam two days later. I didn't mind about Francisco's job, for I was sure the Military Government would find him "light work" if he applied for it, but I was sorry about Jesus and his wife. I wanted to go to the Christmas party, and more than that, I wanted to get him the flashlight.

I should think that between them, Francisco and Jesus offer the answer to why the Japanese could never quite bring the Guamanians around: Francisco, who had seemed to us cautious and timid, biding his time. When that time came, he got out his rusty rifle and killed; but before that, I am sure he was polite even to the Japanese. So would Jesus have been, but perhaps more reserved: his attitude was of calm wariness. He wasn't complaining: he just wanted a flashlight.

I hope someone gave him one.

I turned, and I turned several colors, too. It was my wife, come down from Washington to surprise me.

A Job for

THE STORY OF A COLLEGE PROFESSOR WHO TURNED TRAFFIC COP WHEN HIS STUDENTS WENT OFF TO WAR.

SOMETIME ago, a man who had meant well by me and who had showed me many a kindness said: "Titus! Why don't you write about young love? That's the real killer. You are in this for a few dollars. After all, Titus, you aren't Maupassant, you know."

"From what I hear, he was in it for a few dollars too," I said darkly, and drawing my toga about me. "That's why the caveman killed the icthyosaurus. He knew where he could sell it."

So, I should write about young love, should I? All about girls in slacks or jodhpurs or what? A fine idea, and I would look very good! I have been married for barely thirty-five years. My wife would be so pleased if I turned out to be a first-class authority on young love. I tell you how times have changed: before we were engaged, I hardly knew whether my wife wore a girdle, and I was not St. Aloysius, either. So, all right. In the course of this, I will tell you about young love, old love, and similar matters closely related. . . .

Shortly after the Second World War started, my Dean called me in. He had been one of my own students, a fine young fellow, young—well, he is no more than forty-five. He calls me Doctor, and I call him Freddy. This time, he called me Arnold, so I knew it was going to be bad.

"Arnold," he said, "I know the fight you put up to keep your department together." (I am Chairman of the Department of Anthropology.) "Look, Arnold—"

I put my hand on his arm. "That's all right, my son," I said. "It's all right." All the colleges were having such a bad time. They had to choose between maintaining the Faculty or the football team. Of course, for a while, a man could teach navigation, or elementary mathematics, or principles of flight. All right: now suppose you taught a man wrong or incompetently, and as a result he lost his life, or maybe a battle-wagon, or one of our planes. I wasn't having any.

"All I can do, Arnold, is offer you an indefinite leave of absence. You will be the first to come back, Arnold. I tell you that." (I was, too: that boy sent me a wire on V-J Day.)

I went home with a heavy and a frightened heart. I am not by nature a brave man—far from it. I said: "Myra, this is the works."

"No, it isn't," she said. "No, it isn't. You get in touch with Amos, in Washington. Amos will get you something. You are not beaten, Arnold. Nobody is going to beat you."

"Well, they got me hanging on," I said.

We never save a cent, except what I have in insurance, and I won't touch that. You may remember what they used to say: Teachers don't make much money, but they have security. Well, nobody has security. We know that now. Maybe it was a low ideal, anyway.

I went to Washington. I have no particular ability; I am a teacher, and worse than many teachers, for I live in a world of books, and not in a real world at all. I know thousands and thousands of unimportant things, but I can't put up a shelf or hang a picture. My wife says I do well to open a can of tomatoes. I don't even have any children— Well, that isn't quite right: I have a thousand adopted sons, just as dear to me as if I were their real father. I have had illustrious sons, some of whom now are dead. I tell you: I have had seven All American football-players, and I am going to have the whole eleven, before I die, and maybe substitutes, too.

I HAVE been told I am partial to athletes; so I am. Somebody ought to give them a break; and besides, I like them. That stuff about dying for dear old Rutgers is no joke. They get out there and give everything they have; they ought to get something back besides kind applause. You want to hear of my All America club, to date?

Bart Macomber—Slooey Chapman—Harold Pogue—Potsy Clark—Ed Hake—Bert McGinley—Bob Higgins. Then there were the ones who didn't quite make it: Franky Reagan and Herbie Rainwater. I saw that Reagan hold up a Cornell club, and a good club; he beat them the next year. Of course, he had help. There was the great Al Kreuz, never one of my students and never All America, except in my book. You should have seen what he did to a Yale backfield! That Kreuz could have gone alone against the walls of Troy.

I talk about the athletes, because their fame is ephemeral. These boys I mention live in my heart, and in the heart of my wife. . . . There was Bill

the Duration

by EDWARD L. McKENNA

Illustrated by Raymond Thayer

Ladendorff. He won the high hurdles, in the Intercollegiates, for either the second or the third time. We had been giving him the old yoicks-tallyho, and you have to go some to get me to a track meet; they give me a headache. He came over, that night, with a great big bunch of flowers. There was Pat Duncan, a guard, a small fellow too, about a hundred and eighty-five; he used to come over and tell Myra all his troubles. There was Larry Ackerman, now Dean of the University of Connecticut, but a corking good athlete. Every time he has a new little son or daughter, we go down to Caldwell's and buy a silver-plated drinking cup. Did you know they still had them? No, I am not childless.

So then! I went to Washington. I was treated with unfailing courtesy, but I didn't get a job. I was there two weeks, and came back with a sad heart.

And—well, what do you think? My wife listened to my story, and said: "Arnold, you won't be angry with me, honey—I sneaked down to Washington. I got a little job. You won't be angry with me, will you?"

My wife is a mathematician, a statistician. Figures, curves, charts and graphs, these things are just her dish. She got a forty-six-hundred-dollar job, and it was the first job she ever had, and she is no kid, either.

"Angry?" I said. "No. I'm tickled to death, baby. It's a load off my mind." It was, too.

You know what that girl did? She went to Washington. She wanted me to go too, but I didn't want to do that. She paid the interest and the taxes on our house. Every once in a while she'd send me five dollars, ten dollars, twenty dollars. . . . I had a little courtesy job at the University, translating some French Colonial statutes. I averaged about twenty dollars a week. At night, I could look at the wallpaper. I didn't feel like reading anything. . . . Well, you know how it is. You don't enjoy taking money from a woman. Do not misunderstand me; if a man is going to school, now, under the G.I. bill, and his wife wants to work for a while, that's all right. But I was not going to school.

When I was a young fellow, going to school myself, I worked one summer on the back of an Adams Express Wagon. You would pack a trunk, you and another fellow, I mean, up four flights of stairs, and you'd be lucky if you got a dime. There is a line in an old book called "Richard Carvel": "There is your cursed beauty, still." Well, I still had my frail white body. I went to a town some distance away, and registered with the State Employment Commission.

They gave me a physical examination, and not an easy one. The fine young doctor said to me: "How old are you?"

"Forty-eight," I said stoutly, and in my teeth. He shook his head. "This is it. This is it again," I said to myself, but I was wrong.

"Pop," he said, "if you were a few years younger, I would certify you for the New York cops." He took my hands and looked at them. "What kind of athletics did you do, Pop?"

"Well, I played a little ball—a little basketball. Wrestled a little."

The knuckles of my hands are all askew, and I have three broken fingers. "Never got that playing any ball," he said. "Look. Will you go out of the State?"

"Go anywhere," I said.

"Pop," he said, "I think I can get you a job on the State Auxiliary Police. I know the people. Cost you a couple of dollars to get there. I can get you transportation."

"I got a few dollars," I said.

He wrote me a little note, sealed it, handed it to me.

I went to a relatively small town in an adjoining State, and walked up to the police station, and asked for Mr. Delehanty. I got to him. Mr. Delehanty read my note slowly, looked at me, read it again. "You come well recommended," he said. "You know Doc well?"

"Never saw him before in my life. Met him yesterday."

"Ever see anything like this?" he said, and handed me a Smith and Wesson. As it happened, we had them in the First World War. I took it and broke it. It was loaded, except

for the one empty chamber. I shook the shells out, spun the cylinder, reloaded it the same way it was, so there would be no cartridge for the first shot. Lots of people do that instead of using the safety. "Rather have a Police Positive," I said. "Better gun." Me and Wild Bill Hickok!

"Got any objections to working nights?" he said.

"No sir."

"Forty-two fifty a week take-away pay. Fifty-hour week. All right?"

"Yes sir."

"All right. I'll get you a shirt and a raincoat and a pair of pants."

That was Delehanty, Eugene Delehanty, who will never know—unless he reads this—that I have a side-line working in a college. I never had one cross word with him. I got along all right with most of them, for that matter. They were not cultured men. They were somewhat uncouth and profane. Well, I am not so couth, myself. My language can be bad, at times. I am an alumnus of the United States Navy; and besides, I know some fine Elizabethan words.

Another thing: My uncle was a captain in the Fire Department. At his fire-house I learned three useful things: I learned to play handball, checkers and three-handed pinochle. I say, in simple truth: I am a good pinochle player; I can play with people in the clothing industry. The cops were just duck soup for me, and many an odd sixty or seventy cents I took from them, and very welcome too.

I worked from midnight to eight, six days a week, with two hours extra one night. When I was a child, I was afraid of the dark, as who was not? At my age, of what should a man be afraid? Of dishonor? Of disgrace? Of disappointing the woman he loves? And besides these things, he should fear nothing. I told you about the business with the gun. The gun on my hip was more dangerous to me than to anybody else. I can't hit the side of a barn with a gun. My eyes are bad now; but when they were good, I never could hit anything, but I can go *bang-bang* with anybody. How's he know I can't shoot straight? That might be the time I'd fool us all.

One night I was walking the roads, and my flashlight gave out. You have no idea what a comfort that little flash is to you. Those roads were plenty dark. I was out about an hour. I didn't want to go back to the station. You are supposed to be on that beat. If anything happens, it's up to you. So, anyhow, I stuck it out, four miles up and four miles back, four miles up and four miles back, and was I glad to see it getting light, at last. You have no idea how much attention you pay to things you never noticed before, on a job like that. You get so fond of the sun and moon, and you love a starry night.

Cold nights are bad, until you get used to them, and you could get along fine without the rain. One time, in a thunderstorm, I picked up a great big police-dog that was whimpering, lost, frightened. I spoke to her—it was a female. "Come on, girl. Come on," I said.

She came right along. Every time there would be a lightning flash, she would crouch against my leg. Well, you see, you work out of a little pill-box, a sentry-box, where you keep a few things, maybe your raincoat, maybe a sandwich, a little something to eat. I tried to get her to eat a sandwich, or to stay there. She cried so pitifully, I took her along with me, and she made the rounds with me, all that night, till dawn broke and the storm was over. I gave her a pat. "Go on home now, pup," I said, and away she trotted, and I never saw that dog again. I wish I could have kept her. . . .

One morning I was sleeping. You ought to see how you sleep on a job like that! I sleep badly, as a rule; I think you do, as you grow older. I had been off for about three hours, and the people in the house called me to the telephone.

It was Eugene Delehanty who was on the wire.

"Titus," he said, "can you work today?"

"Why not?" I said. I would have jumped through a hoop of fire for him.

"Ever see anything like this?" he said, and handed me a Smith and Wesson.

"Joe's sick," he said. "Of course, you won't have to work tonight. It's traffic. Sixth and Main, up by the railroad station. You worked traffic before?"

"Sure. That's O.K."

Working traffic in a small—well, a relatively small—town is not like what it is in New York or Chicago. It's fairly easy. All you have to do is watch your feet and not get excited. I rather like to do it. You feel like the Centurion: you know, you say "Do this," and he doeth it—and he jolly well better had. . . .

It was a beautiful day, sunny and bright and not too hot, and I was monarch of all I surveyed. There I was, waving in a lordly way, the boss of the whole world, at that corner.

There was a little lull, an interlude, when there were no cars. Then I heard this, behind me: "Arnold! *Arnold!*"

I knew who that was, all right. I know that voice. I have known it for thirty-five years. I turned, and I turned several colors, too. It was my wife, come down from Washington to surprise me. She surprised me, all right. I surprised her, too. She didn't know what I was doing; she knew where I was; that was all.

I made my way over to the curb like a good quarter-miler coming into the stretch. We gave each other such a hug. "Kid, I'm stuck here for three hours and a quarter," I said.

"That's all right. I'll wait for you in the station," she said.

You should have seen me, that day. I was magnificent. I was beckoning the traffic on, waving it back. I gave nobody a ticket. I wouldn't have given Hitler a ticket.

My relief came. I got over to the railroad station. Myra and I grabbed each other. "Arnold! *Arnold!*" my wife said. "I did all right for myself, didn't I? I thought: 'Well, I am marrying a college professor.' I didn't know I was marrying a fellow that could be a cop. . . . Ah, you! You," she said. "Why didn't you tell me?"

I saw her lip tremble. She couldn't help that. You can't help it, sometimes. The thing to do is not to notice it. I took her out of the station. I bought peaches, and tomatoes, sharp cheese, liverwurst, soft salami, hard rolls, all the things we like. "Now, look," I said, "I worked sixteen hours out of the last twenty-four. . . . No, twenty-seven; I had three hours' sleep. So, now, I am off until tomorrow night. Tomorrow, midnight. How do you like them for apples?"

"Them's fine apples," she said. "Arnold—I thought you were a clerk, or a bookkeeper, or something." She looked up at me, and laughed. Her laughter, to me, is like splintering icicles, or silver bells.

YOUNG MAN WITH A MILLION DOLLARS

THE AMAZING RECORD OF COAL OIL JOHNNY—WHO HAD HIMSELF A WONDERFUL TIME WHILE THE MONEY LASTED, THEN BECAME A SOBER AND INDUSTRIOUS PLAIN JOHN CITIZEN.

by HARRY BOTSFORD

Illustrated by John C. Wonsetler

The young man at the head of the table, attired in a vivid and outrageous suit of orange, blue and green plaids, was slightly mulled. As usual, he was acting as a bountiful host to a group of friends around the long table set in the dining-room of the Girard House, in Philadelphia. Before him were his favorite viands: fried catfish and waffles, which he was washing down with liberal glasses of vintage champagne.

"My Aunt Sarah was a very smart woman," he was saying slowly and solemnly. "Died in March of 1864, she did. She always said that I had no head for figures. And right as rain she was! But a very good woman, I'll have you understand, even if she never did have any fun from her money."

The friends, mostly of a casual nature, many of them being there with the idea that they would like to know more about this fabulous young man and to see if they could separate him from some of the fast-flowing wealth he dispensed, smiled ingratiatingly.

John Washington Steele straightened out a wildly colored scarf with a hand that was slightly unsteady. He was tall, broad of shoulder, with slightly bloodshot candid blue eyes. Women—the wrong kind—accounted him as handsome and unusually attractive, wanted to know him intimately. Most men instinctively liked and trusted him. Gamblers gazed on him, appraised his reputation as being loose as ashes with his money, and estimated that he would be an easy mark. In many ways he was a disappointment to those who wanted to know him better. The devil-may-care look in his eyes might be a personal and compelling challenge to a designing woman, but Johnny Steele made it his business, drunk or sober, to keep it a challenge and nothing more.

He could be a good friend. He had befriended dozens of undeserving men with an extreme liberality. In spite of the fact that he spent money fantastically, foolishly, he resolutely refused to gamble. There were more interesting and amusing ways in which to spend money. Every day he was discovering new and exciting methods that pleased him, and which his parasite companions loudly applauded.

Usually he was smiling, even when suffering from memorable morning hangovers. He had good teeth, and his smile was contagious and engaging. In his semi-sober interims, he fondly assured himself that he was having a great, grand and glorious time.

He was only twenty-one. Before his aunt Sarah McClintock had died in the bleak farmhouse on the west bank of Oil Creek, a few miles above Oil City, in the heart of the Pennsylvania oil fields, he hadn't known much about handling money. He had worked for his aunt, an austere female and a shrewd business woman. He had driven a team, hauled oil from the hundreds of oil wells that marked the meandering course of Oil Creek from Titusville, where a man named Drake had drilled the world's first oil well. He had been paid one dollar a day by his aunt, plus a home and board for himself, his wife and baby.

It wasn't a rich or entertaining life. It was largely a dawn-to-dusk interval

Steele had several quick drinks and then called for the manager, a gentleman well acquainted with his mad foibles.

composed of hard work. His aunt, too, worked hard. He noted, however, that other people had fun out of the money they made in the oil business. His aunt didn't have any fun. She frowned at his own capacity for innocent mischief. He saw other oil-farm owners move to Oil City or Franklin, where they built and lived in big, gaudy, comfortable houses. He saw men who made big money quickly spend a lot of it for fine clothes, fast women, sparkling jewelry, fine saddle-horses, and in some notable drinking marathons. They had more fun out of their money than his aunt did, he reckoned.

All of a sudden, when he was twenty, things happened that sobered and astonished John Washington Steele. His aunt tried too successfully to start a fire in the kitchen range, using a bucket of crude oil. She was burned so seriously that she died the following day. Her husband had died back in 1855.

There was no other living relative but Johnny Steele. Suddenly it burst upon the youth that he would be the sole heir to all of his aunt's property, including the big farm, dotted with producing oil wells. He did not have the faintest idea of what was involved, or of the extent of the estate.

William Blackstone, his aunt's lawyer, drove up from Franklin. It was the day after the funeral. He was a small, fat man, but wise and honest. He opened the little iron safe Sarah McClintock kept in the parlor, and carried the contents to the kitchen, where it was warm. Together, the three of them counted the rolls of bills, the bonds and contents of the black velvet bag filled with yellow gold-pieces. It amounted to nearly two hundred thousand dollars. John and Eleanor Steele gazed at each other in surprise and a little fear.

Blackstone packed the money in a satchel and carried it out to his buggy. The next day the Steeles went to his office in Franklin, a gloomy, impressive place, heavy with the smell of leather from the bindings of hundreds of law-books that lined the walls of Blackstone's private office.

Slowly, impressively, Blackstone read the will. Sarah McClintock had left her entire estate to her beloved nephew, John W. Steele. The lawyer paused, adjusted his glasses, and reminded Steele that he would have to attain his majority before he would be given complete control of the fortune.

Solemnly he told the somewhat frightened young couple that the estate would be large, amounting to more than three hundred thousand dollars. The oil wells on the farm were generating a daily net income of $2,800. In measured tones, John Steele was reminded that he would be a very wealthy man, that wealth involved a great moral responsibility, that it should be guarded and cherished. To which Steele said not a word.

Before they left, Blackstone asked if they could not use some cash until such time as the estate came to them. "Any sum within reason," he invited kindly.

John and Eleanor whispered a minute. Then John Steele asked diffidently if he could have as much as thirty dollars in cash money. It seemed there was a matter of a feed-bill that should be settled. Eleanor needed a new dress, and some new baby clothes were indicated. Smilingly, Blackstone handed them the money, a most modest and reasonable sum, he admitted. . . .

Until he was twenty-one, John Steele lived normally, worked as hard as ever and remained a kind and dutiful husband. Several times, however, Eleanor caught him staring into the distance, a twisted smile on his young face, a strange and disturbing light in his eyes. All of which frightened her, filled her with foreboding, an instinctive dread of a future that seemed to be rushing toward them with dizzy speed as the months passed and John Steele neared his twenty-first birthday.

He assumed control of the big estate on his birthday. After that, things were always a trifle chaotic in his memory. He at once gave $2,800 to the city of Franklin as a contribution to a fund to erect a suitable monument in memory of the town's Civil War veterans who had died in action. It was his first taste of spending.

He tentatively experimented with whisky, quickly graduated to brandy.

It became necessary to him. He went on one memorable binge in Meadville. When he awakened, he discovered that he had bought sixty-seven thousand dollars' worth of dubious real estate, and a team of carriage horses in the same category.

ELEANOR'S health was not of the best, and she had returned to Dempseytown to live with her parents. This he only recalled at infrequent intervals.

He had taken his initial train ride to Pittsburgh and had lived, for the first time in his life, at a hotel. He wanted to make friends, to be amused. Pittsburgh was cold, aloof, indifferent. One day he read in a newspaper that Philadelphia was called the city of brotherly love. That settled it. He packed two hundred thousand dollars in gold and bills in a satchel, and six bottles of brandy in another. He traveled to Philadelphia and arrived there with one bottle of the brandy remaining. He asked a cab-driver to deliver him to the best hotel in the city. Then he went to sleep.

He wakened the next morning in a large and comfortable room in the Girard House. He liked the room, decided that he would keep it. He wryly swallowed a cup of brandy, went downstairs and sought the hotel manager. He rented the big room for a year, paid in advance, stripping big bills from a roll of awesome proportions. The manager was deeply impressed.

Within a few days a newspaper reporter, a gentleman with a taste for assorted alcohol, a perpetual and commendable thirst for news, dropped in at the Girard and asked the manager if he had any news. The manager promptly told him about the youngster from the oil fields, a man who spent with amazing liberality, who kept a traveling-bag filled with gold and big bills in his room, who tipped waiters with twenty-dollar gold-pieces.

THE reporter promptly sought out John Washington Steele, found him gloomily consuming a bottle of brandy. They were congenial souls and immediately became bosom friends. The reporter introduced Steele to champagne, a drink he found extraordinarily palatable and inspiring. He also introduced him to fried catfish and waffles, a combination that greatly pleased the young man from the oil fields.

The reporter was a good one. He recognized in Steele a source of news. He wrote a slightly humorous piece about the lonely young man with the bags of money to spend, hungering for companionship. "Out of Petrolia to Philadelphia, comes this Coal Oil Johnny to savor our fleshpots, to drink deep of the culture of this historic city," the reporter wrote, among other things. After that, John Steele never lacked for companionship.

The name "Coal Oil Johnny" captured the public fancy. The newspaper stories brought around him a galaxy of tricksters, catch-as-catch-can drinkers, nitwits, crooks and gamblers, all willing to give him friendship on a cash-and-carry basis.

There followed a series of utterly insane foolishments calculated to prevent people from forgetting Coal Oil Johnny. He discovered money could buy many things, but little of what he was pleased to call happiness.

When the clerk of the Continental Hotel, opposite the Girard House, acted a trifle haughty in his presence, he was offended. Slightly drunk, now a chronic condition, he tossed a twenty-dollar gold-piece to a bellboy and weaved erratically into the presence of the hotel manager, where he demanded that the offending clerk be discharged immediately. The manager sensibly refused. The young man, clad in a fearsome but beautifully tailored suit, was obviously a little drunk. He smiled and was most courteous.

UNDER the manager's charm some of Steele's anger vanished. The manager countered with a suggestion that Steele rent the hotel for a day, after rejecting the improbable offer to buy the hotel. Steele asked the rental

Johnny often led the parade—beautifully dressed, carrying a gold-headed cane, weaving slightly, smiling graciously.

price, and the manager told him, feeling that the price would frighten this brash youngster into making an immediate and hurried exit. Instead, Johnny peeled eight thousand dollars from a great roll of bills, and the bargain was concluded.

A sign, a big sign, was placed in front of the Continental Hotel by Johnny and his friends. It stated that on the following day open house would be held, all and sundry being invited to eat, drink and be merry without cost.

The hotel was a shambles before the day ended. Johnny had arrived in great good humor. He fired the clerk he didn't like, and became a host who insisted on drinking with most of the guests. Before the end of the day, his friends carried him across the street to his room at the Girard House, as the party continued unabated. Staid Philadelphia had never witnessed anything like it before. The party made headlines that danced erratically before Coal Oil Johnny's bloodshot eyes the next morning.

He had his morning drink of champagne, laced with vintage brandy, and strolled over to the Continental, possessed of a vague idea of compensating the hotel for the damages, which were frightful and extensive, according to the public prints. As he entered the lobby, he was horrified to note that the clerk on duty was the very one he had fired on the previous day. The clerk made a signal, and two strong men approached and tossed Johnny Steele out to the sidewalk. The hotel manager appeared behind the two men, smiled cheerfully and approvingly of the act.

John Washington Steele was furious as he strode toward the friendly and understanding shelter of the Girard House. In the bar he had several quick drinks of brandy and then called for the manager, a gentleman well acquainted with Steele's mad foibles. He explained what he had in mind, and the manager grinned an acceptance of the proposal. He had never been fond of his competitor across the street, anyway.

That day a sign made its appearance in front of the Girard House, announcing rooms, food and drink at bargain prices—prices far below what the Continental Hotel had to charge to make a living profit. Steele had agreed to compensate the Girard management for the losses incurred in this venture, an arrangement that continued for some time, and a very expensive one, too.

Coal Oil Johnny became a public character. He would walk down the street with ten-dollar bills in the buttonholes of his coat and yell with delight as newsboys snatched them. Seldom sober, he always managed to keep out of the grasp of wicked women and gamblers. He was, however, an easy and frequent mark for a legion of tricksters who dogged him. When he was drinking, it was not difficult to persuade him to sign any legal document. Every time he did this, his income became less.

His insanities continued on a very high plane, however. He had his own carriage, graced with a coat of arms emblazoned in screaming colors on the doors: flowing oil wells, boilers, oil tanks. The carriage always attracted a crowd, which delighted him.

He trained to become a prizefighter. A training diet of short hours of sleep, plus long drinking-bouts, made him an easy victim the first time he appeared in the ring. He decided to learn to play the cornet. All he succeeded in doing was to drive the other guests in the hotel frantic. He insisted in doing his practicing between three in the morning and daylight, with the windows of his room wide open. Discouraged, he gave the silver cornet to a chambermaid.

He hired managers to look after his scrambled business affairs, but they all rooked him unmercifully at every step. He met a man named Gaylord, part owner of the Gaylord & Skiff minstrel troupe, currently without funds. Johnny gleefully became an angel, even went so far as to become a part of the show. There was something about the catchy tunes the minstrels sang and played that made him feel very happy even when he was sober, which wasn't very often. "Camptown Races" was a favorite. When the troupe was on the road, Johnny often led the parade—beautifully dressed, carrying a gold-headed cane, weaving slightly, smiling graciously and bowing ceremoniously at the crowds lining the curbs.

He decided that the Gaylord & Skiff show needed better advertising, and spent over five thousand dollars for woodcuts to advertise the show. The show started to make money. He gave the members of the troupe some memorable dinners and parties, showered them with costly gifts. When he tired of traveling with the show, he returned to Philadelphia and the Girard House, where the spending was accelerated, and where he could eat his fill of fried catfish and waffles.

He was now twenty-three. Too much assorted alcohol, too little sleep, too much rich food had taken their toll. His eyes were no longer a clear blue. They were ringed with dark circles. His hands shook as he ate and drank, and he was far from being a happy man.

A puzzling array of legal papers were being served on him. He didn't rightly know what they were about, but suspected they had something to do with the documents he had signed while drunk. His income had surprisingly dwindled to a bare trickle. The Girard House sued him for a large sum. He was broke, unable to meet his obligations. It was 1866. The epochal binge and spending spree was ended. The old records prove that his income had been about $1,200,000. Actually, he must have spent more than a million dollars. It was a lot of money in those days. . . . It still is.

His one-time friends vanished when his money was gone. He pawned a diamond ring, his final asset, took the money and bought a ticket to Kansas City, where the Gaylord & Skiff shows were playing. They were glad to see him, shocked at his appearance. They remembered when he had been gay, generous, amusing, a rollicking companion. He was fat, nervous, gloomy. For a year he was with Gaylord & Skiff as a ticket-seller. It wasn't an easy battle, but in the end, he won.

In 1867 he returned to the oil fields, lean and fit-looking, for all of his lined, weary face. He was dressed shabbily, but his eyes were a clear blue and looked at a familiar world unafraid.

He found Eleanor Steele and the little boy at her parents' home. He didn't apologize or ask for forgiveness. He merely explained.

"There was no happiness in Aunt Sarah's money," he said. "It's gone now, and we won't have to worry about it."

In the future, he assured her, he wanted to earn every cent he would own. Was she willing to start all over again? She was. If she was inwardly puzzled about his evident lack of remorse, she wisely did not mention it.

The minute she nodded her head, the career of Coal Oil Johnny ended abruptly. From then on, John Washington Steele, a sober, hard-working, energetic, ambitious young man, took the helm and remained there for the balance of his life.

Never again did he drink. He worked at various jobs in the oil fields, delivered full value, too. He went to Pittsburgh and attended business college, where he at long last acquired a knowledge of figures that would have made Aunt Sarah McClintock very proud.

He died in 1920, at Fort Crook, Nebraska, where he had been a trusted and competent railroad employee. He owned his own house. He had a small savings account. He had been prudent, a good husband and a perfect parent. . . .

It is recorded that Eleanor Steele never placed fried catfish and waffles before him.

She vaguely understood that John Steele actively disliked them.

The OLD MAN of the MOUNTAIN...

from "The Book of Ser Marco Polo concerning the Kingdoms & Marvels of the *East.*" Here illuminated by Peter Wells, a lover of *Gardens*, &c.

He had caused a certaine valley between two mountains to be enclosed & had turned it into a Garden, the largest and most beautifull that ever was seene, filled with every variety of fruite. In it were erected pavilyons and palaces of the most elegant that can be imagined, all covered with gilding and exquisite painting. Now, no man was allowed to enter the Garden save those he intended to be his Hashishin...

He kept at his Court a number of youths of the countrey from 12 to 20 years of age, such as had a taste for soldiering, and to these he used to tell tales about Paradyse, just as *Mahommet* had been wont to do, and they believed in him.

...Then he would introduce them into his Garden, some foure, or six, or ten at a time, having first made them drink a certaine potion which cast them into a deep sleep... Upon awakening

from the state of stupor, their senses were struck with all the delightful objects that have been described, and each perceived himselfe surrounded by lovely damsels, singing, playing and attracting his regards by the most fascinating carresses, serving him also with delicate foods and exquisite wines; until intoxicated with excess of enjoyment amidst actual rivulets of milk and wine, he believed himselfe assuredly in Paradyse, and felt an unwillingness to relinquish its delights.

Animated to enthusiasm by {*all these pleasantries*} all deemed themselves happy to receive the commands of their Master, and were forward in his service. The *Consequence* of this system was, that when any of the neighboring Princes of others gave offence to this Chief, they were put to death by these his disciplined assassins; none of whom felt terror at the risk of losing their own lives... Thus there was no person however powerful, who, having been exposed to the enmity of the *Old Man* of the *Mountain*, could escape assassination.

N.B. From "Hashish," used to drug these young men, we get the word "Assassin." In the year 1252, the Great Khan got wind of these naughty doings of the Old Man of the Mountain and quickly settled ye assassins' *hash*...

Close Combat

A NOT-SOON-FORGOTTEN STORY OF THE WAR IN GERMANY, FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE INFANTRYMAN WHO FOUGHT IT.

by ROBERT H. BLISS

THE true story in the following pages is written in everlasting memory of those combat infantry soldiers who fell in our struggle for freedom not so long ago, a freedom we must now preserve. What I write is from my own personal point of view as an infantry soldier.

"Close Combat" covers a period of about seventy-two hours; the locale from the Prum River, Germany, and to the Bitburg-Trier highway, a short distance beyond our jump-off point on the Prum. The action takes place in the heart of the famous Siegfried Line, where pillboxes, mine-fields, tank traps and barbed-wire entanglements were everywhere, and fanatical German soldiers fought against us until we had conquered them. At the time of this action, I was eighteen years old, Private First Class, attached to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 304th Infantry Regiment, of the 76th Division.

Many of the men I knew like brothers over there will never return, for they fell under enemy fire. These men were brave men, as Ernie Pyle would say—Americans doing their assigned duty to the very last. In these scattered and secluded spots where these brave men fell, a part of America will forever exist.

In the words of the 304th Infantry History—slightly paraphrased:

"If these men were alive today. . . . they would want to see an America strong in her own right, not merely because of her industrial and farm resources, or her raw materials or her huge melting-pot of manpower, but actually and fully prepared at all times to uphold the peace—a peace for which they died. They would want to see an America where the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness need never again be sacrificed to the regimentation which was their lot. Their diplomatic credo is as simple as day and as compelling as faith. They would believe in the words 'speak softly and carry a big stick,' so long as it is their America which administers the stick. For in her honesty, her truth, her goodwill, her democracy, and her greatness they would believe implicitly. Her will for peace is beyond question. Her ability to keep it must be equally so. And this is merely saying that for the American soldier, war is not the ultimate expression of an army. War is what armies are intended—to prevent."

As one who fought in company with these men, I shall try to tell what actually happened among the soldiers of a light machine-gun squad under fire. To the best of my ability, I shall report what I saw and heard. Much, no doubt, I shall miss through the impossibility of seeing and hearing everything at a time so tense as this. For such omissions, I apologize to the combat soldiers who detect them. In no way does this story reflect the viewpoint of the War Department. It is my own side of the war as I, a Private First Class attached to a line company, experienced it.

All members of the second machine-gun squad who appear in the coming pages survived combat overseas and are now living their lives in different parts of the country. —R. H. B.

IT was one of those nights when anything could happen. The darkened sky was cloudy, but often the dazzling light of the moon pierced the cloud-bangs and revealed the rugged terrain. Steep hills of rock covered over with dense underbrush and timber were everywhere. Scattered over the area were thousands of crevasses, rock formations, and draws. It was a weird place to look upon.

Gazing out upon this mass of untouched nature from a secluded spot on the heights overlooking the peaceful river valley, five American soldiers could hardly make out the flow of the silent river below their position. These men were Buck Sergeants Walter Clark and Harold Oberlin, and Privates First Class Harold Duley and Joseph Balogh and I.

Thoughts of war had left us for a short-lived moment, and we all were taken back in imagination to our boyhood days: days of carefree living and fun that all Americans go through at some time or another. The air was cool that night, for it was still the latter part of February, 1945.

Pulling a crumpled pack of cigarettes from his pocket, Sergeant Clark yanked a muddy poncho over his head and lit up. The sharp report of a rifle echoed through the deep gorge. It wasn't a report of our own Garand, but the crack of an enemy rifle intended for one of those engineers working so quietly near the river-bank below.

I could see a great hatred for the enemy come over the faces of the four men about me. Perhaps it was because of the twisted waxlike figures sprawled on the fields of snow behind; or the young soldier near by with his leg blown off, but making no sound. It might have been those memories of agonizing screams coming from the ambulances plowing through two feet of mud toward the rear. It might be the fact that the enemy kept sending in on us deadly screaming meemies with plenty of .88 fire mixed in. There were so many reasons for hatred, the hatred that comes from deep within a soldier's soul.

All of us were rugged individuals, for through our training and past combat experience our minds and bodies had become accustomed to our environment. We were prepared to meet the enemy in any situation and kill him the quickest way possible. Our job was killing. We had mastered this art.

After successfully crossing the swollen river below us, we had fought a bitter close-combat struggle with the enemy up an almost perpendicular mountain for the past five hours. Here we had come in contact with enemy pillboxes and entrenched positions.

The enemy, sensing our plan, had begun to rush in heavy reinforcements to this particular sector. Our position, as the dawn of a new day broke to the east, was along a wood-line at the top of the mountain. Here we were on the defensive until further orders would enable us to continue the attack. For the past three hours American artillery and tank rockets had been pounding this high ground systematically in coördinated action with our frontal attack up the mountain. Counter intelligence had underestimated the possibility of enemy reinforcements in this sector. Already a flanking movement had cut off our rear elements near the river, and a second battle was being fought on the ground we had just taken. In other words, our small unit was isolated from our lines of supply. Our situation could become critical.

Not only did we have to fight a fanatical enemy; we had also to contend with the natural obstacles of the terrain. About us were dense forests, deep and treacherous gorges, and small mountains of jagged rock. Since armor could not operate under such conditions, our job was to make a gateway to the flatter country ahead, so that the tanks could begin their spearheads.

In the distance and on our flanks, the five of us could hear the never-ending chatter of machine-guns cut through the stillness of the valley below. Fires flickered against the cloudy night sky. A chateau on our right burned fiercely, and the crackle of the flames was audible between the thundering explosions of the enemy artillery. Back of the river hills behind us, the muffled sound of American 240's drifted in along the valley.

Off to our right several enemy automatic rifles sounded sharply. None of us stirred; nor did we give away our position by counter firing. A grenade exploded in a clump of brush on the other side of a large boulder. The enemy was near. The darkness about us was replaced by a hazy yellow mist that hung high in the trees above our position.

A few feet from the wood-line, we lay prone behind the tripod of our light machine-gun. A belt of two hundred rounds was inserted in the gun, ready for firing. Tough, dirty, and sweating in the near-freezing tem-

perature, we lay in wait for any surprise movements on the part of a cunning enemy. There was a feeling of strain, a sense of waiting for something big to happen very soon. Joe was on the gun; PFC Duley, sometimes referred to as Missouri, lay to his right on the ammunition box. To Joe's left were both Sergeants Clark and Oberlin surveying the open stretch of ground beyond the wood-line. I was just behind the gun with a bazooka, loaded and ready for firing. My carbine was close at hand also.

A STRANGE sound came to our ears as we lay there. We saw one of our small reconnaissance patrols near the woods to our left pick up a lone enemy soldier and take him a little way toward enemy positions, possibly so that he might persuade some of his comrades to surrender without a fight. His voice had a weird crying tone in it. Our patrol got their answer when an enemy machine-gun cut down the beaten soldier. All was quiet then, except for the far distant sound of small-arms fire and heavy artillery.

Sergeant Clark, his hands clasped behind his head, lay on his back looking longingly toward the tree-tops.

"If somebody doesn't move us out of here soon, I'm going home. Yep, I'm going home; home to that little woman of mine, and all the whisky I can lay my hands on."

"The trouble with this outfit, they never know where the hell they're going next. For all we know, we're the only ones up here, and that CO has gone back to Paris." With that, Clark rolled over on his stomach and spat vigorously at a nearby tree.

"All day long I hear that monotonous yap of yours going. Is that all you can do—talk?"

"Ya, that's all I can do. Can you think of something better to do, Joe? Joe Balogh, Joe Balogh from South Chicago-o! Why in hell don't you go back there? Don't like it over here? Huh! We got everything that Chicago has, and maybe a little more. Just look at it!" Clark waved his arm in a circular motion.

"If you two guys don't shut up, I'll be forced to get up and shut you up—that is, if those damn' krauts don't do it first." With his say-so in, Sergeant Oberlin rolled over on his stomach again to get a better look out front.

"Say, will you give a look? Those Heinies are sendin' another batch of mail this way. I'll lay odds they don't come within ten miles of these woods."

In the distance we picked up the familiar streaks of red that meant an enemy rocket-launcher had let go in our general direction.

"You're on, Sarg," replied Duley, as he rolled over on his back and pulled his steel helmet down over his bearded face.

Screaming in as if a thousand freight-trains were coming down upon us, the Nebelwerfer rockets hit to the left of us in the woods. Shrapnel and fragmentation flew everywhere—big hot chunks of steel that would tear a man to pieces. The trees cracked above us. To our left we could hear a call for a medic.

Before I realized it, Joe had opened up the machine-gun and was pouring tracer fire into a clump of brush about twenty-five yards to our direct front. The staccato of that gun clicking off those shells felt good to my ringing ears. Above the sound of spurting lead, I heard Joe yell:

"Come on, the whole stinkin' lot of you!" On his muddy sweat-stained face there appeared a smile, a smile of determination. He relaxed his trigger finger. I could hear him suck in his breath.

"If there's anything alive out there now, I'll buy each of you fatheads a beer apiece back in Chi. Ain't that right, Sarg?"

"Ya, you're right, Joe, always right. Hey, wake Duley up, I think the Old Man's about to shove off. I can hear him yelling his head off up in them woods." Sergeant Clark threw his binoculars around his neck and got to his knees slowly.

"All right. The party's over," shouted Sergeant Walker, platoon sergeant of the Weapons Platoon, as he walked up to us. "Get your gun together and start movin'. The Old Man just passed the word along to move out. Clark, you take your men up to the front. You boys are gonna have the sweetest time of your lives leading this outfit down into that small gully over there. Ain't you happy? Just think, you'll be able to tell your grandchildren that you lunkheads were the first ones invited." The Sergeant moved back into the woods again.

From up through the woods, a voice roared: "If you guys don't get up here soon, I'll send the whole bunch of you back home to Ma."

"All right, all right, General, we're coming. They can't even hold up this damn' war for two minutes. Who's got the suds?" Joe began taking the machine-gun down. The rest of us got to our feet and brushed the mud off our clothes. Sergeants Clark and Oberlin took off through the woods.

JOE picked up the machine-gun, threw it over his shoulder, and followed Clark and Oberlin through the woods.

"Hey, Sarg, will you look at that? A dead kraut. Sure looks contented. Wonder if he's got a watch?"

"Well, you ain't stopping to find out, muttonhead. That's the trouble with you. Always lookin' for some easy loot. Remember our party, or have you forgotten already?"

"Okay—okay, Sarg, calm down. Just some more of my wishful thinking," answered Joe.

Throwing my bazooka over my shoulder, I grasped my carbine and checked once again to see if a round was in the chamber. Automatically, I followed Joe through the dense forest. The men about me I trusted beyond any doubt. Our friendship would never die, for in combat together a pride and trust had grown so strong between us that if one of us came into difficulty, all the rest jumped in with him without thought of personal danger.

A deafening explosion made all of us hit the dirt. The familiar zing of shrapnel was close. A bullet jumped off a pebble near my outstretched hand. I drew the hand in quickly.

WE cursed the land about us. Ahead of our present position, we could see the pattern of machine-gun fire traverse a small open stretch of woods. We passed lifeless, pallid bodies, both American and German, passed arms and legs and heads split to pieces from direct automatic fire. Enemy artillery whined in over the woods, crashing like thunderbolts on the slope below us. At times the sky above us seemed crammed with blinding flashes of light that appeared to hang over us. Above all this confusion, I could hear the runner of the Weapons Platoon trying to contact the first platoon of George Company on a handy-talky radio. After a while the runner's voice could be heard no longer.

Mud covered our clothes and seeped down our backs. Our feet were numb. The February weather bit through our mud-soaked boots. Snow flurries were in the air, and the men about me cursed the cold. On our route through the woods, we passed one of our heavy machine-gun emplacements, firing at will at any movements across an open field. The field was well mined, so that we had to skirt to the right in order to begin our descent into the small valley. Here enemy artillery was tearing the woods to pieces. As we passed our CO on the double and in a low crouch, he gave our small section the final word.

"I want you guys to hit for that small clump of woods down there and flush it out. Spare all the ammo you can, for God's sake." The Captain hit the ground as the Germans began firing in our direction at a greater regularity from the other side of the open field.

Instantly, the five of us dived for the dirt as the familiar sound of hot lead cut inches above our heads and ricocheted off some large boulders near by. Crawling up beside Sergeant Clark and Joe, who were surveying the situation from the inside of a smoking

Illustrated by Hamilton Greene

"If there's anything alive out there now, I'll buy each of you a beer."

shell crater, I threw myself into the hole beside them and shouted:

"How the hell are you, Sarg? Bet you wish you were home now!"

"Can't think of a better place to be. I'll tell you mugs what I think: We'll make a dash for that drop in ground over there, and pray those krauts don't move in on us before we get this baby of ours into action. Got me?"

"Roger, dodger, and all that bull. Let's go." Joe picked up a handful of mud and threw it over his left shoulder for luck.

With that, the three of us, followed by Duley and Oberlin, made a run-and-drop affair toward the small gully. We were accompanied by seven riflemen creeping and crawling toward the drop in ground.

The contact that we needed with the rest of our company and the White Battalion was now completely gone. About us enemy mortars churned up the earth, leaving a burned and penetrating stench in the crisp morning air. We felt alone on that open stretch of ground leading to that gully—so alone.

On my left, Duley picked up a slight movement and emptied five rounds of carbine ammo into the brush just as a Jerry stood up to throw a grenade. The grenade fell close, but not close enough. The German was dead, thanks to Duley's accurate fire. A burst of enemy rifle-fire wounded one of the riflemen accompanying us.

"If we don't get the hell out of here soon, we'll all get it, if those mortars don't do it first. For my dough, I'm all for packing up and going home." Joe buried his face in the mud as an .88 shell crashed behind us. The German artillery was becoming accurate.

"All right. You guys win. You've convinced me. Let's go! Hope the hell we make it to that gully." The Sergeant spat at a rock and began the mad dash across the shell-cratered field. Right behind Clark, the rest of us followed.

Making a flying dive over a pile of rocks, I fell and rolled down a seven-foot drop onto a large boulder. Close behind, the rest of the men took up the same course of action. I could hear the riflemen rolling into the gully up to my right. Dripping wet from perspiration and exhausted beyond control, our small group lay there gasping for breath. Every few minutes I could see another soldier come hurtling over the rocks above into the protection of the draw. It was relief to be situated where we were as the war raged above. Faces and hands cut from the fall were scarcely noticed.

"All right, Joe, cover the upper end of this runway with the gun! Duley, you help the monk out! A couple of you guys cover the lower end of the draw and blast anything that moves. I'll take a look at what's on the other side of this outfit."

With that, the Sergeant crawled up to the top of the draw and began his survey.

By this time I had gathered enough strength to prop myself against the rock wall of the draw and begin looking over our present situation. We couldn't spend much time in a trap like this. Tree-bursts, above us and to our flanks, spattered the timber to pieces, and shrapnel flew into the small draw which was our refuge for the moment. Duley, lying on his back by the machine-gun tripod, said:

"For my sixty-five a month, I just as soon get hit, and get the hell back to a nice warm hospital. Three squares a day, plenty of them Red Cross girls, and all the sack time in the world. That's for me. A million-dollar wound. Where the hell is a nice little piece of shrapnel for this here leg of mine?" He raised his leg up in the air.

"You'd probably get a big chunk of steel through that thick head of yours instead, rabbit-paws." Obbey, with his say-so in, pulled out half a smoked butt, and lit up. He inhaled deeply.

"Say, Sarg, when do you think we'll get some chow? The last meal I had was forty-eight hours ago. Remember—they tossed us a K ration apiece?"

"You complaining again, Joe? I thought you had some of that powdered lemon mix with you. Try it, kid. It says that it's supposed to do wonders for empty stomachs. What d'ya want, a steak?"

Just as the word *steak* came from the Sergeant's mouth, he dropped to the rocks quickly and began firing down the draw. Clark slid back down into the draw also. He looked worried.

"They're moving in on us fast, men. What the hell you firing at, Obbey?"

A bullet ricocheted a few inches above Clark's head. He dropped, and as he did this, we also dropped flat against the rocky floor.

"Couple of them damn' krauts are down in that small clump of bush. Saw 'em moving around."

"Did you ever think that they might be lookin' for squirrels?" Clark began fumbling around with a grenade fastened to his coat pocket. Obbey answered his question.

"Wise guy, huh?"

"Say, Sarg, want me to swing this gun around on them?"

"Hell, no, Joe. Keep that baby pointed straight up this draw. Let me worry about them bastards myself."

Sergeant Oberlin tossed Clark his forty-five, and forthwith Clark was off, crawling along the opposite side in the general direction of the enemy rifle-fire. In a few minutes we heard six cracks of a forty-five. There was no more enemy fire up the draw.

"I hope the Sarg makes it back all right," remarked Joe, as he propped his head between two rocks and lit up a half-smoked cigarette from behind his ear. "Yep, sure hope he makes it back. Sort of like the Sarg. Want him around when we go up this here draw. You know, the Sarg has a kid back there in Illinois. Nice kid, I guess. Yep, sure hope the Sarg makes it back. Got a wife too, nice wife, too, I guess." Joe began blowing smoke rings nonchalantly.

Just then Clark rolled down into the draw again. Tossing the forty-five back to Obbey, the Sergeant smiled and spoke to us:

"Well, we won't have to worry about those guys any more. Saw a bunch of them about a hundred yards down from this position of ours. Looks to me as if we're the only damn' Americans in this whole valley. Our best bet is to get going up this draw before they decide to zero some mortar fire in on us. Grab that gun, Joe, and we'll blow. I want that bazooka handy in case we run into some of their machine-gun emplacements."

The five of us gathered up our gear and moved cautiously up the draw. The riflemen who were also in the draw accompanied us. As we emerged out of our shelter, we could see elements of George Company pinned down on a low ridge to our left by enemy artillery fire. This fire was fiendish. I remembered a saying that was often used by the officers of the Battalion: "Good observation is impossible without inviting observation in return by the enemy."

"Those poor guys!" remarked Obbey. "Caught like ducks in a pen. How in the name of billy hell they'll get out of that mess is beyond me."

The chatter of machine-gun fire echoed about our small group of American soldiers. I dropped with Joe behind a large boulder. Clark crawled up beside us.

"Think you can get them? They're dug in between those two rocks ahead."

"Nothin' like trying, huh, Sarg? Don't get your hopes too high, though. Where the hell is Duley?" shouted Joe.

"Over here!" Duley stuck his head out from behind a boulder a few feet behind us.

"Sorry, Missouri, thought you went over the hill. Get that ammo up here. Got a little job to do."

"What the hell would you do without me, Joe-Joe? All the time I gotta feather you under me wing like a baby chick." Duley moved up with us on his stomach, and began inserting a belt of ammo into the machine-gun.

"Take a strain," remarked Joe.

Creeping around the edge of the rock, I placed the bazooka against my shoulder. Taking careful aim, while Joe and Missouri were in the process of setting up their gun, I fired just as Joe opened up. Between the machine-gun fire and the bazooka shell, things quieted down ahead of us. To make sure, Clark tossed a grenade between the two rocks. Joe stopped firing.

Moving carefully, we skirted the position until we had reached a low ridge of ground overlooking the valley we would have to go through sooner or later. A high ridge of timber loomed up on the opposite side. Here we were joined by scattered elements of our company.

"Hey, Sarg, did you hear the news? The Lieutenant got hit back a ways. He'll probably go back to England for a rest. Guess you'll be a CO now. Ain't that right, Sarg? Bet you'd love to be a CO. Ain't that right?" Joe picked up a rock and pounded Clark on his helmet.

"That's right, kid, but right now I think I hear some of them fly boys. They're not satisfied with all this small stuff. Always got to throw a little more into the party. Hit for those rocks over there."

"Take me right back to Joplin. Oh, honey, take me right back to dear old Joplin." With his little song in, Duley fired a few rounds from his carbine into the air and then made a flying leap for the rocks. From the east an enemy fighter plane flew in low over the forest. With all machine-guns going, the enemy plane strafed the ridge where all of us were under the cover of rock formations.

"Try again, you — — —. Maybe next time you'll be able to win another medal. Get the nerve of that fly boy, trying to show off his talents! Did I ever tell you guys that once upon a time I was in that fly-boys' program in the States? Even went to college for a while. Can you beat that—me in school, while in the Army. Some life, that was—all the chow you wanted, a sack with sheets." Taking off his helmet, Obbey started to scratch his head. A folded roll of colored brown tissue dropped from his helmet into the mud.

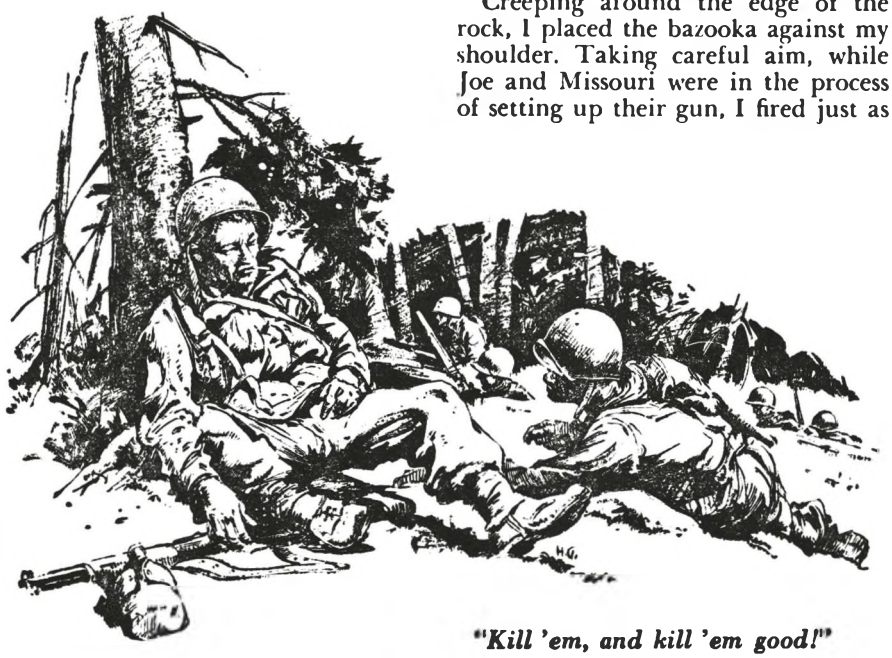
"Damn it, there goes my reserve supply."

Duley put his steel helmet on the end of his carbine and raised it slowly above the rock he was lying near. An enemy rifle cracked in the distance, and a lead slug pierced the top of his helmet.

"How'd'ya like that—a brand new tin hat! That guy must be using telescopic sights." He put his helmet back on after peering through the small hole with curiosity on his face.

"That's what I like about those krauts. Always give a guy a fair break."

"You know, Duley, the only reason the old man give me this stripe was an excuse to bust me whenever he wanted to. Where'd that shot come from, Clark?"



"Kill 'em, and kill 'em good!"

A few feet in front of us, the Sergeant, lying on his stomach near a tree, was looking over the terrain with a pair of field glasses. He turned his head and spoke to us.

"Think a few of those supermen are sittin' up in that gully about a hundred yards above us. Looks as if a few of the boys from the First Platoon are moving in on them. Hope they butcher the whole lot."

A mortar barrage began dropping in about us. I buried my face in my arms. Hot steel whizzed about the rocks. My ears rang as if a thousand telephones were ringing all at once. The enemy shifted their fire along the ridge that lay to our right. We all breathed easier. Clark spat at the rock next to him and spoke.

"Almost swallowed dirt on that one. Good for the teeth, they say."

From behind, the sound of our own 105's firing a mission made morale jump a hundred per cent. The shells spun over the tree-tops in a whistling, swishing sound, and crashed along the ridge on our right. At times the shells came so close that we thought they could be tabulated on an adding machine as they swished overhead. From above, a P-47 American fighter began a strafing mission into enemy positions ahead of us. Enemy ack-ack fire could be seen in the air as the plane dived in for the kill.

Daylight had come fast upon the river valley. The time was near eight-thirty in the morning. A heavy, drifting fog blanketed most artillery objectives from direct visual contact. We knew that our own artillery-fire missions were directed by frontal observers. This was accomplished by radio contact to the big guns miles back. Liaison planes out of Division that morning did some flying over enemy territory, but heavy concentrated ack-ack fire discontinued those flights for the present. Far below us, the engineers were still in the process of trying to span the river with bridges. The engineers and the infantry worked in coördinated action in establishing bridgeheads. There was a mutual respect between the two outfits.

In clear weather, the engineers could work only under cover of darkness because of the accurate artillery fire sent into the bridgehead by enemy observers. For supplies to reach the frontal attack units, these bridges were a must in terms of a modern infantry attack. Even now ammunition was reaching low points throughout the battalion. Much credit goes to the A and P Platoon and all the cooks and ammo carriers of the battalion for a sweating, grinding job of hauling heavy loads upon their backs right along with the attacking companies. Right behind us, wire communication by sound power phones was being established by combat communication teams working in coördination with the spearhead of the new American offensive and bridgehead. On "300" radio sets communication was being maintained between the different fighting units. Relay stations were set up where the terrain interfered with good reception.

"Will one of you back there tell that CO to fire that last mission?"

As our small section waited for orders to continue the attack into the small valley to our right flank, I was sent forward in the vicinity of George Company to try and verify our present position with that of our own Company, Fox. Moving cautiously along the low ridge, I managed to crawl to the higher ground where riflemen were spread over the terrain, sweating out another enemy artillery barrage. . . .

As I crawled back, I passed a wounded soldier propped against a tree smoking calmly. Shrapnel flew all over the area.

"For God's sake, buddy," I shouted, "if you've got to smoke, do it lying down."

He flipped the butt of his cigarette off into a shell crater.

"Buddy, it's like this," he said. "I'm hit, hit bad in the side, and right now I don't give a damn what happens. Do me a favor, soldier," he said softly.

"Sure thing." I crawled up beside the dying man, expecting him to give me a message for his wife or mother. His voice rose to a bellowing roar.

"When you get up there, kill every last one of those — — —. Kill 'em, and kill 'em good!"

As I moved back among the rocks of the small gully to where my own small section was, I heard Clark shouting as usual. Clark was really a man, no doubt about this fact. Big, rugged, and red-cheeked, he liked that word *combat,* and the more of it he got, the better he felt. Even though he had "a wonderful wife and child" back home, how he loved a fight! None of this soft stuff for the Sergeant, always the toughest and roughest assignments.

Just then, T/Sergeant Hitchen, leader of our Company's Third Platoon, dropped in out of nowhere with a great big whooping yell that nearly scared the five of us out of Germany. Hitchen was a great guy and a great infantry soldier. Always joking, he loved to kid everyone. Since he had gone into combat, he had let his mustache grow, vowing not to shave it off until he was safe in his baby's arms back home in Pennsylvania somewhere. It was already handle-barred in a double red curl which practically encircled his nose.

"Well, you lugs," Hitch shouted as if we were all deaf, "let's cut the small talk and help this platoon of mine through that valley. The Lieutenant just gave me the hot word to get the hell out of here, and I'm inclined to agree with him."

"Don't let me stop you," remarked Clark. "That's the trouble with you riflemen. Always gotta depend on the Weapons Platoon to see you through a tight spot. Well, anyway, it's about time this outfit moves somewhere."

Joe took the machine-gun off the tripod.

Obbey got to his feet, picked up an M-1 rifle he had found, threw a couple of bandoliers of ammunition around his neck, and moved out toward the ridge overlooking our side of the small wooded valley. The four of us followed after him, whistling different tunes to ourselves.

A shifting wind began to waken us to the fact that there were still a few trees standing after the terrific enemy barrage in our sector. Ahead, an en-

emy automatic weapon opened up with four quick, sharp bursts. The reecho of the gun firing in the small valley to our right made it seem as if four or five guns had let go at once.

From out of the west, a German Messerschmitt ME-262, a jet-propelled fighter, cut in across the valley. All of us deployed at once, but the Jerry kept right on his way.

Then a systematic pattern of enemy tracer fire sent us flat against the ground. Ahead of us a lieutenant shouted back to us to spread out quickly and take up firing positions. He mentioned something about a counter attack, but his words were drowned out by German artillery zeroing in on the slope. Sergeant Kirk, front observer for our own 302nd Field Artillery Battalion, spotted a German encircling movement on our left flank. Contacting immediately by radio the 105 emplacements on the other side of the river, the Sergeant began calling the directions for direct fire on the advancing troops. Over and over this transmission went out.

Joe and Duley threw our own machine-gun into position and adjusted the sighting range. Next to us two heavy machine-gun sections worked frantically setting up their guns in preparation for the coming attack against our newly won positions. Riflemen checked their weapons and took up positions as orders were shouted out above the terrific explosions and concussions of the German artillery. The enemy was giving the ridge a thorough pounding. American soldiers all about us were digging in and cursing. No time for foxholes; slit trenches would have to do.

Those were precious minutes. Every man knew the consequences of every lost moment. Just as we got our own gun set up and test-fired, four or five German machine-guns let loose in our general direction from different angles. What scared us was the fact that the Germans had come in behind us and had practically surrounded the group—their obvious purpose to wipe out every last one of us and then drive a spearhead back to the river.

Nervous? No, we weren't nervous. Just plain scared stiff. One thing that we were thankful for was the fact that six or seven more company ammunition soldiers had finally arrived from the river. With them had come more vitally needed machine-gun belts. These men had been cut off the night previous while trying to climb the rocky mountain from the river valley below. The point of the whole thing was that the White Battalion had moved too fast, giving the Germans the chance to throw in flanking movements on the spearhead operation. Officers hadn't the faintest idea how to cope with the emergency situation, and the soldiers had to rely on their ingenuity.

Our machine-gun squad opened up as Clark spotted enemy foot soldiers moving down a draw ahead of us. Joe worked his gun in coördinated action with one of the heavy machine-guns on our right, spraying the frontal area with armor-piercing bullets. Every fifth shell was a tracer. Enemy mortars found the range on the ridge, and our casualty list mounted. To our left George Company was engaged in close combat with the advancing, determined enemy. Over in that sector I could hear blood-curdling screams indicating struggles of death and violence between the American foot soldiers and fanatical enemy troops. George Company refused to give ground.

Above all this insane madness of death about me, I could still hear Sergeant Kirk, artillery observer, shouting over and over directions for his missions ahead of us. He was sprawled behind a large boulder with a pair of binoculars. His radio man was against the side of the boulder also. His words went something like this:

"For God's sake, will one of you back there tell that CO to fire that last mission I gave? The men are getting slaughtered up here."

THE Sergeant kept repeating these words over the radio. His voice became hoarse, and he coughed spasmodically. Suddenly his station was jammed by another radio channel. His radio operator was wounded in the arm, and he had to take over the radio himself. Kirk became hysterical until the first rounds for adjusting range came in and fell short, landing amidst elements of our own company behind us. These troops were also fighting the encircling movement. Clark shouted back to Kirk. His face was covered with mud, as were his clothes.

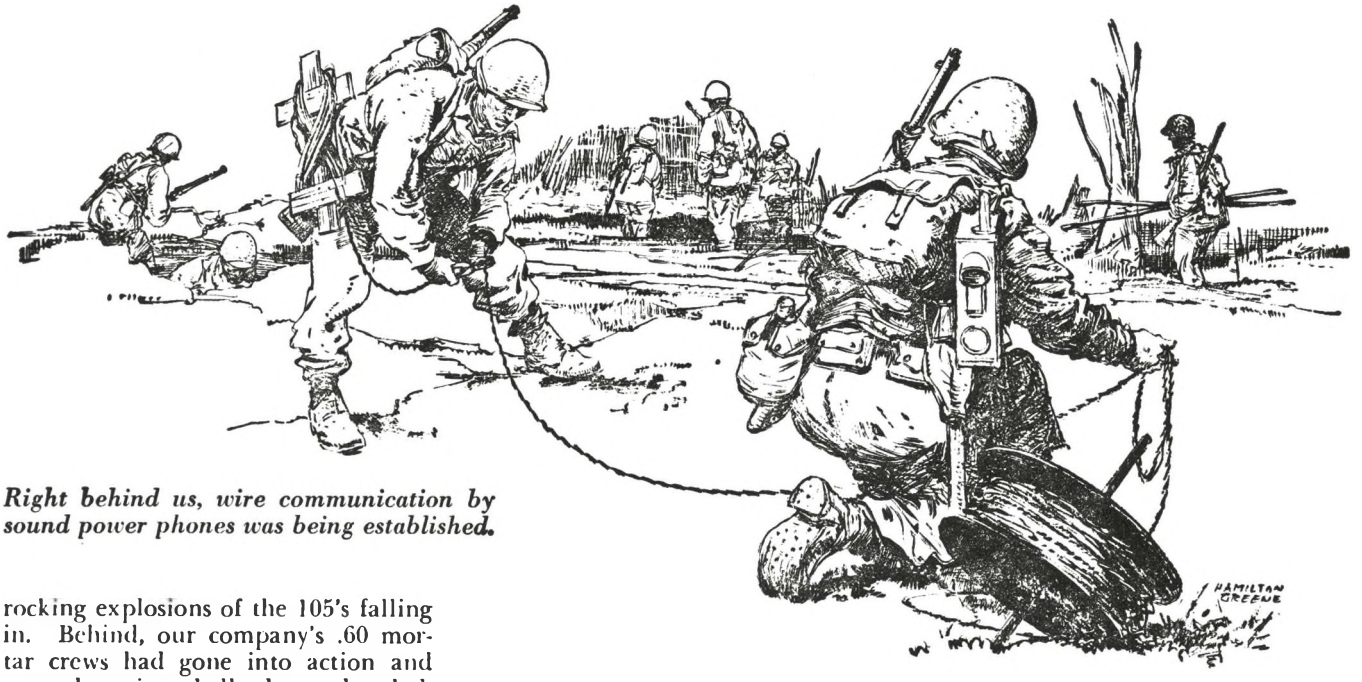
"Kirk, if those bastards back there can't drop the shells in the right place, tell 'em to get the hell back home." A spray of machine-gun bullets along the top of a boulder next to the Sergeant made him drop to the ground again.

Kirk was frantic as he shouted into his radio to lift the fire another hundred yards. We all tensely began to sweat out the next round of big shells being fired by our own artillery in our direction. Then the screaming, whistling sounds of those big shells could be heard. We all buried our faces in our arms as they zoomed in over the treetops. Thank God, they landed fifty yards ahead of us, shaking the very ground we lay on. Kirk shouted into the radio again:

"On target, let 'em come. Roger out." He gave a sigh of relief, and dropped beside the boulder exhausted.

"Hold your fire, Joe. We're gonna see some real fireworks. Come on, you stinkin' krauts, the whole lot of you. Come on in. What the hell you waitin' for – Christmas?" Clark rolled over on his side, pulled out a smoke, and lit up. Our own high-explosive shells began to come in over us by the carload, some falling so short that we had to dodge our own shrapnel and fragmentation. For a period of fifteen minutes there was nothing out ahead of us except the continuous,

Medics were doing a wonderful job for the wounded.



Right behind us, wire communication by sound power phones was being established.

rocking explosions of the 105's falling in. Behind, our company's .60 mortar crews had gone into action and were dropping shells down the shallow valley into enemy troop concentrations and machine-gun positions. It felt wonderful to see all that big stuff dropping around those krauts. Of course German .88 fire still harassed us, but this didn't even faze us, even though a few men were wounded by tree bursts.

Company medics were doing a wonderful job giving morphine syrettes to the wounded. This type of opiate really helped. The medics also saw to it that the wounded men were afforded some protection under trees and near large rocks. I knew the plainly marked Red Crosses on the medics' helmets made the trigger fingers itch on many of those German soldiers. A few of them did fire at these men, and we knew of some being killed outright by the Germans. We expected this after the Germans had deliberately murdered our men in the Ardennes Forest. This was during Von Rundstedt's desperate attempt to break through the Western Front in a dash for the sea.

Some of our wounded men were cut up pretty badly and a few of our close friends died before stretcher-bearers could reach them and bring them back to one of the collecting stations near the river.

An Italian boy eighteen years old was killed instantly from a tree burst. He had been a good friend, and had worked with me as a bazooka helper at one time. We all felt this loss deeply. Seeing him die we became aware of how strong the odor of death hung upon the area. It has the metallic, penetrating sharpness of powder mingled with that of burned flesh. We had smelled it many times.

Since our heavy machine-guns kept firing at all detected movements, we discontinued our for a time in preparation for a jump-off attack into the shallow smoke-filled valley we would soon have to pass in order to gain possession of the high ridge on the other side. One of the riflemen who had been killed near us was dragged over by two of his former buddies and put under the covering protection of some bushes. His eyes had a glassy stare that made me weak all over. What was left of his torso was covered with blood, mixed with the ever-present mud. It was a horrible sight.

As far as we could see, the enemy had temporarily withdrawn to the high ridge we were about to attack. Duley, who was near the dead American soldier, changed his position so that the soldier lying lifeless under the bushes was behind him.

"Time for supper, you chow-hounds. Bring on those steaks, medium of course, mashed potatoes, corn on the cob, hot coffee, rolls, and real butter, and Mom's apple pie. Yep, I'll have mine served over here, Clark."

"O.K., wise guy, this ain't no time for your jokes. Clam that yap of yours up tight."

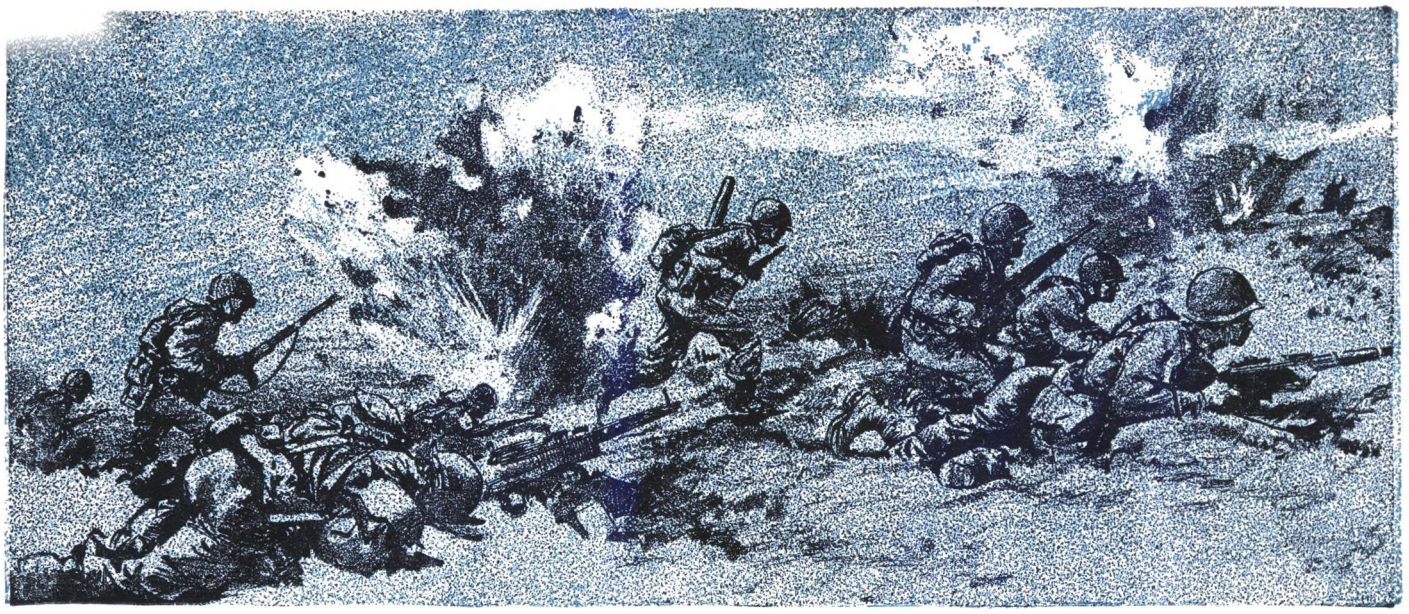
"All right, all right, Sarg. Just dreaming, just dreaming. Take it easy. No harm done." Duley reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out a small K-ration cracker and began to chew on it slowly.

Most of the soldiers now were taking a deserved breather and lying on their backs smoking cigarettes. A few, though, were still covering assigned battle areas with machine-guns and Browning automatic rifles just in case the Germans decided to get active again. A few enemy .88's still whistled in over us in the attempt to knock out the bridges being put up behind us on the swollen river. The sun was high in the east now, but there still was a heavy wet mist drifting among the trees of the desolated forest. Instead of that soft greenish color, the trees left standing were black, with ribbons of splintered wood twisting from the branches everywhere.

Behind us we could hear Lt. Col. Richardson yelling at a bunch of men. Big Red was the battalion commander —red-haired, six feet three, with a perfect athletic build. All the men of the White Battalion liked Big Red, even though he was a lieutenant colonel. Wherever his men went in the hottest of action, Big Red was always up front leading them. One time we saw him lead his men right into four enemy machine-gun emplacements and come out alive to tell about it. He lived, fought, and sweated out the hardships of front-line life right along with his men. We all respected his judgment and followed him into battle wherever he decided to go, whether enemy pillboxes or a well-defended town. Never once did his battalion yield ground to the enemy.

"Say, Sarg, think Big Red is a little peeved because we didn't wipe out all them krauts a few minutes ago? Brother, if he comes around here, I'm going over the hill, and not the one in front of us. I'd hate to tangle with that guy, sober or otherwise. You know, I think I spotted a few of those SS bastards in that last attack. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to take a knife to them big dealers. By the way, just what the hell does SS stand for? I got a good idea, but I don't think it fits their meaning."

"Joe, my boy, as I heard it through the grape-vine, it means Elite Guard or something like that. Who cares? We kill 'em, then they don't bother us. So shut up."



"All right, you guys," Sergeant Walker said as he came up to us, "let's break up the small talk and get this show on the road. We got a job for you kiddies. Lieutenant just got the word: we're supporting the First and Third Platoons in the attack on that ridge. I'm leaving both mortar sections back to cover your advance through the valley, Clark. You and the rest of this crew follow the riflemen up and cover all assignments given you by Hitch. For God's sake, take it easy on the ammo. Now if you're ready, you can shove off."

As the riflemen of the Third Platoon moved out on the double in battle formation, Sergeant Kirk began to call in another firing mission on the ridge we were about to attack. To our left, two heavy machine-guns were being trained in over the valley preparatory to covering the American advance.

As I ran down the rocky slope, pitted with shell craters and covered with dead Germans, the two heavy machine-guns began to pump out their deadly covering fire above our heads. It sounded great, that continuous vibration in my ears, and it gave me new confidence in my chance for survival. German artillery began to thunder into the valley as the Americans moved down into that pocket of death. Riflemen kept their M-1's trained ahead, and on the ridge we could see the fiery red balls of terrific explosions. Kirk's mission was being carried out to the letter.

There was still some snow in the shallow valley, and the German soldiers who had fallen there, in their desperate attempt to regain lost ground, lay stiffly in the whiteness of winter. Some lay face down and others were sprawled in various positions, depending on what type of fire had hit them.

Moving swiftly down that steep slope into the valley, I began to regain confidence. I wasn't alone in this secluded world of war. About me were hundreds of men, fighting men, gaining ever greater faith in their assigned mission. None of these Americans faltered while in the attack, for somewhere in the back of their confused minds was that picture of the victory we would eventually win, a victory that meant peace and the fulfillment of a job well done. Of course the job wasn't an easy one, for to an infantry soldier total war is more than wearing a uniform and a few rows of fruit salad. It is a job that requires the utmost of human strength and courage. Many of these men would die on the far-flung road to victory. But they would not cringe along the way.

There wasn't any flag-waving in our outfit. The men of the White Battalion had been chosen to do their special type of work, just as other men had been put to work doing other things to further the war effort. The reason we fought and killed was to protect our own lives. We weren't fighting for those men back in Washington. We were fighting and killing the enemy so that we could ourselves survive. When the day would come to pack up and leave for home, to all those things we held dear in our hearts, we could do it with the knowledge that we had done something big enough to last us the rest of our lives. I was proud to be a member of the White Battalion, proud of the fighting men that I saw in action beside me.

Combat was tough on the married men for besides thinking about their own survival, they thought also of their children, what Mary, Joan, or Dottie were doing. At times I wondered if these thoughts were good for these soldiers, for when we were in a tight situation, one's mind should be thoroughly concentrated on one thing, fighting for one's life. I felt strongly that young men like myself, single, had a better mental attitude toward combat in general.

Thoughts of home did help the men. We all used to talk about the girls we knew and the different places we had visited, or what we would do when we hit the States again. These things were all a big incentive, and brother, how the men would look forward to mail when there was a chance to get it. Mail, in any form, was the best morale-booster of the whole war.

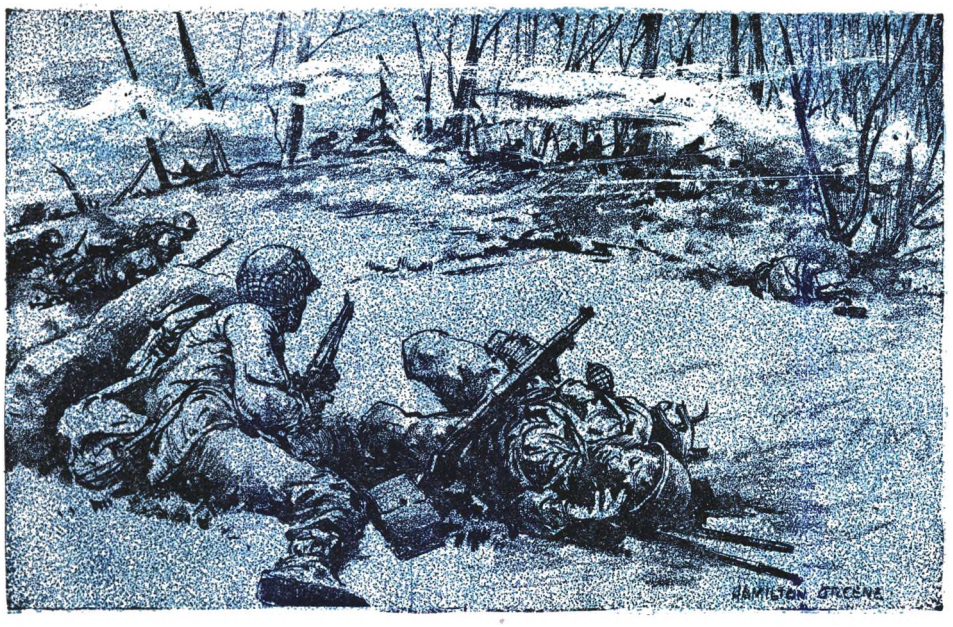
"Hey, Joe, how you doing, buddy? Plenty rough. If we make it up that ridge, I'll go to church for the next ten years." Obbey dived for the ground as machine-gun fire whizzed near him. He lifted his head from the mud.

"Just what the hell I'm doing down here is beyond me. Call up the druggist, Joe, and order me a bromo and a keg of good old American whisky."

"Start rolling, Sarg, or we'll sure as hell die like rats down here. I've seen artillery barrages in my day, but this takes it. I'm petrified. If I don't see my Congressman about this, I'll eat my words."

Joe was certainly a fighting soldier, though. How he loved our machine-gun, and how he loved to talk about Chicago and the South Side.

Our own artillery was lifted, and the men began to charge forward using marching fire from their weapons. Stumbling, cursing and dodging shrapnel and direct enemy small-arms fire from above, the soldiers began the attack on the ridge. Talk about rough going, this was it. All I could hear as I moved up that rocky slope was every profane cuss-word in the English vocabulary, and the zing of enemy bullets. Most of us crawled on



All I could hear as I moved up that rocky slope was every profane word in the English vocabulary, and the zing of enemy bullets.

our stomachs all the way up, firing steadily.

Ahead of me I heard an American soldier yell foolishly, and saw him run directly up the slope toward the dug-in Germans. He fired his BAR from the hip all the way up until he fell. He rolled down over the rocks with about twenty-five slugs in his chest. I gritted my teeth as I watched him.

Next to me, on their stomachs and sweating out German burp-gun fire, were both Sergeant Clark and Joe. The whole slope was just a woven mass of rock and small shrubs, and the enemy was entrenched everywhere. Behind bushes, between rocks, the Jerries had certainly dug in, and were prepared to stay.

"Give me that gun! Quick, Joe! Duley, toss me a box of that ammo!" The Sergeant worked very fast and didn't say a word. Slapping a belt of ammo into the machine-gun, he threw back the lever, clamped the gun down to the tripod, and shouted back to Obbey, taking pot-shots at some krauts above us.

"Tell those riflemen over there to start moving; I'll cover them until I run out of ammo. Pray to Almighty God that some of them make it. Where's Frazee with those other boxes of ammunition?"

"Right behind, Sarg," shouted Joe from behind a rock ledge. "Should I tell him to get up here?"

"You're damn' right I want him up here." Clark fired a burst up the slope. The gun jammed, but he worked it free again.

Corporal Frazee was one of the ammunition bearers attached to our section, a tall, lanky Kansan, the type of man you could depend on. He landed in France just after D-day with an artillery battalion, but had finally wound up with our outfit in Belgium. A great guy, a great infantry soldier.

As the riflemen charged ahead, I fired two rounds from my bazooka up the slope into nests of enemy riflemen. When there was no more fire in that direction, I kissed that rocket launcher of mine. It was hell on earth on that rocky slope that morning, but one thing we were thankful for was the fact that German artillery couldn't reach us in our present position.

Just ahead of us, riflemen were engaged in close combat with bayonets, and were firing their M-1's at close range. The yells of those cursing, sweating Americans drifted over the once beautiful Iffel hills of Germany.

Sergeant Clark motioned Joe over with his hand. The two of them picked up the machine-gun and moved forward. Firing from his hip, as Joe fed the belt into the weapon, the Sergeant sprayed the area ahead.

"I saw a lieutenant fire like this back in basic. but never thought I'd do it. Just goes to show you, Joe, what can happen to a law-abidin' citizen these days. If we make the top, we'll dig in. If we don't, they'll dig us in later on. Think them krauts are pulling out?"

A BAR opened up on some retreating Germans. Clark fired into the group also. A rifleman threw a grenade into the fleeing enemy soldiers. That was the end for that group. Passing dead Germans in foxholes, we found that keeping these dead men company wasn't a bad idea as German mortar shells began to zero in on top of the ridge. Clark tossed one of the dead krauts out and remarked angrily:

"Can't stand it in here with that!"

Only ten men of the Second Platoon survived that attack. We were now occupying the German positions on top of the ridge and firing on the retreating enemy across an open field of two hundred yards. Then it happened:

From behind us and down the slope we had just come up, the Lieutenant in charge of the Third Platoon began shouting frantically at us. We paid no attention to him until we saw him stumbling up the rocks toward us. He seemed to be trying to tell us to get back down off the ridge we had just taken.

"Will one of you guys please tell that officer to knock it off? The war's over. If he doesn't shut up soon, I'll sure as hell take a shot at him."

As the officer came puffing up the slope, we finally could make out what he was shouting. We couldn't believe what he said. It stunned us all so much that we couldn't talk.

"Artillery-fire mission coming in on this slope in five minutes," he was saying. "Get back in the valley quick, or you'll be blown to pieces. For God's sake, men, move! I swear to God it's true. The men on the other side of the river got the mission from that Piper Cub that was flying around above us awhile back. Didn't know we were attacking the ridge, and the orders have already gone through. Five minutes to clear the ridge. Best place is the valley, so move, for God's sake." The officer seemed to know what he was talking about, but we wondered.

"Back in that valley, hell! With all that Jerry artillery, it'll be like signing your own death warrant. I think you're off in the head, Lieutenant. Pardon me for saying so. I'll stick it out here." Clark slid back into the foxhole.

To our right we began to see the riflemen moving on the double down off the ridge.

"Brother, that's enough word for me. See you guys." Obbey grabbed his M-1, helmet, flipped his half-burned cigarette, and went rolling back down the slope covered with dead American soldiers.

Clark put his head up again from the hole, looked the situation over, and climbed out slowly.

"I've seen it all. We fight like hell to take this here ridge, lose half our men in the operation, and now some jackass in a plane wants to blast us right back out of here. I'm through. I'm hanging it up right now. You can find me in the nearest tavern gettin' more loaded than a pair of crooked dice."

"Sarg, if I ever get ahold of that fly boy up there, I'll kill him with my bare hands. To think the Army produces guys like that. This is abso-

"This is it, Sarge! We sure as hell can't turn around at this stage of the game."

lutely the most fouled-up outfit in Europe, and then some. Where the hell is Kirk?" Joe threw the machine-gun over his left shoulder and started to climb downward. The Lieutenant answered Joe's question.

"Kirk's radio jammed again. He's been receiving, but can't get any messages out. He's still trying, though."

Joe shouted back up to the Lieutenant: "That ain't enough in my category. Hey, Duley," Joe shouted down to him just a few yards below, "Catch that word *category*. I'm still a damn' college boy, that's what I am."

It seemed to me that more German artillery shells were falling into the valley than previously. We all joked about it, but began to prepare for the worst. As the last one of us slid down to the bottom of that bloody slope, sure enough, our big guns on the other side of the river began their concentrated fire up above us. Round after round screamed into the exact position we had just quitted. The men all spread out in the brush and near the bases of torn-up trees that were miraculously standing. Clark noticed some movement on the ridge to the left. We figured the Germans were reoccupying the ridge again after our hurried withdrawal. We were now almost two hundred yards back from where the slope to the top of the ridge began. Here we deployed near anything that seemed to afford shelter.

An .88 shell exploded with a deafening roar about twenty-five yards to our right. I crashed my face against the earth, and prayed, prayed that those flying pieces of shrapnel would pass me by. I had a strange inward sensation of being scared, and my arms began to tremble as those spinning pieces of shrapnel hit the ground all about me. I wondered if any of the men had been hit.

Another shell whined in over the trees. A rifleman close by rolled over on his back with a piece of shrapnel in his side. Sergeant Clark saw him and crawled slowly over to the wounded man as two more shells crashed in the tops of the trees on the slope to our left.

"Get a medic over here quick!" shouted Clark. "It's Johnny, and he's hit pretty bad. Those bastards!"

From up the slope, I picked out the white band with a bright red cross in the middle on a soldier's arm. The medical corpsman slid down the hill to where Sergeant Clark was bending over the wounded soldier. The two of them began to work over Johnny.

Joe, still sprawling on the ground, sang a few words of a song faintly to himself. It had to do with a blonde down in Cuba. Up ahead on the ridge—the one we had withdrawn from—our own big shells, fired from across the river, kept dropping in on our once secured position. I felt like turning in my gear and going home in disgust. Over behind a large rock I saw wisps of smoke curl up over the top of the boulder and disappear in the mist above us.

I crawled over to where Clark and the medic were working over Johnny. The boy was only nineteen years old, but what courage he had! In agonizing pain, Johnny had the guts to smile and joke with us.

"Anything I can do, Sergeant?" I remarked.

"Kid's in a pretty bad way. Medic says we gotta get him back to a doc in a hurry, or he'll surely kick off on us. Think I'll try and get him back to the river myself."

"Now just how in hell you gonna do that? There's more shells dropping down there than there are up here. Those things you hear going overhead aren't landing in the Channel."

"Tell MacWilliams to get over here, then. Think me and him can get some sort of stretcher built to carry him out of here. You guys will be here for another month anyway. If I ain't back in an hour or two, I'll see you mugs up Yonder later on."

MacWilliams was a machine-gunner with our other section. From somewhere in the eastern part of the States, Mac had been through the Air Corps program until he was transferred to the infantry. Mac was brilliant in more ways than one.

"What's up, Sarg?" Mac asked, as he came running up to the small group of men around Johnny. "You just broke up a poker game that me, Dublin and Frazier were having."

"We're gonna do a little job, Mac, so prepare yourself for the worst," Clark answered.

By this time Clark had cut two long poles from two small trees and was in the process of wrapping a poncho around them. Completing Johnny's makeshift stretcher, the four of us lifted the wounded soldier up very gently and placed him down between the two poles. Mortar fire began dropping to our right, and pieces of shrapnel zinged through the brush. None of us heeded the exploding shells; our job was to get Johnny out of this section of the valley. This was accomplished as the medical corpsman and I watched Sergeant Clark and PFC MacWilliams descend a small gully in the general direction of the river. Someone shouted after them:

"Let's get back in a hurry! May need you two guys in a little while."

I wondered if I would ever see the two of them again. It was a dangerous task they were both undertaking. Sergeant Oberlin now took over our machine-gun section temporarily. I crawled back to a low place in the ground. The melting snow from the higher ridges traced a pathway down

this gentle slope, as streams of water trickled over the rocks. It was the best place to begin a slit trench. Already seven of the riflemen were in the tiring task of scooping wet mud from the earth. The trenches instantly became mired pools from the trickling water. I longed for a smoke, but I had smoked my last damp cigarette awhile back. It was here that I knew the full significance of that phrase first spoken in the Pacific Theater of Operation: "There are no atheists in foxholes."

The melting mountain snows were already forming rushing torrents of water into the valley below us. Across this muddy water came a warm south wind. The signs of an early spring were in the crisp February air. I was overcome with a feeling of drowsiness at this moment, and I wished I were somewhere in the western part of the United States, just enjoying life and taking things easy. The sun shone above us for a few minutes, and the wind-flaws made the brightness among the twisted, burned timber even brighter. I was taken thousands of miles away from this valley of hell, back to that certain home town. I could see plainly the old gang and all the familiar places. It was a strange sensation of homesickness that tore away at my mind. I looked at the muddy ground beneath me.

THE yearning for food had passed from my stomach by now, and my insides felt like an empty cache in the snow. I was weary of war, weary and exhausted. I began thinking about a million-dollar wound and a nice warm hospital.

Throwing myself into the mud beside Joe, I listened to the rattle of an enemy machine-gun clicking off the rounds somewhere above us. We had taken the course of digging in, for a concentrated artillery barrage began coming in upon us. Our own artillery had let up on the ridge. This meant that we might be shoving off soon in another attack up that bloody slope. Every time a shell landed close, we stopped digging, and plunged into our half-dug slit trenches, now well filled with water. Climbing out of his trench and dripping wet, Joe spoke:

"Well, the Lieutenant got us into this mess. Let's have him get us out of it. If he don't, we oughta ship him back to Mudville, Texas. Mud, mud. Is that all there is in this damn' country?"

Joe began scooping mud out of his hole again. Obbey placed his helmet on top of the mudpile next to his trench and lay down. His head rested on the helmet.

As artillery fire about us quieted down, three or four German automatic weapons were audible, joining in with the enemy machine-gun fire. The sounds echoed and reechoed back and forth across the small valley. None of us could spot the locations of these emplacements because of the conflicting echoes about us. This left us all with a feeling of uncertainty. The time was approximately one in the afternoon, and we hadn't gained a foot of ground since eight in the morning.

"Hey, Pink, we're holding up the Third Army. Kirk just got the word from across the river. Them boys over there want to know why in hell we're not in Berlin yet. Kirk told them that we planned on coming back anyway, so to have the chow on when we pull in. There's enough tanks back there to cover the rest of Germany. Just waitin' for us up here to get movin'."

From up the slope, Sergeant Hitchen shouted down to us from where he was dug in.

"What are you guys waitin' for? A white Christmas? If you'll start movin', I may be able to get home next month. Got a date."

With orders passed forward by Big Red, the men began to move toward the center of the valley from the slope. Joe and I started out just as a bunch of German rockets screamed in over the treetops and crashed below us. We were both shaking. In the ground next to us was a piece of fragmentation a foot long. Ahead, the Germans spotted us moving forward, and automatic fire was directed down upon us. Up on the left side of the ridge, I caught the movement of enemy troops coming into their old positions. Behind us, the Third Platoon, practically at full strength, was lying in wait for orders to attack, hoping to be more successful than the Second Platoon had been. All platoons were now being directed by their Sergeants or their respective lieutenants.

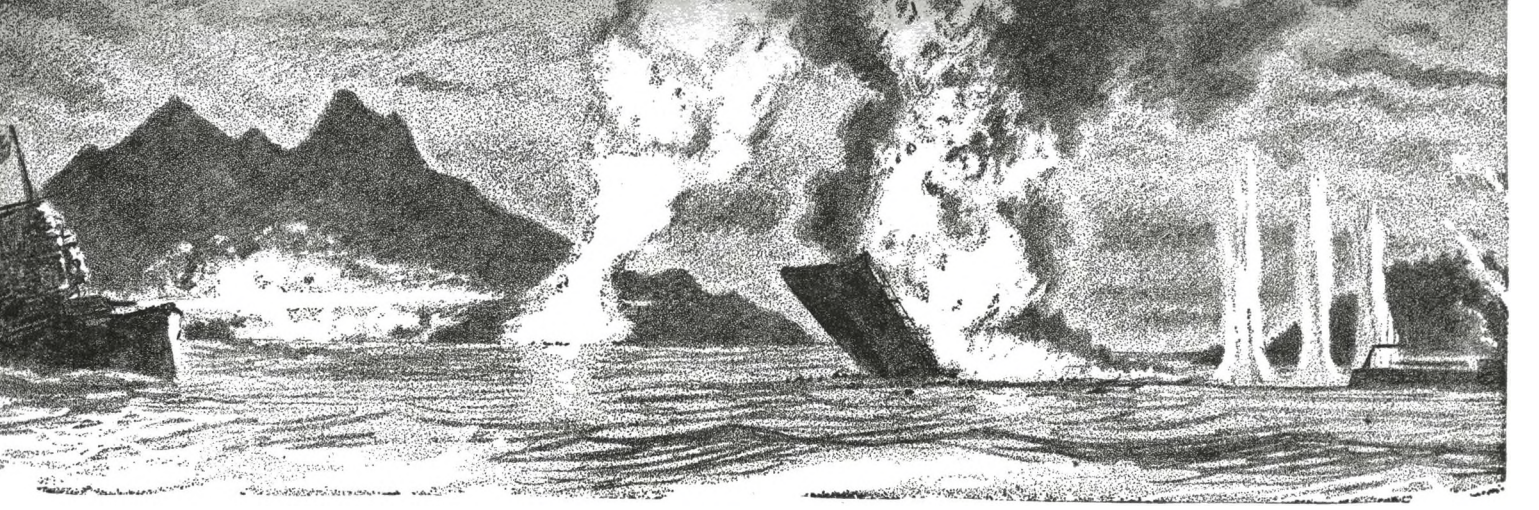
As I lay on my stomach next to Joe and his machine-gun, I pulled out a small prayerbook from my shirt pocket. I had carried it ever since I had gone into action with the Third Army. Glancing at a passage entitled, *"Faith in the Future,"* I had a feeling that everything would turn out all right. Joe took a glance at it also and remarked: "Good stuff."

Most of the men carried small Bibles or prayerbooks. We all trusted in God during such strenuous situations as we were in now. Before entering any type of major engagement with the enemy, the regimental chaplains usually gave the men a short talk. The soldiers believed in these men, and went into battle with faith in God beside them. The chaplains could always be found roving from one forward position to another, or outside the collecting stations and battalion aid stations. It was here that these men met the wounded and the dying as they came to the operation litters for surgery. Spiritual comfort helped and inspired and fortified these front-line infantry soldiers.

I believe the next passage, taken from the pages of the Regimental History, sums up everything in connection with our chaplains.

> "Worship, the second freedom for which they fought . . . all creeds, all faiths, exercising their inalienable right to the practice of it . . . wherever they could . . . whenever they could . . . their God they carried with them as they went . . . in their own hearts and in their democracy!"

"Close Combat" will be continued in our forthcoming June issue.



S-44 *at* Torpedo

August 9, 1942, is a black day in our Naval history. To some of those who participated in the unhappy events of that day, and lived to tell about it, it has stood for a sudden nightmarish eruption out of the night. To others, it has represented bitterness, hopeless frustration—the helpless feeling you get when you see things going wrong and are powerless to rectify them. To those who were not there, but who only heard about it later, it is an incomprehensible, fantastic story that can hardly be believed. But to all it is a source of contention, argument and regret.

On that day occurred the Battle of Savo Island; and the Allies lost four magnificent cruisers sunk and one more out of action with a damaged bow. The Japs suffered practically no damage whatever, with the exception of a shell in the chartroom of H.I.J.M.S. *Chokai,* the Japanese flagship, until the next day, when one of their cruisers was sunk, on the triumphant return voyage, by four torpedoes fired by the U.S.S. S-44, an old, antiquated submarine practically of World War I vintage. The crew of S-44 were completely unaware that she was exacting some measure of reparation for one of the great naval débacles of the War; and the story of how she was enabled to perform this feat, in spite of material difficulties resulting from her age and previous service, is one of the classics of submarine warfare.

The S-44 was one of the old "S" class of submarines, as her name indicates. Designed during the first World War, she and her sisters had been the backbone of the United States Submarine Force during the bleak years of complacency between wars. Toward the end of that period a few new submarines were built, and of course, we had our six huge "V" boats, two of which were later known as *Narwhal* and *Nautilus.* But in general it was the little "S" boats which were the mainstay of the submarine forces in those days, and practically all of our submarine personnel in the early days of the war had had service, at one time or another in one of these craft.

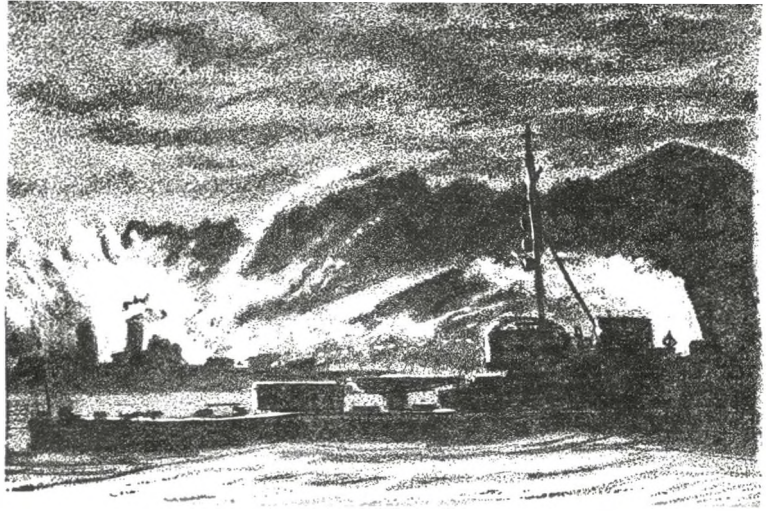
Small, ugly, slow and uncomfortable is a good description of these vessels. Admittedly not the latest word in submarines when they were built, they had been left far behind in the succeeding years. No great effort had been made to modernize them. It was recognized that the necessary funds could be better expended in the construction of new vessels, which would be much more nearly what the U.S. Navy had, by that time, realized was necessary so far as submersibles were concerned. So, although for years they were by far the most numerous class of submarines, they were also, for about the same number of years, utterly antiquated and obsolete, hardly fit for the training duties which were their main function.

Such a boat, one of the many thrown in desperation into the breach at the start of the war, destroyed the fine Japanese heavy cruiser *Kako,* thus proving once again, if it ever needed to be proved, that the fighting heart and the indomitable spirit can conquer over the most distressing difficulties—if the right man is there. . . .

But to return to the Battle of Savo Island. On the night of August 9, 1942, the new U.S. anti-aircraft light cruiser *San Juan,* the Australian cruiser *Hobart,* and two destroyers, were performing station patrol duty in the bay between Guadalcanal Island and Florida Island. To the northwest lay Savo Island, a roughly circular island situated almost in the mouth of the narrow bay entrance. North of Savo, and west of Savo, two destroyers maintained similar station patrols. All U.S. ships were equipped with radar; but remember that this was 1942, and radar was a long way from the efficient and dependable instrument it later became. Furthermore, there was such a scarcity of equipment that only the very newest vessels, or those just returned from extensive "Stateside" overhauls, had the latest models. The type and efficiency of the radar outfit of any particular ship was usually a pretty good index of the length of time since she had last seen the States.

In this particular task force, all the vessels had radar, including those fated soon to meet destruction. But the *San Juan,* a brand-new cruiser, was the only one of the whole lot which possessed relatively modern radar—modern for the fighting forces, that is; for such was the speed of development in this science that even *San Juan's* radar set-up was already out of date, rendered incomplete by additional equipment being installed in still newer ships.

But, all rationalization aside, and without trying to point the finger of blame at any one individual or group, to the *San Juan* fell the lot of being an impotent spectator at the destruction of the major part of her own task force. Herself chained by an inflexible directive, and probably rightly so,



SOME MEASURE OF VENGEANCE FOR OUR DEFEAT AT SAVO ISLAND WAS ACHIEVED WHEN THE OLD SUBMARINE S-44 UNDER LT. COMDR. (NOW CAPTAIN) J. R. MOORE, SANK THE HEAVY CRUISER KAKO—FOUR TORPEDOES, FOUR HITS!

by LT. COMDR EDWARD BEACH, USN

Illustrated by John McDermott

Junction

to the protection of the transport fleet under her immediate care, she was forced to watch the whole pitiful action by sight and on her radar screens.

In justice to *San Juan,* it must be pointed out that the confusion which overwhelmed the Allied force extended to her also, and it wasn't until later that her officers were able to piece together the whole story of what had happened, that terrible night. It all took place so suddenly—the stealthy approach of the enemy, their deployment and preparation for attack, their quick illumination by searchlights and flares, their sudden murderous onslaught, and the senseless confusion and mêlée ensuing, in the midst of which a fierce and unrelenting fire burned out a cruiser hull, two cruisers sank darkly, with cold guns, and the fourth, with guns barely warmed, followed shortly afterward. . . .

The next morning, the people of the *San Juan* were like a lot of wild men. Some cursed themselves and everyone else furiously at the slightest provocation, while others looked merely bewildered. But all looked as though they had just seen their best friends buried. Some of them had, for in the distance were four large patches of oil, covered with debris from sunken ships, in which many bodies floated.

Vincennes, Astoria, Quincy—once the pride of the United States Navy—cruisers powerful enough to take on a World War I battleship, with a fair chance of winning. Now, just so much rusting junk in the ooze at the bottom of Iron Bottom Bay. The fine Australian cruiser *Canberra,* now also junk at the bottom of the bay. U.S.S. *Chicago,* a huge hole in her bow, helplessly awaiting assistance. Never, except once before, had a morning sun revealed a scene more unhappy for American arms.

Credit to luck the fact that our transports were not attacked, where they lay discharging their Marines upon Guadalcanal, defended by two lonely light cruisers and two equally lonely destroyers. We now realize that the Japanese admiral could not believe the extent of his success. He reasoned that there must be more U.S. forces in the vicinity, and that he could not take a chance in riding his good fortune. Moreover, the only damage his force had received happened to be a lucky hit in the operations-room of his flagship, *Chokai,* which killed all the personnel there, and destroyed all the charts. With that as an excuse, and faced with the necessity of reversing course to the south again—he was by this time on a northerly heading, having nearly completed a circuit halfway around Savo—he decided the rest of the game wasn't worth the candle.

So, instead of going back into the "sound," as it came later familiarly to be called, and attacking the transports which were practically at his mercy, and which were the primary objective of his mission, Admiral Mikawa allowed his thirst for praise for an easy victory to override his perfectly plain duty. Radioing jubilantly the news of his triumph, he swept on around Savo and disappeared at full speed to the northwest, whence he had come.

American radio circuits were also carrying the news of his triumph at the same time. It must have seemed to some that this additional disaster, piled upon all those which had come before, could not be borne. Even to Admirals Nimitz and King, toiling all hours of the day and night in their wartime offices, there must have occurred a few doubts as to the capabilities of the Navy they had devoted their lives to. Naturally, an investigation was ordered, and blame for the defeat was fixed; but the distressing fact remained: Four Allied cruisers were sunk, and one more was so badly damaged as to require extensive repairs. Damage to the enemy—practically zero. Hardly a scratch on the Japanese paint to which our apologists could point!

Now, one Jap heavy cruiser is hardly a fair trade for four and a half of ours; but "Dinty" Moore did his best. To him goes the honor of getting the only revenge for the rough treatment an unsympathetic fate had dealt our forces.

In one of the most undramatic, matter-of-fact, laconic patrol reports of the whole war, the saga of how he received disappointment after disappointment, chased target after target without success, and finally seized the opportunity of a lifetime and put four torpedoes into H.I.J.M.S. *Kako,* is related by Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) J. R. Moore. It is difficult to get one of these taciturn submariners to talk, and it is even more difficult to get one of them to write of his deeds in other than plain unvarnished language. Most aptly is our Submarine Force known as the "Silent Service!" Moore, like so many of his brethren, believed in letting what he had accomplished speak for itself, and not a word did he mention about mechanical difficulties with his ship, many of which must have plagued him during this (and other) patrols, except one bare statement to the effect that his bow planes had become deranged. Although admirable, this propensity sometimes makes it a bit hard for the historian.

On July 24, 1942, Dinty Moore took his 1916 model S-44 away from alongside U.S.S. *Griffin,* her tender, and out of Brisbane harbor on her third war patrol. He had just spent three weeks in port, overhauling after the second

patrol, and giving his officers and crew some much-needed rest and leave. Just before departure, his very capable Executive Officer, Lieutenant Tom Baskett, was detached and ordered to command the S-37, another 1916 model submarine. A minor annoyance for Dinty, to have to do without his trusted second-in-command, but he was generously overjoyed to see him get his own ship at last. It only meant a little more work breaking in a new "Exec."

For five days S-44 plowed ahead, *en route* to her designated patrol area, on the surface at a speedy nine knots. Luckily the patrol areas in the Southwest Pacific were close to home base; otherwise the S-boats never would have been able to reach them and still have enough fuel and provisions left for a respectable patrol. Later on in the war this condition changed, but by that time there were plenty of long-range fleet subs to take over the fight.

On the sixth day S-44 entered her area. The patrol report merely states: "*Weather bad. . . . Unable to get sights.*" Next day: "*Weather same. . . . Sea very heavy all day—worse at night.*" Nothing is said about the discomfort and misery you experience when you try to keep the watch on the tiny, spray-lashed chariot bridge of an S-boat. Nothing is hinted of the ceaseless pitching and rolling on the surface at night, nor of the continuous fight to keep her at periscope depth while submerged—neither entirely on the surface as a result of wave action, nor so far beneath it that nothing except opaque green water may be seen through the periscope. No word is put down describing the dampness that pervades everything, the sickly oily smell of the ancient Nelseco engines, or the acrid acid smell of the overaged batteries. The newspaper reporter who dubbed all submarines "pig-boats" had probably not seen one of the comparatively palatial "fleet" submarines; but he had, without doubt, been thoroughly aware of many of the qualities of the old S-boats. However, Dinty Moore was writing his report for his fellows to read, and they knew as well as he what he was up against. They had all been through the same thing—therefore the terse phrase was sufficient—"*Weather bad.*"

The ninth day of the patrol, the weather cleared up, and Dinty found himself near a point of land on New Ireland. A good patrol spot, it turned out, for at ten minutes of eight that morning a merchant ship and three escorts were sighted, passing up the coast. Despite the utmost efforts of the submarine crew, however, they were unable to close the range sufficiently for a shot. All hands were much disappointed. Here is the first indication of the mettle of this crew. Despite the fact that they were inviting combat with three enemy destroyers, and despite the fact that their submarine was old, slow, and poorly protected against the rigors of a depth-charge attack, they made strenuous efforts to get close enough for a shot at one of the four ships. The weather, though clear, was still by no means favorable. The notation was made in the patrol report that, "*Swells were so heavy that depth-control was very difficult.*"

During the morning of the twelfth day a single large merchant ship, escorted by a seaplane, passed within sight of S-44, making eighteen knots.

Again, with exasperation, Dinty Moore was forced to watch impotently while this fine target passed by, out of range. At two o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, two ships were sighted, headed so as to pass well clear of the submerged S-44. There was only one way even to have a chance of catching them. Dinty rang up full speed and took the S-44 down to eighty feet, where she could run along undisturbed by wave action, and where any wake sent back from her thrashing screws would not come to the surface to reveal her presence. Instead of slowing down and taking frequent looks through the periscope—and, naturally, reducing his overall speed—he shot the works, knowing there was no possible hope of reaching an intercepting point (called "firing point" in submarine lingo) otherwise.

Finally, after twelve minutes, he slowed down and brought the S-44 back to periscope depth. What he saw through the 'scope must surely have destroyed his faith in Lady Luck, for shortly after he had started his run, the targets had evidently changed course ninety degrees. During practically the entire period, S-44 had been running in exactly the wrong direction! Had he been content to stay where he was, the enemy ships would have practically run him down, and maneuvers to gain a good attack position would have been easy.

It is hard to be philosophical about this kind of luck, and poor Dinty was not cheered by the fact that another ship was sighted a few hours later, also too far away to close, though he pulled all he could out of his old battery, known as "can" in the submarine vernacular. Rocketing along submerged for all she was worth, poor old S-44 managed to get within seven thousand yards of this one—which passed blandly ahead just out of range of even a "luck" shot.

But to the persevering heart, even all this bad luck had one encouraging feature. Proved beyond contestability was the fact that there were targets in this area. To the man who could stick it out, a fair shot would eventually be vouchsafed! So ran Dinty's philosophy. He expressed it in his patrol report for the fourth of August with the statement: "*This area looks so busy. Will try another day.*" He neglected to mention that the high-speed running he had been doing all day long had seriously depleted his aforementioned "can," and that when he surfaced at about ten minutes before seven that night, it was "flat," indeed!

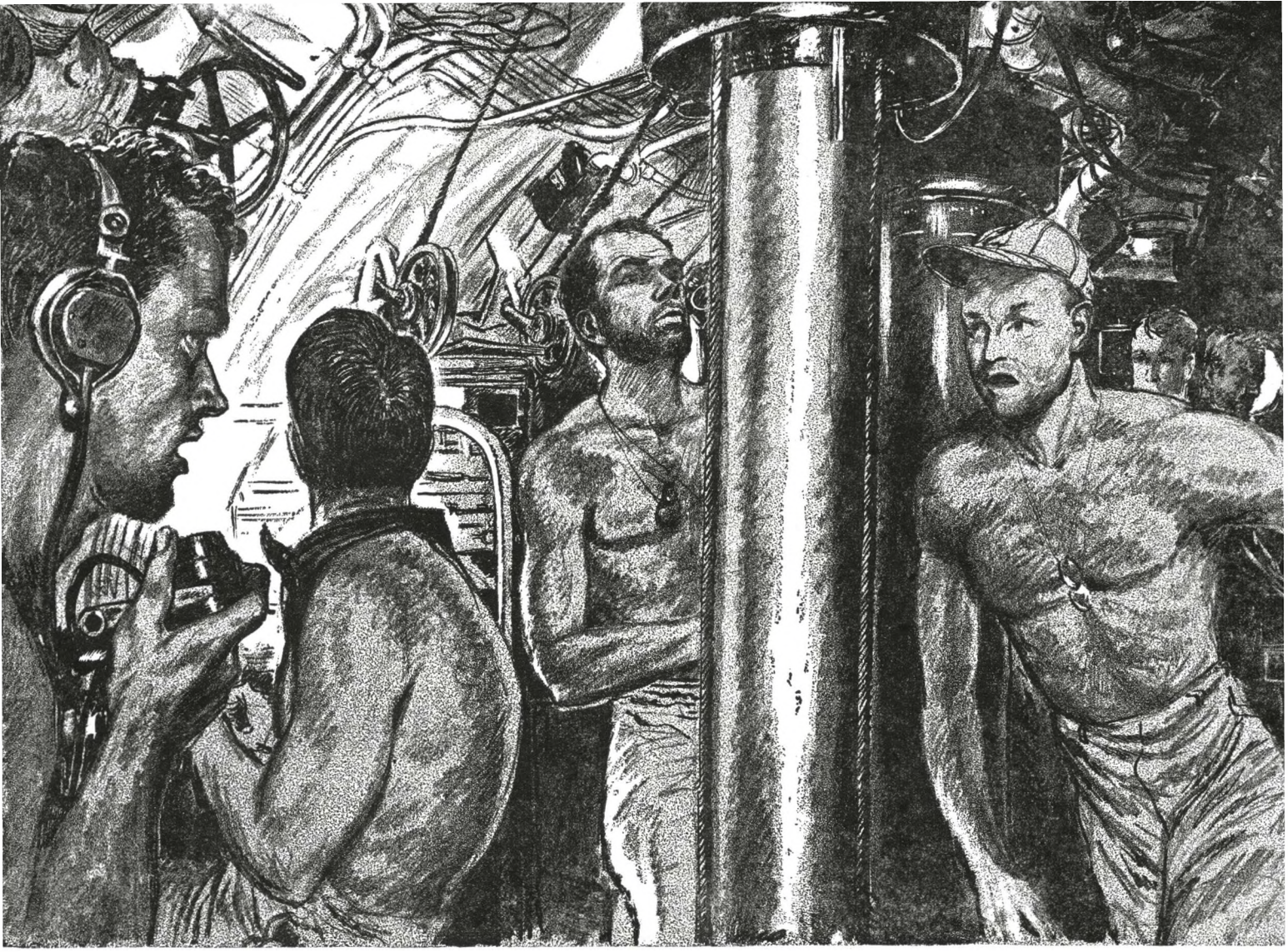
Since S-boats have to use their main motors as dynamos for charging the batteries, it follows that a "flat can" will need so much charging that it may be necessary to unclutch both propellers and lie to, dead in the water, in order to devote the whole output of the Diesel engines to turning the disconnected motors as generators in order to store up enough electricity for the next day's operations. So it was that Dinty's idea of staying in the area was probably at least partly influenced by the fact that he could not have gone very far away from it, in any case!

The next day was the thirteenth on patrol, and true to its unlucky reputation, all it brought to the doughty and impatient S-44 was the sighting of one seaplane while submerged, and another shortly after surfacing that night. Maybe that day was not so unlucky after all, for the seaplane should have spotted the submarine, even though it was after sunset. But it must be assumed that the imminent conclusion of a long hard patrol flight and the prospects of a warm dinner and a comfortable bunk have the same effects upon everyone, whether Nip or Yank!

Next day, the sixth of August, the fourteenth since leaving Brisbane, two merchant ships escorted by two destroyers were sighted. Again S-44 was far off the targets' track, but by dint of much high-speed running, Moore managed to reach an acceptable firing position, two thousand yards off the track, with five minutes to go before the convoy was scheduled to arrive.

It looked for a moment as though Fate had finally smiled a little, and that Dinty and his 1916 model sub were to get a shot or two in at last. But no such luck! With five minutes to torpedo junction, the targets changed course eighty degrees and passed by out of range of anything except a desperate shot at four rapidly retreating sterns. "*Did not fire,*" wrote Dinty, surely a philosopher by this time. Then he added another comment: "*Look like a lot of poor judgment or bad luck on 4th and 6th of August.*"

But Fate had weighed the S-44 and crew, and had found them worthy of bigger and better game than mere merchant ships or destroyers. For three days longer Moore cruised around Kavieng Harbor, looking at the rather



Eighty feet, on the way up, when—Wham!... Wham!... Wham!... Wham!... Wham! Wham! Depth-charges went off alongside.

lush scenery, once curiously investigating what looked like a signboard near the entrance to Byron Strait. No contacts of any kind. That's the way it is, when you are the hunter. Some days you have so much business that you can't handle it properly, and other days you can't make a nickel.

August ninth, 1942, came and went, taking with it the *Vincennes, Astoria, Quincy,* and *Canberra,* but the isolated men in the S-44 knew nothing of this tragic loss. Even less did Lieutenant Commander Dinty Moore and Captain Kameto Futukawa of H.I.J.M.S. *Kako* know that they had a rendezvous with each other, and with death.

For at ten minutes before eight on the morning of August tenth, 1942, Dinty sighted four heavy cruisers deployed in two columns, headed for him. Lesser men might have quailed at the sight of a whole division of enemy cruisers—but no submariner worthy of the name ever did. This was just what the doctor ordered! Forget the fact that the ships up there could make little bits of tin scrap out of your sub if they should catch her! Forget that they could construct and man eighty submarines the size of yours, with what they had up there! Remember only that there are four torpedoes in your bow, and that it's up to you to get them into the side of the biggest and fattest target you can find! Revenge? It's mighty sweet to think of afterward—right now the hunt's the thing, and you have the ever-present tingling knowledge in the back of your head that you are in the balance too. He has as much chance of getting you as you have of getting him—more, if you slip your guard!

As Dame Luck is prone to do, she really went all out for Dinty when she finally decided to play on his side for a change. When Moore sighted the four Jap cruisers, he was dead ahead of them! After days and days of frantically trying to get into a firing position for a shot at some of the targets he had seen go by, this time the most important target of his career shows up—and he doesn't have to turn a hair to get on the track!

As a matter of fact, S-44 was too close to the track, for some maneuvering was indicated in order to avoid being run over! Also, Dinty realized that he was just a "one-shot Charley" in this league. The minute he fired his old type torpedoes—antiquated and out of date, like the rest of his ship—those cruisers were certain to start buzzing around like hornets. The Japs were known to carry a rather complete stock of depth-charges in their cruisers, and could not be expected to have any hesitancy in expending them. He would not have a chance to reload, consequently could not expect a shot at more than one ship in return for taking a few depth charges. Split his salvo and hope to get two ships instead of one? Not on your life! That only made detection of the second half-salvo virtually a certainty, and its avoidance simplicity itself—especially since these were not the new, fast torpedoes he was proposing to fire, but old, slow ones, which made many bubbles, and consequently left a beautiful wake.

No, the thing to do was obviously to pick out the best target, let him have the whole wad—and then Git! His brain clicking like a machine, Moore

selected the rear ship in the second section, which was also rear ship in the formation, as his target. They all looked to be about the same size, and the only criterion, so far as he could determine, was to select him so that there would be the minimum opportunity of a chance sighting of his torpedoes by one of the other vessels. Besides, remember, he had to get out from in front in time to turn around and get his torpedo tubes lined up!

The problem was one which was intimately correlated to the time factor—the length of time required for each maneuver of the submarine; and Dinty knew to the second how long it took S-44 to perform every maneuver of which she was capable. The problem with which he was faced was not so easy as with a new, modern fleet submarine, where in such a case one had only to pull away from the target's track and fire stern tubes when he went by astern. S-boats had no stern tubes! They always have to shoot from their bows! Furthermore, they carried no automatic angle-solving device, and no automatic gyro angle setter. Gyros could be set, true enough, by hand; but once the gyro setting spindle was withdrawn from the torpedo, there could be no further changes made. The firing angle and firing bearing were calculated from a remarkable contrivance known as a "banjo," which, in the hands of a skilled and cool operator could give the right answer, and in the hands of anyone else could give only confusion.

But the "banjo"—which looks like one, hence its name—is not a speedy instrument; and anyway, the gyro angles have to be preset. So Dinty has to do some fast calculating in order to determine on which side of him the target will pass, what will be his firing bearing, gyro angle, firing interval (remembering that it cannot be allowed to be less than eight seconds, and that the target speed, which he must deduce, plus its estimated length and the range at which he expects to fire, all enter into the determination of the number of degrees he can set between "fish" and still be able to fire them all with the same firing bearing at the successive points of aim—number one turret, stack, mainmast and screws—and have all four hit in the target).

In the meantime, Dinty has also to take observations of the enemy ship and maneuver his own ship so as to reach his predetermined firing position, no matter what the target does. And on top of that, once he has figured out what the target will do, he has to remain alert for a sudden change in the situation which might require a complete recasting of his whole scheme of attack—and if that should occur, he must make the necessary adjustments, perhaps within a matter of a few seconds! Truly, this is hardly a job for amateurs!

But it doesn't seem hard, to hear Dinty tell about it. Since the original angle on the bow was only five starboard (that is, the submarine was five degrees on the target's starboard bow) at a range of nine thousand yards, and his estimated speed is sixteen knots, he will be at torpedo junction about seventeen minutes from the time of first sighting. Seventeen minutes for S-44 to turn, get off the track, and then turn again to the firing position. Moore's report simply says that he turned left and opened the distance to the track, diverging seventy degrees for five minutes; then turned back for *"an eighty track shot with zero gyro angles,"* or, in plain English, for a nearly perfect set-up, firing torpedoes with zero gyro angle set (thus having most chance of perfect functioning), broadside on to the target.

Dinty didn't start his maneuver until he had observed the target for several minutes, so he had only scant minutes to go when he gave the order. It took S-44 about two minutes to turn, and about the same to turn back. That left four minutes, and S-44 was all set. On the firing course, creeping along at minimum speed so as not to close the track too much, all four torpedoes ready, shutters and outer doors open, the firing bearing checked and double checked, the banjo ready for a last-minute change in set-up resulting from an unexpected zig.

Nothing to do, now, but wait. With the single exception of waiting for your torpedoes to hit, this is the most excruciating wait in the world. Four minutes, during which the enemy may detect you and commence a counter-attack with the odds of position in his favor, instead of yours. Four minutes, for the duration of which you have exposed yourself to an alert lookout or sound man, during which you have irrevocably committed your ship, your crew and yourself—all for the twenty-four seconds it will take you to shoot four torpedoes. Four minutes, during which you wait, with spine tingling and stomach trembling, during which you suddenly notice the clammy feeling in your hands and the itch of perspiration on the three-day growth of whiskers under your chin, during which you discover that there is time to be afraid, after all.

The leading cruiser in the second section approaches the firing bearing. Just before he gets there, Dinty swiftly raises the 'scope barely an inch above the water for a quick look. The periscope has hardly stopped moving upward when he motions with his left thumb for it to be lowered, and there is scarcely a break in the soft whine of the periscope motor as down it starts again. In that interval, however, he has observed the first ship and the target as well, five hundred yards astern, has noted that there is no change in course, that the angle on the bow is as it should be, and that the target bearing is being accurately reported by the sound man in the forward torpedo room of the submarine.

All during the approach, sound has been chanting the sound bearing of the *"left-hand set of heavy screws,"* with occasional digressions at the skipper's command to "sweep all around," or to "give the bearing of the other heavy screws," just a few degrees to the right of those emanating from the target. An ordinary office intercommunication speaker perched near the periscope squeaks out the sound-man's bearings in a strained monotone.

No need to worry about the two vessels of the first section. Dinty has so chosen his firing position that they are on the far side of the target group—hence not in position to sight torpedo wakes. Now the leading ship of the second section has come so close that no sound gear is needed to hear the deep solo, seemingly coming from all directions at once: *"Chug, chug, chug, chug, chug, chug."* At about this time the murmur of the electric periscope hoist motor stops, as the periscope reaches bottom.

"We'll let the first one go by!" rasps out Dinty, forgetting for the moment that he has decided this long ago (about five minutes ago, to be exact), and that there is not a man in the ship who doesn't know of this decision.

At the moment Moore finishes speaking, the intercom, which has been barking out bearings with a steadily rising inflection as the tense but expert operator followed the target in its doomed approach, suddenly whispers, as though transmitting confidential information for the Captain alone: "Leading ship is crossing our bow!" As if it were not plentifully evident!

Dinty looks at his new "exec." The target is five hundred yards behind this chap. At sixteen knots, or 533 yards a minute, it will take him about fifty-seven seconds to reach the same position. But we are seven hundred yards from the track; torpedo run will be in the neighborhood of thirty-five seconds. That leaves twenty-two seconds. It might as well be twenty-two hours.

At ten seconds, Dinty motions for the periscope to start up, stops it just short of breaking surface. Squatting on the deck of the control-room before it, he has just enough room to bring down the 'scope handles, which had been folded up against the barrel of the periscope so as to clear the walls of the well when the periscope was lowered into it. All is silence within the submarine. Within the confines

of the control-room, all eyes whose owners feel free to take them away, for a moment, from their appointed dials or instruments, gaze at the Captain. They have loyally supported him, given him the best that was in them, up to now; but from this point on, it is his show, and his alone.

Dinty cannot help but feel this rather cold detached attitude—and what captain hasn't, when the chips are finally down—as he prepares for the final effort, the culmination, the consummation, the climax of what has been, up to now, a brilliantly conducted approach. Looking at the overhead of the control-room compartment, at the azimuth ring around the spot where the oily steel shaft of the periscope disappears through the hull plating, he gently and caressingly twists this vital instrument until the hairline scribed on the barrel matches the previously computed firing bearing. His eyes flick to his exec, who quietly says: "Five seconds to go!"

The firing bearing is three-three-six. Target's length is estimated to be six hundred feet; at seven hundred yards firing range, that means that it subtends an angle between propellers (on which sound bearings are taken, of course) and bow of about fifteen degrees. The intercom has been chanting bearings in a steady stream: *"Three one four—three one five—three one five and a half—three one six—three one seven—"*

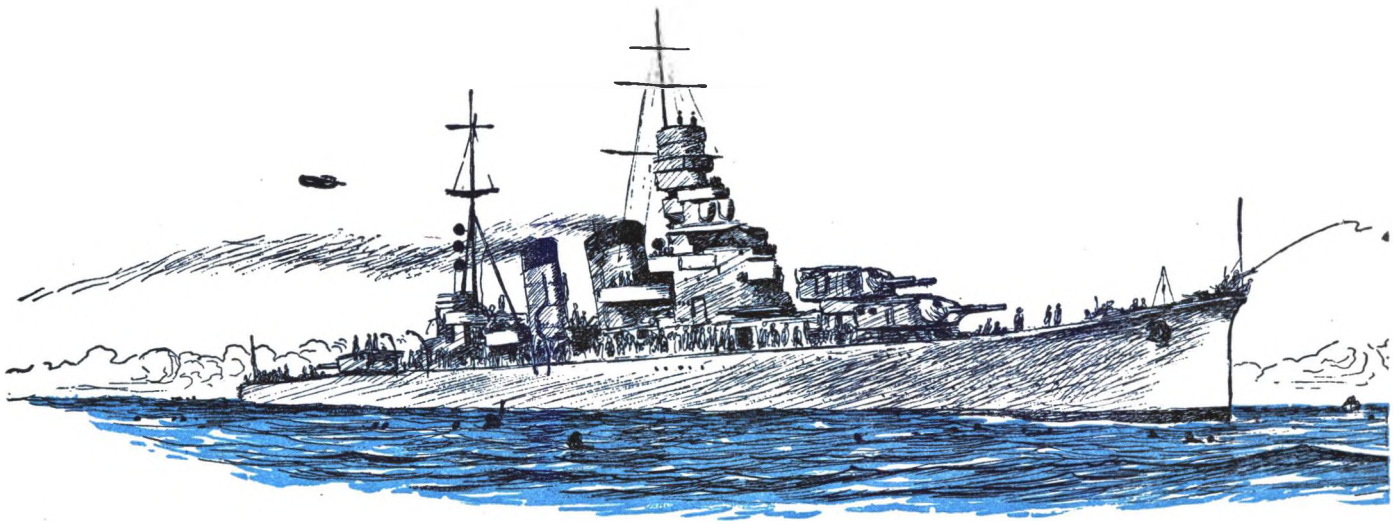
Three one seven plus fifteen is three three two; four degrees to go! *Time to start shooting!*

Simultaneously with the motion of the skipper's thumb, the periscope starts up again. It has only a short distance to travel, since it has previously been raised to within a few feet of the surface of the water. As the eyepiece rises out of the periscope well, Dinty puts his right eye to it with his chin almost touching the deck, and rises with it to a nearly erect position.

He is greeted with the sight which is every sub skipper's dream: The bow of an enemy warship entering the field of his periscope, the white spray kicking up slightly under the forefoot, running swiftly aft along the gray side. Your own periscope hairline just in front of the bow—and as you watch, the bow crosses it and moves on to the right until the ship covers the entire field of view. It has a rather nice clipper shape to it, and it rises and falls slightly as it stands across the firing bearing.

"Out gyro spindles!" snaps Dinty. The gyro spindles, which have been left in the torpedoes until this moment in expectation that a last minute change of firing set-up might become necessary, are whisked out by two of the torpedomen, standing by for just this purpose. They would have

The creaking and groaning are as though the ship were crying out in protest.



jerked them out, in any event, in a moment, for the Chief in charge of the torpedo-room has mentally determined that he is not going to waste *these* torpedoes. With the uncanny skill which all experienced submarine men seem to develop, he is fully aware of the situation "topside," and that the firing bearing is practically upon them.

"Stand by!"

The word rushes through the ship. This is it! The sibilant syllables are repeated over and over—permeating the very decks and bulkheads with their pregnant message: *"Stand by. . . . Stand by."*

EXTERNALLY calm, inwardly boiling with anticipation, Moore stands in a half crouch at his not quite fully extended periscope. It is not fully raised, so that in case the diving officer should happen to lose a foot or so of depth at this crucial juncture, the skipper can compensate for it in a hurry by raising the scope a bit more. All this is doctrine—and doctrine is what Dinty is working on, for the situation he finds himself in is what every submariner has been living for, and working for—and the details of what he has to do are so graven in his subconscious that he will accomplish them without in the least realizing that his actions are the product of years of drill, study and preparation by himself and other members of the Submarine Force.

The undulating deck of the Jap impresses itself with surprising distinctness in Dinty's mind, as the cruiser swishes past his periscope. The figures of men can be seen, walking about the decks, or leaning indolently on the lifeline. . . . Wait just a bit more, Dinty. . . . Wait for the turret. . . . That's your point of aim for Number One. . . . The foremost turret comes into view, and moves irresistibly to the right until it is exactly bisected by the engraved centerline in the 'scope. The point of aim—the firing bearing—your torpedoes ready—

"Fire One!"

S-44 shudders as the first torpedo is ejected from its tube, running straight ahead, true as a die. Not for nothing has that chief torpedoman's mate babied it for these three weeks!

No sign of alarm on the cruiser yet. . . . Wait a bit more. . . . Wait for the stack. . . . Here she comes!

"Fire Two!"

Again the lurch, and again a torpedo runs straight ahead, exactly down the path of bubbles left by the first.

Still no sign that the torpedoes have been seen, though to the anxious watcher behind the periscope they are bubbling and smoking on their way down the range like two old locomotives on their way up a tough grade. The stub of a mainmast moves into the 'scope—touches the hairline.

"Fire Three!"

There is still no sound in S-44, save the hiss of air, the accelerating whines of the deadly "fish," and the crisp orders of the Captain. He waits for the stern, judges the point where the propellers ought to be—just ahead of where the wake commences.

"Fire Four!"

For the fourth time S-44 reels and trembles as she disgorges her messenger of destruction. Relieved from his job of aiming and firing, Dinty swiftly sweeps the decks of his target, and especially inspects the bridge for any signs of sudden activity. All this in about five seconds, for this is not the time to play the spectator. Maybe there is some significance to a little movement he detects on the bridge, maybe not. Anyhow, with all torpedoes expended out of his tubes, and with no prospect of having the opportunity to load more, there is not much point in taking too big a risk of a good depth-charging with a twenty-year-old hull—riveted, at that.

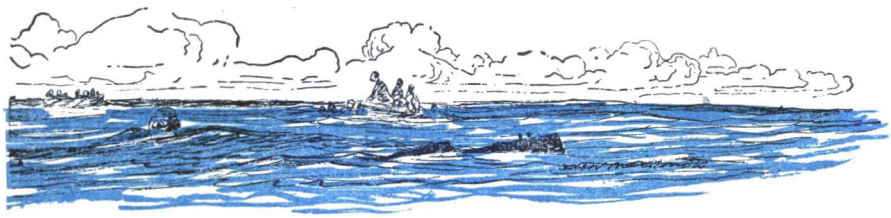
"Down scope!" Forgetting his carefully built-up periscope technique for the moment, Moore barks out the command simultaneously with the thumb motion. *"Take her down! . . . All ahead full!"* A few seconds later, when she has definitely started down, *"Left full rudder!"* This to clear the spot from which the torpedoes were fired, leaving their telltale wakes in the water for all to see whence they came. Dinty plans to run nearly under his target, hoping that the disturbed water in her wake will make sound detection of his noisy ship more difficult.

Whang! This is the sound all hands have been listening for, what they have been tensely waiting for. It is a hard sound to describe—not a low-pitched rumble, as one might expect, but a fairly high-pitched metallic clang, as though a wash-boiler were hit a powerful blow by a huge sledgehammer. The depth charge is the sound which most nearly resembles it, but there is no mistaking a torpedo hit when you hear it under circumstances such as these. *Whrranggg!* Another hit! And then two more—*Whrranggg! . . . Whrranggg!* Four bull's-eyes in the starboard side of the ill-fated *Kako!* Her fate is sealed, for there is no Jap cruiser built which can remain afloat after this kind of treatment!

Ever the master of the anti-climax, Dinty's only comment on his good luck—if you want to call it that—was: *"The surprising thing is that all torpedoes hit—sure is good to have a long target to shoot at."*

ALMOST immediately after the explosions, popping, crackling, and hissing noises could be distinctly heard through the thick hull of the submarine. No need for the sound man's excited reports—everyone in the ship could hear them, reverberating inside the cylindrical steel "pig-boat" as they would inside a drum. The death-throes of a proud ship have been many times reported from the point of view of a surface observer; but seldom, if ever, have they been watched from below the surface of the sea. The creaking and groaning are as though the whole great fabric of the ship were alive and crying out in protest. The gurgling and popping of water pouring into the ship are interspersed with heavier noises, like banging and smash-

Dinty might have seen one cruiser steaming disjointedly about, picking up survivors of the sunken ship.



ing, the whole indicating progressive flooding of some compartments and the sudden breaching of others, when the limits of bulkhead strength have been reached. As the ship rolls over on her side all gear not strongly fastened down rips its moorings and falls to the low side. Steam lines and boiler tubes, as they become immersed in the ever-greedy sea, writhe and twist, hissing violently all the while, and finally burst open at some location of maximum stress. The motion developed, the heaving and the snorting, the sloshing back and forth, all remind one of a huge sea monster thrashing madly about in his final agonies.

OTHER noises are heard also. First, there is the unmistakable sound of gunfire, and of shells hitting the water. Nothing to lose any sleep over, this, for even the Japs ought to know that they are simply wasting ammunition. But within a few minutes a more ominous sound is heard—and felt! Depth-charges!

Depth-charges usually sound a lot like torpedo hits—with some very significant differences. They are not quite so high in pitch, for one thing, and they are usually accompanied by a heavy blow against the hull of your submarine. But the most important difference is that you don't know how many to expect, nor exactly when. Add to this the fact that you know damned well that they are dropped by a friend of the fellow you have just slapped a pickle into—or maybe the same guy, if you missed—and *you* are the target, not *he*.

Cruisers are not very good depth-charge droppers, however, being too slow to turn around, and requiring too much time to speed up or slow down. Besides that, a cruiser is not a particularly bad target itself, and hence would supply pretty good incentive for the sub getting the working over to come up to periscope depth prepared to swap a few swats or so in exchange for those received. Hence, cruisers tend to avoid depth-charging assignments, when possible, even when more or less forced into one. In this instance, the thought must have very quickly occurred to the Jap skipper that he had very pressing business elsewhere, and that one of his charges had probably sunk the submarine responsible for the unpleasant incident anyway. So he dropped thirteen half-hearted charges in the general direction of S-44 – Dinty said they were *"close enough to shake the ship a bit, but none very close."* By that he meant that none of them threatened to shake his teeth loose, but no submariner ever considered a depth-charging fun, even though he might have quite deliberately invited it, as in this case.

However, an hour and a half after the attack, S-44 began to come back up to periscope depth, in order to take stock of the situation. She had been running "silent" since firing, and it was still considered inexpedient to risk the noise of loading four more torpedoes from the racks into the tubes, since screws could still be heard on the bearing of the firing point, not far distant. She had just reached eighty feet, on the way up, when—*Wham!* . . . *Wham!* . . . *Wham!* . . . *Wham!* . . . *Wham!* *Wham!* Six depth charges went off right alongside! Frantically, the sound man turned his listening dome around in all directions, to try to locate the source from which this new attacker had sneaked up upon them—no luck! It must have been a plane, and now there really was something to worry about! Before the dust, flecks of dried paint and bits of cork which had been knocked into the fetid atmosphere inside the intrepid submarine had yet fallen to the deck, all controls had been put on full dive, and S-44 went back into the friendly anonymity of the ocean depths.

TOO bad, for Dinty would have given a lot for a look at what was going on topside right then. Well he might, for he would have seen one cruiser, the one he had refrained from shooting in order to make sure of the one he had slated for Davy Jones, steaming erratically about, picking up survivors of the sunken ship. Air cover and the fantastically alert anti-submarine watch she now kept—her rail was lined solidly on both sides, from bow to stern, with men intently searching for periscopes or telltale torpedo wakes—plus the fact that she did not stay on any course or speed for more than a moment or two, would have made her a most unsatisfactory target. Knowing the mettle of the S-44's skipper, it was just as well that he didn't know what was going on, for he would undoubtedly have tried to get her too.

And that is about all there is to tell. In due time, S-44 returned to her base at Brisbane to receive the envious plaudits of the whole submarine force, as well as acclaim from far away Washington, D. C., where the news that one of the Japanese task force had been sunk was, at that time, about the only good news our leaders had. Nothing could avenge the debacle of the ninth of August, of course; for though the ships could be, and were, replaced, nothing could replace the brave men who died in them.

Doughnut Jockey

THE AUTHOR OF "THE TORN TIN COAT" HERE GIVES US A BRILLIANT STORY OF AIR TRAVEL IN THE FUTURE.

by ERIK FENNEL

FAINTLY the unmistakable howl of a driver rocket drifted across the ten-mile-wide safety strip surrounding Mukilteo Spaceport. The new guard heard it, and frowned inquiringly.

Mike Kelly cocked one ear, yanked the lever opening the main gate, then jerked the new man bodily into the low pillbox-like gatehouse. He kicked the heavy door shut.

"That's Doughnut Merrill turning off the highway," he lectured. "If the gate ain't open, he'd as soon drive that hell-wagon automobile right through it. He's got a miniature Haskell driver bolted into the back deck of that roadster. Fixed it himself. The cops would throw away the keys if they caught him using it on the roads, so he plays out here like he's flying low. Wild as a coot, that fellow."

"But won't he stop to check in?" The new man took his duties seriously.

Kelly snorted. "He never does. And this morning he has a good excuse, for once."

"What's it all about, anyhow?"

Kelly looked serious. "Must be something bad wrong. Interplanet don't break schedule for fun."

WALTER MERRILL glanced toward the blast pits as he passed the perimeter fence. The squatty, ludicrous shape of *Doughnut II* was already on the supports. *Fireball* lay beside it in the retrieving cradle on which it had been dragged from Puget Sound after its last run, sleek and slender and, to anyone with an engineering brain, breathtakingly beautiful.

The three tall cranes were in position, their boom tips interlocked to form the stable tripod needed to set a *Fire*-class ship upright. They always made Merrill think of gawky long-necked geese whispering secrets.

Soon *Fireball* would be positioned in the hole of *Doughnut*, ready to go out. The scene was perfectly familiar, but this time it carried a special thrill. Merrill smiled happily. This was his big day.

He cut the jet, tromped brakes, and from sheer exuberance made it a spectacular squealing stop—one that streaked hot rubber across the parking lot beside the administration building. He felt eager and well disposed toward all mankind as he headed for Jerry Slidell's office.

The operations manager of Interplanet started to jump up, then remembered what long accelerations in the pre-Gravinol days had done to his heart valves, and rose more sedately. He was in his thirties, but his hair was white from radiation leakage, and his face was deeply lined.

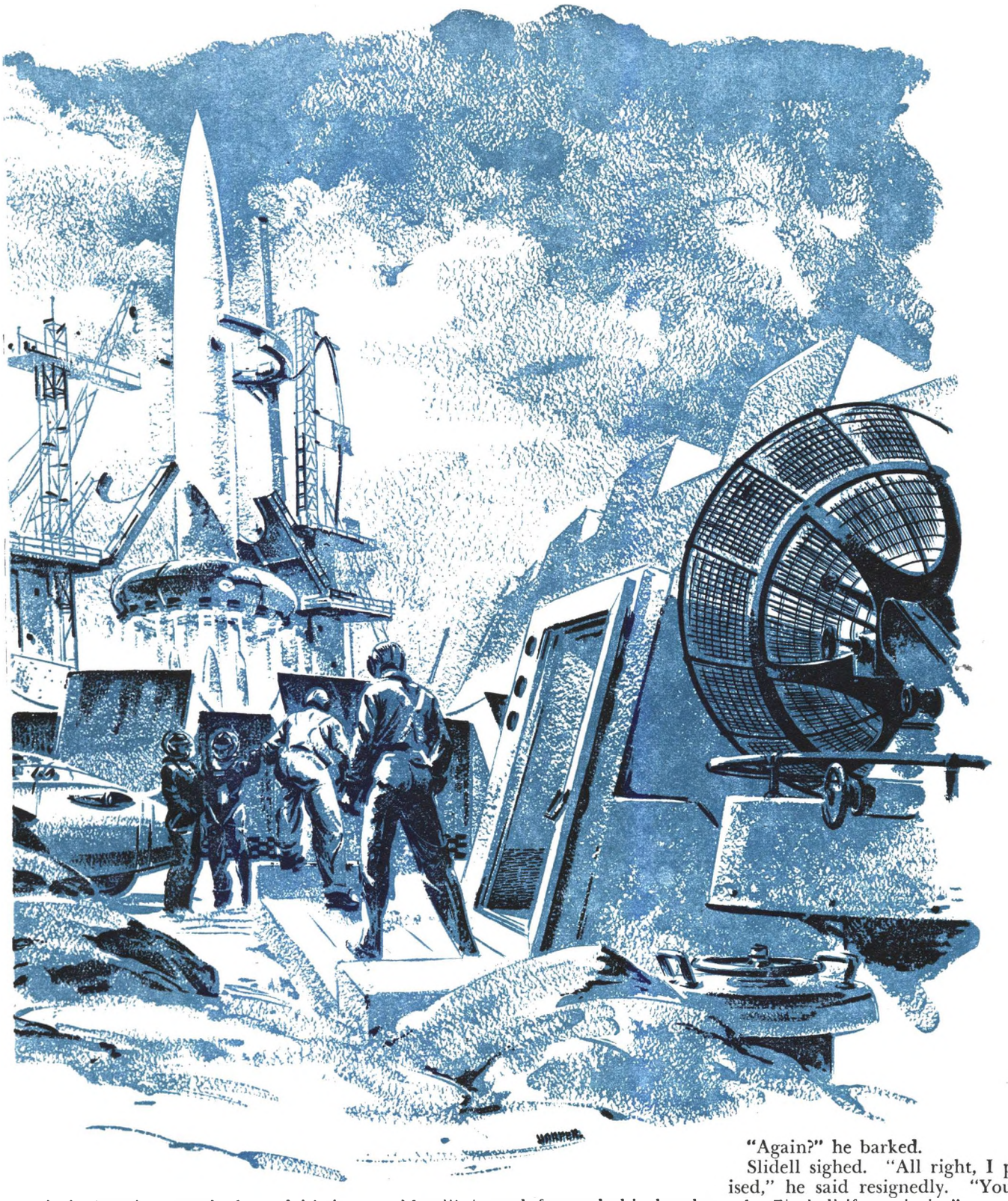
"How long to blast-off?" Merrill began. "Tape ready? What's wrong at Mars Colony to need a special hop?"

Slidell eased himself back into his chair.

"A pneumonia carrier—one of those people who have it in their systems without showing any symptoms—must have got through the medical checkup. And you know what high-level meson stuff and Rho shower-effect discharges from the hull plates do to viruses. This mutation is so damnably virulent it stands to wipe out the Colony."

Merrill whistled in dismay.

"Benson and his relief pilot were both coming down with it when they splashed *Firefly* in last night. But the doctors say this new serum should hold even a mutant virus—if we get it out there in time. We found a sup-



ply in Seattle—pure luck—and it's being loaded now to stand acceleration and shock.

"So *Fireball* goes out light, no load but the serum, no relief pilot even, and it'll be full boost, open throttle, and jets all the way."

"But—"

"I know, I know! She'll get in without enough fuel to come back, and there she sits out of action until the Marsport plant starts producing. It messes up the whole schedule, but there's nothing else to do."

Merrill leaned forward, his hands gripping the edge of Slidell's desk.

"Jerry, I'll set you a speed record that will stand a long time," he declared.

He had a disturbing thought then, but before he could put it into words, the operations manager looked him in the eye.

"Walter!" He avoided the nickname he knew Merrill detested. "Just a minute. Don't you think—"

Instantly the smile was gone from Merrill's lean face.

"Again?" he barked.

Slidell sighed. "All right, I promised," he said resignedly. "You can take *Fireball* if you insist."

"But you want me to—"

"Use your head, Walter. We need all the boost *Doughnut II* will put out. Not bare escape velocity. And you know there hasn't been time to check her properly since you boosted *Firestreak* out last Thursday. You're the one who—"

"How about Bob Ord?"

"He could, under normal conditions. But this won't be standard pattern. Besides, we haven't been able to find him yet. This *would* hap-

Illustrated by Arthur Harper

There were eighteen zippers and twenty-seven adjustment straps on the suit, and he checked each one personally.

pen between schedules, when everybody's scattered to hell and gone!"

"Now, listen here, Jerry. I don't intend to get pushed—"

"Walter, I'm doing my best. I caught Wraxton vacationing in Los Angeles, and he should be here in a couple hours to see what he can do."

Merrill grimaced. Wraxton of Chesapeake Spaceport was supposed to be a good boosterman, but *Doughnut* was touchy, and Chesapeake used a different control system. The pleasant feeling of a few minutes earlier had evaporated completely.

Slidell's voice was suddenly crisp with authority. "Go get your shots. Thomas will take care of you. We'll settle later who takes what."

Merrill didn't argue, but if the door panel had been glass instead of plastic, it would have shattered as he slammed it. As he stomped toward the locker-room he had a rebellious suspicion that he was being had—again.

HASKELL - JENKINS nuclear shift drivers had taken spaceflight out of the over-Niagara-in-a-barrel category, but they had the intrinsic drawback of critical mass limitation. Too much fuel, and a ship exploded spontaneously. Enough to stay under the e.c.m. and it could reach Mars—but on the return voyage it would run out of fuel before completing deceleration, and hit Earth's atmosphere fast enough to burn itself to powder.

The intricate equipment involved made step-rockets, in which sections were jettisoned in space, fantastically uneconomical. So the great brains of Interplanet had conceived the *Doughnut* to boost its ships through the power-hogging lift from Earth.

Walter Merrill had been picked off the Luna experimental work for his uncanny power sense and delicate kinesthetic perceptions, for no auto-control had been devised capable of coping with all the variables of blast-off. He had become Interplanet's first and only boosterman.

In many ways it was a dream job. One boost-out a month, with the rest of the time almost entirely his own. A salary rating of Senior Pilot "A," which easily financed such impractical hobbies as putting jets on an automobile, as well as a house and sailboat and all the trimmings. A sense of importance too, for the fate of each spaceship was in the hands of the boosterman during the most critical interval.

But dissatisfaction had set in. Boosting lacked the glamour of deep space. The line pilots and their relief men talked endlessly of the strange floating landings through the low .38 gravity of Mars, and of the remnants of a vanished civilization there, and of the Colony that was beginning to grow at Marsport—and all he could do was keep his mouth shut.

He was a glorified elevator operator, missing out on the high adventure that lay out there, never getting much beyond Luna's orbit, and ending each flight with a hissing drop into Puget Sound beside the Mukilteo beacon, while his friends one after another had been given command of full-fledged space vessels.

Recently even men he had been forced to downcheck as potential boostermen had been taking ships through to the Colony. Here he was, stuck in a rut, and every time he had been promised a line run, something had gone sour!

HE stripped and put on the buttonless one-piece knit garment he would wear beneath his circulation suit, then kicked his feet savagely into a pair of slippers and shuffled down the hall to the medical department. In the empty treatment-room he stuck two fingers into his mouth and whistled shrilly.

Bubsy Thomas emerged from the dispensary. She had auburn hair and green eyes; and her white stockings and starched nurse's uniform could not hide the fact she carried de luxe equipment throughout; but for once he was too disturbed to open the conversation with his customary suggestion of matrimony.

"Limit dose," he told her. "And Neogravinol too. This hop will get rough."

She looked at him questioningly. The boosterman ordinarily did not need the more prolonged action of Neogravinol in addition to the regular Gravinol shot.

"You had breakfast before the office caught you," she accused.

"Coffee and toast," he hedged.

"—and three eggs and a pound of bacon. I've seen you eat. Now get your teeth out."

"Aw, honey!" he protested.

Impatiently she tapped a toe against the waxed flooring.

His front uppers had been removable ever since one of the Luna experimentals had set in with a smash

that broke his shock chair straps, but still he felt there was something comical and faintly disreputable about wearing falsies. Too much like those females who wore padding to remedy natural deficiencies—which Bubsy definitely did not.

Grimly she watched him, and finally he took them out.

She measured a brownish liquid into a small glass while he cursed the medical records for telling her about his teeth. They hardly helped make him a romantic figure.

"The basin is over there," she directed. "Now drink this."

Two minutes later he had no further worries about gravity cramps from a full stomach. It was full no longer.

"Sometime you'll blast with that bridgework in, and get it knocked down your throat," she warned as she had often before.

"A lot you'd care," he growled, still retching.

"But I would," she declared sweetly. "You might wreck a ship."

Before he could think of a suitable rejoinder, she had the hypos ready.

"I shot your left arm last time," she remembered, and he rolled back his right sleeve.

Deftly she found the vein and pressed the plunger. Then, changing syringes, she began to inject the Neogravinol.

"If you take – sit still, darn it! – who'll handle–"

His skin was prickling and itching, and a distinct rainbow aura was forming around every object in the room as the drugs took effect.

"Ord, maybe. Or Wraxton from Chesapeake. But I'm taking *Fireball.*"

For a moment her hands were unsteady.

"And why not?" he asked sharply. "I can straighten out any trajectory error they hand me."

"If it's not too bad," she corrected. "But what about Mars Colony if *Fireball* gets a sour boost and has to abort?"

Merrill didn't want to think about that. "But I don't intend to keep on–"

Jerry Slidell banged through the door. His face was streaky pale from moving too violently, but his tongue was unimpaired.

"Wraxton was flying his own plane up," he told them at last with forced calmness. "At Medford some lard-headed student cut in on him during landing. He's got a fractured leg and concussion. Now what the hell?"

"Call Ord," Merrill snapped. He was in the depressive-irritant phase that followed a Gravinol injection. He started to get up, but the nurse pushed him back. He had to take it easy until the shots "settled in."

Slidell glared. "Been trying, and still am. You think I got holes in my head?"

"Yes, if you think I'm going to–" Merrill growled sullenly.

"Shut up, both of you!" Bubsy interrupted. "Barking at each other won't help."

Slidell's shoulders slumped, and his manner was almost pleading.

"You'll stay on call, Walter?"

"Yeah. I'll be around until you get me a boosterman."

A CIRCULATION suit was too heavy to put on until the last minute, so he had nothing to do but wait. It should have been pleasant, but the nurse ignored him while she cleaned up and put the hypodermics in the sterilizer. The few glances which she did cast his way were troubled, almost angry.

He used her phone to get preliminary flight data from Calculations. Then he fidgeted.

"What's the idea of giving me the busy signal so much lately?" he asked at length. "You sore at me? Or is it that Fred Morgan off *Firesprite?*"

The girl turned quickly, as though she had been waiting for that question.

"I've been afraid."

"Huh?"

"Not of you. Of myself. Afraid moonlight and biochemistry would gang up on me."

"And that would be wrong, because I'm a boosterman instead of a line pilot?" he demanded belligerently.

Her eyes misted unexpectedly. "You and I both know there's something real under all our kidding. But Walter, I want a husband who's emotionally mature, who understands responsibilities and accepts them instead of acting like a brat in a temper tantrum."

Merrill frowned.

Jerry Slidell's voice interrupted, rattling abruptly through the interoffice call-box. "We've found Bob Ord. Get ready to give him his shots."

Instantly the nurse thrust personal matters aside.

Merrill felt better. Slidell wasn't giving him the runaround after all. But now he had a different worry.

He had let Bob handle a few splits, those critical moments when *Doughnut* and boosted spaceship parted company; and although Bob looked more promising than any of the other men sent to him for training, he hadn't yet quite got the feel. This was going to be a tough boost; and it had to be good—or else. He only hoped Bob could hold the trajectory skew below the limit that meant aborting the flight.

Slidell's voice came again, tinny through the speaker.

"Walter, better get your suit on."

Automatically Merrill answered. "On my way!"

He turned to the nurse as the connection snapped off.

"How'd he know I was here?" he demanded.

She smiled, half tenderly and half teasingly. "Everyone around here knows how long and pointed and gray-furred your ears are. And since that front-office blonde–"

"She did not!" he retorted indignantly. "And I never made a pass at her, anyhow."

"Okay. So you didn't, and she didn't." Bubsy pulled that infuriating feminine trick of refusing to argue.

THERE were eighteen zippers and twenty-seven adjustment straps on the suit, and he checked each one personally while the two dressers made the suit-to-boots, suit-to-gloves, suit-to-helmet and helmet-to-face-mask hook-ups. Then he lumbered stiffly across the room and plugged in to the test modulator.

The over-all inflation went on, squeezing his body equally from all directions. He jiggled the manual control—in flight the pressure would compensate automatically with acceleration—and it responded perfectly.

He cut in the sectional controls, and felt the familiar yet eerie rippling sensations as a multitude of tiny compartments in the suit began rhythmic fluctuations in response to his body's needs as reported by built-in blood pressure and pulse and respiration meters. The suit's action had been patterned after the peristaltic movements of a digestive system, using the same idea of progressive, serially applied pressures, and his fingertips and toes tingled as the blood was hurried along.

In tree-dwelling days the human race had developed a reflex response to short-duration, one-G falls. Veins and arteries constricted; blood pressure shot up; and major changes took place in the action of the heart valves. This automatic reaction had minimized the injuries of many a falling man, and it was still right for its original purpose.

But under the hours-long, multi-G strains of spacelight, it became a peril instead of a protection, putting strains on the body that meant permanent damage. Gravinol short-circuited the reflex, but if used alone under heavy acceleration, it would bring blood circulation—and the pilot's life—to a dead stop. The answer, worked out at heavy cost in lives and health, was Gravinol plus a circulation suit.

The suit felt right, almost as though it were alive and part of his body. He nodded okay, unplugged, then loosened his face-mask for comfort. Then he turned heavily at a sound behind him.

"Hiya, Bob," said Merrill, friendly enough. This finagling wasn't Ord's fault.

Ord squinted. He was having difficulty focusing his eyes.

"Neo?" Merrill asked.

"Yeah. I still itch."

Merrill's lips tightened. Neogravinol for Ord meant that Slidell was still scheming.

"What'd Jerry tell you?" he demanded challengingly.

"Nothing. Said get the dope from you."

Merrill made a face. That smelled like an attempt to appeal to his "better nature." Nuts to that!

He was just a bit sick with disappointment. All the while he had handled the *Doughnuts,* he had dreamed of his first real command, dreamed the day of his first deep space blast-off up into quite an event. Now those dreams had gone bust, and he felt sour and blue, cheated of the exhilaration he had anticipated.

Slidell's voice buzzed through the speaker. "You pilots hurry up! We don't want to recalculate."

Merrill was on his feet at once, anxious to give Slidell a hot earful and then climb into *Fireball.* After this flight, he'd see about a job with Chesapeake on the Venus run.

THE pick-up car was waiting, the driver goosing his engine, and as Merrill climbed aboard, the operations manager thrust both autocontrol tapes into his gloved hands. There was no question which was which, for *Doughnut's* tape was much wider than *Fireball's.* Still, no tape could handle all the unpredictable variables. That was what made a pilot.

Merrill skimmed the visual sheets and trajectory graphs, while Ord peered over his shoulder.

"What's the orders?" he asked truculently.

"Get it out hot and in line," Slidell said.

"But—"

"You know the situation and what's needed. I wash my hands of it." Slidell sounded thoroughly disgusted.

"But—"

Bubsy leaned across the car door and kissed him. "That's for luck," she whispered.

Then she drew back. "Don't forget your teeth," she said aloud.

"Listen here, Jerry," Merrill began, ignoring the girl for more important matters.

Slidell jerked a thumb at the driver, and in a second the car was streaking toward the blast pit.

"Damn him!" Merrill growled, handing *Doughnut's* graph sheets to his companion.

Ord whistled, then looked pained.

"You don't have to rub it in," he said, still irritable from his shots.

"Huh?" Merrill's eyes widened. Bob had nothing to gripe about. Either way, this day's work would get him a Senior Pilot rating, and Interplanet never downgraded a man without very good cause.

"Damn! This break would have to come now, on an off-standard boost and before I was ready for it!" the junior pilot said bitterly.

"You mean you actually want—" Merrill demanded incredulously.

"Why the hell do you think I requested tryout assignment on *Doughnut?*" Ord snapped.

Merrill took that idea for what it was worth.

"Well, okay. If you think you can boost me anywhere near trajectory, I'll take *Fireball.* Be glad to."

Ord looked grateful but uncertain as the car began to slow, and Merrill wasn't entirely happy either. . . .

Doughnut's jets were humming and the snoring rumble of *Fireball's* five big nozzles reverberated deep in the pit. The heat of the idling drivers sent a stinging breeze against Merrill's uncovered face.

Doughnut was nothing but a huge power ring fitting snugly around the middle of *Fireball,* designed to feed a maximum of fuel through her drivers in a minimum time. Her range was short, but she had a theoretical acceleration, minus ship, of better than forty gravities – which Merrill had never been so suicidal as to test.

Her thirty-six jets were fixed-mounted four degrees radially outward to save the aft half of the boosted ship from blast effect, and three of them were movable plus or minus one degree annularly for rotation correction. There were no vane deflectors, no full-swing jets, no heavy axial stabilizing gyros, no extras whatsoever; and control was accomplished entirely with the fractional throttles. Even turnovers were made without side-thrust or braking rockets, and with the inherently unstable ring design of *Doughnut,* that took handling. She was an ugly and ungraceful machine, strictly functional, a tug rather than a ship; and with her tremendous power she could easily break the neck of any pilot who made a single wrong move.

The pick-up car stopped beside the ground trap, and within seconds the two warm-up mechanics emerged from the tunnel.

"*Fireball's* ready. Everything's normal," one reported.

The other acted uneasy. "Two, five and eleven—" he began.

"Tell Bob too," Merrill interrupted.

"Two, five and eleven overheating, eleven the worst. Seventeen running incomplete shift as far as I dared try her, but may clear at full throttle. Thirty-two still sputtering as if the nozzle field is out of phase."

He turned back to Merrill. "That's the one you reported, sir. We were going to yank the tube, but didn't get time."

"It adds up how?" Merrill demanded.

"She'll be hell to balance."

"But she'll lift?"

"Yes. The dynes come up."

Merrill's face hardened. "Then we don't cancel. Well, Bob?"

Ord's face was pale. "That ties the ribbons on it," he said slowly. "Guess I'm plain scared. You're senior man; you call it."

But Merrill knew it was the thought of what a sour lift here would mean on Mars, rather than the chances of a crash, that had Bob Ord frightened. He sighed, feeling as harried as Jerry Slidell usually looked, but admiring Ord's honesty.

"Here's your tape, Bob," he said. "Luck!"

Together they ducked into the tunnel leading to the ships. The mechanics tugged the counterweighted trapdoor shut behind them, and ran for the car.

Around the spaceport perimeter the sirens shrieked their warning to take cover or take the consequences.

MERRILL crowded clumsily into the pilot chair, plugged in his suit, cinched the safety straps, tightened his face-mask, then cursed petulantly as he had to loosen it again to remove his bridgework. He slipped the tape into the robot, threaded the end through the drive sprockets, clipped the visual sheets into the holder where they'd be in sight for reference. He swung his chair back until he lay supine with reference to blast axis, for sitting up during initial acceleration was how pilots got ruptured intervertebral cartilage disks and pinched spinal cords. The control panel on which everything was crowded within fingertip-reach swung with him.

"*Ready?*" he asked. The hull-to-hull contact phone carried his words.

"*Set.*"

He cut in the master intercontrol, and after a momentary pause to run through his mental check-list, he thumbed the Big Red Button. Relays clacked, and the tape hooked in the timers. They were on the roller coaster now—unless they canceled immediately.

He heard a faint click as the external feed lines that had been replacing the fuel burned during warm-up disconnected and retracted.

"Last chance," Merrill announced quickly.

"Clear to lift," the answer came back.

SLIDELL pulled the cobalt glass screen down across the slanting blast-proof window of his office. Conver-

sation was impossible through the uproar of the sirens, so as he glanced at the chronometer, he tapped the nurse's shoulder and held up five fingers.

Involuntarily she winced. Then even through the heavy purple shield the glare filled the room with blistering radiance. Around the pit a flattened sphere of flame more deadly than the heat of any blast furnace ballooned and burst. A shrieking cyclone of superheated gas bombarded the low, solid building with dust and gravel.

A FEW seconds later a second sun was rapidly fading overhead. The din of the sirens lowered and died.

"Was it—" she asked.

"It was very, very smooth—so far."

"But was it—"

Slidell shrugged. He raised the shield and stared unseeingly at the thermal dust-devils still dancing over the field.

"But which one?" she insisted.

Slidell turned impatiently. "Don't you think I want to know too?"

"Sorry, boss."

"Mr. Slidell? Radar Plot," the intercom rasped suddenly.

Jerry gripped the speaker box as though to squeeze information from it. Haskell-Jenkins interference made direct radio contact impossible even on microwave, but three radar eyes were following the *Doughnut-Fireball* combination while a mechanical brain compared their findings with the theoretical flight path.

"How bad?" he demanded.

"Not too much deflection, sir, but a nasty gyration on the longitudinal axis."

"Power output?"

"Full."

Slidell exhaled gently. At least, the flight wasn't aborting—yet.

"Keep me posted," he ordered unnecessarily.

He slumped behind his desk, and from the workings of his face muscles the nurse knew that in spirit he was riding a control chair again, his body heavy under the acceleration stresses, watching the spots of light on the meter faces swing, and punching studs to steady them.

After a few minutes he snapped out of it and used his dictating machine to record a pungent memorandum on changes in medical procedure to prevent other virus carriers from getting aboard any spaceship.

Radar reports during the next hours were poor but maddeningly inconclusive. It was impossible to tell from them whether *Doughnut* was running well and being erratically piloted, or whether someone was really hand-riding a set of surging, unsteady jets. The data grew steadily less intelligible as the Earth turned, and the probing beams pierced the atmosphere at an increasingly oblique angle.

Merrill swung his chair until he lay supine with reference to blast axis.

Finally the intercom spoke again. *"Below horizon. Contact broken."*

Honolulu would take over the tracking, and then Guam.

THE nurse returned to the spaceport after a night of dream-haunted naps and headed directly for Slidell's office. He was already there, and the drawn, gray look on his face made it obvious he had slept no better than she. The current flight graphs were strewn across his desk.

He shoved the power output chart toward her. It was full of irregular sawtoothed peaks and valleys, and although she was not an engineer, she knew they signified jet malfunction. But Slidell was smiling faintly.

"They're still pretty close to plotted trajectory," he told her. "We'll know soon now."

The radiophone buzzed, and as Slidell snatched the handset, Bubsy leaned over to eavesdrop shamelessly.

"Guam? Reduced power on which unit?"

He listened a moment. *"Damn your foul driver emission meters! Why don't you get something sensitive?"*

The radio sputtered indignantly.

"Okay, okay. Yes. I'll see the directors about an appropriation to develop one," he promised, and broke contact.

"They've split, but whether it's line-out or back-out we can't be certain until *Doughnut* and *Fireball* are far enough apart to read their power impulses separately," he explained.

They waited what seemed like ages before Guam called again, and then Slidell picked up the phone as though it might bite.

"Continuing steady full? Good! Other on intermittent low bursts? Thanks!"

That was Merrill's trademark, the signature of a smooth pilot, rocking *Doughnut* into turnover with minimum throttle settings to save his body and ship from the jarring shocks of suddenly applied power.

Bubsy knew it as well as Slidell did, for more than once Walter had diagrammed it for her on restaurant

tablecloths. She grinned, and the operations manager grinned back. Then, suddenly and irrationally, she wanted to cry. She knew the intensity of Merrill's desires, but with a mutant virus loose in Mars Colony, the surest way had been the only decent way. Bob Ord *might* have flown a successful full-power boost, but then—

Slidell looked years younger as he switched his interphone into the public address system.

"All hands! Fireball is lined out!" he announced. *"Hot, straight and normal!"*

For a minute he leaned back and relaxed, then spoke.

"Sit down, Miss Thomas."

She jerked around, startled by the unaccustomed formality, then saw the twinkle in his eyes.

"Are you a sufficiently loyal employee to enter into a private conspiracy for the good of the company?" he asked seriously.

"Just what are you talking about?" she demanded.

"This is off the record yet, but I'm slated to get myself heavily doped and ride deadhead to Marsport for some special development work. The new operations manager here—I just picked him—has guts enough so once he's stuck with this job, he'll hang tight and ride it.

"But he's going to beef and yark and kick at the traces—unless someone helps keep him contented."

Bubsy understood, and smiled as she nodded.

"But it's just for dear old Interplanet, you understand."

Slidell raised one eyebrow quizzically but said nothing.

"Oh, you go to the devil!" she blurted, and blushed for the first time since her high-school days.

THE yellow car actually paused at the gate.

"Checking out."

"Okay, Mr. Merrill, Miss Thomas."

It was one of those crystal nights that come occasionally to foggy Puget Sound, moonless and with a sky full of stars. South of the zenith, the faint pink dot of Mars twinkled invitingly.

Merrill sighed. "That scheming fox! Eighteen months before I get another chance, but I'll get there yet—if Van Zwaluvenberg's new emission meters and *Doughnut III* plans don't land me in the nuthatch first."

The girl let one hand slide along his arm. This was no night for talking shop.

"But they should have some decent transient facilities ready by then, as well as the fuel plant," he continued. "Might even be a good spot for a honeymoon."

"Eighteen months? *Second* honeymoon," she corrected firmly.

A DRAMATIC STORY FROM AN OLD SAILOR'S MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES OF THE STORMY CAPE HORN VOYAGE.

by BILL ADAMS

"Steady your helm!" the skipper roared, his voice half drowned by a sudden squall.

SMART SAILOR

NONE of the other apprentices in the halfdeck abaft the mainmast had any use for the second mate. They agreed with the eldest apprentice who scornfully grumbled, "He thinks too blasted much of himself." To me it seemed that he thought only of the ship, which after all, was what he was aboard for. I was the youngest hand in the halfdeck, and in the second mate's watch. Though he led me the devil of a life when his watch was on deck, I liked him because at night he often called me up to the poop to keep him company. I sometimes stayed there through the whole of a four-hour watch while he yarned about other ships he'd been in; or spoke of different skippers he'd sailed with, and of the different ways various skippers handled their ships.

"You can pick up some new trick in almost any ship. The more tricks you have up your cuff, the smarter sailor you'll be when you get to be a skipper yourself," he said to me one night early in the voyage. The other apprentices were inclined to sneer at me, accusing me of being his pet. But since it was always me he picked on if there was some nasty job to be done, their sneers didn't hold water very well.

From the first minute we clapped eyes on each other, we seemed to click. I remember the first words he ever spoke to me. The ship was gliding out of the African dock, Antwerp, into the stream, bound around the Horn for Frisco. Directly astern came the grand three-skysail-yard full rigger *Fullwood,* also Frisco bound. "Never mind looking at that packet! I'm going to make a sailor out of *you!*" said he. His words made me feel a bit shivery.

A little fellow, short and slight, Clegg couldn't have weighed over a hundred and thirty. He was twenty-five. I was close to eighteen, just starting my first voyage, stood six foot three, and was lank as a bean-pole.

How I hated those infernal swing-ports! There were six in each bulwark. Steel plates four feet long by eighteen inches high, they swung on hinges and were for the purpose of letting the sea run off the decks in heavy weather. When closed, they formed part of the bulwark, and were held in place by a lanyard spliced to a ringbolt in the center and made fast to the pinrail above. It would be a pitch-black night, sleeting or snowing maybe, cold as misery, and beginning to blow. We apprentices of Clegg's watch would be sitting in the snug halfdeck, smoking and yarning. Suddenly his whistle would shrill for one of us. Perhaps it would be my turn to answer. If it were some other fellow's turn, he'd be back in a jiffy to say it was I who was wanted.

"All right! Get a chain-hook, and hop along!" Clegg would say. It was always *hop along* with him. I'd hustle forward and fetch a chain-hook from the locker under the fo'c's'tle head: a steel rod with a handle at one end and a hook at the other. They were for flaking down the cables in the chain locker when the anchors were being hove in.

I'd hand Clegg the chain-hook. He'd kneel on the pinrail above the first swing-port, which was in the quarterdeck bulwark beneath the crojick braces. I'd kneel in the scuppers beneath him, unlash the lanyard that held the port shut, and push it out so that he could lean down and grab it with the chain-hook.

While he was fishing for it in the darkness, the ship would take a hard roll to lee, and the sea would flood in through the open port and soak me. I'd be lucky if the heavy port didn't get away from me and bang down on my hand or arm. Perhaps the ship would take a grayback over her weather rail, and a few tons of icy water would roar down to lee and half drown me. Kneeling on the pinrail, Clegg would be high and dry. As soon as he had the lanyard hooked, he'd bring it up from outside and pass it down to me to haul tight and make fast to a belaying pin in the rail, so that the port would be wide open. "All right. Next port!" he'd say, matter of fact as though we were picking apples. By the time we had the six swing-ports open, I'd be soaked to the backbone and half frozen.

I often wanted to ask him why he didn't ever pick some other apprentice for the job: but one doesn't question an officer. There was a night when, with all the ports open, he said: "Come on up to the poop. It's lonesome as hell up there by myself in this confounded cold." He was bone dry. I was drenched and shivering; but one doesn't question an officer, and so to the poop I went, and stood there for an hour and a half while he talked about some girl he'd met in Antwerp.

The worst time Clegg ever gave me was down in the roaring forties of the South Atlantic. I had a hard time on my first voyage, because I was troubled by vertigo when aloft, and compelled to fight off a horrible dizziness. Also my long legs were a curse. A ship's footropes are not swung with any consideration for a fellow with long legs. Their stirrups are too short. You can't wind your legs round your neck or tuck them into your belt, because you need your feet for walking along the swaying footropes. When a fellow's a hundred and seventy or eighty feet above the sea, with the ship rolling through an arc of anything up to eighty degrees, long legs are quite a problem.

One day when we were furling the mainsail, a job for all hands, a grouchy old foremast hand who had no use for apprentices growled at me: "Phwhy didn't you get yerself a job at a desk ashore so ye could put them long legs under it?" I went red in the face, as a youngster will when ribbed by an old hand, but next moment caught Clegg's eye. He had come aloft to help with the big sail, and gave me a wink. It was as though he said: "Never mind. He'll still be a poor swab of a foremast hand when you're mate of a dandy ship." Though at the time I had small hope of ever being mate of a dandy ship, his wink put the ginger in me and enabled me to do my share of the work despite dizziness and long legs.

BUT about that time in the roaring forties. . . . We were in latitude forty-five south, and due to be sighting Staten within a few days. From Cape St. John's at the east end of Staten, it's only ninety-eight miles southeast to the Horn; but if a ship is so fortunate as to come down to Staten with a following wind, she can, with luck, slip through the strait of Lemaire between Tierra del Fuego and the west end of the island—a saving of some two hundred miles.

We'd sent down the old sails that had brought us through the tradewind latitudes, and replaced each with a storm sail. We'd lashed the weather boards round the taffrail, to keep the Horn seas off the poop, given the hatch tarpaulins new wedges, and the decks a good dressing of hot linseed oil mixed with Stockholm tar. Lifelines were stretched along each side of the deck. She was all ready for the Horn.

That at least was what I supposed, and also the other apprentices and the able seamen. The mate and skipper doubtless thought so too. But Clegg had his own ideas.

The bells struck—eight bells, time for the second mate's watch to come on deck for the afternoon watch. I happened to be first out of the half-deck. The sky hung low and dark above the swaying mastheads. The sea was black, with a long high swell running. With a fresh wind from a little before the beam the ship, under full sail, was pitching hard and rolling more than a little.

The skipper was laid up, had been for two or three days, with a touch of lumbago. The mate went below, to his cabin.

"All right, lads. You can go make robands under the fo'c'stle head," said Clegg to his watch.

Making robands is a monotonous job, but keeps one off the cold wet deck. When there's no mate about, the watch can talk all they like, and snatch a smoke too. With the wind before the beam, it's nice and snug under the shelter of the fo'c'stle head. It was going to be a nice four hours. That's what *I* thought. But as the watch started forward, Clegg called: "You there, Shellberg, and you too!" And he pointed at me.

"Now, vot der secon' mate vant, I vunder," muttered Shellberg, a leather-faced Swede, with wife and two kids in Gothenburg. One seldom met a foremast hand who had any family. While a topping fine sailor, Shellberg never took any needless chances as so many foremast hands did.

Clegg led us to the locker under the break of the poop, brought out a hammer, cold chisel and punch; each with a long lanyard made fast to it; and a pot of black lead. "Get the topsail and lower brace blocks overhauled and blackleaded, you two! Start on the mizzen. Sing out when you're ready for me to slack away the braces. *Hop along!*" he ordered.

I followed Shellberg up the rolling mizzen rigging to the upper topsail yard over a hundred and twenty feet above the sea, and started along after him along the swaying footrope to starboard. I was a bit dizzy, and the pitching and rolling didn't help matters. Shellberg had the hammer and cold chisel slung to his neck. I had the punch slung to mine, and the pot of black lead in my jumper pocket. Heaven help you if you lose any gear overboard in a Blue Nose ship with a Blue Nose skipper and Blue Nose owners!

"Iss better you sits on de yardarm. You younger iss dan me, an' not got vooman an' keeds," said Shellberg as we approached the yardarm. A first voyage apprentice doesn't argue with an able seaman. While he leaned forward, I, with my heart in my mouth and my eyes swimming, managed to swing around behind and pass him by. Then I somehow contrived to seat myself astride the smooth round yardarm, with my long legs dangling above the South Atlantic far below.

"Let go der upper tops'l brace, on deck!" shouted Shellberg, standing on the footrope with his hands on the jackstay. Clegg threw the brace off its pin. The released yard swung forward a couple of feet, with a quick jerk that almost unseated me. Then we pulled up on the wire pennant till we had in our hands the heavy teakwood block through which the rope brace ran up from the deck, and down to it again. While I held both the block and the weight of the rope, Shellberg, with hammer and chisel, removed the little brass plate that covered the end of the sheavepin. Then, while holding block and rope tucked tight under one arm, I held the punch for him, he punched out the pin. Seated astride the rolling yardarm, I took it from him, scraped it bright with my sheath-knife, gave it a good coat of black lead; after that he replaced it, tacked the the brass plate back on, and shouted to Clegg to haul the brace tight.

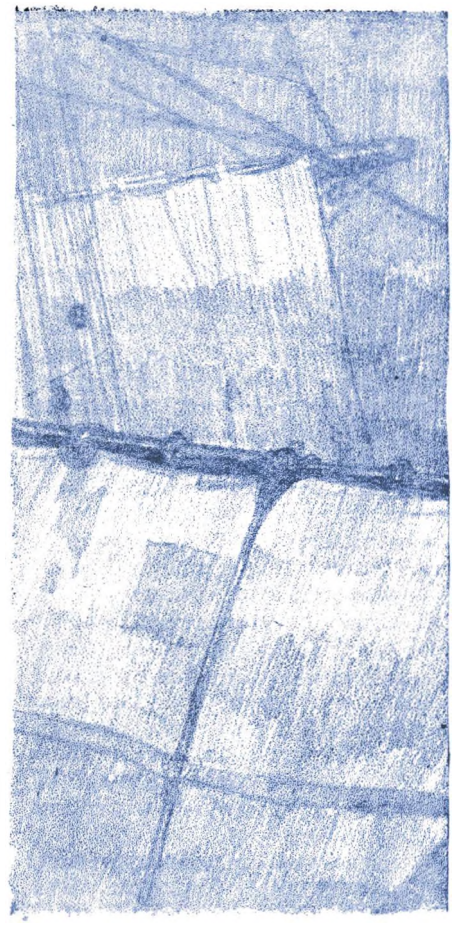
Having survived that operation, which was no less jerky but more prolonged than the releasing, I followed Shellberg in to the mast and out along the port footrope to the port yardarm, where we did the same thing over again with the port brace block. After that, it was down to the lower topsail yard to overhaul its two brace blocks in the same way; and then it was down to the crojick yard. And thanks to Shellberg's "vooman an' two keeds," it was always I who sat astride the horribly rolling yardarms. By the time the crojick brace blocks were finished and we started down to the good solid deck, my thighs were so sore that I could barely walk and was wondering why I ever had come to sea.

"All right. Now the brace blocks on the main! Hop along!" ordered Clegg, matter of fact as could be. So we went up the mainmast and did the same thing over; and having done it, came down again and were ordered to hop along and get up the foremast and overhaul the brace blocks of the fore topsails and foresail; and always, on every yard, because of Shellberg's "vooman an' two keeds," it was I who sat out on every pitching, rolling smooth hard yardarm.

"Thank heaven that's done!" I exclaimed, as we came down from the fore yards.

"Dot not goot yob iss for man mit a vooman an' two keeds," remarked Shellberg.

Two hours of the watch were done. Now I'd be able to go make robands



Always, on every yard, because

under the fo'c'stle head, listen to the talk of the foremast hands and other apprentices, forget the hell I'd just been through, and get the soreness out of my thighs. Mighty thankful I was to be down from those terrible yards!

And as I dropped from the fore shrouds to the comforting solid deck, Clegg called: "All right, now you can start on the mizzen and overhaul the brace blocks of the topgallant and royal yards. That's a one-man job. Hop along!" He was speaking to me, of course.

Well, you don't let an officer, or anyone else, see you're scared. Whether you go overboard or get smashed on the deck, there's only one thing to do. What did you come to sea for, if not to do your job?

Anything I went through on the topsail and lower yards was pie to what I went through on the topgallants. Till now I'd had Shellberg, and company is a great help; even though it be a man with "vooman an' two keeds." The mere sound of another's voice is tremendously comforting.

To go alone to the topgallant yards, which are so much higher than the upper topsail that the ship far below looks like a very slender wedge, was special hell. And I had to take care of all the gear myself—hammer, cold chisel, punch, and pot of black lead. There was no chance to use a hand

of Shellberg's "vooman an' two keeds," it was I who sat out on every pitching, rolling smooth yardarm.

to hang on with. Both were needed for the job. But if the topgallants, mizzen, main, and fore, in turn were torture, the royals were much worse.

The rigging ends at the topgallant masthead. When the royal is not set, its yard rests just above the topgallant masthead. When it is set, its hoisted yard is some eighteen feet higher; and to get to it, one must shinny up the eighteen feet. Every Saturday morning, as soon as the decks have had their daily scrubbing, the royal mast is well greased with old salt-pork slush. It was Saturday afternoon.

From the royal yards the ship looks smaller than ever, of course; and the higher one goes, the more one feels her pitching and rolling. When seated on a topgallant yardarm, it would have been possible to grab the clew, the lower corner, of the royal above, if necessary to save myself from falling. Above the royal yards, there was only a scudding black cloud mass. How I managed to do my job on each of the three masts in turn I don't know; but I did it, and came down all in one piece, and met Clegg as I dropped from the lower rigging to the comfortingly solid deck.

"Did you see anything of *Fullwood* when you were aloft?" he asked.

"I didn't look, sir," I replied, like a young fool. I could have said: "No sir." It would have been the truth.

"You *didn't* look? What sort of sailor are you, with that flyer thinking she's going to whip us to Frisco?" he exclaimed, and added: "Get to that fore royal mast again. Go clear up to the truck, and see if you can see anything of her! *Hop along!*"

I LAID down my gear, climbed dolefully back into the rigging, and went up to the fore royal yard once more. And from there I swarmed, with only the slender pole to cling to, the last eight feet to the truck—the gilded ball at the very summit of the horribly swaying mast.

Away on the starboard beam, hull down, was a full rigger under skysails. I knew her instantly.

"Fullwood on the starboard beam, sir!" I shouted down to Clegg, one hand at my lips, the other gripping the truck; and then, about to start down, I saw that she was lowering away not only her three skysails, but her three royals also; and that beyond her the sky was black with an approaching squall.

"What sail's she carrying?" asked Clegg, as once more I stepped to the deck.

"She's stowing her skysails and royals, sir. There's a stiff squall blowing up," I replied.

"Clew up fore and mizzen royal! Look alive!" he bellowed, and out from beneath the fo'c'stle head ran the watch.

"One of you apprentices go to each of those royals and make it fast! Hop along!" ordered Clegg as soon as the sails were ready for furling.

When it comes to furling sail, the man nearest the rigging is the first man into the rigging. Being that man, I once more climbed into the rigging and started aloft to the fore royal. And before I was thirty feet from the deck, the bell struck. Clegg's watch was over. It was my watch below. But you don't come down from aloft when on the way to furl sail.

The squall caught us as I was passing the upper topsail, heeling the ship down till her lee rail was dipping into the sea. It was midwinter in the south. Daylight was nigh gone. By the time I started out along the royal footrope, forms on the deck were scarce visible. To make up for having no skysails, the ship carried very big royals. When I had mine stowed it was dark, and snow was flying; and by the time I reached the halfdeck, almost a quarter of my two-hour dogwatch below was gone.

It was my turn to take the wheel at four bells, six o'clock, and I was just about all in. But I had to take it just the same, and steered her till eight bells at eight o'clock, with snow so thick it was difficult to see the compass —so that, much though I dreaded be-

ing aloft, I wished some other were steering and that I was up on the footropes helping to furl the topgallants. To have the lives of your ship and shipmates in your keeping is no joke when you're a first-voyage kid, and so dog-weary that you scarce know how to heave the straining wheel spokes up and down.

The weather moderated during the night. Toward dawn the wind hauled and came out of north. We piled all sail on; and at daylight saw *Fullwood* also under full sail close on our starboard beam, and going like a hunted stag. For three days we ran, boom-end to boom-end with her, neither ship able to gain a foot on her rival.

Illustrated by Raymond Sisley

To have the lives of your shipmates in your keeping is no joke.

Early in the afternoon watch of the third day we sighted right ahead the entrance to Lemaire strait. If a ship can slip through Lemaire instead of going round the east end of Staten, and if her luck holds, she may be able to pass the dreaded Horn before her fair wind gives out, leaving her to battle her way against gales from the westerly for weeks on end until at long last she gets a slant into the yearned-for Pacific. But with only a few miles of deep water in its center, Lemaire's a mighty bad place to be caught in. Let the wind shift when she's well into the strait, and unless her skipper's the most skilled seaman, and her gear all in the very best possible shape, she'll be fortunate ever to get out. One turn too much on the helm, one rope that jams instead of running free and easy, and God help ship and crew!

"I don't like it," Clegg said to me; the two of us beside the bulwark amidships watching *Fullwood* on our starboard beam racing for the entrance to Lemaire.

"It's a grand fair wind, sir," said I, looking at the cloudless pale blue sky astern.

"Aye. It's a fine north wind; but we've had three days of it, and a north wind don't blow forever down here," he replied.

"All hands handy to the port braces!" shouted the skipper next minute. We were within the entrance now; sea birds in countless thousands wheeling and screaming round us, sea lions barking on the black rocks of Staten's wintry shores.

The hands were scarce at the port braces when, all in a tick, the north wind lulled quiet away, and every sail on each tall ship hung idly flapping to her uneasy motion on choppy windless water.

"*Haul away port braces!*" roared the skipper; and to the man at the wheel he shouted: "Starboard your helm!"

"*Lively all hands! Steady your helm!*" he roared; his voice was half drowned by a black squall from the suddenly beclouded south.

"*Bully boy!*" yelled Clegg, watching the yards crash round, their braces skirling through the rattling sheaves.

With every sail drum tight, with sheets and halliards straining, the ship raced back to safety in the open sea, missing by not more than a hundred feet a sharp black reef that seemed to reach for her.

"*My God! My holy God!*" cried an old foremast hand; all others, skipper, mates, apprentices and men, in silence gazing at tall *Fullwood* with her canvas all aback: each sail hard pressed from forward against its straining mast.

"And not a thing that we can do. The tide rips have her now," Clegg muttered, at my side.

Dimmer she grew, and dimmer, in fast-falling snow, and soon was lost to view as we drove on for Staten's eastern end, with hands aloft to furl our gallants, royals and courses.

The bells clanged out, faint on the lashing wind, eight bells, as we came down to coil the ropes and go below, with darkness falling on the gloomy sea.

"Who's got a fill of 'baccy to spare?" asked Clegg, stepping into our lamplit halfdeck—snow on his sou'wester and shoulders, as on ours.

"What I want to know, sir, is why if we could get clear, *Fullwood* could not," said the eldest apprentice, passing his 'baccy pouch.

"It's little things make smart sailors and smart ships, my lad. When you're a skipper, see that you have your brace blocks in good shape in latitudes where you may have to go about in a devil of a hurry," answered Clegg; and looking at me, he added: "It'll be blowing the headlights off of hell's front door before morning. Get on deck! We'll lash those swing-ports open. *Hop along!*"

So I dragged on my sea boots again, grabbed my sou'wester, wriggled back into my cold oilskins, and followed him out to the dark wind-whipped deck. And what with thinking of *Fullwood*, and of what might have come to us if I had not blackleaded the brace blocks, that was one night when I had no objection at all to lashing the swing-ports open.

The Elephant Smiles

IN INDIA AN AMERICAN SALESMAN FINDS HIMSELF CRASHING THROUGH THE JUNGLE ON THE HURRICANE DECK OF A WRATHFUL ELEPHANT.

by KENNETH PERKINS

CHOOSING a dak bungalow for a night's lodging was the same as stopping at a tourist home back in the States. It might be good, or it might be ridden with bats and mice. If it had no electric punkah, it would be murderously hot. In any case, it was all in a traveling salesman's life, whether in Missouri or Assam.

The single parked car in the compound indicated that the place was not popular, but one thing intrigued the homesick McGuire. Across the road he saw a line of tethered elephants. He had seen a lot of them in the tea country, for planters used them for plowing or making clearings. But every time he saw one, he was a boy again, back home watching the circus tents go up at the end of Elm Street across the tracks.

He drove to the side of the road, the elephants looming in the glare of his headlights. They stopped weaving at their picket chains and stared at him just like cows back home. They do not mind when a car is going, but when it stops they want to know why. Some were tuskers—*gundas* they called them—and some cow elephants with small tusks or none. All had foreheads and sides scarred by the drag saddle or from shoving logs. One thrust a trunk out at the car, reaching for a scent, chirruping, whoofing.

A voice yelled in Bengali, and two elephant herdsmen ran into the cone of light. They pointed excitedly at a hole in the ground and then to a pile of scattered bran mash. McGuire had no idea what they were trying to tell him, except that he must not park here. He backed his car, turned and drove into the dak's compound.

But he had misgivings. The bungalow was too shabby and silent, the garden too unkempt. Part of a hedge had been broken down, the debris left there. Flower bushes were tangled as if not tended for years. One bush seemed to have grown in the middle of the driveway. The bungalow itself looked deserted, even though every room was lighted, clouds of insects swarming about the bulbs. McGuire could not quite make out the air of utter desolation, of a place lived in but long empty.

Not entirely empty, for a turbaned head poked around a veranda pillar. McGuire called: "Hi you, boy! Come and put my car in your garage—if you have a garage."

The turban shook. "It is best to leave it where it stands, sahib." As McGuire stepped out of the car and locked it, the houseboy said: "You have come in good time. You are very welcome, sahib!"

Somewhere inside, a dog howled dolefully. McGuire could not shake off the feeling that death was here—in the bungalow, or the godown or the servants' lines in back. But at the same moment a baby squalled—the tiny gasping squall of an infant first filling its lungs with the air of the open world. It was a curious duet of death and of new life.

MORE life was visible as McGuire stepped up to the veranda. A group of natives huddled in the main room, stared at him. If they were servants, they belonged not here but in the row of huts behind the dak. The robber-caste night watchman belonged on the veranda, but he sat on his hunkers in a far corner as though wanting protection from the household he was supposed to protect. Even the sweeper was here, and another woman who might have been the wife of one of the servants. Two wide-eyed children clung to their mother's sari, but when McGuire stepped in, they scurried into the next room. The natives started salaaming, one actually kneeling before the white guest. The children came back with limes and flowers!

"There's no danger, really. Elephants hate fireworks. Besides, if he charges, I have this nine-millimeter Luger."

Illustrated by Charles Chickering

In the midst of this strange ovation, the houseboy said: "Sir, the lady-sahib is waiting for you."

"A lady—for me?"

"A young lady-sahib who has been very impatient. We will all be saved when the jungle sahib comes, she said, and now you have come! I will bring a whisky peg!" He disappeared, his slippers flapping softly against the chunammed floor.

"A young lady waiting for me," McGuire said to himself. "Maybe things happen that way in fairy tales—or in India! And this crowd kowtowing—you'd think I was a rajah!"

He did not look like a rajah or even like a Britisher. He was every inch an American, though smaller than the average, with a burned nose, freckled face, and a suit of white that was too loose for his wiry frame.

He said aloud: "There's a mistake somewhere. No lady-sahib would be waiting for me. I'm selling contractors' equipment to the Department of Public Works. That's why I'm on my way to Shillong."

But no one understood him. On the contrary, the ovation was climaxed by a white-bearded Hindu stepping from an inner door. He had ashes on his forehead, and looked like a holy man except for his alpaca coat, which gave him the appearance of a railway stationmaster. Or else, because of the old carbine he used as a staff, he might have been some local chief.

"Sir, you are welcome," this dignitary said, after a salaam. "As the munshi of this district, I welcome you and likewise apologize for this riffraff coming in here. But the lady-sahib herself invited them in, knowing their fear. Indeed, she even invited the chokidar's wife, who was to be delivered of her first-born. 'Let them all come in here with me,' she said. 'We are all together in this peril, English and Hindus and Mohammedans. We are all besieged!' "

McGuire was not listening, for a girl in white, with a tea-kettle in one hand, a thermometer in the other, came through the tatty curtains. Evidently she had heard him speaking for she showed no surprise at discovering he was the wrong man.

"But she's not the wrong girl!" he said to himself. His yearning for home burned again—a real home among people of his kind. Despite the wilting heat, the dampness of the curls at her temples and her tropic pallor, she was like any young girl he had seen in midsummer back in the States. *"A lady-sahib, all right, and waiting—but not for me!"*

"More hot water," she said to the houseboy, then turning to McGuire: "Good evening—rather awful, isn't it? You'd better explain to these poor people," she said to the munshi, "that this is not the man I was waiting for."

"But we saw him stop his car and give an order to the elephant herdsman, so we thought—"

"He's only a commercial traveler," the girl said, "not the owner of the elephants."

When this was translated, a complete change came over every face. The native who had been on her knees got up, shrugged, jabbered to her children. The latter took their limes and flowers back to the next room. The houseboy who had brought English water and whisky and ice set everything on a teapoy and walked out with a grunt of disgust. The munshi seemed actually angry. "Not a jungle sahib, not a savior. Just an American. I should have known!"

McGuire wiped his forehead, conscious that the girl was looking at him, comparing him no doubt with the glamorous figure, the jungle sahib they all had been waiting for. "Sorry," he gulped. "Wish I were the right man."

She almost smiled, at this. "You don't have to apologize. I am glad you came. You can fire a gun, I suppose?"

McGuire had been a grease-monkey in Burma during the war, which did not demand special marksmanship. But he said: "What do you want me to shoot?"

"Why, the elephant—the one that's gone *mada*, as they call it. Didn't you know?"

"All I know is, everyone's scared to death."

"One of those timber elephants pulled his peg and tore through the hedge before the herdsman could catch him. He got to the back of the compound, and they are afraid to go after him until Hal Unsley comes. He's the owner."

"You mean it's just a tame elephant that's caused all this—" He waved to the frightened crowd.

"You think, sir, a tame elephant cannot be dangerous?" the old munshi interposed. "When a tusker is in musth, he may be moody, or he may kill. It is a temporary malady of bull elephants, but until the musth period is over, shackles and a silver bell must be worn. Otherwise— Well, I will show you!"

The munshi stepped to the door of a side room. When he drew the tatty curtain, McGuire could see a cot, a half-drawn mosquito netting, a crushed body. It was a high-caste Hindu, judging from the mark on his lop-sided forehead, and by the skin, which was now the color of cheese.

"It is the dresser who works at the dispensary in the village," the munshi said. "That is why we called this lady-sahib, who is a nurse stationed at the same dispensary."

THE girl was watching McGuire's reaction. "You'd better take this drink," she said sympathetically.

He took a good gulp, and then realized it was an admission that he was succumbing to the general panic. But luckily everyone turned at that moment to see a young Englishman bounding up the veranda steps.

"Don't come out, anyone!" the newcomer shouted. "That gunda's still loose, and raising hob!" But after one look at the crowd, he saw that the warning was unnecessary. The natives were huddled together, gibbering, whimpering, praying to Vishnu the Preserver. A second look, and he saw the girl. "Miss Durness!" he exclaimed, delighted. "Taking care of everyone as usual, I see!"

"We've all been waiting for you to take care of us, Mr. Unsley," she said radiantly. "Your mahouts said you'd gone to Shillong, but you'd be back tonight." She turned to the munshi: "Tell them everything is all right now. There's nothing to be afraid of any more!"

The jungle sahib was everything McGuire had imagined—scarred and brown as teak, with a wide belt of rawhide around his waist, a pair of steel shackles slung over one arm. "No, nothing to be afraid of now, but —where's the man that got it?"

When they pointed to the dead man's room, he saw McGuire for the first time. "Rather bloodcurdling, isn't it, old fellow?"

McGuire said lamely: "Wish I could help out somehow."

"Help!" Unsley laughed. "Why, you're an American, aren't you?"

"He means," the girl explained, "being an American and a stranger in India, you might not know how to hunt elephants."

"Don't Americans ever hunt 'em?" McGuire asked, his dander up.

"Not here, my good friend," Unsley said. "The right to hunt 'em is auctioned off, and I happened to be the highest bidder."

Before McGuire could answer, the natives crowded around the jungle sahib, salaaming. Some touched their foreheads to the floor; the women touched his ankles; the children lifted up their limes and flowers. It was the ovation which McGuire had almost received, but here was someone who could really fill the rôle! The munshi started his speech all over again.

"Sahib, as munshi of this district, I apologize for these miserable heaps of filth—"

"No time for all this," Unsley said, tossing the limes on the table. "I've got work to do." He glanced at the body in the side room, then went out to the veranda. For a moment he talked to a bowlegged man armed with a brass-tipped bamboo goad—evidently one of his herdsmen. "The tusker's swung off into that tope again," Unsley said, returning to the main room. "That gives us time for a spot of whisky."

The houseboy had already squirted English water into a tumbler with whisky—a burra peg, not a chota peg. Unsley swigged it with a flourish, then looked at McGuire. "I say! I believe you could help. I can't trust my herdsmen. They're like all these natives, loaders who drop your gun when you want to bag your tiger. But I can trust you."

McGuire swallowed. He thought the girl was staring at him, but she was not. Like the natives, she could not take her eyes from Unsley. McGuire reached for the whisky peg, but put it down again. "What do you want me to do?"

At this, the girl noticed him. But it was the way his big sister used to notice him long ago whenever he was about to get into trouble. "I don't think you should ask him to go out there, Mr. Unsley."

"That's up to him." Unsley took something from the back pocket of his hunting jacket. It looked like a stick of dynamite, but he explained, "I always keep a few of these in my kit in case one of the herd gives trouble—a Roman candle. You can shoot it off in front of the tusker while I sneak up behind and hobble him."

"You mean you're asking him to stand up in front of the tusker!" the girl gasped.

"There's no danger, really. Elephants hate fireworks worse than anthills. Besides, if he charges, I have this nine-millimeter Luger."

Despite himself, McGuire took a gulp of his drink. The girl said hotly: "He's not going out there with you —and that's an end to it!" She must have thought the point was settled for as the houseboy brought a kettle of boiling water, she took it and started for the back room.

This reminded McGuire of the newborn infant, and in the same flash of the body in the other room—a shapeless mass of bones and crushed flesh. He was as frightened as he had ever been in Burma during the war, and he intended to admit it in his next letter home. He would admit it to everybody the rest of his life after it was all over, but not now.

"I'm ready when you are," he said.

"I was only fooling," Hal Unsley laughed. "It's a job for the herdsmen."

McGuire was beginning to suspect that this swashbuckler was fooling everybody. He followed Unsley to the veranda and said: "You asked me to help, thinking I'd welsh in front of that girl—is that it?"

"Are you trying to tell me we're rivals?" Unsley asked in surprise.

"Since you mention it, we'll play it that way."

Evidently the girl, instead of taking the kettle of water in the back room had come to the veranda door. "Just what are you two talking about?"

"About the advice you gave this chap," Unsley said smoothly. "I've changed my plans. I'll send my mahouts with beater elephants to flush the killer out of the woods; then I'll shackle him—without help."

The girl put her hand on McGuire's arm. "Then you'll stay here with us, won't you? We'll all feel safer."

It was his boyhood all over again—a small boy being coaxed to stay home when the bigger ones were playing hare and hounds.

"If the tusker charges this bungalow," Unsley said breezily, "you have that Roman candle. It will work wonders, you may depend."

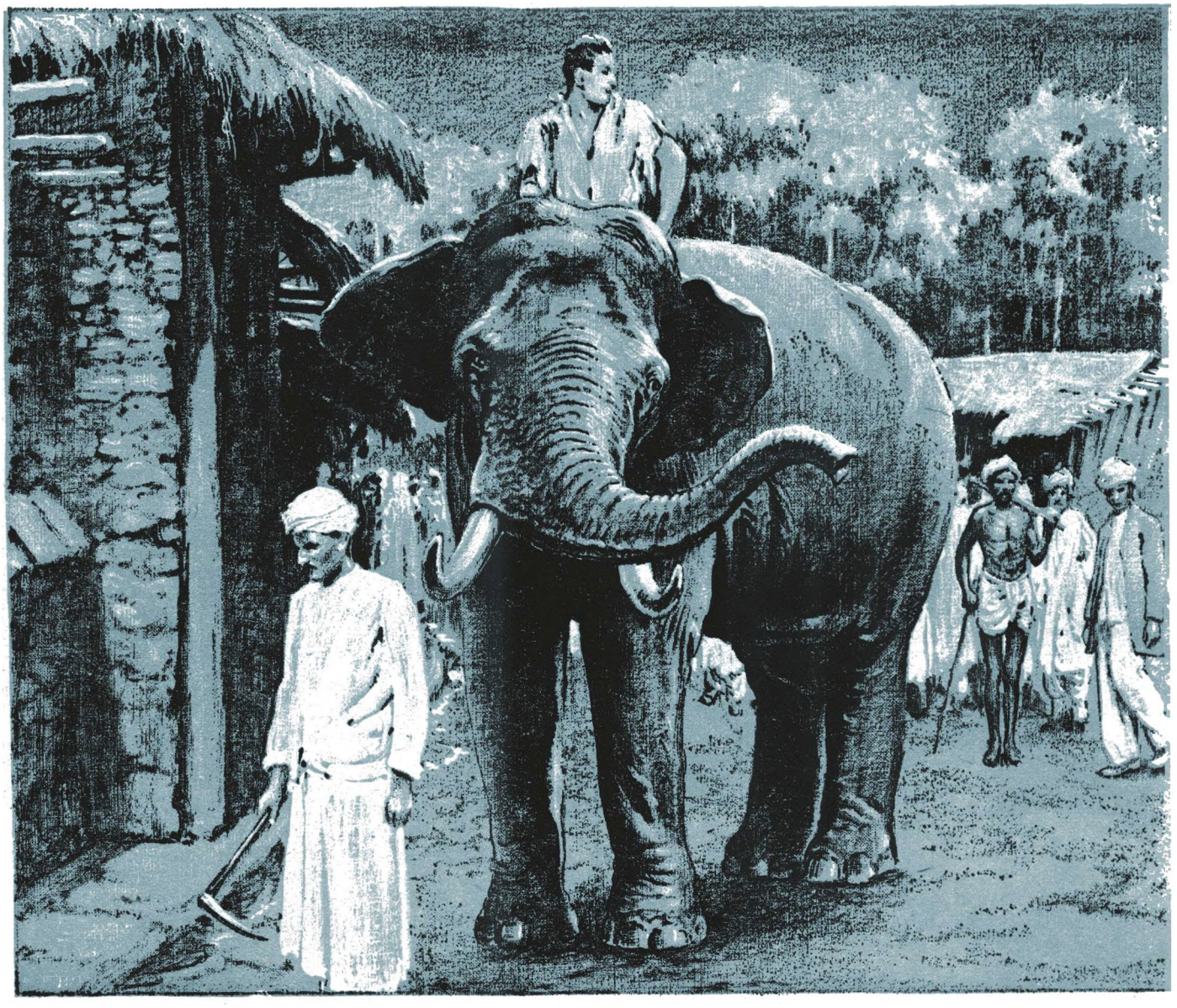
AS he swaggered off, the girl's hand tightened. "We had better go in, hadn't we?"

"You go in," McGuire said. "I want to watch the show." He added, growling, "He'll put on a good one, I'll bet."

But she still stood there as if afraid to let him out of her sight, afraid just like his sister, to let him run with the gang that used to pick on him and hurt him.

The natives, emboldened since the arrival of the jungle sahib, had crept up to the doors and windows to watch the capture. Even Miss Durness was intrigued by the general excitement, for she followed McGuire to the end of the veranda, where they had a good view of Unsley's camp. The herdsmen were mounting, each one helping another by looping the elephant's tail for a stepladder. The last one to mount used the trunk instead of the tail for a step, the tusker swinging him to his seat behind the giant forehead.

As the elephants jogged off on the hunt, the girl ran into the bungalow,



summoned by a moan in the back room. Thus for a moment McGuire found himself alone—and free. And in that moment he succumbed to an impulse not unnatural to either boy or man. In one hand he held the Roman candle; the other went to the pocket where he kept his cash. He noticed that several tuskers were left at the picket line with one mahout. A few rupees or a Bank of India note might persuade that mahout to let him ride. He could show him the candle, and explain that Unsley sahib had instructed him to use it. . . .

He slipped through the potted plants of the veranda and down the driveway. The sudden cessation of chatter meant that the servants were watching him open-mouthed, but that did not matter so long as Miss Durness did not hear about it.

As it happened, his escapade was interrupted not by his guardian angel, the nurse, but by a curious turn of events. As he neared the camp, the mahout got up and ran off, shouting. Somewhere across the clearing there was a crash of brush. The night birds set up a wild clamor but this might have been due to the beater elephants coming through the tamarinds. In any case McGuire realized that it was not safe to stand out in the middle of the clearing alone and on foot.

One of the elephants shouldering through the brush gave his stomach a turn. If he had stopped to look, he would have seen the mahout riding him, but in his panic he could see nothing and think nothing. The sweat on his forehead turned cold in the wind; his temples throbbed, the blood knocking against his skull like his knees knocking at each other. He ran.

It was too far to run to the bungalow, too dangerous to stay in the open. In the whole clearing there was not a log or a bush or a tree for protection — nothing but this elephant camp where two hines and two tuskers yanked uneasily at their picket chains.

The first one he reached seemed to know that he wanted protection. It took very little sagacity, after all. There was excitement in the air, a great fear hovering over men and beasts alike. The herdsmen were mounted, shouting, beating through the brush. No one was on foot except this lone man in whites. A big bull elephant curled up his trunk, making a step so the man could mount.

McGuire was thinking on the same lines. He would be safer on an elephant's back than on foot. He stepped on the trunk, and found the circus trick of mounting absurdly easy. Most of it was done by the elephant himself swinging McGuire easily into the air, so that one step took him over the frontal lobes. He straddled the neck like any mahout, intending to stay there until the danger was over. But a complication arose. The tusker started to amble off toward the road.

Perhaps the mahouts, intending to use him in the chase, had untethered

Nell tried to get her breath. "But you're hurt—badly hurt!"

him, then changed their minds. At any rate McGuire found himself jogging along on the moonlit Shillong road!

Somewhere behind him he heard the wild shriek of birds and the shouts of men where Unsley and his herders were beating through the tamarinds. This medley of sound was syncopated by a sharp alien strain, the backfire of a motor. He wondered if Miss Durness had heard of his escapade. Very likely. And the possibility of her following him gave him a feeling of guilt. This was more of a prank than he had planned, and he began to wonder anxiously: *Just where is this elephant taking me?*

He tried to turn and head back for the dak compound, using his knees as he would turn a horse, but the tusker chose his own direction. As the clumsy trot slowed to a rocking walk, McGuire considered jumping. But that car turning out of the compound gate distracted him. He was trying to make up his mind, when the elephant himself came to a decision and stopped.

This was around the first bend in the road on what seemed to be the outskirts of a village. Here a group of Hindus, some with lanterns, were examining a torn-up garden in front of a whitewashed bungalow. One of them called out: "Unsley Sahib!"

It was understandable why they mistook McGuire for the elephant trader, even though the latter wore khaki. "The name's McGuire," he said.

"But you understand what is toward? You are perhaps on the chase for the budmash?"

"It amounts to that. Haven't seen him around here, have you?" He was sorry he had made this bluff, for it put him in an awkward position. It would have been a simple matter to slide to the ground, but he was not certain how mahouts did it. He had seen pad elephants kneel and the riders step off with dignity, but he had no remote idea how to make this elephant kneel. He decided to stay where he was.

The Hindu with the lantern went on: "We have been examining this house and the garden, for this is where the slain man lived. He was slain near the elephant camp, but you will observe that something happened prior to the death. Observe these prints. The budmash was here, and that is very peculiar."

"How do you know they're the prints of the same elephant?" McGuire asked.

"This shikari saw the death accomplished"—the speaker pointed to a hawk-nosed bearded man—"and he assures me the budmash has four toes on the forefoot, five on the off hind foot."

The elephant tracks were turned into a glaring relief as a car drove up and stopped. A girl's voice called out in astonishment: "I didn't know you could handle a big tusker like that, Mr. McGuire!"

"Thanks for the compliment," McGuire said, wishing he knew how to get off without everyone laughing at him.

"Hal Unsley sent a message to the dak," she went on. "They can't find the mad elephant anywhere. He's not in the tope, and no one knows where he went. He might be hiding behind any tree clump. I thought I should warn you."

"You should've taken the warning yourself," McGuire said logically. "A pretty reckless thing to do—your coming out like this just to follow me!"

"The servants saw you go down to the clearing and mount one of the elephants. You wanted to join in the hunt, of course, but I was afraid you might be getting into more trouble than you expected."

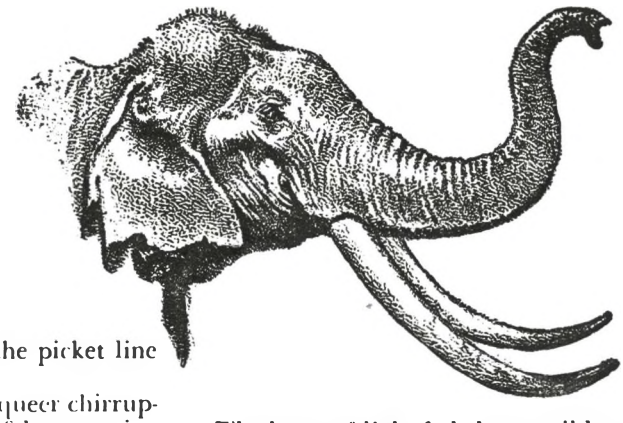
She was right, as everyone found out the next moment. The little shikari gave a muffled gasp deep in his whiskers. His eyes bulged as he stared at McGuire's elephant. The glare of the car's headlights seemed to have caused some sort of revelation, shining on the outcurving tusks, the ragged flop ears, the scarred forehead, the clownish triangular under-lip.

Backing away slowly, the shikari cried: "But this is the gunda himself, the budmash, the one that went amok! And he obeys you!"

"Not that I've noticed," McGuire grunted, but the grunt choked him. "What're you telling me?"

"I tell you he is the one that trampled and gored a man to death!"

"You're mistaken. They're hunting for the killer back there near the



"Not a budmash, not in musth. Tame and docile, but he killed a man."

dak. This one was at the picket line eating bran—"

The elephant made a queer chirruping sound and began to fidget, sensing the growing panic in the air.

"It is the budmash, sahib! In a herd of a hundred I could pick him out!" The shikari kept gibbering as he slid into the doorway of the house. "The tusks streaked black and red, the tail with hair that grows two ways, the knobs on the chin which are red like blood! But the mouth—" He shaded his eyes against the car's lights— "there is something about the mouth that is beyond my memory. *The elephant smiles!*"

"Get into this car, quick!" the girl screamed at McGuire.

"No, no, do not dismount, sahib!" the shikari begged wildly. "He is subservient to you, but if you dismount he will trample us! He will overturn this house—this village!"

"I tell you I—it can't be!" McGuire mumbled. "I don't believe it!" But he did believe it. He remembered how one of the herdsmen had run off shouting for help just before McGuire reached the picket line. Obviously the mad tusker, after eluding his pursuers, had hidden in the one spot where no one had thought to look for him—his own spot at the picket line and his own pile of bran mash!

THE abrupt flight of the Hindus in every direction had its effect on the tusker. If McGuire had known that the queer chirruping was a sure sign of bolting, he would have jumped. But he was still clinging with shaking knees when the elephant swung off and crashed into the scrub.

An overhanging branch knocked off McGuire's topi, and the next whacked him on the face and chest. He grabbed at it, hoping the gunda would keep going, leaving him hanging there like an Absalom. But the pythonlike trunk had already curled around the branch as the tusker passed under the tree. The branch broke like a crunched bone. McGuire went with it, hurled into the air.

A thorn bush broke his fall, but his forehead hit a mossy stone. It was as if that Roman candle had gone off inside his skull. In the blinding light he had a vision of the dead man in the dak. He saw the face clearly now, the lopsided head, half of it human—

The burst of light faded to a milder, gyrating glow—a lantern held above his face. Under it he saw the hawk nose of the shikari, the white thatch of beard, the white tufts of brows tangled together. It was an angelic face in contrast to the slain Brahmin that McGuire had just seen. The hands were cupped together, holding water to his split lips.

"The elephant smiles," the shikari said as if his statement of long ago had not been interrupted. "The smile is a blister on one side of his mouth which draws the lip upward, as you will observe—"

McGuire did not try to observe anything, but he was trying to think. "I should have listened to that girl. She was right, just like my sister and my mother back home. Always right. I need someone like her to keep me out of trouble. I need a nurse, that's what!" He struggled and sat up. "That girl in the car—she got away safe, I hope?"

"She could not follow through this scrub, sahib, so she drove her car to get help. But as I was telling you, if you will observe this gunda's mouth—"

"You mean the gunda's right here!" McGuire gasped.

"Standing before you, sahib. He came back as a penitent and tame gunda will do when his herdsman is brushed off his back. It is my belief that he is not in musth at all, but penitent and gentle. I saw clearly how he tore a branch away so that it would not brush you off—as all well-trained elephants will do."

McGuire shuddered, or perhaps it was just the chill on his chest where the water dripped down from his chin. He tried to pull his jacket together, but found it was in two parts, the sleeves in ribbons, exposing his bleeding arm, which the shikari was washing with water from a nearby jheel.

"Not an elephant in musth, nor vicious, nor a budmash, but a good timber worker that was mistreated."

McGuire asked for another drink, then said groggily: "What are you talking about anyway?"

"This man will tell you—a weaver in the village who saw it from the beginning even to the end."

A lumpy little man in a Parsee cap moved into the circle of lantern light. "This gunda picked some flowers from the dispensary garden and ate them," he said. "The dresser, who was a Brahmin, came out and drove him away with a stick. But the gunda was moody, and came back and trampled the garden as we have seen."

"And the dresser got a vial of acid," the shikari said, "and followed the gunda. This I did not see—"

"But I saw!" the other went on. "The Brahmin dresser came to the elephant camp and waited until no herdsmen were watching, and he threw the acid into the gunda's mouth."

"And I saw the gunda after he pulled his peg," the shikari said. The dresser fled, but the gunda caught him and, then came the death that we know."

MCGUIRE was staring beyond the lantern light at the giant form silhouetted against the moon. The elephant had pulled up a tuft of grass and was shaking the dirt from its roots. He swung it to his mouth, then tossed it aside. He was hungry, but he could not eat. McGuire's horror of the five-ton man-killer gave way to sympathy, for his own flesh burned from the thorn cuts. His bones ached, and his head pounded. This after all was not the elephant's fault. In fact, the old tusker had actually tried to prevent his tumble. "Can't you do something to help the burn?"

"I do what I can, sahib," the shikari said, using strips of McGuire's shirt for a bandage.

"I don't mean my hurt. I mean the old elephant's."

The two natives looked at each other in surprise. An animal in pain was not anything for Indians to worry about, but the shikari said: "I will make a poultice of tamarind leaves and betel juice and minister to the elephant, but I must heal you first."

"That girl with the car will heal me," McGuire said. "You doctor that elephant. I want to ride—" He checked himself. "You're sure that he's not crazy with this thing they call musth?"

"I will make sure, sahib." After fixing the poultice, the shikari went up to the giant shadow. Only a daredevil would go straight to those side-swiping tusks, McGuire thought, but this shikari seemed to know how.

The giant head stopped wagging as the cooling poultice pressed against his lip. He curled his trunk to keep it out of the way. He rocked back and forth. He cooed.

While the shikari held the poultice with one hand, he stuck a straw into a little hole just above the blister and then smelled it. "There is no smell of musth, sahib. This gunda is gentle. He will obey my commands."

"Then drive him back to the dak compound," McGuire said. "But let me climb on first."

At the village well a crowd listened to a lady-sahib haranguing them in a mixture of English and Bengali. Many of them knew her; many swore they would lay down their lives for her sake. But to go into the scrub jungle after that budmash was work for mahouts, not for buffalo herders. They called the headman of the village and there was much debate.

Frantic and helpless, Nell Durness got into her car, swung it to head for the dak. Her only hope now was to find Hal Unsley and put him on the right trail. But this was unnecessary.

As she passed the dispensary, she saw some natives staring into the moonlit depths of the scrub where the tusker had bolted. They ran to her when she stopped her car, all jabbering at once.

The gunda had gone only a short distance, they said, when his rider was brushed off his back. This had happened a few minutes after the girl had driven to the village for help. No one knew what happened next, except that the shikari and the village weaver went into a scrub. "They went to search for the body of the white mahout, who is now no doubt trampled beyond the shape of mankind."

Nell Durness jumped out of her car. She knew nothing of tracking elephants, and the moonlight was not enough to reveal broken branches or crushed grass. She begged the natives to help, and this resulted in more debate. As some pointed one way, some another, the trees at the edge of the scrub moved, parting like tatty curtains. A great shadow fell across the road. The shadow took shape—enormous, majestic like a ceremonial elephant returning to the temple keddah.

It so happened that the shikari who was actually driving walked on the left side where he belonged, and for this reason no one saw him. They were all watching the man in blood-darkened whites riding mahout fashion on the giant neck.

Nell Durness did not scream. She remembered the last time when her scream and the panic of the natives had sent the tusker bolting. She stood, gaping like the natives, afraid to move, afraid to breathe until McGuire called out: "Everything's all right! No danger at all. Not a broncho elephant. He's tame!"

She tried to get her breath. "But you're hurt—badly hurt! You—"

McGuire called over his tattered shoulder as the elephant swung off down the road. "Nothing to worry about. I'm taking him back to the dak so Unsley can hobble him."

At the dak bungalow they all saw the procession coming—the tusker and his rider in a glaring spotlight thrown by the car chugging in low. And behind the car came the whole village chattering, kicking up dust—a regular Hohlee festival.

Mounted on their own elephants, Unsley and his herdsmen watched dumbfounded. It was not until the tusker stopped before the bungalow that they drove in and surrounded him.

"Don't get too close!" Hal Unsley shouted at the girl as she jumped out of her car. He crowded his pad elephant toward McGuire. "Man, are you crazy?" he exclaimed. "You look as if you fought the tusker barehanded!"

"He fought him barehanded!" the Hindus on the veranda shouted. "He fought the gunda and subdued him!"

"The tusker is obedient. He is tamed! He is captured. He stops; he bows tamely; he bows his head to the right! He kneels!"

Now they saw the shikari, but this did not belittle the glory of the rider. For it was the custom that any elephant in musth have a guard to help the mahout, who in this case was that small Yankee! McGuire stayed on until the shackles clamped with a loud clang on the gunda's outspread hindlegs. This done, he slipped off, falling almost into the girl's arms.

As she helped him to the veranda, she made him lean on her, for he was stiff and bowlegged. But he walked on air. He walked in the clouds when she gave him a whisky peg—a half tumbler. He drank it while the children put limes in his other hand and flowers around his scratched neck. He finished it, and watched the crowd salaaming, kneeling, touching their foreheads to the floor, some reaching to touch his feet and hold his ankles.

But as he drained his glass, he saw Unsley who had dismounted and stepped up on the veranda. And he saw the shikari talking to him. On the jungle sahib's mouth there was a sardonic smile. The mouth of the shikari was forming words, but because of the jabbering of the crowd no one but Unsley heard him. McGuire knew what he was saying without even watching the shikari's lips.

"Not a budmash, not in musth. Tame and docile, but he killed a man, yes—and for just cause!"

Unsley's grin was wider and more on one side. He snapped to the crowd to be quiet, then to McGuire: "Quite a hero aren't you, old chap?"

McGuire got up. "I'll tell you about it—outside. Of course you want to know how I did it?"

"But you've got to get to bed," the girl objected. "Look at you! Look at that arm! I've got to fix it!"

She was distracted at that moment by a wild-eyed native who came from a back room. He asked her something in Bengali, to which she replied soothingly: "Now, you must stop worrying. He's a man-child, so you should celebrate, not worry. But I'll have a look at them." She went into the room to the squalling baby and its mother.

McGuire pressed through the crowd, shouldered past Unsley, nodded to him to follow. Out on the veranda he said: "Go on in and tell them. You like play-acting. Make it good—dramatic, the way you do everything. Here's a handful of limes."

"Dash it all, what do I want of your limes?"

"In America they call it handing you a lemon. Go in and tell them the truth. The elephant wasn't mad, or even dangerous, except to the man that tortured him. Tell them I didn't capture him or fight him or tame him. And tell that girl I'm not going back in there. I've had enough heroics."

"Jove, man! You're crazier than I thought! Go in and let her doctor that arm."

"And let her laugh while doing it."

"No one's going to laugh. Except me. You're right, saying I like a good show. You put on a good one! In fact you stole my show completely."

"But the girl—I thought you—I thought we were rivals?"

"Of course we are—tomorrow when I'm selling Public Works my elephants. An elephant can do anything your bulldozers can do—and on hay, not petrol."

"But I don't understand, or else *you* don't understand. I'm not a hero. I got on that tusker's back by mistake."

"I know. The shikari told me, and I told him to keep his mouth shut. You're a hero, and no one need hear why." But he added: "Of course the Sub-Inspector must know why that dresser was killed. I don't want my old tusker condemned by Government. I'm very fond of the old fellow."

"So am I," McGuire said. "But I'm going to tell that girl the truth—every word of it!"

Unsley was puzzled, but he said thoughtfully: "A rather good play, at that! Perhaps you've discovered something about Nell Durness. If you play the hero, she's unimpressed, but if you're down in the scrum and getting kicked around, she won't be happy till she has you in her arms."

McGuire said, dazed: "I stacked you up all wrong, Unsley. There's something about you Britishers—"

"There's something about you Yankees too."

The houseboy waddled out to the veranda and stood waiting for them to finish talking, then: "Sirs, I do not wish to interrupt, but I was ordered to hasten matters."

He gave a salaam to McGuire.

"Sir, the lady-sahib is waiting for you."

COOROMENGRO

(FIGHT-FELLOW)

Pots and kettles were hanging along the sides of the Gypsy vans and banging a broken rhythm to the clatter of horses' hoofs mingled with the rumble of wabbling wheels jouncing over the little-traveled lane in southern Texas; it was the song of the open road.

A dark-skinned driver poked out his underlip to blow at the gray layer of dust settled on his sweeping mustachios. He began to curse, a long string of Gypsy expletives that lined up and rolled out like an oft-told story. "Fanella, take these reins, before my backbone is bounced through my head. A wise old woman is Kisaiya Chumomisto, who leads us from that fine highway to this wretched tobbar*."

Fanella grunted as she hoisted her fat body over the seat and reached for the reins; she caught his eye with a glance that bespoke caution as she jerked her head toward the rear of the long cart. Canairis, the driver, craned his head in that direction, and although he saw only the heels of a man idly kicking in the air, he recognized them and added in a loud voice: "But she is our Queen and knows the best things." Then he mumbled to himself: "Old dinnelo, possessed of a devil —such a road—such a road!"

In the rear of the long covered cart's open end lolled the old Queen's twenty-year-old grandson, Sacki Chumomisto, lying flat on his stomach. By him half-reclined Shuri, the daughter of Canairis, with her legs dangling over the end of the cart-bed, and her back propped against a roll of bedding. Shuri was dozing lightly despite the careening cart, when Sacki, with a sly twinkle in his eyes, slowly scooted to the edge of the tailgate and reaching down his arm, nipped a dusty but very shapely ankle, and at the same instant made behind a cupped hand a fierce noise resembling an angry dog. The effect was instantaneous. Shuri gave a shrill cry and jerked her feet high, showing still more shapely calves and knees. Sacki rolled over on his back and laughed as hilariously as only a Gypsy can laugh, when a sharp whack of a long string of beads, wielded by Shuri, across his forehead, stopped him short.

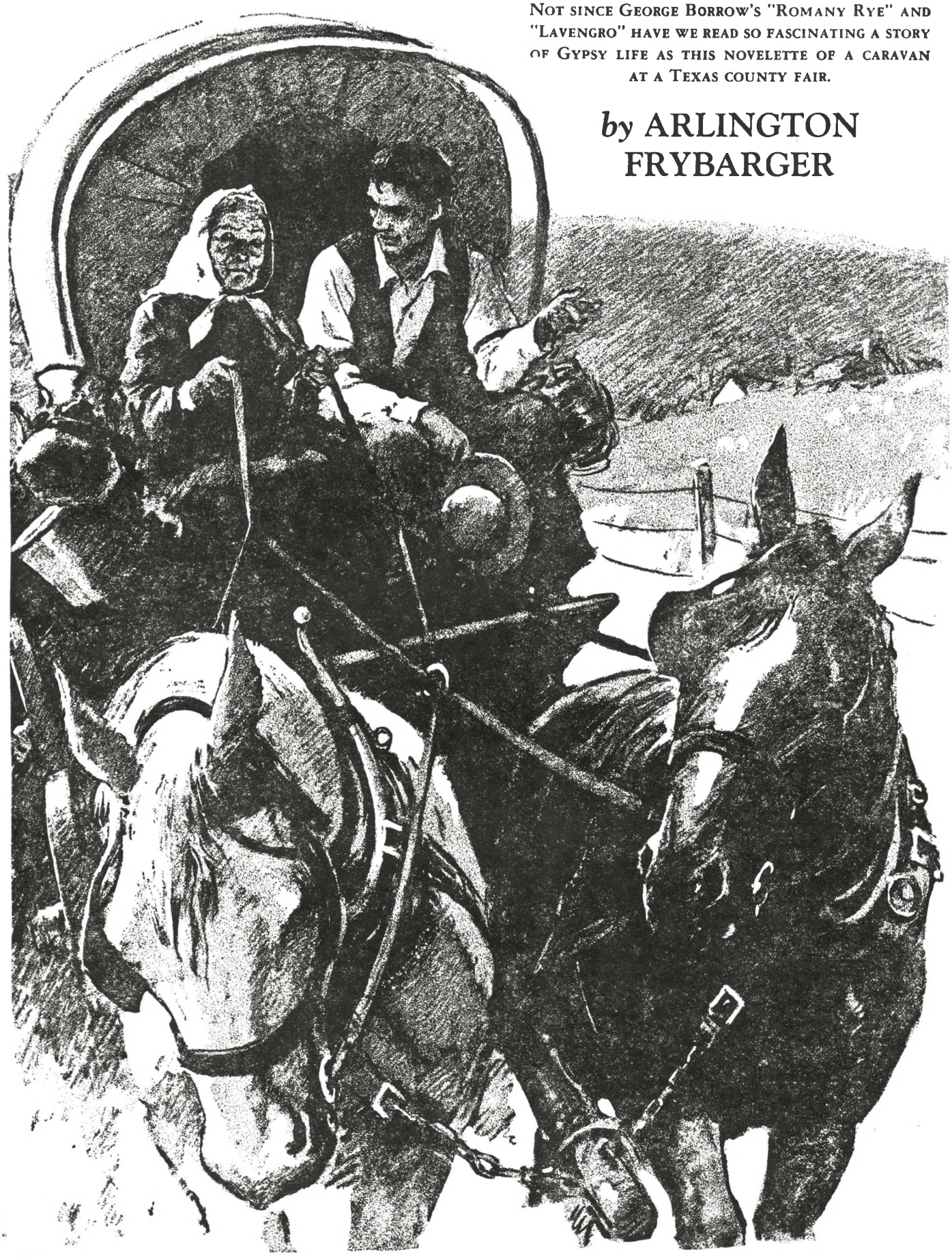
"Grasni!" spat Sacki.

"Don't calls me a mare!" snapped Shuri.

**tobbar*—road
dinnelo—devil-ridden
grasni—mare

NOT SINCE GEORGE BORROW'S "ROMANY RYE" AND "LAVENGRO" HAVE WE READ SO FASCINATING A STORY OF GYPSY LIFE AS THIS NOVELETTE OF A CARAVAN AT A TEXAS COUNTY FAIR.

by ARLINGTON FRYBARGER



Sacki glowered. It was an old and sore subject that she was bringing up. "I marries when I want. You would not be so quick to see me marry if—" he stopped talking, but not soon enough.

Sunrise found them on the fairgrounds, active in arranging the vans on the

"Kedast* strike me on my sherro!"

"You traished mande, by nipping my foot!"

"I'll do more than that!"

"You tries, and my fingernails will be in your eyes!"

Sacki sat up. Noses an inch apart, they threatened vehemently, when Sacki grabbed her and kissed her hard on the mouth. Shuri beat his back, pulled his hair and scratched his neck, but she did not try to dislodge her lips from his. And who knows who kissed the harder? For very much in love was Shuri. And why not? Sacki Chumomisto, grandson of the old queen, who would, when married, head this group of English Gypsies, and who could outdo any man among them in drinking or in playing the fiddle, who was by far the best *cooromengro,* or fight-fellow, and the handsomest. No wonder Shuri loved him so greatly.

Fanella's customary short screaming threats and Canairis' growling admonitions had quieted the two in the rear of the cart. Sacki sat with his legs over the end, gazing between his feet at the close rush of ground.

"Why do you stare at the ground?" Shuri softly asked. "Don't it makes your head whirl?"

"It whirls more when I look on you, my *chiricli,* my little hen-bird." He looked up at her, and though since childhood he had gazed upon her, his eyes took their time and slowly drew a picture for his mind of her red mouth, her jet-black hair flying loose and disordered but for a single bright-red band, her even teeth so white against the rich color of her face, and her eyes, black, wide and lustrous, changing in expressions and emotions like a never-ending sunset shifting its colors. Her

kedast—you did
sherro—head
traished mande—forced me

coveted location, starting breakfast fires and engaged in their many activities.

laugh, always an unconscious thrill to Sacki, although it was hearty and long, oddly reminded him of the liquid tinkling of small silver bells which he had heard late at night outside an old Mexican mission far south. Indeed did Sacki love this Gypsy girl with an untamed beauty and a magical laugh.

They sat unmindful of the swirls of dust from the wheels, silent for long intervals and then breaking into sudden laughter over a few straggling words, for between Gypsies there can be long moments which words would spoil and chase happy shared thoughts away.

Finally Shuri spoke. "Your grandmother is an old wise-one, but this is a bad road. The men are cursing, and there is much talk of her years."

"They do not know what she knows, or they would not talk," was Sacki's rejoinder.

"And what special thing does she know?"

"What I tells her."

"Fiddle-dee-dee, what did you tell her?"

"What I see."

"Oh—what did you see?" Shuri was becoming exasperated with Sacki's teasing.

"What I tells her," laughed Sacki.

Shuri tossed her head and sniffed, and said nothing.

"Don't you wants to know?"

"No!"

"Then I'll tell. This morning I stands on top the Queen's house, and I can see far down the way, and what do I see?"

"Police?" Shuri was interested.

"No, of course. She is too wise to have troubles with them. I see Spanish Gypsies!" He paused to emphasize the significance of this. "I see Spanish Gypsies. They was four autos full with hind-carts, and I believe when they go, the wheels wabble much more than our carts. Their eyes are filled

with auto-smoke so they cannot see the green ground and trees, and their ears are filled with noise and *yag-kairepenes** so they does not hear the song of the morning-thrush." He spat contemptuously. "It is too bad they are like to head for the State Fair too. We will have some troubles and fights maybe, and they had wish they stayed away."

"Maybe you had wish we stayed away, after a few fights are over," said Shuri casually.

"Me? You talk *dinneleskoenoes,* like a crazy somebody. Never had I so much as go down once in any fight, and I always win, always don't I? Every *Rom* I ever fight always talk alter of my *tatto-yecks* and punches. Of a truth, even if I say it, I am the best cooromengro I ever see. I can hit harder than any man I ever see. I can hit swifter than any man I ever see, and—"

"And you can boast louder than any man I ever see." With a toss of her head, Shuri rose, gathered her full skirt and half-crouching to maintain balance in the swaying cart, she made her way to the front and sat apparently very interested in the backs of her parents.

Sacki, with his face flushed from his ruffled vanity, slid from the cart and to the road and stalked up past several vans into the front seat of the leading van beside his grandmother.

OLD Kisaiya Chumomisto, the Queen of the little band of English Gypsies, did not so much as glance at him, this little wizened, ancient woman perched atop the wide seat, her gnarled hands clutching the reins, and her shiny black eyes seeming fixed on some distant hilltop.

Then she spoke. Her voice was dry and brittle and cracking, but there was no mistaking the quality of authority and wisdom. "My mother told me a boasting tongue is a whetstone for listener's remarks."

"I am thinking some tongues are too sharp already."

"When you marries her, you can make her not talk like that."

Sacki glowered. It was an old and sore subject that she was bringing up. "I marries when I want. You would not be so quick to see me marry if—" He stopped talking, but not soon enough.

Kisaiya Chumomisto's eyes flashed, and her words whipped. "The time is far off when I can no longer guide my people, and even then your chest may be too bare or your judgment not sound enough to take my place. You are three fools if you stopper one ear and keeps the other open and not lets out what you hear from idle mouths." A tear stole down a wrinkled old cheek and lost itself in the many creases.

Sacki saw and was sorry. He did not seek quarrels with old women, nay. Changing his tune, he said: "Tell me, good grandmother, how you know of Shuri and me quarreling, and about what, and how do you know our people talk of your age. Now do not say that you just dukkered* with the cards; tell me of a truth."

"Odd's fish, now I did dukker but a short time ago, and it tell me what I thought."

"Yes, but how you come to think what you thought?"

The old woman grinned a toothless grin, and her eyes sparkled. "Listen my little *chal,* when you give and take hot words with a man, you win and you are pleased; but no man win with a woman in words. Your angry looks shows you might be fighting words with Shuri, and you two quarrels bad only when you boast overly. See? And how do I know our people talk of my age and say that I am just a little too old maybe? Ha, why shouldn't they? I am old, old; and my bones creak; and they are not blind or deaf. I think there's many an angry one today and many curses behind my back and special talk of my years today. They don't know why I quick takes this tobbar instead of following the highway."

She stopped talking for a moment as her eyes again sought the distance, and there was a sadness in the way she sucked her lips between her gums. "This same tobbar," she mumbled. Then she caught up the present and remarked: "Long ago—just not long after we came to this country from England — this same road I traveled with your dear mother and dado, my own baby, and how happy we was, and how much laughter there was in our band at night, and how the *bosh* was played and songs were sung—and dancing, telling of old stories that only the old ones remember now—and how rich the soup was. But now—ah, me—the young ones have addled brains and queer thoughts. They think too much of the ways of the *gorgio,* and not enough of the Gypsy, and they will have some hard lessons to learn." There was a shake in her voice that might betoken many things.

Sacki knew that she was upbraiding him for his frequent remarks of the Gorgios and their elegant ways, but he was too interested in her brief allusion to his parents to heed else. For of his parents he was very ignorant, not remembering them himself, and the Gypsies never talked about them, although he knew that once his father had led this band. He asked eagerly: "And where was I, my grandmother, when you and my parents traveled this road?"

The answer came slowly and guardedly: "In the back of a cart in my lap, and a very young chal you were."

"And where did we go?"

"Many places — far north and far south—over the land from ocean to ocean, and not a corner of this country have we not go."

"But my deya (mamma) and my dado—what happened? Tell me, dear old grandmother—I have asked you ever since I remember. Now I wants to know!"

"No." And not another word would the old one utter. She looked ahead and seemed unconscious of his presence. He said nothing more, for he had learned how impregnable her armor of silence was, when she chose.

THAT afternoon near dusk, Kisaiya Chumomisto hauled sharply on the reins and turned the cart from the road into a grassy meadow, and before all the vans had followed to a halt she had climbed gingerly out of the high seat and turned to address the band.

"Hark, women, give your Roms a good meal, and in haste, too. Roms, do not pom your grys*; unhitch them, but leave the harness on, for as soon as we rest an hour, we go again on the tobbar, and—" Here a murmur of protest swelled from most of the Gypsies. Tired, hungry and sullen, they were in a bad mood.

Kisaiya Chumomisto lifted her head, folded her arms with a grim pride. She screamed out above the clamor: "Since when you takes it to speak against the word of your Queen? And when has my leadership ever brought aught but good to us? Ask you yourselves that. Odd's blood, and since what new time is it that I got to explain and give reasons for what I do? You worm-eaten, weak-stomached ones who call yourselves Gypsies, listen and be ashamed. This morning Sacki stands on top of our house and sees Spanish Gypsies in autos, and where would they be going? To the fair as we do. And when they got there, we would be on the road yet a day. I been to this fair before; I been to this town before, nineteen years ago. The place of the fair is on the edge of the city, and between the railroad tracks and a river is a little piece of land not used in the fair, but what is on the side nearest the town—that is where we pitch our camp. If we do not get there first, we must take a spot of land on the far side of the fairgrounds behind the great stables where no Gor-

yag-kairepenes—popping noise, explosions
rom—gypsy man
tatto-yecks—blows, punches

dukkered—read a fortune or seek advice
chal—gypsy boy
dado—father
bosh—a fiddle or violin
gorgio—white man or English man

pom your grys—pasture your horses

gios will come because of the smells. But if we takes short stony tobbar, we get there first if we drive all night. That is all. Now be about."

She turned her back to them, ignoring the cries of praise from the group. She reached inside under the front seat for nosebags for the horses, and her hands were trembling and her knees were drifting away. She swayed for a moment, and would have fallen had not Sacki stepped around the cart just in time to slip an arm about her waist and support her. He did this quickly but in a casual manner so that none who might see would spread any additional rumors of the old one's inadequacy. She gulped air for a moment like a drowning person; then she noticed that Sacki was still supporting her. With a vigorous shove and the motion of a kick with her foot, she sent him off with a shrill "Be about!" Sacki grinned, knowing that she had recovered from the excitement of the moment, and he stepped around to unhitch the horses.

The old queen leaned against the van, so glad that Sacki had come up when he did. She was feeling warm again inside. Next time they would do her bidding without questioning her word, but she was too old to lead this band, she reflected. None of the Gypsies knew how old she was—some said that she must be over one hundred and twenty; but she knew that when a woman is ninety-three, she ought not to be the one to hold the iron hand that she had maintained for so many years, in keeping the Gypsy band from intermingling even with other Gypsy bloods, for a half-caste *Zingaro* was indeed a low person in the eyes of the English Gypsies.

Long ago in England she had foreseen the eventual dissolution of the English Gypsy as a race, and through great labors she had made the Chumomisto clan migrate to America. Constantly she had continued to fight a losing battle to retain their customs and their speech.

Once for two years she had gone without speaking to a single Gypsy, as a desperate move to preserve their language; but she had lost, and no longer was the old tongue in use—just a few scattered words now and then mixed in with their corruption of the English language.

But year after year she kept the small band moving constantly. In winter they would go south and in summer wherever they chose, anywhere just so they were always moving, not giving one of them time to contemplate settling, moving from the tribe or marrying out of it. Many problems she had encountered, and many of them she had conquered. At times, though, she felt that she was just too tired to carry on.

That Sacki would marry soon and naturally assume the leadership of the tribe, was her constant prayer.

With renewed enthusiasm the Gypsies pushed their horses through the long night, and sunrise found them on the fairgrounds, worn and sleepy-eyed, but still active in arranging the vans on the coveted location, unloading baggage, putting up clotheslines, stringing up small hand-fashioned square tents which used one side of the van itself, starting breakfast fires, and engaged in the many activities of preparation for the long stay of a week or two.

Immediately upon arrival, Sacki had donned his best clothes, consisting of soft-leather black shoes fashioned by one of the Gypsies, ready-made gray flannel trousers, and a fancy shirt which was one of Sacki's most prized possessions. It was patterned from an old one of his father, which his grandmother had saved for years; this gray silk shirt was fitted with silver buttons made from old English coins, themselves worth a small fortune because of their great antiquity. Flowing sleeves and an open neck were edged with a bright red cord which made it a shirt that only a Gypsy could wear.

Sacki had oiled and wetted his hair, combed it to the front, with the forelock plastered flat to his forehead in a carefully arranged curl. When thus attired, Sacki would stop frequently, take out a small pocket mirror, and inspect this curl to see that it was in the proper position and not mussed. A vain young Romany Rye, this fellow! He stood in front of his grandmother and asked her how he looked.

Said she: "Aye, you are the handsomest Gypsy I ever see, even more handsome than your dado, perhaps. But after all, you are not the fighter he was, I might say."

"How can you say that, dear grandmother—I never yet been beaten in a fight."

"The other Roms are not so strong and fierce as they used to be, maybe. . . . Enough of that—now please think of what you are to say to the manager—have you remember everything that I tell you?"

"How could I forgets. You tells me fifty times. Yes, I will hurry back."

The Gypsies had been ejected from fairs before, so old Kisaiya Chumomisto always took precautions to prevent recurrences. Sacki was going to see the fair manager and secure permission for their stay.

Although the opening of the fair was not until the next day, hot-dog stands, and various concession booths were jammed along the sides of the avenue leading into the fair grounds, and the concession owners were spasmodically hawking their wares and attractions, perhaps as a matter of warming up. Off to the left could be seen the great tent, and several rows of smaller ones adjoining it, of a large circus which had chosen the opportune time of the State fair to make its appearance.

Sacki made inquiries and found the doorway marked *Office* in one of the permanent fair buildings, and went in. A few minutes later Sacki had talked with the manager, who proved to be an affable old man who readily gave his consent to the Gypsy encampment. He cautioned Sacki that on the first complaint of any unlawful actions of theirs, they would be ordered out. Sacki assured him that there would be no cause for anyone to complain, and explained that while the Gorgio's laws were not the Gypsy's, they would be observed. Sacki left, proud, with the thought that the last barrier to their "working" the fair had been surmounted.

But when Sacki returned to the camp, there was trouble waiting.

The Spanish Gypsies whom Sacki had sighted the previous day, had arrived; evidently they were contesting the occupancy of the desired location. There was a beef of a fellow, dark-skinned and gaudily dressed, with a red sash around his great belly, who was shouting and arguing with Kisaiya Chumomisto.

Quickly, talking in the Romany, she told Sacki what was happening, and that they were outnumbered and stood the chance of being pushed back by these "lousy ones," and then she turned to the big fellow and started to curse.

Although the big man did not understand the volley of English Gypsy insults, he took a threatening step toward her, and his long black mustachios fairly bristled, and his face was red.

Sacki spoke in a loud voice, so that all the English Gypsies clustered in small groups behind him could hear. "Just a minute—baulo." In the Romany this meant "thing with a big round belly," or a pig. The howl of amusement which went up boosted the big fellow's anger and caused him to snort out furious puffs of air which vibrated his comically pouched lips, and shook his fat jowls.

Sacki continued: "I been to the head one here, the boss, and he says we stops here, this very place and no other, so polite as my suggestion is, you get in your autos before the wheels falls off, and go on, or there might be troubles and you would be led to the jail, or the police might just sells you to a butcher for *baulie-mas*" (pork-meat).

At this last remark another round of laughter came from the English Gypsies, for they enjoyed nothing more than to hear their language used

for such baiting. The big fellow would have realized undoubtedly that retreat would have been the wiser course if what Sacki said was true about their having secured permission for occupancy, but he could only think that this smart-talking, conceited young dandy was calling him, Hermano Montemayor, bad names; no telling what he had been called, and with his people watching and listening all the time, so he spat full at Sacki's face—like an explosion it was—drew a long knife from his sash, and crouched low.

Sacki stepped back and wiped his face on his sleeve, and his voice shook. "For that you will be sorry many times over." His hand shot out and grasped the big fellow's wrist, and a quick twist brought a grunt of pain. The knife was dropped to the ground, where the toe of Sacki's boot sent it yards away. Simultaneously, Sacki lowered his head and charged, butting Hermano Montemayor fairly in the rotund expanse of belly, which caused him to half-double over, the color to drain from his face, and queer burbling noises to come from his gaping mouth.

For the moment Sacki made no move despite the cries of his brothers to step in and finish him. When the deflated Montemayor had been able again to straighten up and draw in a full breath of air, Sacki, lightninglike, repeated the savage butt, and the big fellow sank to the ground like a balloon that had been pricked, moaning and clasping his belly.

Again came the cries to pounce on the prone one and bloody his nose, but Sacki waited still longer this time until the unfortunate one was sitting upright and breathing fully but laboriously. Montemayor rolled his eyes up at Sacki in dreadful anticipation, and then began to crawl rapidly away on his hands and knees in the general direction of the decrepit train of autos. Sacki allowed him to traverse about a dozen feet in this manner, then ran and caught him by the heels and dragged him, despite his kicking, jerking and roaring, back to the spot of the combat, and then let go his hold.

Immediately Montemayor, whose only thought was to get away without standing up, started in the same direction in the same ludicrous manner, and it was indeed mirth-provoking to see such a hulk of a man trying to cover ground quickly crawling on his hands and knees. Again Sacki allowed him to get a short distance before he made retrieval with the same results. By this time the Spanish Gypsies were glum and silent and ashamed over their leader's ignoble defeat, while the English Gypsies were jumping up and down, shouting and laughing until the tears rolled down cheeks, and ragged Gypsy dogs were barking and the clamor was great.

The exceptional performance was repeated several times until Hermano Montemayor began to tire, and finally lay on his stomach, and covering his head with his arms, he refused to to budge or react. Sacki laughed without anger; then he remembered

Immediately Montemayor, whose only thought was to get away without standing up, started in the same direction in the same ludicrous manner.

he was a Romany Rye, and he straightened his silk shirt, took out his little comb and arranged the curl on his forehead. Then he turned and addressed the Spanish Gypsies:

"Polite as my suggestion is, there is a place for you to stay—behind the great stables yonder. Some does not likes the smell, but without doubt you will not notice that as long as he," pointing to the inert figure, "is among you."

A fresh roll of laughter came from the Gypsies at this final repartee. Sacki stepped back among his people and bade them "be about" and not to give any attention to the Spanish Roms, which they did, dispersing among the vans, although they were reluctant to leave such amusement.

Several of the Spanish Gypsies stepped up to their chief, and with the word that his feared tormentor was gone, he leaped to his feet and fled to the autos; soon they had gone with much sputtering of noisy motors. Sacki leaned against the side of the Queen's House and watched the departure. Quite elated with himself

he felt. No doubt Shuri would be very proud of him.

SACKI was sitting on a large packing-box just outside the performers' entrance to the big tent of the circus. After each show for the past four days he had occupied that spot in order that he might gaze briefly on Mademoiselle Yvonne, "The Most Astounding and Daring Equestrienne of the World," so he read over and over from the flaunting banners and billboards. He did not know just what that meant, but he felt sure that it was added proof of her magnificence.

First he had seen her from inside the tent and had sat spellbound through her act, and he had jumped up and shouted aloud when she had ridden through a hoop of fire; and he had not noticed that people stared and laughed at him, and that Shuri had left his side and went out with her face a dull red and her head downcast.

For that matter, he had given little thought to Shuri for the past few days. Day and night his thoughts whirled like a merry-go-round from which the cluttered faces of those about him dimly flashed by, and in the vortex of this confusion was the distinct figure of a goddess, clothed in skin-tight raiment of white, with long golden curls flying as she stood gracefully atop a galloping white charger, a laugh on her mouth and a halo of glory surrounding her. This was the sight constantly before his eyes that caused him to sit for long hours without speaking, and to wear a half-stupefied look of anguish and happiness that caused much talk among the Gypsy folk. They were not long in placing the cause of his strange attitudes, and more than one had gone to Kisaiya Chumomisto with the words "He has troubles like his father before him, and aught of ill might come." But that old one had kept her counsel to herself.

And now he sat waiting, and listening for the blare of trumpets that sounded the last act, and when it came to his eager ears, he sprang to his feet and focused his eyes even more intently on the large swinging tent-flaps across the fateful door.

First came a tired train of wilted clowns, a few liveried grooms leading huge, broad-backed horses, and then appeared Sacki's vision.

Truly she was beautiful in her white tights that showed every curve of her well-proportioned body, with her golden hair in a pleasing disorder, her skin painted dead-white with powder, and her mouth a molded splash of color. She was breathing deeply, and a mist of perspiration from her recent exertions was balling the heavy coat of powder, but there was much justification of Sacki's infatuation. She saw him standing there, and this time she walked straight up to him, for she had noticed him each time since the first day he took this post.

Sacki felt his knees trembling. He could only stare oddly and hold his breath!

Tilting her head slightly to one side, she smiled and said: "Well, Gypsy, did you like my act today?"

Immediately as she spoke, his trepidation receded like a swift tide and his head cleared. Here was a woman—a woman who spoke like anyone!

"I am a mighty fine fellow," he replied out of a clear sky, and he showed his white teeth in a wide grin.

A surprised, slightly haughty and offended look changed to a sour one as she turned away. Sacki perceived his error, which he quickly amended by saying: "I could not stand to see your act again—my heart comes up between my teeth when you jumps through that fire. I like, oh, so much, to hear you tells how it feels?"

HE paused a moment, and he saw that her expression was more favorable. "Here—I puts your coat on so you don't sneeze, and we sits down?" He took her light cloak from her arm and laid it about her shoulders very carefully.

Half-amused, Yvonne allowed him to steer her to a bench nearby, as she said: "I gotta get back to the dressing-room right away and get out of this costume." But she sat down. "So you want to know how it feels to jump through a hoop of fire? Ever ride a horse?"

"Oh, sure. I has four horses myself, but I don't think they would be polite enough to jump through a hoop of fire," he replied.

Yvonne laughed. "I think I saw them the other day over there at the Gypsy camp—you surely don't call those nags *horses*, do you?"

Sacki thought this over for a moment, then replied: "No, we calls them *grys*."

"What? Oh, I see." And she laughed. He laughed too, a little faintly at first, then more heartily, but clearly not knowing what the joke was, which caused her further merriment. "What—what are you laughing about?" she asked.

Sacki made a grimace. "A Gypsy don't got to have reasons to laugh."

They laughed together at this, and Yvonne rose. "You're a pretty nice guy even if you are sort of a queer duck, but you hand out a few snickers at that."

"Duck? Snickers?" he murmured.

"Oh, Lord, cut it out, Gypsy—you ain't that dumb." But she laughed.

"I don't know what all that means, but I thinks you likes me," he said.

"Yeah, I guess so. You want to walk with me over toward my dressing-room? I gotta change."

As they started off, a heavy-set, broad-shouldered man rounded a corner and saw them. "Hey, Yvonne!" he shouted. "Wait a minute, you!" And as he came closer, the sight of the flat nose, cauliflower ears and a generally nicked-up face betokened his profession. "I was just lookin' for you," he stated amiably as he shouldered Sacki to one side as though he had not even noticed his presence. He took hold of Yvonne's arm.

"Well, I can't say I was looking for you," said Yvonne sharply, "and leggo my arm."

These words had an instant effect on Sacki—evidently this Gorgio was not wanted along. He ran around in front of them and halted. His face was serious as he spoke: "Just a minutes—"

"Say—who is this punk, Yvonne, in all this screwy get-up? Never mind who he is—run along, brother, run along and peddle your papers!"

"Peddle my papers? What papers? Anyway, I thinks this young lady Yvonne and I don't like for you to go with us to her dressing-room, so polite as my suggestion is—"

"What! To your dressing-room?" He looked at Yvonne with his eyes puffing up to slits. "How long you knowed this egg?"

Yvonne wagged her head exasperatedly. "Gosh, don't get sore, Gus. I just met him. He don't know good English—he don't mean anything by that."

"So he don't mean anything? Well, see if this means something to him!" Gus threw a heavy short hook to the point of Sacki's jaw, and he slumped to the ground unconscious.

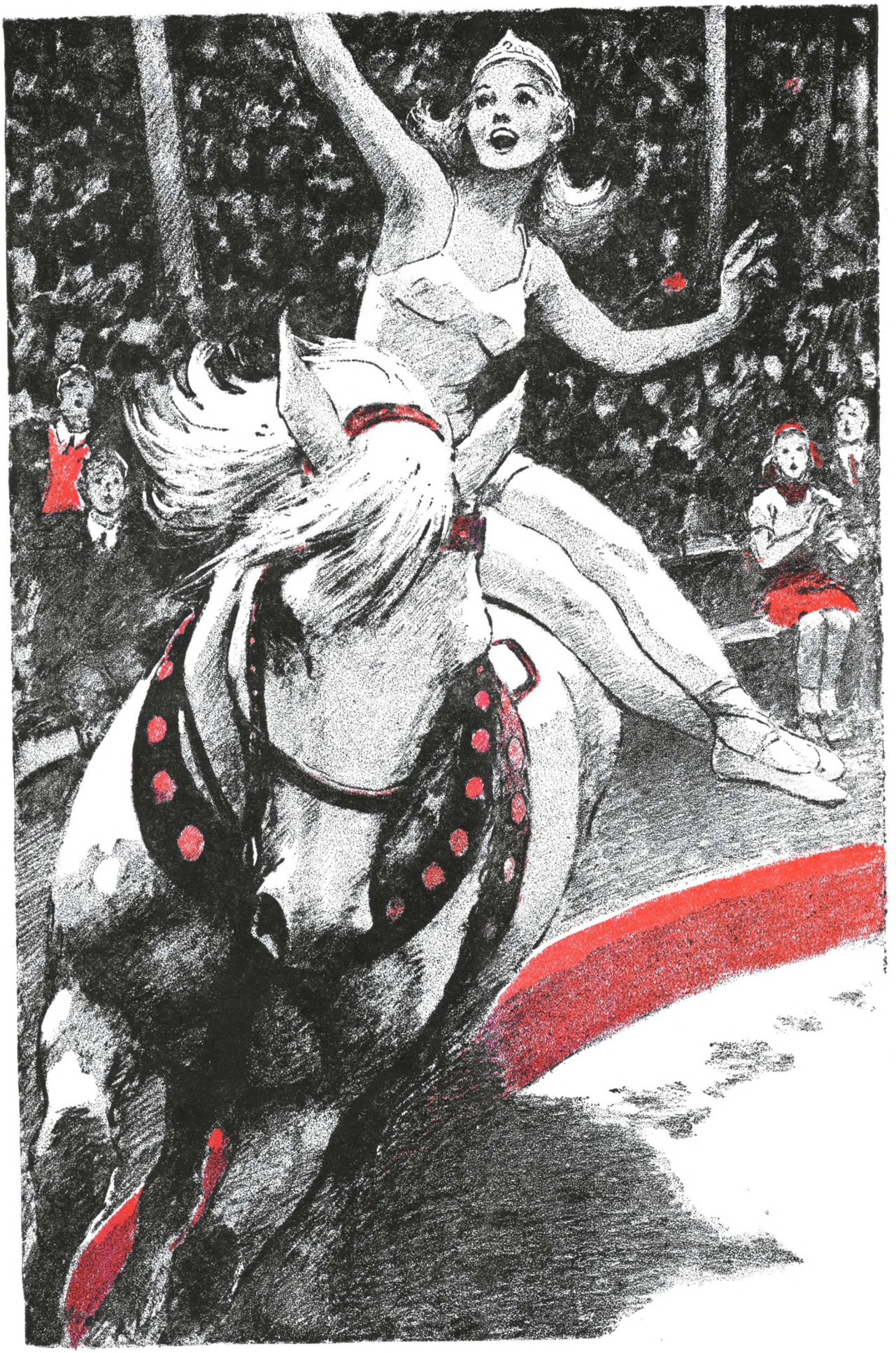
YVONNE whirled toward Gus; her face was unlovely, and her voice matched it. "You damn' fool. Now you beat it!"

Gus began to grumble a protest.

"Scram!" fairly screamed Yvonne. This made Gus hunch his shoulders, and he backed off and edged away, apprehensive lest one of her temperamental fits might come on, which to his notion was nothing but nasty temper which he didn't like to remember.

Yvonne called to a nearby razorback. "Hey, Mac, lift this guy on your back and bring him over to my dressing-room—he may be hurt bad." Yvonne walked on ahead.

Not until twenty minutes later did Sacki regain consciousness. Then he moaned a little and opened his eyes. When he sat up, a wet towel which had been on his head fell to the floor. He leaned forward to pick it up, and slipped forward groggily to his knees. Yvonne hurried in at that moment with some smelling-salts, and a whiff sharply cleared his brain. He looked about the small room partitioned off from other similar quarters in this



First Sacki had seen her from inside the tent and had sat spellbound through her act.

large tent which housed the circus performers and attendents. He saw a long rack of costumes and clothes across one end; a bed, poorly disguised as a couch, and a bench in front of a folding dressing-table comprised the furnishings.

Sacki slowly got to his feet, and rubbing his tender jaw, he smiled ruefully at Yvonne who said: "You're feeling some better now, aren't you, Gypsy?" Her voice was gentle.

"Yes! No! I feels worse." A dark look came over his face, and he sat down heavily on the couch. "I feels much worse. Not here,"—he pointed to his jaw, then indicated his heart,—"but here. For the first time ever in my life a man knock me down. Always before I win in a fight, and now I can never say so again. But I never fight a Gorgio—maybe that makes a difference?"

Yvonne laughed and sat down beside him. "Oh no, that isn't why. You were just up against a tough customer. He's a pug."

"A pug?"

"Yeah, a professional fighter. He used to be top notch, they say, until he began to hit up the booze. He works along with the circus. You know—offers fifty bucks to anyone who can stay three rounds."

"You mean he pays *anyone* to fight him?"

"Sure—every night they get a crowd up outside their tent, it's next to the side-shows, and if no local takes him up, they got a dummy planted, and if they don't like the looks of some guy that's willing to step in the ring with him, they take the dummy anyway, a guy by the name of Eddie Somebody, who used to be his sparring partner. It's a cinch, the way they work it."

"WHAT happens when he fights *anyone,* not Eddie Somebody—do the police give troubles?"

"Gosh, no. When Gus does take on some sap, he always stiffens him, and why do you think the cops would step in?"

"I am the best fight-fellow I ever see. I never fight a Gorgio. My grandmother always tells me 'never fight a Gorgio if from jail you stay away,' but I likes to fight this Gus. Oh, but I likes to fight him!" These last words were almost whispered through Sacki's tight lips and clenched jaw-muscles.

"Say—you must mean that. You think you could stand up to him? Gus really knows the fight game."

"I thinks I could stand up to him." Sacki smiled. "You ever hears of 'Jack' Chumomisto in old England? A long time ago? No—he was my grandfather. He was England's greatest fight-fellow. He fights Paddy O'Leary, from Dirty Fellows Country (Ireland) and oh, my, what coorapen, (battle), and he fights West Country Dick and wins, and he fights Hardy Scroggins, who Jack Randall never would fight, and always he wins. He was a great one!"

Yvonne was really interested. She said: "I've heard of Jack Randall alrighty; he was the champ in those days. What happened when your grandfather fought him?"

"He never fights Jack Randall. He—he runs off with a Gorgie, an Englishwoman, to Australia, and leaves my grandmother. But he was a great fight-fellow. My grandmother sees all his fights and teaches me to fight like he did. I would feel sorry for this Gus after I finished him!" Sacki rose and paced the small room, muttering things in the Romany.

"Here sit down, sit down and calm yourself. I gotta idea. I'll get hold of Bill Talbolt, that's his manager, and fix it up with him to let you fight if you just show up in the crowd tonight and holler out when he asks if there's anyone brave enough to get in the ring for three rounds. See? I'd sure like to see someone plaster that mug. He's been tagging me for weeks."

At that Sacki's eyes narrowed and he growled: "I plasters him, that mug!"

Yvonne laughed: "You keep on and you'll have me convinced. Boy, you sure don't lack in confidence, that's one thing. You show up there tonight, and I'll just have time to get over there from my last act to see the fireworks. You had some tough luck today when you met me, didn't you? Maybe this'll make up for it." Yvonne bent forward, put her hands on Sacki's shoulders and kissed him on the mouth. Sacki stood up quickly, and for a very brief moment looked down at her; then he caught her up with both arms in a sudden embrace that all but stopped her breath. Throwing her head back, she looked into his face, and her wide easy smile died on her lips when she saw the intensity of feeling in his black eyes.

"Gosh, Gypsy, don't look at me like that," she gasped.

Slowly his face came closer, and then their lips met in a kiss the like of which Yvonne, despite her previous amours, had never known. She responded completely, and so long it was that she finally had to tear her face away for breath. Sacki slowly dropped his arms from around her, but she clung to him for support, and her hands were still clasping and unclasping, making a wad of his shirt-back. She was very dizzy and her breathing was uneven as she said: "Whooie! Boy, if you can fight the way you can kiss, I pity poor Gus! You better leave right now while I can order you out—beat it."

Sacki grinned and turned to the door as Yvonne added: "Don't cram your stomach full tonight unless you want to be dead on your feet, and look good at the gloves or you'll get the heavier pair. And good luck, Gypsy—I'll be there with bells on."

He turned in the doorway, still smiling and his eyes were merry as he said: "That good kind of kiss means just one thing!" His generous laugh followed him away.

"The crazy guy—" Yvonne murmured, but there were stars in her eyes, and she hummed a little song, and now and then laughed to herself.

THAT evening Yvonne could not shake her thoughts from Sacki, and she cut her performance short and hurried to her dressing-room.

While dressing, she began to tremble and as she approached the tent-arena and heard the wild yelling from the inside, she broke into a run.

Inside was a bedlam of noise. One huge light focused its glare down on the ring and two figures seated in opposite corners. The place was packed and Yvonne at once noticed a large group readily identified as Gypsies by their colorful dress, and a noisy pack it was! Every man, woman and child in the Chumomisto clan had turned out for this momentous spectacle. For them, history was in the making—one of their own pitted against a professional Gorgio cooromengro, and now they were screaming and howling for their Sacki.

Yvonne walked quickly down an aisle to sit beside Talbolt, Gus' manager. She glanced closely at the figures in the ring. Sacki's back was toward her. Gus lolled back on his stool with his legs spread out and arms dangling on the ropes; he was puffing noticeably and a red belt of color showed around his mid-section. She grabbed Talbolt by the arm. "What round is this, Bill? What's happened? Tell me—quick!"

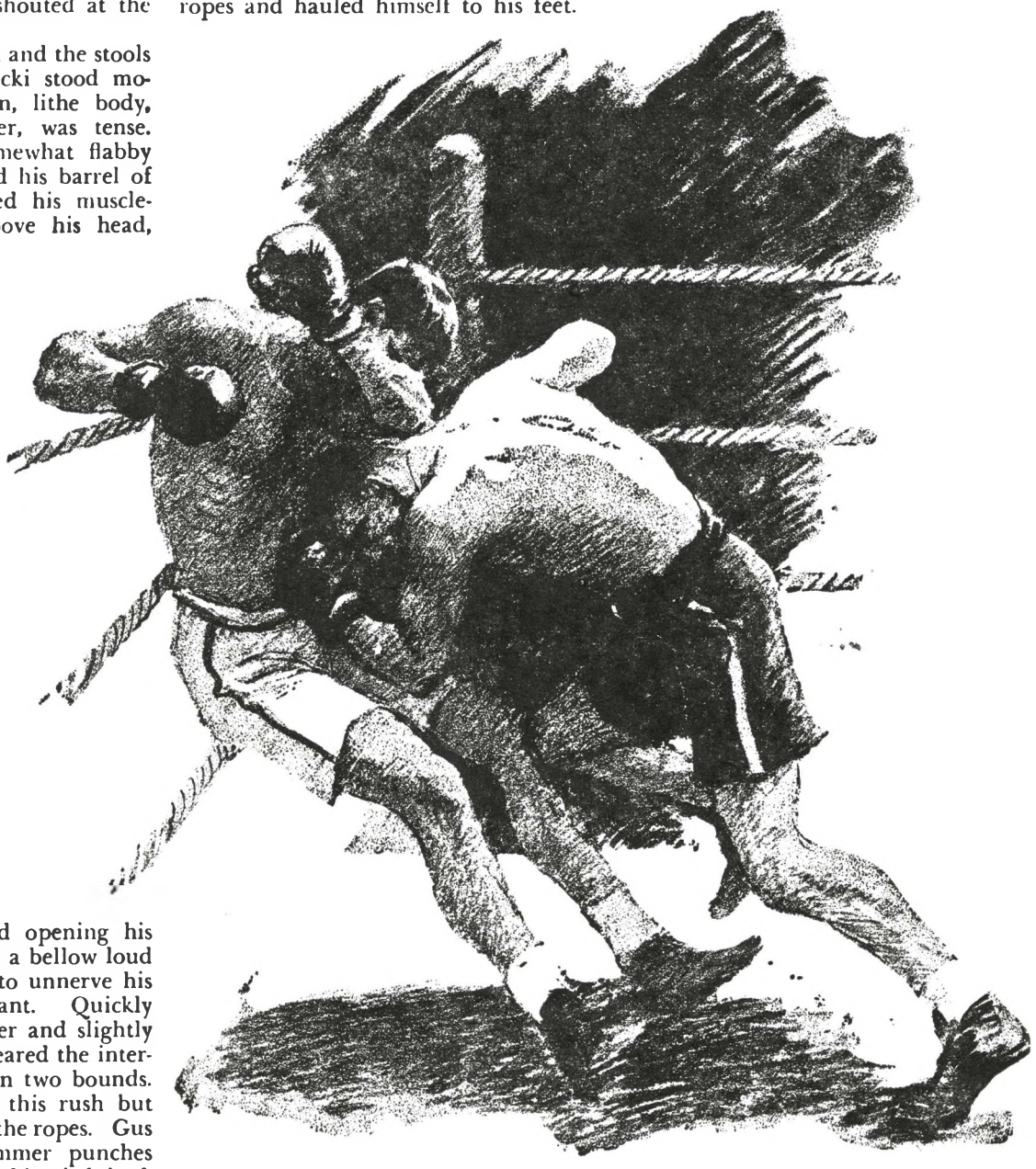
Talbolt, a dried-up little man, looked at Yvonne steadily and amusedly. "What you so flustered about, girlie? I guess this is the boy friend you spoke about? Well—first round just over, and you can see what's happened. Gus is puffing like an old horse, and that Gypsy is fresh as a daisy, even if he's been doing all the work. Say, you know that kid has got the makings. I haven't seen anything like it in forty years. He looks just like one of the old-timers there in the ring—same old square stance, keeps his mitts low and uses them for hitting, not for blocking. Never did see a guy so quick in moving his body, and damn' clever dodging. He don't know just what to do with his feet but he's plenty fast on 'em. He started things right off—boring into Gus' middle and kept right after it the whole round. Gus couldn't land his blows, so he started covering up. Now you watch—Gus is going to rush him the

second, and may finish him off if he gets in close. That Gus could have made the top–best close-in worker I ever saw – gotta eight-inch punch that'd kill an ox, and . . . there goes the gong!"

And a roar went up. Every Gypsy stood on his feet and shouted at the top of his lungs.

The two fighters rose, and the stools were jerked back. Sacki stood motionless, but his brown, lithe body, muscled like a panther, was tense. Gus sucked in his somewhat flabby and sore stomach, filled his barrel of a chest with air, raised his muscle-bulging arms high above his head, contorted his face, and opening his mouth wide, he uttered a bellow loud as a bull; all this was to unnerve his opponent for an instant. Quickly dropping his arms lower and slightly ducking his head, he cleared the intervening space to Sacki in two bounds. Sacki tried to sidestep this rush but was borne back against the ropes. Gus was placing short hammer punches that quickly told. Sacki tried ineffectually to cover. The cries of the Gypsies were quieter, and carried a pleading note. Suddenly Sacki sagged and dropped to the floor. Gus retreated to a neutral corner, and the arm of the referee began to flag the count. Sacki raised himself on one elbow, then fell back with the effort. Three–four. . . . He rolled over on his stomach and drew his knees under him . . . Five . . . Six . . . Seven. . . .

The weight of his body made Sacki wabble as he brought his body forward on his hands and knees. He thought dazedly to himself: He could never get to his feet–it would be too hard, and it would be so easy to drop on the floor. This was a funny position he was in. Just like that big fat Spanish Gypsy last week, and now he was the one crawling on his knees! And put there by the one who was after his Yvonne, and his people were there watching! Sacki shook his head vigorously, reached out, grabbed the ropes and hauled himself to his feet.



Sacki tried to stop this rush but was borne back. Gus was placing short hammer punches that quickly told.

Gus had been straining in his corner like a runner on his mark waiting for the gun, and when Sacki had risen to his feet and the referee's arm had ceased raising and dropping, he hurled himself across the ring–only to tangle with the referee, who was backing off. This gave Sacki a few precious seconds and broke the impetus of Gus' rush. Gus stood off and tried to land one long sweeping blow that would end the fight, long heavy blows that Sacki managed to dodge, or halfway block. No longer were those spasms of pain shooting through him from Gus' short power punches. Gus had changed his tactics, and to the howling mob, it looked like the kill.

Yvonne turned to Talbolt. Her blue eyes were wide and fearful, as she said tremulously: "What do you think, Bill? Is Gus gonna finish him?"

Talbolt looked at her scornfully. "Hell, baby, can't you see nothing? Gus don't use his bean or he might have wrapped it up, but look at that Gypsy roll with them punches–look at his face. Does he look like he's hurt? Naw, he's smilin'–he's foxin' now; that's what he's doin'. He's rested up from that last close workin' of Gus, but he's not ready to show it."

Habitually calm, Talbolt grew tense and gripped Yvonne's knee. "Listen, baby, if I ain't wrong–no sir–that's it. Gus won't be able to put on a glove for weeks after this. That Gypsy is out for a killing. Gus has give

Illustrated by Maurice Bower

The ancient Gypsy had slipped a long slim dagger from her waist-sash, and on this she impaled a card. And Yvonne could see the blurred outline of the ace of spades and knew the significance well.

all he's got, and now he's tired out. There's the gong. Now you watch this next one. I'm tellin' you! I'd feel sorry for Gus, only he's let me down too many times. If I ain't wrong, I'll be signing that kid up and giving Gus the gate—he's been washed up for a long time. That Gypsy can go places with me!"

Yvonne gave a short laugh, high-pitched and nervous. "Say, Bill, you're sort of going for the kid. I don't see where you get that way—Gus looks just as tough and ugly as ever. I do hope you're right, though. Gus knocked him cold this afternoon, and I'd hate to see him do it again."

"He did? I bet the Gypsy wasn't expecting it? Yeah. Fightin' over you? Yeah. Sort of going for the kid yourself, ain't you? Well, I don't blame you. He's a swell-lookin' guy and he can amount to something. He's an honest-to-God fighter. There's the gong—you watch, now, and you'll see what I been talking about."

The fighters came out slowly and circled warily. Gus hugged his guard while Sacki had dropped his gloves almost to his sides. Gus was not to be pulled in. The shouting died down, and a hush settled over the spectators; somehow a crucial moment was sensed. This nerve-racking circling continued, until Sacki finally dropped his arms straight by his sides and stood turning in one spot while Gus slowly planted his feet and circled. Sacki laughed out clearly and loudly, and this taunt brought Gus to make a short half-hearted left feint at Sacki. Like a flash Sacki's shoulders dropped and a low, terrific right, long and swift, with the full weight of his body behind it, smashed into Gus' left side and sent him staggering backward clear across the ring against the ropes. Sacki followed in. Timing his blows carefully, he began a massacre that was to be carried down in Gypsy tales for generations to come.

Short punches broke down what remained of Gus' guard. Then standing off, Sacki lunged like a fencer delivering long, straight-from-the-shoulder blows that carried the full force of his shoulder movement. These terrible blows were placed with a slight turning from his trunk, that twisted the blow and tore the skin at each impact. Driving like pistons, Sacki's fists ripped almost every inch of skin on Gus' chest, shoulders and stomach. He was careful to avoid hitting Gus' left side, for he knew that first blow that sent Gus flying across the ring had done damage.

The spectators had gone crazy, and the Gypsies were in a frenzy. Everyone was standing and screaming and yelling. The din was deafening. Talbolt alone regained his presence of mind, and grabbing a towel, he tossed it in the ring. The referee stood in a far corner, fascinated with the gory battle before him, and had no thought of intercession. Sacki had started directing his blows to Gus' face, and both eyes were shut, lips mangled, and blood spurted from a dozen places.

Talbolt ran around the outside of the ring and grabbed through the ropes at the referee's legs and nearly pulled the man from his feet before he could point at the towel and yell: "Stop it, and stop it quick unless you want a murder!" The referee came to his senses with a shock as he ran forward and stopped the fight.

Yvonne was in poor condition for her night performance. Once, when holding an arabesque position she had put her steed over a low hurdle, she had slipped, twice she missed her running mount, and the ring-master cautioned her in a serious voice.

Not waiting for her second bow, she hurried to her dressing-room and flung herself down on the couch. Her thoughts dwelt on the fight, on that terrible, glorious fight. Yvonne knew with a certain primitive satisfaction that she, herself, was the reason for the ferocity of Sacki's onslaught. For a brief moment she had talked with him after the fight. He had said that he would see her at twelve. It was probably near eleven now. She rose on one elbow to look at the clock on the dressing-table which was in the circle of light cast by a single, small table-lamp, and then she saw her visitor. "Ugh! What—who are you?"

On the floor near the other end of the room, motionless as a weathered stone, sat old Kisaiya Chumomisto; her body was lost in the semi-darkness, but the light from the lamp on the dressing-table showed her face and made her eyes glitter like black coals. Slowly came the sibilant answer: "I am Kisaiya Chumomisto!"

Yvonne, strangely fearful of this ancient creature whom she had never seen before, controlled her voice with an effort. "Well, I see you made yourself right at home. What you got on your mind?"

For a full minute the old one did not speak but only stared at her with a venomous intensity. Yvonne's nerve crumbled. "What do you want? What—what do you want?" she almost wailed.

"Be quiet! I tells you. Tonight I dukkered with the cards, and you know what I finds? Three times this card comes to the top." She held up a peculiar square card, twice the size of a common playing card, and despite its unfamiliar design, the Queen of Diamonds could be distinguished. Kisaiya Chumomisto continued in her hoarse whisper, but her voice rose in pitch. "And each time just beneath it is this—"

She rose to her feet with an effort and advanced silently within a foot of Yvonne, who leaned farther back on the couch. The ancient Gypsy had slipped a long slim dagger from her waist-sash, and on this she impaled a card, showing a large black figure. This she held out in her bony hand and Yvonne could see the blurred outlines of the ace of spades and knew the significance well. It came closer and closer, this square black card with the thin shaft of polished metal in front, until the needle-point pricked the skin on her throat. Yvonne could do nothing but stare downward at this harbinger of death only six inches from her fear-wide eyes. Her head pressed against the wall in back of her, and her voice stuck in her straining, corded neck. For five long horrible seconds both were motionless; then Kisaiya Chumomisto spoke.

"You takes our Sacki from us, and they finds you in three days with this knife sticking in your neck, and you—dead!" The old one slowly backed up, turned and passed through the door.

Yvonne stared at the doorway as though in a trance, then finally closed her eyes and heaved a long trembling, sobbing breath and didn't bother to wipe away the perspiration which had popped out on her face. As she rose shakily and changed from her costume, her actions began to assume a decisiveness and a certain amount of self-assurance returned. Tossing a light coat over her arm, she mumbled to herself as she went out: "I guess I sorta fell for Gypsy—but God, is that old hag poison!"

Yvonne found Gus with a doctor working over him. His face was in a huge swath of bandages in which there were only two openings—a narrow slit for one eye and another for the mouth.

"How is he, Doc?" said Yvonne lightly.

The doctor straightened up and his face was grave. "This poor man must have got mixed up in a cage of your cats. I've had to set a nose, and take twenty-three stitches on his face. His body is still worse—there are five ribs broken on his left side, innumerable lacerations, and probable internal injuries."

Yvonne was shocked despite her feelings. "Gosh—when will he be up and about?"

"Not for weeks, probably. I'll know definitely tomorrow after I move him to the hospital. I've done all I can right now, and you'll be doing this chap a big favor if you can stay here tonight and call me if anything should happen. Watch especially close for any sign of hemorrhage and keep him quiet." In a few minutes he had gathered his dressings and equipment into his satchel and departed.

"It tells the day, the hour, the minute when you sees Sacki."

"Don't try to talk, Gus, but you can hear me, can't you?" A slight nod came from the bundle of bandages. "Well, I don't like to put it up to you when you're this way, but it's about the only chance I see. Do you want to get even with that Gypsy?" Gus sat up with muffled moans, and shook his clenched fist meaningfully.

"Lay down, you fool. Now listen. You know Talbolt is gonna give you the gate and start managing this Gypsy? Well, he is; that's what he told me. Look—tonight at twelve that Gypsy's coming to my dressing-room, and if you can only make the grade—"

KISAIYA CHUMOMISTO'S ears were those of a cat. "Sacki—*avata acoi,*• come here!" There was no sound from the outside and the command was repeated.

Sacki stepped slowly from the darkness to the back door of the Queen's House and poked a sad but determined face inside.

His grandmother said: "When one sneaks through the darkness the purpose is not all times good. Come in here; I wants to talk."

Sacki answered in the Gypsy tongue, in a voice flat and expressionless. "While tute's rakkerin the cheiruses jal."

"You has plenty of time. I tells you about your dado and mother now." That brought Sacki in, and he sat on the floor keeping his eyes averted.

"You knows about your grandfather, what a great fight-fellow he was, and how he leaves me, and runs off, to go with that Gorgie to Australia. You knows how that ends and Gorgie leaves him and he dies, and me his Gypsy romady, always loves him to this day even. Now your father just a short time after we leaves this town when you were a tiny chal, takes us south to big horse race, where he an' a Gorgie he meets works a big hunki what they call a confidence game, and then they runs off. The Gorgie gets the money, and then tells the police and they takes your dado to jail for many years, and he dies. Your poor mother dies just a month after he leaves her. Oh, Sacki, dear Sacki, have you forget Shuri? She fades like a little flower that has been pulled from the ground, and she cannot eat, and cries so many tears." Sacki did not answer, and so she continued: "There is bengis your see, like your father and grandfather."

SACKI was squirming, becoming impatient. Then Kisaiya Chumomisto reached out and opened a small, curiously wrought box which Sacki had regarded since childhood as being a container of mysterious secrets, and drew out a packet of square cards, as she said: "I rokra no more; I am through speaking. I gives you one last dukker with my old cards I brings from England. Only once before in twenty years I uses them and that earlier this evening. I shuffles them well. Now watch you, how the cards fall—you know something of what they can tell. . . . I sees a little dried-up potato named Talbolt what says he gives you hundred bucks, which means dollars, each week to go about and fight Gorgios, and what says you will be champion in two years and very rich. The fourth card I turn will show if this can be—if not a face, 'twill come to pass, and if a face 'tis the one who makes it not so. Hail It is the Queen of Diamonds. She is the one who makes you not be champion, or ever rich. She plays you false, for I sees here the jail and you in it. I sees you walking a long ways to us. And then you stays with us forever, and makes Gypsy people stronger and happier, and Shuri has many tiny chals about her, and yet another under her belt, and the little chals are kishto and strong like their dado. . . . That is all, Sacki. My dukker with these cards never fails. Sometimes it is good to know what things are in waiting for us. *Ja and rak tute,* 'Go thou and take care of thyself.' "

Sacki said nothing as he turned and stepped out into the darkness. He walked slowly and he was extremely

---

•*avata acoi*—come here
while tute's rakkerin the cheiruses jal—while you talk, time slips by
bengis your see—likeness of your forefathers
rokra—speak
kishto—virile

disturbed. Truly, he had never known her to be wrong, but how could she know what she did? Ha—it was those thin canvas walls of the dressing-room where Talbolt had talked to him after the fight, that let her know.

Why should he worry, he thought, over an old Gypsy's dukkering? For had not Talbolt said he was the real McCoy, whoever he was, and that was a good thing, for had not Talbolt also told him that in two months they quit this sideshow and go into real training, and then in two little years the champion of the world and all the time more money than he had ever dreamed of and—here he caught his breath—a most beautiful golden chi,* not a chi but a Gorgie, that would be his! It was nearing twelve o'clock so Sacki hurried toward the dark group of tents which soon loomed up huge and quiet.

Only one small square of light showed—Yvonne's room, and she was there waiting for him! He ran the last short distance and burst through the door with his eyes shining and a glad cry on his mouth. Yvonne was sitting on the couch. A terrible look in her eyes stopped Sacki. He heard a rustle behind him, felt a stab of pain shoot through his head, and then there was darkness.

YVONNE uttered a little cry and ran forward and turned his face up, and would have kissed him, but a kick in her side and a growl from the grotesquely swathed Gus stopped her. Without a word, and the few tears drying quickly on her face, she ripped the shoulder of her dress and tore it far down in front and in back; she loosened her hair, quietly turned a chair over and pulled the bed-covers half-off on the floor.

Then they waited, strange, solemn, and somehow seeming naked in the hard light of the unshaded light hanging in the center of the room. Then they heard—slow, regular footsteps in the distance of the night-watchman.

Yvonne whispered: "Do you feel okay, Gus?" He nodded quickly, and again she whispered: "Do you think he'll stay out?" Again Gus nodded and made motions to her, for the steps were getting farther away. Yvonne drew in her breath, and a shrill, terrified scream broke from her lips, a woman's scream that freezes a man's blood. She quickly assumed a crouching position on the floor in one corner and began to sob loudly, while Gus stood by the doorway with a heavy tent-stake clutched in his hand.

The sound of running feet pounded upon them. The watchman threw himself through the door and took in the picture at a glance. He stooped over the prostrate Sacki for a moment. "The dirty Gypsy," he muttered. "Good work, Gus—good thing you were near. You all right, Yvonne? This guy won't move for an hour. I'll be right back—goin' to phone for a squad car."

A LARGE old-fashioned desk was placed at the end of the bare cement corridor of the city jail. A pair of large shoes with feet in them were planted on the very top, and now and then they waggled slightly and a dark brown flying stream of tobacco juice would arch into the air from behind the desk and land, sometimes with a "ping," in a cuspidor intentionally placed a dozen feet away.

The loud jangle of an electric bell sounded the noon hour and a few moments after it had died away, the heavy feet were withdrawn reluctantly from their resting place and a mountain of flesh, clothed in a sloppy blue uniform rose laboriously and emerged from the retreat. Schmidt, the jailer, fished for the ring of keys suspending from his belt, as he started down the corridor to the cells. . . .

Sacki lay prone on the floor, as motionless as the gray walls.

Schmidt wagged his head slowly, and his tenor voice squeaked: "Well, son, it's sort of gone hard fer you here, ain't it? You ain't been eating enough to keep one of them cockroaches alive. You ain't spoke a word for two weeks, son. Damn' if I don't think you're going nuts. Been too bad if you'd got five years instead of thirty days, and which you would have if that circus dame had appeared in court against you. You're lucky and you don't know it, son. Hey! Hey, Gypsy!" The figure on the floor remained motionless. "Say—have you gone deaf? Listen, son, your time finished at noon. Come on, you can git now."

Schmidt unlocked the cell door, and grunting like an overfed hog as he bent over Sacki, he slid him across to the wall and made him sit up. "Now come on, son—get up! Don't you know nothing? Hell!" A solid kick from one of those heavy shoes thudded in Sacki's ribs and seemed to shock some consciousness into him. He stood up and swayed.

Ragged and dirty and pitifully thin he was, with unkempt hair falling over his eyes, which stared out expressionlessly—like blank eyes in a death-mask. "There—that's better, son. Now march along—come on, come on." Schmidt pushed him ahead through the corridors to the desk outside. He dug about in a strong-box in one of the drawers and handed over to Sacki his pocket trinkets, and a few dollars in bills, fewer still after Schmidt had peeled several off before rising from the box. Sacki dazedly thrust them in his pocket. Schmidt entered the release in a dog-eared record-book, and then led Sacki out a door opening on the street.

Schmidt shuffled back to the desk, adjusted his tremendous weight in the chair, and again the thick-soled shoes rested on the top, and a "ping" sounded a dozen feet away.

FOR several hours Sacki slowly walked, not knowing what direction he was taking.

Off to one side across some railroad tracks, he saw some long white buildings that seemed familiar. He turned his steps toward them and upon closer approach he stopped and looked sharply about him. With the recognition of the fair-grounds a flood of comprehension swept away the mental paralysis. He ran forward eagerly to the spot of the Gypsy camp and found only the remains of fires and little heaps of rubbish among the weeds. He sank to the ground and began to sob, tearless sobs that shook his body. Deserted by his people—but he had deserted them first, he thought, deserted them for a lying Gorgie who had tricked him into jail. He should have known, for did not his old wise grandmother tell him—ah, what all did she tell him! A few of her words trickled back and then he recalled her dukker and what she had told him of his return to his people.

His moaning ceased, and his head lifted with the flicker of hope. Leaping to his feet, he rushed wildly over the patch of ground, and every foot of the place he searched, even going down the road a way. He returned to the camp site, still looking, and it was then he noticed an old wood-rail and wire fence that bordered one side. Along this he walked examining each post and the last one showed him what he sought. Two nails—one standing upright, driven halfway into the top of the post with a shred of red cloth hanging to it; the other nail was driven in beside but the head was bent over to the wood. It was bent toward the south, and Sacki started out on the highway leading south, taking his course as indicated by this patrin (a sign of direction, a signal).

Walking along in the coolness of that evening Sacki's spirits mounted. His stomach was full. Except, perhaps, in jail, a Gypsy seldom goes hungry long, and the thought kept recurring that his people would take him back—for had they not left him a patrin? He stopped to rest by the roadside and in the sheer exuberance of his freedom which was more than he could contain, he rooted and rolled on the ground like an animal and rubbed the moist earth on his bare chest, and he sang an old, old Gypsy song about how happy and wise was the wolf that lived in the woods, and the ear-fellow (rabbit) who lived in the green fields,

*chi—girl

and the singing birds who sailed through the skies, but how much wiser and happier were the Gypsies who lived in all these places.

The campfire danced and played with jumping shadows and sent them chasing off into the bowl of darkness around. Half-light, half-dark figures occasionally moved past as the Gypsies finished their preparations for staying the night. A silent and spiritless group it was, with only a few growling mumbles from hungry men, and now and then the raspings of a nagging woman mingling with the crying of a child.

Kisaiya Chumomisto sat within the circle of the firelight and stared into the blaze. One sat beside her—Shuri, with downcast eyes. Dark patches on her cheeks were accentuated by the flickering flames, and it showed her heavy lids swollen with weeping. Shuri's hands were limp in her lap, and her complete abjectness stayed in the old Queen's heart. Aye, she knew how it felt to have her man leave her, and she had kept on feeling it for sixty years. She muttered aloud: "It is from things that catch inside our neck and choke our heart and hard to bear, that we makes room inside us for good things that might before been crowded out."

Shuri heard and began to sob very softly. The ancient one leaned toward her, curled a bony finger under her chin and lifted her head. "I gives you a dukker from the old cards. I tells you about Sacki, and if you sees him again." Through her tears Shuri looked at the wrinkled, unfathomable face in wonderment.

Shuri did not know, indeed none of the Gypsies knew, what Kisaiya Chumomisot and Canairis, a man whose tongue could lie, knew. The Gypsies had broken their camp and had left the fair-grounds very early the morning after Sacki's desertion; and of his consequent troubles they did not know; and many guesses were made concerning the hurried departure and the absence of Sacki. At the instruction of Kisaiya Chumomisto, Canairis had stayed behind in the city, to slip inside a tiny courtroom, and he had heard the sentence passed upon the dazed Sacki. Most of that night Canairis had walked to catch up with the vans and report to only his Queen what he had learned. For the next month the Gypsies had stayed several days at each stop and traveled slowly.

So now, as the "old cards" were withdrawn from the bosom of Kisaiya Chumomisto's blouse, Shuri could only wonder mightily and feel the pain of rising hope. Skillfully the old one played the cards, suiting them to her patter.

"I sees where the Queen of Diamonds remains on the bottom of the deck, and I cut the cards and cut again, yet Queen of Hearts stays on top, and then places the cards thus, and each time I shuffles and deals likewise the cards fall the same, with the Jack ever coming nearer. Now one more shuffle, and he is next! Odd's fish! That can but mean you sees Sacki soon. He comes back! And then it is that you must forgive and forgive him altogether, for he has been behind the walls of a staripen," (jail) "and not with the Gorgie as was feared."

Even while she intoned this, her acute ears caught a faint sound on the night breeze that she identified. She breathed faster, and her words jerked, but Shuri did not notice. The dukker continued. "I spreads the cards out now like only the oldest black Romanies know how, like the Tackey Romanies, the last but me buried at Heviskey Tan, at the Norwich Mousehold. It tells the day, the hour, the minute when you sees Sacki, and—Look! Ai! You sees him, your Sacki, before you breathes a twenty times!"

Shuri sprang to her feet, straining with excitement. Quickly and forcefully the old one added: "You must not forgets what I tell you about forgiving him." As she spoke, she heard it clearly, and Shuri heard too, and others nearby stopped and lifted their heads with questioning looks.

For over the cool night air came a strong voice lifted in song:

As I was jawing to the town one day,
My Gypsy lass I met on the drom.
Said I, "Young maid, will you stay with me?"
Said she, "Another wife you've got."
"Ah, no!" to my Gypsy lass I said,
"No wife have I to share my bed,
And you my wedded wife shall be,
If you will consent to come with mande."

Nearer and nearer the voice came, until it was upon them; and Sacki, ragged and travel-worn, strode into the firelight, his face radiant yet full serious. Shuri started forward, but the old one detained her with a gesture.

None spoke, and finally Sacki said: "I have come back. Is there no word of welcome?" He looked about at the faces of the Gypsies.

A sudden fear was in his words: "I knows what you think. Let me tell you I was one great fool. Yes, me, Sacki Chumomisto, the greatest fool like I never hears of, except my dear father and grandfather. I left my people to go away with a Gorgie, but I did not go with her, believe me, I did not. That very night she tricked me into jail, and I have been in that staripen ever since—thirty days I was told, but I knows it was thirty years, and in thirty years of heart-pain that only a Romany can feel, he becomes wiser. And now I wants to come back with you and I never leaves again." There was no answer, but stares and silence. Perhaps they were waiting for the old one to speak.

She did. "How do we knows you do not lie?" she rasped.

Would they not believe him? Sacki drew his shoulders straighter and said in low voice: "I been in jail for so long, and walks day and night to come back to my people and finds I cannot. . . . Shuri—I turn to you who always I love and never anyone else. For a few crazy days I thinks I love that Gorgie, but that was just because she was a Gorgie, and even then I never thinks of her with love like Romanies know—I just thinks of her white skin and of her body, and I never thinks that she might have a black heart. . . . Can you forgive foolish me and still finds room in your heart for me as you did? If you only will, I want you for my *tatcho romadi* and we will go away, we two, if the others will not have me." He stood thus before Shuri and pleaded. She looked on him and smiled, and its goodness swept over him like a wave. He could not speak, so he dropped to his knees and kissed her hands.

Shuri bent down to him, and her tears were like jewels on her radiant face. "But Sacki, don't you know we cannot go away? You leads your people when we marry." And at that moment Shuri became conscious of great things that many women never learn.

There was a second or two of silence and then Kisaiya Chumomisto screamed at the top of her voice: "He tells the truth! He's been in the staripen of a truth! And now he's back! Aren't you glad to see him? Then why does you stand like sticks and—" Her words were suddenly lost in the roar of rejoicing and welcoming that went up. The clamor was great.

It was not long until the fire soared very high, crackled and snapped, throwing its warm glare on a wide circle of happy faces.

A little off to one side sat Kisaiya Chumomisto, quiet, ancient, incredibly tired, but the happiest one of that throng, for hers was the transcendent happiness that sometimes comes, in a life of gambles with highest of stakes lost, to reward a spirit that had continued to fight a losing battle. There she sat just outside the circle, hugging to herself a thousand treasured memories, dim and misty, but yet so real, that floated before her, conjured by the scene around the fire:

There was playing of the violin and singing, and strong liquor and thick soup were passed. Then Shuri, the graceful one, dancing a swift whirling dance in a big platter to the unrestrained music of Sacki's *bashadi*, and there was laughter, hilarious, long, free, glorious laughter that only the Gypsies know.

And the night became a huge soft blanket no longer held off by the fire.

SAM WAS ONLY A DEPUTY, WHEREAS HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW WAS THE SHERIFF; BUT WHO DO YOU SUPPOSE SOLVED THIS FLORIDA MURDER MYSTERY?

by RICHARD HOWELLS WATKINS

Short of Suspects

SAM ROBBINS, a sun-dried young man, stood on the corner of Flagler Avenue and the Federal at fifty minutes before midnight. He was bothered about the man beside him, John Perry.

Perry, a bit younger than Sam, was dressed suspiciously well for a reporter, even for one who occasionally wrote special items for the Miami papers. His linen suit was spotless and included a coat, worn on the back instead of on the left arm. Moreover, his shoes were neatly shined, a Panama hat rested squarely upon his sandy, springy hair and his tasteful necktie was fastened securely around his hot neck.

Suspiciously well was the term; a man could go to be buried in clothes like those. Yet John Perry had just denied he was going anywhere.

"And even if I were," Perry said morosely, "would I have to tell a deputy sheriff about it? Beat it, cracker."

"You sho' are a mess," Sam said. "More than that—yo're a mystery."

A black coupé which had been drumming northward along the Federal with no respect for the twenty-five-mile limit in Colusa City's center, pulled over abruptly to the curb. A fat man's heavy-jowled, gray-topped face leaned toward them from the driver's seat. Black eyes sharper than drill-points bore on them.

"How do I—" The man swallowed his words, then went on: "Can you turn right on the red in this town?"

"Sho' cain't," Sam said slowly.

The car shot away. It didn't turn right at the first corner, which was the direct way to the beach. It did turn right at the next.

Sam Robbins closed his eyes to remember a name.

"Well, now!" he said, pleased. "I b'lieve that feller is Gus Sholter, a private detective in a big Miami agency. Come to see us once. Question is, John, did he quit asking something because he recognized you as a repo'ter, or me as a dep'ty sheriff?"

"I don't know," John Perry said.

"That's *two* li'l' mysteries on one street co'ner," Sam commented.

Without a word in reply Perry walked away.

Sam blinked his faded blue eyes.

"What's eatin' Johnny Perry is bigger'n ants," he decided.

Slowly Sam headed toward the parking-lot where he had left his loose-jointed old sedan. The lot proprietor and a high-school boy who did his work for him joined in fifteen minutes of gas-engine research and experiment before they managed to start the motor. In this interval Sam stood beside the car with his head on one side.

In another fifteen minutes he was cruising slowly along the coastal highway with the swash of the Atlantic in his ears and a soft breeze off the Gulf Stream in his face.

It was right along this stretch that the few wealthy lived who could afford to hire a thirty dollar-a-day dick like Sholter. Winter people.

"Something right sinful could be going on if it takes thirty dollars a day to handle it," Sam told his clattering valves. "Sheriff's office might be getting some business it don't want."

His eyes widened as he approached the Kenneth Justin place. The red glow of two tail-reflectors showed in his headlights. A car was parked near the Justin entrance, alongside the high Australian pine hedge that screened the estate from the road. Mostly, folks having business with old Kenneth Justin drove right in.

A car traveling at high speed came up behind Sam's sedan, swerved to pass, and then cut speed sharply with groaning brakes. It was Sheriff Ben Dunn, Sam's brother-in-law, driving the county car.

Ben pulled alongside and scowled at Sam.

"How'd you hear— All right, follow me but keep out o' my hair!" Petulantly the Sheriff kicked his car ahead to take the turn into the Justin driveway at appropriate speed.

"Well, now!" said Sam. He slowed to glance at the license number of the parked coupé. It was Gus Sholter's car.

A white man with a pipe in his mouth was standing in the shadow of the hedge near the car. Sam pulled up.

"Live around here?" Sam asked.

"I'm Dan Meader, Mr. Justin's head gardener," the man answered. "He'll be mighty glad to see the Sheriff."

"Well, now," said Sam politely. "I'll drive you back up theah. Might need yo' evidence."

"I don't know a thing," Meader said. But he climbed on the running-board.

Sam followed Ben Dunn. The Sheriff had driven right past Kenneth Justin's enormous, stubbornly old-fashioned Florida Moorish house and had stopped outside the much-later but equally old-fashioned building overlooking the beach, which Kenneth Justin had built as his office and study—though he claimed to be retired. The

old man liked to watch the Gulf Stream while he dabbled in stocks, land and even horse-races.

Meader dropped off Sam's car. "On the porch," he said.

On the side of this small building, facing the sea, was a tiled porch roofed over and decorated with Moorish arches. It was sheltered by seagrape and such other tough vegetation as Justin's gardeners had induced to defy the sea's salt spray.

Onto this porch a big moon was pouring white light. It fell on the paunchy figure of a man crumpled stomach-down on the tile floor before a large chair: Gus Sholter.

Plump old Kenneth Justin stood beside the still form. He had lifted a blanket off it.

"He's not dead," Justin said to the Sheriff. "Still breathing. But he's been hit hard on the back of the head. . . . The doctor's coming."

"Somebody been fooling with him?" Sheriff Dunn demanded.

"My niece Elspeth put that pillow under his head and covered him up. She said it might be safer not to move him till the doctor said so."

"Who is he?" Ben asked. "What's he doing here?"

Kenneth Justin's answer came out smooth as silk:

"His name's Sholter—a private detective. I sent for him this evening to keep an eye on the place. I don't like those big jewel-robberies down at Miami Beach."

SAM'S eyes opened. "A guard? Gus Sholter seemed to me mo' like a brain dick than a brawn dick—p'ticularly at thirty dollars a day, which—"

"Shut up!" said Ben Dunn. Then to Justin: "Weapon?"

Justin shrugged. "You'll have to hunt for it."

"Give us the background, Mr. Justin."

"Sholter must have arrived only a few minutes ago. I wanted to see him privately, without alarming Elspeth, so I had told him to leave his car outside, walk through the grounds to the office here and wait for me."

Sam's forehead crinkled up. Slanting his head, he regarded the millionaire with mild interest.

Kenneth Justin drew a breath audible against the whisper of the sea. "I suppose Sholter was sitting in that chair—it's the most comfortable one on the porch—when the robber arrived and hit him from behind."

"Robber?" Ben Dunn barked.

Justin nodded his streaked white head and gestured toward the office.

"You can see what a mess the place is—drawers dumped on the floor, files scattered. He didn't have time to break open my old safe."

"What you got, Mr. Justin, that's so valuable it needs special-guarding?" the Sheriff asked, turning to scowl back at the ransacked room.

"A necklace for Elspeth that cost forty-five thousand dollars," Justin said promptly. "It's still in the safe. All that was stolen was a little money—about two hundred—out of my desk drawer. Either the thief was too jittery to tackle the safe after slugging this poor fellow, or he heard me coming."

Ben Dunn stumped about. "I got deputies coming and a fingerprint man's on his way, if he'll lift his lead feet," he growled. He looked at Sam's animated ears. "You hear him?"

"Other folks," Sam answered. He grinned a welcome as small Elspeth Justin and a tall young man came hurrying around the corner of the building. The moonlight made a right pretty picture, shining on Elspeth's fair hair; but Elspeth was all business.

"I have my camera," she said briskly to everybody. "Hello, Sam! . . . . Will some pictures help you run down the crook, Mr. Sheriff? They'd cost you a lot of money if you were a magazine."

"You know my niece," Justin put in. "And Mr. Axtell—a neighbor."

"Neighbor?" said Elspeth. "Why be secretive, Unc? My fiancé."

There was a little silence while Luke Axtell grinned happily.

A mite feverish tonight, the girl seemed, thought Sam. But of course girls took being engaged right seriously.

"Never could figger how a five-foot girl could get such tall prices jest fo' clicking a shutter," he said.

Ben Dunn scowled at him, but Elspeth merely made a face. Then she bent and covered Gus Sholter with the blanket.

"If that doctor doesn't come soon, I'll try some first aid," she said hesitantly. "Well, how about the pictures? Or perhaps you'd prefer Mr. Axtell here"—she glanced at her tall fiancé, close beside her—"to make you a sketch or diagram."

HER gaze fixed firmly on the grim granite of Ben Dunn's face. "This is our place; he was our visitor, and we want to help get the man who hit him."

"Yes, sure, start shooting, Miss Justin," Ben Dunn said. "One to show there was room to sneak up behind that chair. And then—"

"Afraid my talent is strictly comic," Luke Axtell said.

"Omit modesty, Luke," Elspeth said. "It's out of the mode."

"Yes," Justin said suddenly. "Juries are impressed by skillfully drawn diagrams."

"If I could rough in something," Luke Axtell said. "I'm not much at drawing to scale—"

"Skip it," put in the Sheriff crisply. "Luke Axtell? You're that strip artist—uh, comic-strip artist, I mean—that draws the *Old Uncle Aaron* feature, ain't you? Living here now?"

Axtell looked at Elspeth, and they laughed. "From morn till midnight," he said. "I also have a cottage down the beach at Sunrise Villas."

With the tip of her tongue caught between her lips, Elspeth briskly got to work with camera and flashlight bulbs.

The doctor arrived and at his heels three of Ben's deputies. The Sheriff shoved these out to prowl the neighborhood.

Sam wandered into the office. A mess of papers flooded the floor under desk drawers bottom-up. The unimpressive old safe stood in a corner.

BEN DUNN came and called up the road patrol and his office. Sam hung around.

"I'm all messed up, Ben," he said when the Sheriff hung up. "Theah mo' mysteries 'round this town tonight! Heah's a jewel-thief slugging a man, which ain't natural."

"He was surprised," Ben said curtly.

"No, suh; it was Gus Sholter who was surprised. The crook could have moseyed off and come back later."

"Maybe," Ben muttered.

"He could. Instead he slugs—an' nearly kills—a dick, and goes to dumpin' desk drawers. Did he expect to find a forty-five-thousand-dollar gewgaw in one of them? Why didn't he tackle that ol' safe? Just kick it hard, and I figger the door'd open."

"He was in a hurry." Ben Dunn was impatient.

"So he looked in the wrong places?"

"They could have been the right places. People are careless about their ice."

"I'm still wondering why Kenneth Justin hires him a fat, thirty-dollar-a-day brain-dick to *guard* the place. It runs up."

"Don't harp on that," Ben Dunn snapped. "The Sheriff's office ain't picking on a prominent citizen without reason."

"Made quite a secret of Gus coming heah, didn't he?"

Ben frowned uneasily at Sam's mild, unimpressed face. "Look!" he said. "You go outside and handle the crowds, the press, all that."

"Crowds? Why, Ben, theah ain't no crowds!"

Ben let go a grunt of laughter. His forefinger pointed rigidly. "That's why I'm trusting you to handle 'em," he said. "Git!"

Sam bowed up his back to balk like a mule. But he didn't. He stepped out into the murmurous night. Meader, the gardener, and a deputy were moving the unconscious Sholter to the house on a wheeled chaise-longue.

Sam waylaid the doctor.

"Bad crack, Doc?"

"Undoubtedly concussion, possibly a fracture at the base of the brain, Sam," the physician said gravely.

"Real hard, then? Intended hard?"

"Even a very thick skull may not even bring him through."

"Would you guess the weapon? A gun-butt?"

"No," said the doctor slowly. "Something round, with a sort of flange on the end of it."

Sam wandered around among the sea-grape in the moonlight. He got into trouble with a Spanish bayonet as sharp as an icepick, and sheered off. He kept looking.

'Tires a man down to a nub, looking fo' clues!" he mumbled. He moved around the southern end of the office. Here the wind from the beach had blown sand over the coarse grass, the only kind that would live there, even with lots of watering. Under the moon the sand was like a silver sheet. Near the boundary hedge he passed a coiled garden hose beside a water-tap projecting from the ground.

Thirty feet beyond it he turned abruptly and came back. He peered at the sand in the shadow of the hedge. It wasn't silvery, that shadowed sand. It was dark—too dark. He looked around. This place was well screened from the office.

He snapped on his small pocket flash. The sand was wet near that coiled hose—not damp, but wet. The hose nozzle wasn't dribbling; there were no footprints in the wet area.

Sam went back and located Meader near the office.

"Been doing any watering 'round heah tonight?"

"Watering?" The gardener's jaw sagged as he stared. "Not me—nor the others. We work days, Mister deputy, not nights."

Sam reported privately to Ben:

"Maybe somebody washed off the weapon theah."

Ben guffawed. "Somebody took a drink of water."

"But, Ben, he'd be likely to make footprints in the wet sand, and he didn't—"

"*You* make footprints," Ben said, twitching his thumb.

"Ben, that hose had—"

The Sheriff stalked back into the office.

Elspeth was getting set for another shot on the porch. Luke was helping most willingly with flash-bulbs. Sam turned his back on the camera, facing the sea. A bulb lit up the world like lightning.

Sam's open eyes blinked; he went off down the path that led over a dune to the beach—unhurrying, inconspicuous. Though the moon was a poor substitute for a flash-bulb, it was enough.

The man who stood in the shelter of a wind-harried coco-palm started back-tracking silently.

"Wait!" Sam said. "Wait, Johnny Perry!"

The reporter stopped; then he moved toward Sam.

"I was just coming up," John Perry explained. "You've got good eyes, Sam. What's up? Elspeth doing some night shots?"

"Sort of," Sam said. "Of still life—as still as a cracked skull will make a man."

He shifted his position to get a better slant of moonlight on the overdressed young reporter.

"You sho' get around," he said. "Your office get a tip from the Sheriff's office?"

Perry started up the path. "If there's a story up there—"

Sam caught his arm. "Wait! I'm handling you: crowds and press—I got you on both counts. It's this way." He gave John Perry the dope, omitting nothing.

"So after maybe killing this po' detective, the robber gets two hundred dollars an' misses fo'ty-five thousand in that ol' safe," Sam concluded. "Make sense to you?" He squinted intently at Perry.

"It's good enough for me," John Perry replied. "His missing the necklace gives the story a high spot. I'll lead with that." He meditated. "Maybe I can get a picture."

He started up the path. Sam followed peacefully.

At the office porch Perry walked in on the Sheriff and the Justin household.

Ben Dunn snorted angrily. "How'd you get this so soon?"

"Radar, Sheriff," the reporter said. He looked at Elspeth. "Any chance of a picture, Miss Justin?"

"No chance," replied Elspeth with casual politeness. "This isn't a regular job. It's for the Sheriff. Another bulb, Luke dear."

"Coming up!" said Axtell efficiently. He followed her into the office.

Plump old Kenneth Justin took three strides toward the reporter and stabbed angrily toward the gate with a thick arm.

"You're not needed around here, Perry. Kindly leave."

"On my way," said John Perry quietly. He started.

Sam sat down on the edge of the tiled porch. "Seems 's if I'd make a good repo'ter," he said complacently. "The very thing that struck me, how the robber missed fo'ty-five-thousand-dollars' worth of necklace, Perry's going to feature."

"What!" shouted Ben Dunn. "You told him that?"

His violence brought Elspeth and Luke Axtell to the door.

"Ain't you the one that tol' me to handle the press, Ben?" Sam inquired. "I handled him right."

"Great Peter!" said Justin.

"Suppose that crook reads he's missed—" Ben Dunn stopped, black-browed and thoughtful. "Huh!" He pointed a finger at Sam. "Go get Perry's office. Have him call me back soon's he arrives."

Sam went into the office and dialed. In the interval he shook his head at Elspeth.

"Fo'ty-five-thousand-dollar necklaces!" he said. "Gettin' right fancy on us! Thought yo' story was you were a working-girl."

"What?" Elspeth inquired vaguely. "Oh, that! I am. I'm sure Unc just bought it as a sort of hedge against inflation. He knows me better than that."

"The trouble with you," Luke Axtell said, "is that no man would even notice you were wearing jewelry. It's a waste." He paused. "Not that I'll mind doing a little wasting on you, Elsp."

"No tender passages in public, please," Elspeth said. She opened her eyes at Luke. "I suppose your comic-strip *Uncle Aaron* keeps heaping rich gifts on you, too?"

Luke Axtell smiled broadly. "I make a living," he said.

When John Perry called back from the *Chronicle* office Ben Dunn cleared his throat importantly and took up the telephone. Around him, with open ears, grouped Kenneth Justin, Elspeth, Luke Axtell and Sam. Outside Meader waited patiently, puffing on his pipe.

"Oh, Perry," Ben Dunn said, forcing some suavity into his sandpaper voice,

"you may get a real story out of this later if you'll forget that Gus Sholter is a dick." Ben's eyes narrowed cunningly. "The doctor says he's only slightly injured, anyhow. Call him a chance visitor, a Miami businessman. What?"

He listened a moment; then smiled slyly. "No; no objection to building up the thief's stupidity in missing the jewelry in that broken-down piggy bank." He hung up.

Justin shook his head doubtfully. "I'm inclined to doubt you can lure back the thief to make another try, Sheriff."

Ben deflated. He frowned sourly. "But you wouldn't go so far's to refuse to let it trickle out through your servants and gardeners that the necklace is still in that safe?"

Justin ran a hand over his white hair. "No. I'll even agree to leave the thing in there, if you furnish adequate protection."

"You'll get plenty," Ben Dunn said. "The only way we'll grab this crook is by outsmarting him."

He raised a finger importantly. "Any crook dumb enough to slug a man when he could have come back later, *might* try another bite."

He strode out. Sam caught up with him out among the sea-grapes where he paused after his big exit.

"When you start bein' light-footed, Ben, folks think it's earthquakes," Sam said. "But then, maybe a trap *is* the thing."

"It was your dumb spilling everything to Perry that gave me the idea," Ben said smugly.

"Well, now you bring it up, Ben, maybe that's so," Sam agreed soothingly.

LONG before midnight next evening the sea-grapes around Kenneth Justin's office were stiff with alert deputies. Ben Dunn himself maintained headquarters in the shadow of a massive palm.

The office, lit only by the moon, stood empty. The door was open. The necklace lay carelessly in the safe. Everything was ready. Even the chain across the main entrance to the estate was down.

Sam Robbins was one of the deputies. Lying on his stomach, he watched the office awhile without interest and then eased out backward. Quietly he faded over to the garden hose that lay in the shadow of the southern boundary hedge. There was no damp sand around it tonight. Sam lifted the hose. The nozzle was gone.

Soberly Sam headed toward the Justin house. Sholter, still unconscious but likely to live, had been taken away to the hospital.

In contrast with the office, the house was aglow with lights. Ben Dunn had insisted on that.

"Everything's got to look natural," he had said, and had posed reluctant old Kenneth Justin in his library with a strong reading-light beside his chair, so that even the most casual trespasser could see from the driveway that he wasn't in the office.

Elspeth had balked. "I'm no goldfish," she said. "If you want things natural, I'll be strolling out to meet Luke Axtell as he comes up from Sunrise Villas. What could be more natural than that?"

"You're not meeting him inside the grounds here?" Ben Dunn demanded, aghast.

"The place is yours; we'll keep to the beach," Elspeth promised. She looked at Sam. "All we want is our share of the moonlight."

THAT had been that. Now Sam quietly circled the house. Lights glowed even in the quarters over the garage where Meader, the gardener, and the old Justin chauffeur had rooms. Sam returned to the front, found a stone bench suitably shadowed by hibiscus bushes and sat down.

"Mo' civilized than lyin' on my face," he decided.

Patiently he contemplated the lamplit figure of Justin, in the library. The old man was wrestling irritably with his book as if it were an unruly eel. Next Sam watched Elspeth come out of the house. To avoid the vicinity of the office, she slipped through the Australian pine hedge and started cutting across the palmetto scrub south of the Justin estate on her way to the beach.

Sam looked up at the moon. "Pow'-ful medicine," he murmured. He sat on the edge of the bench.

His eyes narrowed. Somebody had drifted in past the stone columns of the entrance and was flitting along from shrub to shrub on this side of the driveway. Sam sat still. The man was coming this way, but his eyes were on the house.

Sam took to the hibiscus bushes. The intruder approached. It was John Perry.

Sam came out and sat down again. "Lookin' fo' somebody?" he asked softly.

Perry started and whirled around. He grunted and sat down moodily, turning his eyes back to the house.

"Ben Dunn got his fool trap set?" He sounded disinterested.

"Sho' has," said Sam.

"How dumb does a man have to be to be a jewel-thief?" John Perry asked petulantly. "If he comes back I'm a— Ugh!"

Sam's sharp elbow found his ribs. Sam nodded toward the lighted library and slowly stood up, his face grave. They peered through the greenery.

It was as if they were watching something on a stage. Kenneth Justin had at last settled down to reading. And behind him the door from the living-room was swinging open. The movement was gentle, inexpressibly sinister, as such unexplained actions of inanimate objects can be. Slowly the black oblong widened.

Luke Axtell stepped into their sight. He was screened by the door from the other man in that room.

He paused for only an instant, his eyes fixed on old Justin's mop of white hair showing above the back of the easy-chair. Then he started across the room, on his toes. He seemed to move toward the chair as if he were floating.

He swung up his arm. There was something clutched in it.

John Perry bent and caught up a hunk of coral from the edge of a flower bed. With an underhand heave he sent it whizzing toward the French windows. It crashed against the glass.

Luke Axtell froze, arm upraised, as if the smashing of that pane had revealed to him with paralyzing effect that the trap was here, not up at the office.

But only for an instant did he stand rigid there behind the chair. Justin's startled face, turned on him, seemed to release his muscles. He whirled toward the window, throwing an arm up to cover his face.

PERRY had followed his missile toward the library windows. He hurtled across the terrace.

Sam Robbins hung back. He deflected his gun and fired one shot carefully into the ground at his feet. Eyes on the library, he thumbed the hammer of the six-shooter methodically, put slight tension back on the trigger and closed up on his target.

Now Perry had wrenched open the French window and burst into the room. There was released fury in his charge, far more fury than reason. Even so, Axtell barely managed to dodge. His long arm swept Justin, scrambling to his feet, across Perry's path. Perry collided with the old man and flung himself to the left. He jerked up an arm in time to brush aside Axtell's smash at his head. He grabbed at Axtell's wrist, but Axtell broke away and streaked for the open window.

Sam, still moving in, could see very well in the moonlight. As Axtell flung himself from the lighted room, Sam shoved out a leg.

Axtell tripped. He hit the stone flagging of the terrace full length with a thud that made Sam stow his gun in his holster. He stepped beyond Axtell's flattened figure and picked up something that had clattered out of Axtell's right hand. It was the heavy brass nozzle of a lawn hose, a short, innocent-looking chunk of metal but heavy enough to deal a killing blow.

"Keep on lying theah after you get yo' breath," Sam warned him. There was no movement; no reply—Axtell was out.

Ben Dunn, with his gun glinting and a trail of deputies behind him, came plunging back from the office. John Perry and old Justin stood over the prostrate figure of Axtell.

"What is this?" Ben Dunn roared. "Who fired that shot?"

Sam tapped his holster. "Would I keep you out o' things, Ben?" he asked.

During the first flurry of questioning and cross-talk he stayed silent, waiting for Elspeth. She had darted back through the hedge and was running fleetly toward them.

"Oh, what is it now?" she cried and stopped, her eyes fixed on Luke Axtell.

"He's coming to," John Perry said curtly.

Sam raised a sandy eyebrow at plump Kenneth Justin. "Didn't you git to figgering last night that it wasn't Gus Sholter the feller wanted to slug, but you?" he asked. "In that light, in yo' chair, with the same build and the same white hair, how was he to tell different?"

"No!" muttered Justin. "No! To slug me? Why?"

"You better talk," Sam said. "And not about hiring Gus Sholter as any necklace guard, either. The job you wanted him fo' was a brain job, wasn't it? I'll he'p you: To find out something about this Luke Axtell, wasn't it?"

"Uncle Ken!" cried Elspeth. "You *didn't!*"

Flustered, Justin did not answer her directly. He spoke to Sam:

"Yes. That's so. But it never occurred to me this attack on Sholter was anything but the outcome of a robbery. You must believe me! Naturally I didn't want to drag in any—any extraneous private issues, so it seemed simplest to say I'd engaged Sholter as a guard."

"Simplest!" Ben Dunn thundered. "Mr. Justin, I'm warning you now to talk mighty simple—and true! You been lying to the law!"

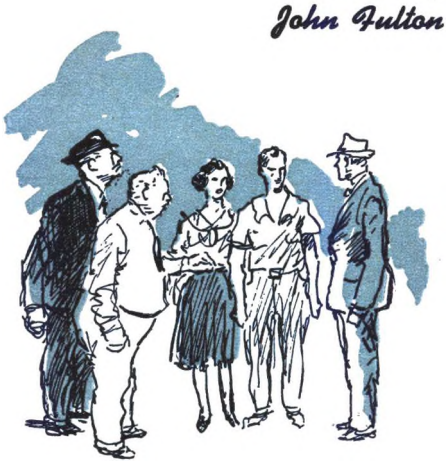
WITH quickly restored dignity, Kenneth Justin put both his hands on Elspeth's arms and spoke to her apologetically:

"My dear, I usually approve your selection of—of friends. But in a long lifetime I've developed something of a flair for detecting impostors. It seemed to me that Mr. Axtell was not the successful and pleasant young cartoonist he pretended to be. So—I thought a quiet inquiry would do no harm."

"Except to Luke Axtell," Sam murmured.

Impulsively Elspeth turned her face up and kissed her distressed uncle.

Drawings by John Fulton



"How'd you come to pick on Axtell, Sam?" John Perry asked. "Don't tell me you weren't sitting on that stone bench with your gun handy just waiting, dead sure, for Luke Axtell to attack Mr. Justin."

"With us all seeming to be laying fo' a thief up at the office he figured he'd have a safe shot at Mr. Justin."

"But why *Axtell?*"

"I— We were awful sho't of suspects," Sam said apologetically. "Who did we have? An unknown jewel-thief, who acted like jewel-thieves don't act, and didn't steal any jewels. Mr. Justin, who'd left a trail wide open to himself if he had any reason to kill Gus Sholter. Miss Elspeth, who hasn't the muscle to make a right good slugger. John Perry, who didn't need to come mooching back heah so suspiciously if he'd done it and besides is too bright and dressy to go killing. A gardener who wouldn't point the crime to himself by using a garden-hose nozzle. The only one we had left was Luke Axtell, the man Mr. Justin wouldn't introduce as Elspeth's fiancé, the man who was right nervous about drawing a sketch, though he claimed to be a big artist. The clues weren't much, but besides Axtell we were fresh out o' suspects."

He wagged his head. "When I went to that hose and found the nozzle gone tonight, I—we—knew he'd used it last night, washed it and put it back on and was going to use it again, this time on the right man. Of cou'se he figgered we'd think the jewel-thief had come back to search in the house this time; even a jewel-thief not being thick enough to reckon that necklace would still be left in the office."

Ben Dunn dragged at his shirt collar, as if it had tightened under a sudden rush of blood to the face. Ben was getting the picture fast.

"Did you telephone to get Sholter, Mr. Justin?" Ben asked.

"Yes, I telephoned," said Justin. "But I thought I was quite alone at the time, and I mentioned only that I had a delicate matter to be taken care of. I was sure I was—"

"Amateurs shouldn't be sure about crooks," Ben Dunn broke in sternly. "You watched him; well, he watched you."

He cleared his throat with oracular emphasis. "Axtell's game was to marry Elspeth in a hurry. Then he had you and her for plenty, no matter how soon he was uncovered as a phony using an artist's name. To him that rich marriage was worth knocking you off before you could open up to the dick. There was a new necklace around the house to make your killing look like part of a robbery. And then, with a nice Florida moon to help him, he figured—"

It was not Sam's embarrassed tug at his sleeve that stopped Ben Dunn in full cry; it was the blazing fire in Elspeth's eyes. He took a quick step backward. In the silence he fumbled at his face and then his dodging eyes glanced down at Luke Axtell, beginning to move his legs. He bent rapidly to heave Axtell to his feet.

Elspeth spoke:

"Suppose Luke Axtell and I were both playing—but different games—in the moonlight, Sheriff?"

"Grab a hold!" Ben Dunn blustered at his deputies. "What are you here for? Move!" He glowered ominously at Kenneth Justin. "It's a good thing you picked this county to stick your neck out in, Mr. Justin. We can't let citizens get themselves killed, no matter how dumb— Where's my car? Get going with this prisoner!"

DURING the uproar Elspeth walked around the corner of the terrace. John Perry followed her and Sam followed him, but not quite at his heels. Sam's thin figure found cover behind a tall plant.

John Perry had Elspeth by the shoulders and was shaking her with unrestrained violence. Her head wobbled pathetically, but Sam did not reach for his gun.

Perry spoke bitterly between clenched teeth:

"So you thought you could work that on me, did you? Next time you grab onto some poor mutt and parade him around, I'm going to let you go through with marrying him!"

"Even if—it's you, John?" Elspeth asked.

Sam Robbins, withdrawing rapidly, headed off Kenneth Justin.

"Is John Perry there?" Justin whispered. "That young idiot isn't still quitting?"

"Case is closed," Sam said, tilting his head toward the corner. "Not knowing what to do next about Elspeth is why he's been all dressed up like a monkey's uncle. I'm fresh out o' mysteries at last."

"Silence! There remains only to assess the punishment to be visited upon these barbarians."

SAILING THE GOOD SHIP MARTHA TO CHINA IN THE TEA AND SILK TRADE, CAP'N EZRA FINDS A STRANGE NEW WORLD AND A CHILL WELCOME—AND THEN THE OPIUM TRAFFIC INVOLVES HIM IN A SINISTER HAZARD.

by H. BEDFORD-JONES

EZRA COOPER met the dancing eyes of the girl facing him, and sighed in a heartfelt manner. "You're an unmitigated nuisance," he said severely. "Instead of pulling you from the China Sea, I should have let you drown. Because of you, my ship's in danger, I'm in danger; if the authorities find you're here and alive, I'll be jailed and executed. A lot it seems to worry you!"

T'ai Ho smiled prettily, not comprehending a word. Clark, who was sitting across the room, broke into a laugh.

"Nonsense, Captain! She knows you're going to Canton; she simply wants you to do a bit of shopping for her." He spoke in Chinese. T'ai Ho nodded, smiled, and handed him a slip of paper. Clark, who had a good knowledge of Chinese, glanced at it.

"Very simple. Here's the address of a druggist, and the name of the stuff she wants you to get; it can't be bought here. No doubt some kind of beauty powder. Dragon Dust is the name; presumably essence of dead dragons. Probably old bones pounded up."

"All right. Tell her I'll get it, though I don't know when I'll be back. We may have to be at Canton several weeks. I'll leave this house in her care."

Cooper met the dancing eyes and winked. The girl laughed. The wink robbed his lean, high-boned features of solemnity; the hard Yankee skipper looked almost boyish for a moment. T'ai Ho rose, politely shook hands with herself, and departed to the half of the house which she and her maid occupied. Cooper stuffed his pipe and relaxed.

"Well, the permit is here. We can go to Canton tomorrow," he said.

His ship, the *Martha* of Newburyport, lay at the Canton inner anchorage awaiting scraping and cargo. But it was the southwest monsoon, the off-season, when no tea was ready and cargo was difficult to obtain. Also, the East India Company had just been dissolved, and its monopoly on trade ended in favor of free British commerce, with a resultant disturbance, turmoil and upset that was far-reaching. Cooper had a sharp eye on the situation, looking for his own profit.

Meantime, like many others of the foreign colony, he was living comfortably at Macao, the Portuguese colony on the coast. Canton was hot, stagnant, steamy. Here one could be cool, pleasantly situated—and free. This was a rare blessing.

The restrictions on "foreign devils" in Canton—China's one port of open trade—were rigorous and absurd. No white women were permitted there. Merchants and missionaries must reside in one tiny district of so-called trading "factories," and were subject to countless regulations by the haughty mandarins. Only the Hong merchant, the native agent who was surety for a white man, could supply his cargo.

DRAGON DUST

Graft was prevalent; restrictions could be evaded; and Cooper had heard it predicted freely that war was inevitable, if only to teach the lordly yellow men that whites were not dogs. Yet in Canton a white man was little better than a prisoner.

"Sorry I can't save you the trip," Clark said.

Cooper shook his head. "No. I'm the ship's master, and I alone am responsible. You saw the letter from Houqua, my Hong merchant. He has a whacking big shipment of silk piece goods, and I must inspect them before accepting the shipment."

"Nonsense. His word is good. Anyone would accept it."

Cooper's lips thinned. "I don't do business that way. Now, the permit lets me go to Canton by the inland or river route. When I return here, I'll come by the Pearl River or outer route, and have a look at the ship. I can speak a little pidgin English now, and it helps. Why don't you teach T'ai Ho some English?"

Clark chuckled. "Trust her—she has a teacher. Plenty of Chinese speak perfect English; it's against the law, but who cares? Let her hide here in safety. You and I might have some fun in Canton. I know the ropes, and it's time you cut loose a bit, Captain."

Cooper shrugged and puffed at his pipe. "So she's learning English—that's news. See here, Clark, what the devil am I to do with her?"

"Well, look at it frankly: Her father, a high official, was executed for some mistake or fault; as usual, his entire family suffered with him. She escaped. You saved her life. She has recovered some of her father's fortune, but life here is impossible for her. Take her to America when your ship leaves."

This fetched a grunt from Cooper. "You don't know Newburyport, Massachusetts. No, thanks; I'm not taking her back to America—that's final. In fact, I'm not so sure about going back right away. Things are in the air—"

His words died. Clark gave him an odd glance.

"Hm! Say you so, indeed, Captain? I have a thing or two in the air myself; later on we may put our cards on the table. I don't mind saying that as regards T'ai Ho, I might be interested myself. . . . Oh, well, let it pass for the moment."

Cooper nodded. "Aye, that boat will be ready early, and we must get packed. Dragon Dust—that's a hell of a thing for a ship's master to be buying!"

"Ling Ting, the factory comprador, will get it for you."

A routine suggestion, bound to result in some very curious chances.

It was half an hour later that Captain McGuire, commander of an English brig now lying in harbor, showed up. He was a sturdy man of rolling gait, with a moonlike sun-tanned face from which looked sharp gray eyes under heavy black brows. He asked for Captain Cooper, and was shown into the main room downstairs. Having caught the British accent, Cooper shook hands rather stiffly; as a good Yankee he had no use for Britishers. He found McGuire very pleasant, however—somewhat abrupt in speech, but pleasant.

"I came to ask a favor, sir, hearing you're going to Canton tomorrow," he said bluntly. "I must leave my ship here and run up there myself on business, and have my permit; but it costs a hundred Spanish dollars for a boat, and I wondered if you'd take me with you. I'd be glad to pay half the cost."

"I've engaged a chop-boat, as they call it," Cooper rejoined cautiously. "My supercargo, Mr. Clark, goes with me; but of course there's plenty of room. It might be arranged, I dare say. Are you new in these parts, may I inquire?"

"Bless you, I'm an old hand," replied McGuire, laughing heartily. "My craft's a country boat, running out of Calcutta; I've been knocking around here for years. Speak a bit of the lingo, too. I have to see my agents in Canton, and may be there awhile."

"So may I. Well, since you have your permit, suppose we speak to Sing about it."

Cooper called his Number One boy, who had arranged for the chop-boat. Sing agreed there was plenty of room; it meant only more supplies for the trip, and as McGuire was perfectly willing to hold up his own end, nothing would prevent the arrangement.

The visitor remained chatting for a bit, shook hands with Clark when he came in, but refused to stay for dinner; there was much to be done, he said. Presently, having settled on the time for tomorrow's departure, he went his way. Clark gave a quizzical glance to Cooper and lighted a cheroot.

"Amiable chap. Oodles of money, no doubt; plenty of it in his business."

"Eh?" Cooper looked up. "What business?"

"Only one thing brings ships here at this season. Opium from India."

Cooper was startled. He knew about the illegal opium trade, vaguely; the Chinese authorities fought it as an evil. So rampant was the graft, purely Chinese in origin, that the ships from India poured in cargoes of opium almost without hindrance. Some of the most noted men in the "foreign mud" game were Yankees; yet Cooper found himself prejudiced against it.

"I didn't know that," he said. "Too late now."

His objections to the traffic were shared by few foreigners, even certain of the missionaries making use of it. The Imperial Edicts against opium, issued on moral grounds, were considered ridiculous; India produced the drug, and all foreigners shared alike in the easy proceeds. Captain McGuire was quite jovial about it when he met them next day. He waved his hand toward his ship, lying at anchor.

"A hundred chests under hatches, worth an easy two hundred thousand dollars," he said complacently.

Cooper lifted his brows. "I'd like to learn how it's done," said he.

"I'll instruct you, sir," said the other heartily. "Plenty of time; we'll be three or four days on the way upriver."

So it rested, while the chop-boat, a large and well-crewed craft of a hundred tons, left the lovely bay of Macao, so like that of Naples. The inside passage to Canton was by way of the Heang-Shan River, celebrated for its scenery and many forts; there were the usual official inspections of permits and passports, and the usual crowd of river-boats was in evidence.

As all three sat on deck that afternoon drinking tea, McGuire talked opium.

"It's a simple business; the Chinese have it down to a fine system. We do no smuggling; they attend to it. I bring the stuff, anchor at Lintin Island or elsewhere, and receive a ceremonial visit from the mandarin in charge; that's all. Smug-boats, as they're called, of a peculiar build, come and take off the cargo. My agent at Canton is paid for it. The only trouble comes from new officials who must be fixed."

"I prefer Dragon Dust," grunted Cooper. McGuire gave him a sharp look, as though startled, then laughed.

"Or fire-physic, eh? That's the old Chinese name for gunpowder; they invented it. Well, every man to his taste!"

Cooper was somewhat puzzled, but as his dislike for McGuire increased, he kept the more silent. The two others discussed language—the Mandarin or proper Chinese and the provincial dialect of Canton, which was quite different.

The servants served delicious meals; the river was a continual passing show; except for McGuire, the trip was a fascinating one. McGuire grated upon both Cooper and Clark, revealing a coarseness and an addiction to liquor. They were thoroughly sick of him by next day, when a warm, steaming rain came down in torrents to coop them up more closely. Most of the time Clark and Cooper spent over checkers. The trip ended on the fourth day, and their arrival at the Thirteen Factories, or foreign community, of Canton was made in fine noonday sunlight.

Obviously, McGuire was indeed an "old hand;" he greeted everyone cordially, even intimately, and departed as a guest to the English factory. Cooper resumed his former quarters in the American factory at the corner of Old China Street, where he and Clark shared a room. Here he knew everyone; and as his friend Dr. Macleish, the missionary, had come from Macao to work on a pidgin-English manual, it was like coming home.

Next morning Cooper got to work with Houqua, his Hong merchant, through whom all business must be transacted, on the silk-piece shipment. This consisted of satins, levantines, pongees, yellow nankeens, sarsenets, lustrings and other trade names of silk goods, in huge quantities. Houqua would order a sample brought at random from a chest, and by this the lot was judged and bought. Such was the integrity of these Hong merchants that their bare word needed no backing.

Yet, to the Yankee notions of Ezra Cooper, this "work" was a joke. He could have accomplished in a day or two what was strung out over long weeks; foreigners, he reflected, lived luxuriously and had odd notions of labor here. If a man wanted to settle down here awhile and really plug at the job, he could get incredible labors completed; and with the commercial changes that were going on, chances of all kinds offered. It was well worth thinking about.

So Cooper worked a little, played much, and kept a sharp eye out. To Ling Ting or "Solitary Nail," the general comprador of the factory, he confided his quest for Dragon Dust, saying nothing of what it was for. It could be managed, yes, said Ling; how much was desired?

"No *maskee*—no matter. Get plenty of it. Stow it in the boat against my return to Macao."

"A' right, my fixum," promised Ling Ting. "Maybe two box."

Cooper banished the matter from mind. On the third day of their stay, Clark showed up with news.

"Party invitation, Captain. Wu, the big tea merchant, is giving a dinner at his house in the suburbs, tomorrow night. An all-night affair. A number of us are going and you're in the party."

"Good! But I thought we weren't allowed to move about the city?"

"It's strictly illegal, of course." Clark winked. "You'll see when the time comes."

Cooper laughed. "All right, on your head be it! See here, Clark. It's all very well being a Yankee shipmaster, a mere errand-boy who gets cargoes for the owners back home, but the man who makes the money is the chap who sits here as a merchant and sends the cargoes, and snaps up chances when they offer—"

"Correct." Clark surveyed him smilingly. "So the bug has bit you, eh? I'm not surprised. Such a man needs a certain financial backing, though."

"And I've no money."

"You have character, which other men lack. And changes of all kinds are in the offing, Captain. Go easy, do nothing definite; by the time we go back to Macao, I may have some proposals to lay before you. If you wanted to touch the opium traffic—"

"No," snapped Cooper. "Positively not."

"But everyone does it—"

"I don't. The Chinese themselves detest it, do their best to stamp it out; they regard the use of opium as a vicious habit, and they should know. Plenty of white men use it, I know; most of the merchants in our factory use it. That has nothing to do with me."

Clark shrugged. "Then that settles it. If the English force it on the Chinese, and war comes of it, you'll lose some fine chances at a fortune."

The discussion ended—as close to heated argument as had ever arisen between the two friends.

Cooper, indeed, had been seriously pondering the idea of settling down here, at least for two or three years, and turning his hand to making money; the chances were tempting. Another man could take his ship home; there were some good masters on the beach. Once that berth had been the height of his ambition; now he was looking farther. He was getting onto the hang of things here, and the way they were done. With the dissolution of the East India Company, good ships could be picked up for a song, too.

Chancey business, of course; a man could easily go on the rocks, and Ezra Cooper disliked a gamble. Also, he had no money, and he had no opening. Plenty of arguments against it. To give up his sure, steady berth for the sake of an illusive office position in a totally different occupation, looked like sheer madness. At this thought he grinned wryly.

"Don't hurt to be tempted, anyhow!" he told himself. "I can dally with it a spell, and if things don't work out, can drop it and no harm done."

A bit of factory gossip came his way that day which went to prove that the saffron merchants of China were not nearly so lacking in keen wits as appeared. Mr. Wu's party of the evening was for his own cronies and relatives; among these it was understood that some white merchants would attend—illegally. It gave both sides an opportunity of meeting each other and turning business deals quite impossible in ordinary affairs. Everyone winked at the law and was happy.

Cooper found the procedure absurdly simple. Well after dark, he and Clark went to their room, where they found awaiting them huge conical straw hats and the blue gowns of students. They donned these, joined a number of other similarly attired figures below, and fell in with a dozen or more Chinese in the street. To distinguish any foreign devils in this crowd was impossible; they became attendants of two wealthy men in palanquins, and set off across the city streets quite openly, the disguised Europeans surrounded closely and shielded by the Chinese.

Illustrated by Cleveland Woodward

"I came to ask a favor, sir, hearing you're going to Canton tomorrow," McGuire said.

During the traverse, Cooper found himself rubbing elbows with a young man named Lejean, from the French factory, and with round-faced Captain McGuire; the guests formed a mixed company, of course. Lejean he knew slightly, and liked, so linked arms and kept company with him. Clark was lost somewhere in the throng.

Lejean informed him sadly that the party would be sedate, given over to a dinner of sixty courses, recitation of poetry, and heavy drinking, but without ladies to liven the evening. The guests might include anyone from mandarins to customs officials, many incognito; and once the rice-wine began to pass freely, all stiffness would be gone.

"There is no debauchery, as we know it," said Lejean. "Purely intellectual pleasure—and a good deal of business done on the side—*sub rosa.*"

To Cooper it was utterly amazing. It was an outdoor garden party beside the river, with fairy lanterns bobbing among the flowers and trees and shrines. There seemed no order, no system about anything. Couches and pillows were strewn on all sides; servants brought around dishes and wines apparently at random; groups of guests formed and parted and formed again. And everywhere were crickets; most of the guests were ardent fanciers and carried their own insects, valued for their chirping or rather the stridulation of their wings, and for their fighting abilities.

TINY jars with perforated lids of jade, ivory or lacquer, housed the little creatures; miniature cages held them too, made with the most delicate artistry. The care and feeding of fighting crickets had become a science in China through many centuries, and some of the greatest tea-merchants were masters of this art. Cooper went from group to group, watching staid elderly men bending low with slivers of ivory set with rat-whiskers as ticklers, inciting their champions to song or prowess, wagering vast sums on the battles, and gulping rice-wine from tiny cups in vast amounts.

Lejean stuck beside him, having a live interest in such matters and explaining what was going on, for the Frenchman had a good knowledge of the language. He had inherited a business in the French factory, but said frankly he was more of an artist than a trader. They had paused near an ancient summer-house to discuss some excellent sea-food dishes and listen to some cricket chirpers, and Lejean spoke bluntly.

"You are an American, a seaman, filled with energy and with ideas. What would I not give for such a man as partner! I'm too dreamy, too lazy, too given to art and beauty—"

Cooper gave him a sharp look. "Eh? If you're in earnest, M. Lejean, let's have a talk tomorrow; come over to our factory for tiffin. I've been thinking about remaining here as a merchant, but have need of an opening. Your firm is established and might be the very thing."

"Admirable! Magnificent!" cried Lejean, kindling. "I'll come! Americans are all wealthy—and my firm sadly needs money! We'll talk about it."

Cooper smiled thinly to himself. Money was the thing he did not have. Still, one could always talk it over.

Just there, McGuire barged into them and clutched at Cooper in bleary

Cooper went from group to group, watching staid elderly men bending low, wagering vast sums on the cricket battles.

recognition, steaming with the fumes of rice-wine but not at all drunk. Lejean's face showed acute dislike for the man; he turned away, but McGuire ignored him.

"Cap'n Cooper! Step aside, sir—a whackin' big thing is afoot, and I must have a word with 'ee!"

McGuire impressed Cooper by his eager air, his excited breath, his urgent rush. The man was coarsened by wine, but more than wine was in him; a driving, lashing cupidity, a gusty vision of enormous things, had him in grip, and this communicated itself to Cooper, who followed him to one side with curiosity actively aroused.

"What's the matter, McGuire? Are you in trouble?"

"Aye, bloody bad trouble," replied the other, with a significant wink. "I've made a deal, and need help in putting it over. Will ye help me for a share in the profits?"

Cooper did not reply at once. It suddenly occurred to him what the nature of McGuire's business was, and caution leaped into his mind. But McGuire did not pause, pouring forth his affairs in a foaming torrent.

"A wonderful thing, unheard of—money to be made like water!" said he. "Over a hundred thousand to be made with no trouble at all, more than double the usual profit. Twenty-five thousand for you if you say the word."

"What's the lay?" queried Cooper, with a catch of the breath. There was the money he so sorely needed—enough to start him out in life as a merchant. He was tempted, and being an honest man, did not deny it. His voice came hoarsely. "Explain, man, explain!"

McGuire's explanation was involved, but Cooper got the gist of it: The official who on behalf of the Hoppo or Customs Department had charge of Cooper's ship, the *Martha,* now lying at the inner anchorage, was an ambitious gentleman. He was not on the inside of the opium business, and desired to be; so he had come to Captain McGuire with a surprising offer.

He would pay more than double the usual price, if McGuire would send fifty chests of "foreign mud" to the American ship, where he would be able to make it secure. Further, he would pay a huge amount in advance. Not only would he thus double-cross the opium syndicate and his own Customs people, but he would be sitting pretty with an enormous amount of the drug safely in hand, with all the usual middleman's "squeeze" or graft obviated, and wealth to be made very handily. If Cooper gave his permission to let the ship be thus used, no

more need be done, and the money was his.

To say that Ezra Cooper was tempted, is to put it mildly. He had only to give a nod of assent. He was shutting his eyes to what other men considered quite proper; it was no sin to cheat the Hoppo. He was to do nothing himself. This official was putting over a new touch in smuggling, and everything was quite safe. And twenty-five thousand dollars was not paper funeral money by a long shot!

What was to gain? Lejean & Cooper, merchants—a going concern, money in the Hong bank, the *Martha* going home to Newburyport with another captain in charge, and Ezra Cooper sitting in his Canton office turning deals—all for a mere nod. What a dream! No longer poor as a church rat, but garbed in fine broadcloth and pongee silk, a man of consequence. . . .

Cooper twice tried to speak, ere he found words.

"Be damned to you!" he said then. McGuire gawked at him, unbelieving his ears.

"Eh? Surely you don't mean to refuse, Captain—"

"No, I say!" Cooper snapped out the words, furious at himself. "I'll not touch opium. You may think it's quite all right—I don't. I'll have naught to do with it, and that's flat, so put that in your pipe and smoke it."

"You're a bloody fool," began McGuire, and went farther with a burst of profanity that infuriated Cooper, who reached for him. A blow—another—in a furious wild grapple the two men smashed blindly through the bushes and staggered into the open.

THERE was a chorus of dismayed voices, frantic yells, and before them a group of intent Chinese scattered and fell away. Cooper felt something crunch under his boot. He looked down to see the wreckage of a delicate cricket-jar with jade top, cricket included. He looked for McGuire but the latter had vanished. Before him, glaring into his face with utter fury, was a tall Chinese, evidently the owner of the cricket—obviously no common man, since his robe was pinned at the throat with a white jade buckle carved in the shape of a mace of office.

"For God's sake, come away!" This was the voice of Lejean, who took Cooper's arm and dragged him headlong. "That was the champion fighting cricket of the district you stepped on—his owner is the second in command of the Hoppo's office, a top-rank mandarin appearing here incognito. Get out or we're all lost, and hell to pay—"

Voices, screams of alarm, wild shouts were spreading, and the gardens were in a tumult of bobbing lights and rushing figures. No one knew what had happened. Cooper felt himself drawn violently through the brush by Lejean, and propelled into a group of guests from the foreign factories. Clark caught his arm. With a few Chinese to shield them, these departed hastily for home. Lejean held at Cooper's side, with low words.

"We must talk now, not tomorrow," said the Frenchman. "If I may, I'll come home with you. Odd things have happened."

"Odder than you know, perhaps," said Cooper, and left it at that until they were all safely home again within factory walls.

In a quiet corner away from the buzz of excited tongues, Cooper lighted his pipe and thanked Lejean for extricating him from the affair as he had.

"It is nothing," said the Frenchman, and corrected himself instantly. "Or rather, it is a most singular affair, my friend. Except in their dignified old age, these Chinese love games, impostures, all kinds of larks. That thin, severe man whose cricket you smashed tonight was the red-button mandarin Tzetang, second in command of the Customs office, and almost the only honest official in the district."

"Too bad about the cricket," said Cooper. "Shall I send him my apologies—"

"And admit you were on forbidden ground? No. Listen! This Tzetang has one passionate sport to which he devotes himself—the trapping of dishonest officials, and in particular those who smuggle opium into the country. There are some incorruptible mandarins, you know, and he is one. I dare say he was at the party tonight with his corps of spies, with some special victim in mind."

Cooper puffed at his pipe and broke in, with some dismay, to recount the talk with McGuire that had led up to the fracas. Nor did he skimp the truth, but told what a temptation it had been. Lejean vented a soft groan.

"If you but knew! I have an option on the purchase of two excellent teak-built vessels, country ships—and that sum of money would have swung the deal! Still, I blame you not. Now, I must point out to you the character of this mandarin Tzetang. He is implacable, merciless, hates most viciously all grafting officials who smuggle opium; he is not a kindly man, and will not love the white man who destroyed his champion cricket."

Cooper was fidgeting uneasily. "He looked directly into my face this evening, Lejean, and must know that I'm a white man. So he knew foreign devils were there."

"Of course he knew." Lejean smiled. "It's an open secret. Business dickers are made at such times; bribes pass; agreements take place. Officials are incognito and supposedly know nothing of it. All very handy! I've no doubt that Tzetang or his spies speak English and may have out a trap to catch McGuire. You did well to refuse him."

"I'll not deal in opium," Cooper said stubbornly.

Lejean smiled. "Very well, then. That will be our basic agreement if we form a partnership. When shall we discuss the matter further?"

"Say, day after tomorrow? Frankly, I see no way of raising the money we'd need."

Lejean rose. "At least we might reach some understanding. . . . Good. Day after tomorrow I'll be here. And say nothing to anyone except your friend Clark. I think he's an honest fellow, and I like him. Good night."

SO the Frenchman departed. Cooper joined in the discussions still going on, found that the causes of the riot were as yet unknown, and presently retired with Clark, to whom he made no secret of the whole thing. They lay long in the dark, talking.

"You're not a lucky man," said Clark. "That fellow Tzetang will remember you—and he's a bad enemy. Powerful, too."

Cooper fell asleep thinking of those thin, severe, infuriated features. He had almost forgotten about Captain McGuire.

But late on the morrow, McGuire came to mind again, in full person. He came to the factory asking for Cooper, nodded amiably to him, and put out a leathery hand.

"A bad business, last night, and I want to apologize for my share in it, if you'll shake hands," he said bluntly. "To be honest, I had a bit too much rice-wine. The whole deal has now been arranged, and there's no need to bother you further."

Astonished, Cooper shook hands. "Don't mention it," he said, smiling.

McGuire mopped his face; the day was a hot one. He peered at Cooper.

"When is your chop-boat going back?" he demanded. "Would you agree to take me with you, same terms? I have three boxes of specie to take along, and I'd be glad of the favor if you'd take me on."

Cooper looked at him, wondering a trifle at the man's humility. It occurred to him that McGuire was probably ashamed of his last night's actions, and he smiled again.

"I've no objections," he replied. "There's room and to spare, of course. I'm not going by the river as we came, though, but by the outer route. I have to take a look at the ship. About the specie—"

"That's all right," broke in McGuire. "I'm getting a permit for it—gold bars and some sycee silver."

Cooper nodded. "Fine, then. I have the boat ordered for Sunday

morning, early—I forget what day it is in this heathen calendar."

McGuire grinned. "Fifth month, eighteenth sun. About sunrise?"

"Yes. With no delay."

"There'll be none, Captain. And thank 'ee, with all my heart."

Cooper watched the man swagger away, and reflected that McGuire seemed to have fallen upon prosperity, whether or not due to "foreign mud," and it had agreed with him; he was less abrupt of speech and more easy of manner. Not that he wanted such company on the trip downriver, but McGuire was so openly penitent, that Cooper could not refuse to meet him half-way.

So, feeling rather gratified over his own magnanimity and the avoidance of any overt trouble, Cooper dismissed the matter from mind.

His luncheon with Lejean was prolonged into a lengthy discussion well into the afternoon. A few queries about the man had given him an excellent reputation, and he found Lejean not only serious about wanting a partner, but desirous of an American partner in particular—his father, as a young man, had served under Lafayette in America. So Lejean went into the most detailed accounts of his business, and what he and Cooper each could gain from it—and Cooper found himself in a more and more unhappy frame of mind.

THIS opening, he had to admit, was wholly ideal, and Lejean was exactly the partner he would have desired. A couple of stout ships could be obtained at once; the ventures to go into them were in sight—all that was needed was the money. And this Ezra Cooper could not possibly obtain in the amount needed. That was definite, and it clapped a quietus on all thoughts of the new firm.

Still, as Lejean said, it would not harm to map the thing out in case something should turn up. So the two of them figured on, making every arrangement as though the deal were going through. It would be an American firm, and so would have space in the American factory; Hong merchants, linguists, compradors, servants, schedule of cargoes and destinations for the ships—nothing was neglected; and the farther they went, the more money was necessary to swing it. At last Cooper pushed away his figures.

"No use, Lejean; it can't be done, that's all. A nice dream, but beyond possibility. A seaman I stay."

"Say not so." The other shook his head. "Cherish the dream; it may come to reality when least expected, my friend! At least, we know the worst, and can plan to that end."

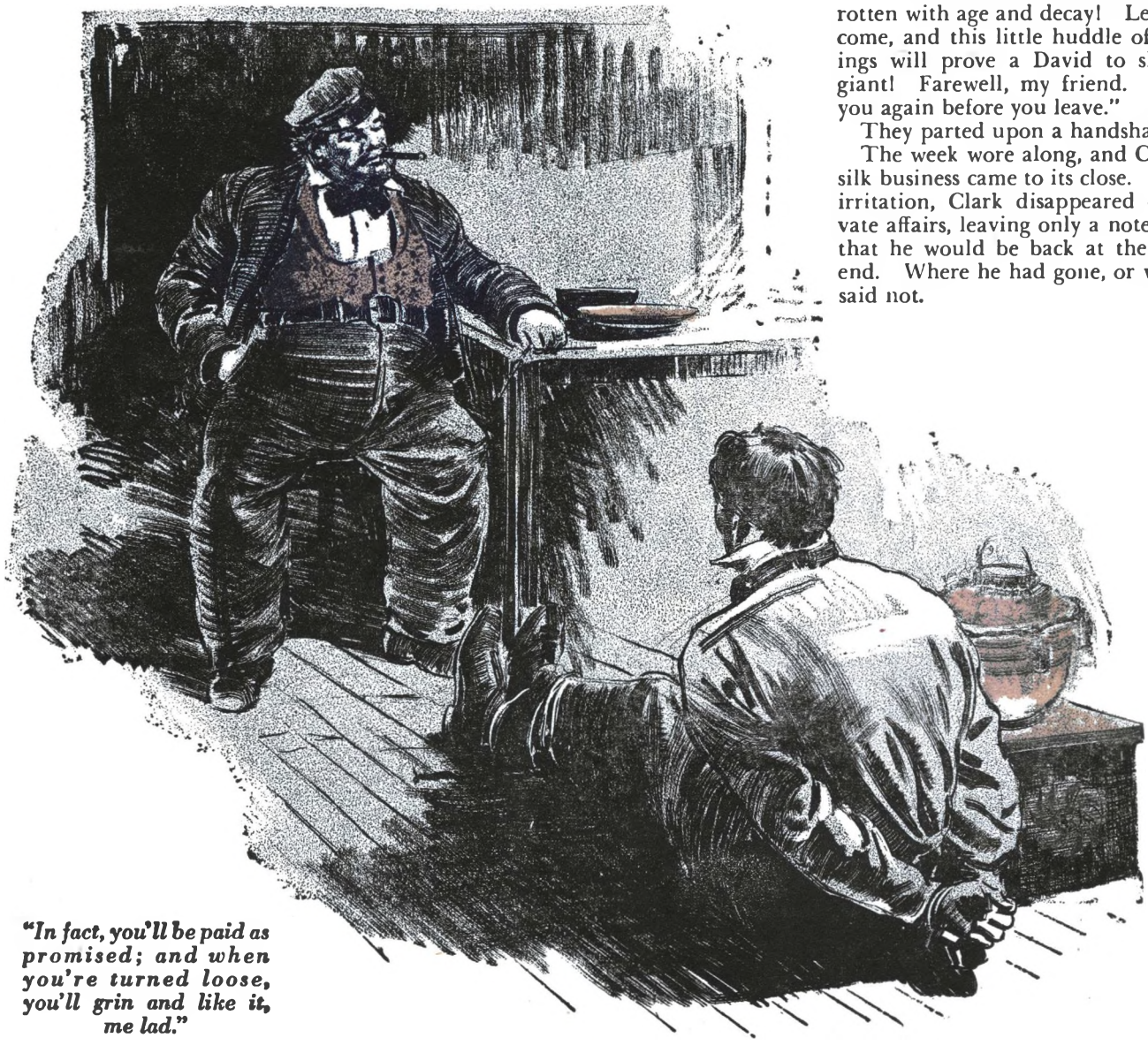
An agreement was drawn up and initialed; if nothing happened within three weeks to save the dream, it would be allowed to perish. With this culmination of their conference, Cooper walked outside with his guest. They crossed the open ground to the water's edge, then turned and looked at the group of white-painted buildings, the Chinese city pressing in from three sides.

"A tiny thing, to represent our civilization and culture within this vast world of China!" Cooper remarked gloomily.

Lejean erupted in a laugh. "Bah! That of China is far older than ours, rotten with age and decay! Let a war come, and this little huddle of buildings will prove a David to slay the giant! Farewell, my friend. I'll see you again before you leave."

They parted upon a handshake. . . .

The week wore along, and Cooper's silk business came to its close. To his irritation, Clark disappeared on private affairs, leaving only a note saying that he would be back at the week's end. Where he had gone, or why, he said not.



"In fact, you'll be paid as promised; and when you're turned loose, you'll grin and like it, me lad."

The chop-boat, as per custom, arrived on Thursday to prepare for its Sunday departure and was moored at the factory wharf. The permits "to leave China" arrived in due order, Macao being technically foreign territory. McGuire's three chests of specie came and were loaded aboard. Cooper had a quiet word from Ling, the comprador, that the boxes of Dragon Dust were aboard and no one the wiser.

Clark did not show up; instead, another note brought word that he had been detained and might not go back to Macao at once. At this, Cooper was furious but could not help himself. The Customs officials were on hand for their usual examinations of boat and cargo, and there could be no delay. The usual absurdly meticulous regulations seemed to be carried out with more care than ordinary, if anything; the petty formalities were accomplished and all papers furnished with the necessary "chops." The boat was ready to leave at sunrise, and so ordered.

Word had leaked out of Cooper's ambitions to become a merchant instead of remaining a shipmaster, and on Saturday evening everyone in the factory assembled to do him honor at a dinner complete with toasts and speeches. It was a kindly intent, but in view of his quenched ambitions, it rankled. The absence of Clark vexed him. Being in an evil humor, he drank heavily for once, under the despairing conviction that nothing mattered.

Nor, actually, did it matter; there were others who drank far more, since it was a hard-drinking age. But his wits were confused. When someone passed up a folded note that had just arrived for him, he thrust it unopened into a pocket, and finished his drink, and forgot about it.

When he was shaken awake in the dawn-darkness of morning, and tumbled into his clothes, he found the note. He had a vague memory of the story with it—that it had been fetched upriver from the anchorage where lay the *Martha,* his ship, by a native. Half-dressed, he paused to tear it open, and saw that it was signed by Mr. Brindle, his second officer, and dated three days previously.

Then the words reached his brain, and cleared his head in a dash of furious comprehension. Few as they were, their meaning was like fire:

> *Sir:*
>
> *There's something queer about these chests cummin' abord so secret like and I'm worrit. Your order ain't writ in your fist to my noshun. I'd be glad if you'd confurm same. Yrs most respectful...*

"Gad!" In one abrupt flash, Cooper saw the whole thing, and groaned. "Oh, that damned McGuire! He sent the opium aboard the *Martha* just as though I had agreed to his scheme! He forged an order in my name! He came and buttered me down, damn him, spoke me soft—probably figured he'd smooth me down on the voyage, too. Hell's fire! I'll smooth that rat with the back of my hand before the chop-boat leaves the wharf—"

Anger grew most hotly as he dressed. No wonder Mr. Brindle was "worrit"! Smooth as the smugglers might be, safe as was the game, there was good cause to worry. In a furious rush, Cooper finished dressing, flung everything into his carpet-bag, called the servants and went downstairs, intent upon coming to grips with McGuire.

Except for the servants, everything was dark and deserted. No sign of Clark. No one around. No McGuire as yet. Breakfast would be served aboard the boat after it was on the way. Cooper strode out to the empty terrace before the factories. A few strange natives here, the boatmen, two of the usual Chinese soldier guards. With mounting choler he strode down toward the landing and the waiting chop-boat. Mr. Brindle had done well to doubt that forged order.

"If I'd only read this note last night!" thought Cooper as he came to the boat. "Then I'd have had advice and help from the old hands. Now I don't know what's the best move to make. Blast that McGuire!"

He went aboard the boat and passed directly down to the wide and sumptuous cabin. His bag had just come aboard. Daylight was growing outside, but the cabin was pitch black. Cooper stopped short, spoke angrily—and something hit him, hard. He knew no more, for a while.

When he wakened, the boat was tossing on the water, afloat. Sunlight was in the cabin. His eyes were slow to come to focus; a bad pain in the back of his head, inability to move hands or feet, told he was a captive. Yet there was life and movement in front of him—someone sat at the table. The scene came clear. It was Captain McGuire, champing on a hearty meal.

He himself was lying on the floor. It was not long since departure; on a stand almost beside him were two paper lanterns whose candles were guttering low with a vile smell. At Cooper's smothered oath, McGuire looked at him and nodded.

"Oh, hullo—come awake, eh? Well, we're off and on our way, Captain. Too bad you ain't sitting at table with me."

"Very lucky for you," said Cooper, trying to check down his anger. "I've learned of your rascality, putting your cursed opium aboard my ship with a forged order from me—you and this clever Customs official stop at nothing, apparently."

McGuire laughed, and bit at the end of a Manila cheroot.

"Right you are, Captain. There's no harm coming to you; in fact, you'll be paid as promised. I have your money aboard, and as much more of my own—a cool fifty thousand American dollars. And when you're turned loose, you'll grin and like it, me lad."

"Indeed!" said Cooper acidly.

"Aye, indeed. There's nothing else you can do about it," McGuire said complacently, and winked. "You'll jolly well have to keep a stopper on your mouth, or the bloody Chinks'll confiscate your ship. So chew on that for a bit, while I go see what that bloody Customs guard-boat is doing so close aboard us—"

He rose and, thus speaking, went on deck, puffing at his cheroot.

The ghastly truth broke upon Ezra Cooper in all its force. Captain McGuire was dead right; lawless as the man was, a mocker at all convention and decency, he was none the less correct. There was not a thing Cooper could do. Were he free this moment, he had to keep his mouth shut—for the Chinese would confiscate his ship did he blurt out his story. For his own sake, he had to back up McGuire's game. When McGuire turned him loose, he had to play good dog—

So violently did Ezra Cooper react to this obvious compulsion, with such frantic and spasmodic fury did he throw himself into an effort to obtain freedom, that he came close to doing just that.

He tore and twisted at his bonds, doubled up trying to get at his ankles with his fingers, found every effort futile. The lithe bits of rope had been well tied. This enraged him to the point of madness. He kicked out desperately with his bound feet, trying to knock over the table in hope that a knife would fall to the floor. He missed the table at the first try, but did knock over the stand beside him. It crashed down, took the two paper lanterns with it, and from somewhere arose a swift little flicker of flame, of which Cooper remained oblivious. His next kick broke off a leg of the table; breakfast, dishes, chopsticks, came tumbling pellmell around him, strewing the deck with ruin. No knife, however.

Presently, as he lay panting and quite helpless, Cooper smelled something burning. He half realized what he must have done, as a plume of smoke crossed his vision, but only a vicious satisfaction filled him. Thought of peril was far from him. He felt a little movement in his ankles—they were working free! Savage delight coursed through him. He began to squirm again—yes, the bonds were giving; he could move his feet! Under his frantic movements, a chair over-

turned. At this instant came a thudding of feet, and into the cabin descended McGuire with a jump.

"Good God!" he shouted violently. "The boat's on fire!"

He hurled himself at the silken curtains, tore them down, and there was a billow of smoke and flame that filled the cabin. Shrill and frantic shouts sounded from on deck; a yellow face appeared in the doorway and vanished with a yell. To Cooper, the moment was one of utter mad confusion; everything seemed to be happening at once, and he was conscious of a burst of wild delight as his feet came free. He made an effort to stand up—only to feel a violent concussion. A burst of red fire exploded at one side with an appalling roar that engulfed him bodily; then everything was a chaos of rushing waters.

THESE were real enough. With his freed feet, he was frantically swimming, and as his head emerged into air, he dimly realized he must have been somehow blown overboard. . . .

Sunlight, voices, hands, brought him back to sanity. A last dose of filthy Pearl River water nearly finished him. His hands were freed, he was lifted and carried and dropped again, and with blessed unconcern he became limp and unconscious in sleep.

Later, he emerged as from some evil dream to blink around.

"Quiet!" That was Clark's voice, and a hand pressed him down. "Don't move. Speak softly. Did you have gunpowder aboard that boat this morning?"

"No," muttered Cooper dazedly. "Nothing but the Dragon Dust for T'ai Ho."

"Oh! Don't talk, now. We're at the Yamen. Tzetang is holding a hearing—"

Things came vaguely to life, against a background of Chinese voices. Clark was talking with a number of natives. The Yamen! That meant official headquarters. And Tzetang—why, he was the mandarin of the cricket champion! That was he, sitting in the big chair across the large room in his ceremonial robes—thin, severe features, glittering merciless eyes.

Men were being questioned. Court servants were hustling around; scribes were working away at brushes. Clark leaned over and murmured:

"You're a little burned, not hurt to mention; lie quiet. McGuire is dead. Your turn's coming—I'm interpreting for you."

"Tell him—Tzetang," Cooper got out, "McGuire was partners with a Customs official at the anchorage—put fifty chests of opium aboard the ship—forged my name to the order—scheme for smuggling it."

Clark caught his breath. "Don't tell him that! You may lose the ship."

"Tell him," Cooper insisted, "that I don't understand—gunpowder—"

There was a stir. Tzetang spoke; all eyes went to the foreign devils. Clark suppressed a groan. Tzetang made very clear that the laws had been transgressed by the "outside barbarians" and that the Son of Heaven meant to exact full punishment. First in the matter of the fire-physic, for which no permit had been obtained.

Clark spoke, and a ripple of laughter was suppressed quickly. Fire-physic was good Mandarin for gunpowder; *dragon dust,* in the Cantonese dialect, was slang for the same thing, though in normal speech it also meant a ladies' rice powder for the face.

Tzetang gave a rebuke to the merriment; and Cooper, gradually comprehending the mix-up, found the mandarin speaking obviously to him.

"Now we're in for it," muttered Clark. "He asks your relations with McGuire and—"

"Tell him!" snapped Cooper. "As I told you—all of it!"

Clark sighed, and launched into speech. Linguists checked his words; scribes took them down; Tzetang, wrapped in dignity, sat with a face like stone until Clark finished, then he began to speak. His Mandarin was precise, polished, almost musical, but his voice was inflexible as steel. Clark murmured a running translation, though not without astonishment.

"Let the outside barbarians be well aware that the office of Hoppo is filled by Imperial appointment, and therefore knows all information before it is spoken. Upon the foreign ship mentioned there is no despicable opium. It has been seized by officers of the Hoppo, and now awaits destruction; the official responsible for smuggling it has swallowed gold and is with his ancestors."

Tzetang paused, and although impassive as ever, seemed to be relishing the effect of his words. Cooper had come to one elbow and was staring dazedly. Clark began to speak, but the mandarin cut him short with peremptory gesture.

"Silence! We are well acquainted with this barbarian who kills crickets, and with his motives. Everything is known to us. His first talk with the dead barbarian who tried to bribe him to smuggle opium was overheard and reported."

Cooper suspected a grim humor in the inflexible voice, as Tzetang stared at him. The impact of this information, however was staggering. So his talk with McGuire had been overheard by spies who knew English! Before he could assimilate this, Tzetang went on speaking.

"There remains only to assess the punishment to be visited upon these barbarians who have dared to provoke the anger of the Son of Heaven. This man before us, the killer of crickets, is found blameless: his motives are excellent, and his actions are approved. The actual criminals are dead. The smuggled opium has been seized and will be destroyed. A large sum of money was recovered from the ruins of the damaged chop-boat; of this, a fifth part goes to indemnify the office of the Hoppo, and the balance goes to the barbarian before us, as a reward of honesty. Let these matters now be duly recorded."

So saying, the mandarin rose, and to the thuddings of a gong, swept majestically from the room, attended by scribes and servants. The investigation was ended.

Cooper dimly comprehended that the *Martha* had escaped seizure, but the absurd mixup of fire-physic and "dragon dust" still fought in his brain. He realized that Clark was joyously leaning over him, repeating something; at last it came clear.

"Wake up, Captain! Don't you understand? It means that he has awarded most of McGuire's specie to you, with high compliments. I don't know how much the man had aboard the chop-boat, but it ought to indemnify you."

Cooper sat up. "Holy mackerel! Is that it?" He stared at Clark, deaf to the buzz of Chinese voices that now filled the Yamen with excited chattering. "I thought he was fixing to cut off my head! McGuire's money—goes to me?"

"Most of it." Clark nodded. "And look here—I may as well tell you what I've been about, here in Canton. I've been rescuing all I could get my hands on of T'ai Ho's fortune—her father's, rather. If you've no objections, I think we've come to an understanding, Captain. We can settle down safely at Macao, and I'll go into business there—we can supply you with funds, too."

COOPER staggered to his feet. His brain was swimming, but the bare facts had penetrated. He uttered a harsh laugh, when Clark spoke of ordering another boat to take them to Macao.

"Clark—you mean that you and T'ai Ho are to be married—is that it? And I never suspected such a thing! Oh, I'm not going back to Macao—not at all! Too much to do here. Send for Lejean—get in touch with him at once—tell him everything has come to pass. Oh, it's incredible! And d'ye know what?"

He caught Clark by the arm.

"It's all due to T'ai Ho's Dragon Dust—that's what! Now let's get back to the factory in a hurry. I need fresh clothes and must get to work."

Forgetful of burns, draggled garments, all appearances, he was on fire with the single idea—the impossible had come true!

Notes on the Helicopter Age

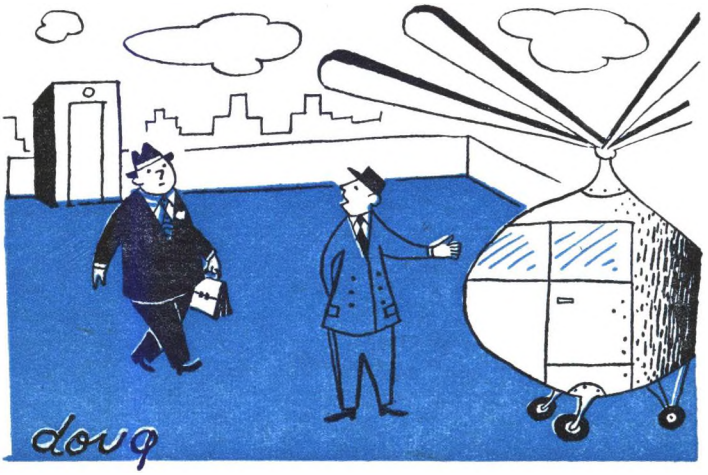
A glimpse under the tent of time, into the not-too-distant future when there will be two cars in every garage and a helicopter on almost every roof.

by DOUG ANDERSON and BEN MELNITZKY

"LAUNDRY WILL DRY IN A FEW MINUTES, DEAR."

"COME ON OVER AND GET AN AIR-CONDITIONED SUN TAN!"

"OH, NOT THE STORK. THE HELICOPTER BRINGS 'EM NOWADAYS."



"GOING UP! . . . . . GOING UP!"

BADINAGE IN A NORTH WOODS LUMBER-CAMP IS SELDOM SUBTLE; BUT AS A RULE YOUR LUMBERJACK HAS HIS HEART IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

They Called

"IT ain't funny," said Ted Chert in an unwontedly irritable tone.

"What ain't?" asked Chickadee, looking up from a mortise he was fitting.

"This here 'gorilla' business; I don't like it."

"I wouldn't worry," said his friend soothingly. "Near everybody around here has a nickname—I never get nothin' but Chickadee, though my right name is Austin Parke. What about Soupy Dick, and Hoohoo Layton, and Chimp McCann, and plenty more?"

"I wouldn't mind if it wasn't so near the truth," grumbled Ted. "I can't help how I look, but I don't want it throwed up at me every minute. I don't want to act mean or crabby, so every yap thinks he can call me Gorilla to my face and grin."

He laid down his saw and turned to face his chum. Chickadee saw a big head covered with bristly hair, thick eyebrows jutting from a great bony ridge over fierce little eyes, a broad flat nose, an enormous mouth, and a chin that was a huge shapeless mass of bone.

To make the resemblance more devastatingly complete, Ted's head rested on broad shoulders padded with muscle, his long arms ended in spade-shaped hands covered with curling dark hair, and his thick legs were a little bowed. He was above middle height, but appeared short.

"Well, now," agreed Chickadee, "I wouldn't ezackly say you was handsome, but I wisht I was a little more like you."

He was thin and frail, his face as delicate as a girl's, his fair hair soft and silky, his big blue eyes shadowed with long lashes. He had lost a leg in the lumber woods, and got about on crutches.

"Even if they do call you Gorilla," he went on, "they don't mean nothin' by it—they all know you're a good head."

"They think I'm a big dumb egg—everybody laughs at me," returned Ted with a lift of his upper lip that revealed big canine teeth.

Chickadee regarded him uneasily, as one might a volcano that is giving rumbles premonitory of an eruption.

"What's gripin' you, Ted?"

"Vi Martlett, that's who!" was the short reply.

Chickadee whistled softly.

"What's wrong in that?" demanded Ted. "Can't I talk to her the same as any other feller?"

"Why, sure, sure," said Chickadee hastily. "But I wouldn't think you'd—what I mean, I didn't know."

"And that smart aleck Bert Random," growled Ted. "He'll get funny once too often."

He had been sawing rough lumber into convenient lengths for Chickadee's cabinet-making. Now he picked up a small piece of board and snapped it like a match between his fingers. He scowled at the pieces and let them drop.

Chickadee's expression of concern deepened. He was one of the very few people who had seen Ted lose control of his temper; he remembered the occasion vividly and with dread.

Ted was talking again, half to himself.

"Why, I never could even fool with anybody—they'd commence yellin' I was hurtin' 'em. I have to keep my hands off of people—have to hang onto myself all the time. Fools don't see that—they think I don't feel nothin' nor understand nothin'. Well, somebody's liable to get a big surprise some day soon."

"For gosh sakes, don't hit nobody on account of Vi," begged Chickadee.

"Not unless I have to." The tone was ominous. He went on: "Well, I guess I got enough sawed up for you to go on with. I'll drift around again later."

He left the little workshop behind the hotel where Chickadee supported himself by making knickknacks and bits of furniture. The cripple was something of a genius with wood, and his handicraft was beautiful in design and workmanship. . . .

Him Gorilla

by JOHN BEAMES

Snow still covered the lumbering town of Carter's Mills, though it was mid-April. The lumberjacks were all in from the woods, with nothing to do until the break-up should arrive and permit them to bring down the log drive.

They wandered restlessly about in groups, putting on occasional free-for-alls to relieve the monotony; and one such group had taken to haunting the neat frame house where pretty Vi Martlett lived.

She was small and dainty, but full of vivid life. Her hair was a halo of red gold, her eyes a sparkling hazel, and she was quick with tongue and laughter.

When Ted came along, she was sitting on her sun-warmed front porch with four young lumberjacks around her; and she was distributing her smiles with rather careful impartiality, deftly fending off tall Bert Random's persistent efforts to establish himself on a preferred basis.

He was a newcomer to the Mills, talkative and boastful, anxious to make it appear that he had logged the continent from Atlantic to Pacific, though still in his early twenties. He also fancied himself as a wit.

"Why, hello, here's the Gorilla," he said loudly.

"Don't call him that," chided Vi. "Hello, Ted."

"H'lo, Vi," he mumbled, and sat down on the bottom step.

While the talk eddied about him, he said little or nothing, but his eyes remained fixed on Vi with an expression of sadness and devotion.

Presently the girl stood up. "Well, I got to go and help Ma now," she said, and went in.

The five lumberjacks drifted up the town's rambling single street in the aimless way of idle men. They gravitated to the hotel. It was near noon, but not yet time to eat, and so they stood about on the broad wooden veranda in the sun, waiting for the half-breed waitress to ring the dinner-bell.

The hotel's rates were twenty-five cents a meal and twenty-five for a bed, and one could board there for six dollars a week. It was the principal hangout for lumberjacks in town.

Bert Random thought it a good occasion to air his wit, freed from the restraint of Vi's presence. He remarked to Ted with a sneer: "You ain't sayin' much, but I guess gorillas can't talk very good, eh?"

He looked around for approval. Two of the boys laughed, but Ted merely drew down his upper lip.

"I wonder you'd go around to see Vi," pursued Bert. "Wouldn't you think your face would scare the poor kid?"

"Don't you say that," said Ted in a hoarse voice.

Bert was big and powerful, and Ted did not appear particularly formidable to him.

He laughed. "Oh, go climb a tree with the other gorillas."

Ted's blow followed instantly on the words. It landed on Bert's cheek and laid it open. With his other hand he caught the man's wrist, jerked him forward and hit him again.

Bert struck back weakly. Then Ted's arms encircled his waist, he was lifted off his feet and dashed to the boards. He lay there, too stunned to know what had happened.

Ted glared at the others. "You was laughin', eh?" he snarled at Hump Wright.

"Hold on," cried Hump, but a hammer blow on his head buckled his knees and laid him beside Bert.

"Anybody else laughin'?" demanded Ted, his great chest heaving and his teeth agleam. . . .

Chickadee was in the habit of eating his noonday meal at the hotel, and he hopped around the corner just as the dinner-bell rang.

"Ted," he called sharply, "leave 'em be, that's enough."

Ted scowled at him. "They got too funny," he said. Then he gave a short ugly laugh. "They thought I was a poor punk, and I had to learn

"Don't talk like that," pleaded the girl. "He'll come back—"

'em different. They broke up pretty easy and I'll break up some more yet."

"Not just now, you won't," said Chickadee peremptorily. "You come in with me and have dinner."

Ted looked around at the rapidly gathering crowd of lumberjacks.

"Anybody else feel like callin' me a gorilla?" he inquired. "That word means fight from now on, if I have to lick every man in town."

Chickadee tugged at his sleeve. "Come on in and have dinner," he insisted, and led him away.

"Well, what in hell's got into him?" asked a puzzled lumberjack. "He always used to be good-natured."

"I don't blame him," said little Chimp McCann. "If I was as big as him, they wouldn't be callin' me chimpanzee to me face the way they do be, every day of me life. More power to him, says I."

They helped Bert Random, still dazed, to his feet.

"Looks like he been kicked in the face by a horse," commented Boxcar Daley. "I guess the boys better be a little leery about callin' that feller Gorilla from now on."

In the dining-room of the hotel, Chickadee led Ted to a corner table. "Set down there," he said, "with your back to the room. Don't pay no attention to 'em. Cool down and eat your dinner quiet and sensible."

Ted's labored breathing gradually eased. A big plateful of roast pork with apple-sauce softened his anger.

"I been wantin' to do that for a long time," he said in a tone of satisfaction. "Maybe they won't be so quick to call me that to my face again."

"You stopped 'em, all right," agreed Chickadee. "But it ain't what they call a feller to his face: it's what they say behind his back. The boys used to think you was a good head; now they'll think you're a grouch."

"Don't give a damn what they think," declared Ted.

With a little sigh, Chickadee let the matter drop.

Ted walked out of the dining-room with his head high. He shook off Chickadee and wandered up to the the other end of town. There he stared for a while at the still frozen river. With a jerk of his heavy shoulders, he faced about and marched straight to Vi Martlett's house.

A south wind was combining with the sun to convert the crumbling snowdrifts into so many pools of sky-blue water. The spruce trees were singing softly of spring. Vi was out on her porch with three of the boys —Bert was having his battered face sewn up by the doctor. At Ted's approach, the animated conversation going on was abruptly succeeded by an uneasy silence.

"Hello, hello," he said with noisy joviality.

They looked at him in surprise. One of them muttered: "Drunk or crazy."

"Nice day, ain't it, Vi?" Ted went on. His voice could be heard fifty yards away.

"Yes," she replied in a cool tone.

"Shouldn't wonder but what we'll have the break-up right away," he bellowed. "All the snow'll go away. Won't be no more snow, eh? It'll all be gone. Then we'll have summer, eh? It'll be nice then."

He paused and wiped his forehead, on which sweat was standing. "Pretty hot right now," he puffed.

Nobody else said anything. He looked at the boys, and they shifted uncomfortably, but stubbornly held their ground.

He took a deep breath and shouted: "Come on for a walk, Vi."

She paled, but she had plenty of courage. "I don't think so," she replied coldly.

"Why not?"

"I don't go around with fellows that act like—gorillas."

He stiffened and stood glaring. The boys moved instinctively to throw themselves in his path. Then he turned on his heel and strode away.

He burst into Chickadee's workshop, nearly bringing the door with him. "She called me a gorilla," he panted.

Chickadee fitted a small panel with careful exactitude.

"She called me a gorilla," repeated Ted.

"Well," said Chickadee, "didn't you go around there askin' for it?"

Ted gripped him by the arm.

"Oh, go on, hit your best friend," said Chickadee wearily. "I don't know what's got into you."

Ted let go and dropped heavily on a trestle. "I don't know myself," he admitted. "But I'm fed up; I ain't standin' for no more. I been gentle and good-natured. When folks would make me mad, I'd go away so's not to get rough with 'em. And what did it get me? What did it get me?"

"It got you plenty friends," replied Chickadee.

"Like hell it did! It got me so every two-by-four little lousebait in the country would laugh in my face and call me Gorilla. Well, if I got the name of a gorilla, I'm goin' to fill the bill. Next goof what even looks cross-eyed at me gets his face pushed in."

He lifted a clenched fist. "And from this minute on forevermore, I won't never look at a girl."

"I wisht the break-up would come so you could go out on the drive," said Chickadee mournfully. "What you need is plenty hard work."

DURING the week that followed, Ted established for himself a completely new reputation. Chickadee tried to keep him in the workshop on the plea that he needed help, but he could not endure being indoors for long at a time. He would potter around for an hour or two, then rush out.

There was not much to see in the Mills, and he would wander aimlessly.

Thus he encountered Pony Jenkins, who had taken the extra drink that breeds indiscretion. Pony hailed him: "Hello, there, you old gorilla, you!"

A few minutes later he was inquiring weakly: "Did the buildin' blow up, or how?"

Said Boxcar Daley: "Gorillas is for them as likes 'em. Me, I'm givin' this one the road—all of it."

It was generally agreed that he spoke sense; and Ted found himself walking among averted faces. If he spoke to a man, he was answered in polite monosyllables.

Lumberjacks are hardy folk, and there were men in the Mills capable of giving him an argument, but as big Paddy Ryan remarked: "There ain't no money in monkeyin' with a crazy buzzsaw."

As for Vi, Ted avoided even passing her house. Once, seeing her approaching, he turned and walked the other way.

"I ain't got a friend in town," he complained to Chickadee, "not a one!"

"You got plenty friends," replied Chickadee, "but you got 'em so they don't dast open their mouths to you."

"Best keep 'em that way, eh?"

"Okay, then you won't have no friends. You can't make folks love you by poundin' 'em on the head."

"I got a good notion to get to blazes out of this here dump and never see it again."

"If you take that disposition with you, you won't find things no better any place else. Ted, I wisht you'd pull out of it and be your old self."

"I'm bein' myself."

"Then God help you," said Chickadee, and bent to his work.

Ted went out into the spring sunshine, but in no mood to enjoy it. As he tramped moodily along, he idly noted that the snow was nearly all gone. Every low spot in town was under water. He drifted down to the river-bank, and stood looking at the broad bands of open water on each side of a central ribbon of ice. The imminent break-up was likely to be spectacular.

AT daybreak a day or so later he was wakened by a dull rumbling, as of a distant cannonade. It swelled in volume as it neared, and ended in a crescendo of crashes. He hurried into his clothes and went out.

At the river-bank he found that a sudden rush of thaw water from above had lifted and shattered the ice, which was grinding and wallowing by in huge floes. The river level had risen twenty feet overnight.

The noise was less now, but the perpetual coming together of the ice masses produced a deep and monotonous undertone above which rose a thin tinkling as of uncounted panes of glass being shattered in succession.

The field became stationary, and the noise sank to a soft hissing.

In the sudden hush, a lumberjack raised the old river cry, "Jam below!"

The water rose rapidly, and the ice was soon almost level with the top of the bank. The mill manager began hastily organizing a party to go downstream with dynamite to blast the jam.

Then the diapason swelled again, and the whole field got in motion, sinking as it went. The jam had pulled of itself, and the townspeople heaved sighs of relief.

In a little while only a stream of muddy water was flowing by, bearing on its surface a few small pans of ice. Everyone turned to look upriver, where the recumbent granite mass of Buffalo Rock split the stream into two channels. A pallidly gleaming wall of ice was building up behind it.

A downstream jam was bad enough, but the ice it might spread through the town would be floating on slack water and do comparatively little damage. A jam on Buffalo Rock was a more serious matter—deadly serious. The far bank was high; and if the ice piled up beyond a certain level, the whole mass would spill over and sweep across the flat with irresistible power, destroying everything in its path.

The dynamite gang prepared to meet the new menace.

Ted, standing sullenly with his hands in his pockets, found Chickadee at his elbow.

"Ain't you goin', Ted?" he asked.

"Nobody asked me," growled Ted, making no move.

Illustrated by Wilson Thomson

Ted scowled. "They got too funny. Thought I was a poor punk, and I had to learn 'em different."

"Hell, do you have to be asked? If that there jam ain't blowed in a hurry, there won't be no town by night."

"I don't give a damn."

"You don't?"

"No, it can wipe the burg off of the map and everybody in it, for all me."

"Well, I guess you have come to the point where you ain't got a friend left," said Chickadee. He swung on his crutches and hopped away.

Ted looked after him for a moment, then shrugged his shoulders. He did not join the groups hurrying upriver with boxes of dynamite, pails, peavies, pike-poles and crowbars. Instead, he walked to a point a little below the jam but on the crest of the bank, sat down, and moodily contemplated the men lighting fires and putting sticks of dynamite in pails of water to thaw.

Bert Random's conduct was in direct contrast. Conspicuous by reason of the patch of plaster on his cheek, he was everywhere. He had a large audience, including Vi Martlett, and made the most of it. He was first out on the jam, prying chunks of ice off the face with a crowbar.

"What does the damn' fool think he's doin'?" growled Ted aloud. But the townsfolk were leaving him to himself, and there was no one to answer him.

Bert rushed back to pick up the first stick of dynamite thawed out. He tied it to a willow stick, ran out on the ice, poked the dynamite into a crevice, lit the fuse, struck an attitude, and ran back again.

There was a sharp explosion, and a few pieces of ice flew into the air, but the jam did not stir.

Other men followed his example. Everybody was excited, and there was little coördination. Sometimes considerable masses would be dislodged and float away downstream, but the gap would be plugged in a moment, and the ice wall continued to build up with terrifying rapidity.

Growling deep in his throat, Ted rose and went slowly down to where the dynamite was being thawed. Men glanced up at him and turned their heads away in silence. He left them and walked down to the water's edge.

Bert Random raced up, got another charge and went scrambling out on the ice toward Buffalo Rock.

The mill manager shouted after him: "Hey, come back! It ain't safe out there."

Bert airily waved a hand and went on until he reached what he considered a suitable place, where he was in full view of every soul in Carter's Mills. He placed the charge, lighted the fuse, stood a moment so that everyone could recognize him, and started back in a leisurely way.

There was the usual explosion, and a loud rumble as a considerable section of the crest of the jam surged forward and rolled down into the water.

A concerted yell of warning went up from the crowd. Startled out of his complacency and suddenly panic-stricken, Bert tried to hurry. His foot slipped on the glassy ice, and he plunged headfirst into the water.

Ted, standing on a rock at the river's edge, regarded his rival struggling in the water with an expression of contempt. Then he saw that Bert was having difficulty keeping his head above water and was being rapidly swept out into midstream.

With an impatient jerk of the head, he stepped off the rock and began to wade out. The river level now had dropped because of the jam, and the water rose only to his armpits, but the deadly chill of it would have paralyzed most men.

Ted seemed wholly unaffected. Though he could not swim a stroke, he kept his feet on the bottom and held doggedly on until he was within reach of the drowning man. He caught Bert by the collar of his jacket, steadied himself against the pull of the current for a moment, then turned toward the bank.

The townsfolk surged down to meet him, Vi among them.

He saw her and splashed his way among the rocks and stranded ice-floes, supporting the half-conscious man on one arm, until he stood before her.

"Here he is," he said, looking at her with hard eyes. "You can have him." He let Bert sink to the ground at her feet, and turned away.

Brushing the people aside, he walked rapidly over to the mill manager.

Ted did not join the groups hurrying upriver with dynamite, pails, peavies and crowbars.

"What's the sense tryin' to blast this side of the rock?" he asked. "The ice in this here channel is settin' right on the ground – ten tons of dynamite wouldn't shift her. The place you want to blow her is the other side of the rock, where the deep water is."

"I can't send a man out there," answered the manager. "The ice is liable to rise up over the top of the Buffalo any minute. Suppose she pulls—a man'd never get out of there alive."

"Give me a good big charge," said Ted. "About ten sticks. I'll shift her."

"You'll be takin' your life in your hands," warned the manager.

"Who'd miss me? Come on with that dynamite," answered Ted with a glare.

CARRYING a big bundle of the explosive tightly bound together with wire, and an iron bar, he went out on the face of the jam. He took his time, testing each step of the way, but advanced steadily.

Chickadee hopped over to Vi Martlett, who with the others was watching Ted's progress in silent suspense. She was pale, her under lip caught in her teeth. Chickadee was trembling so violently his crutches hardly held him up. . . .

"And that's the guy you called a gorilla," Chickadee burst out passionately. "He's goin' out there when he knows well he mayn't never come back. And you called him a gorilla!"

"I'm sorry I did, Austin," she answered in a low voice. "I'll never call him that again."

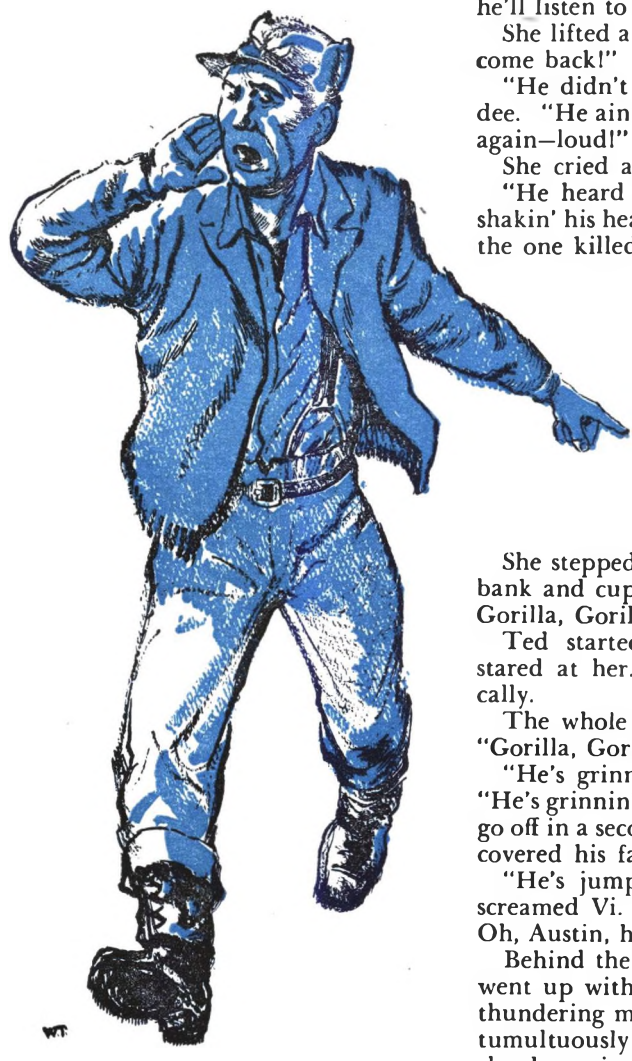
"No, you won't—you'll never get the chance. He won't come back alive. I don't think he even figures to. You called him a gorilla, and I told him a little while back he wasn't my friend any more. He thinks more of us two than he does of anybody in the world, and we turned him down."

"Don't talk like that," pleaded the girl. "He'll come back – he's too strong to let the ice get him."

"But if he wants it to get him—" insisted Chickadee. "That's what I'm scared of. He's sensitive, that boy. You wouldn't think it, but it hurts him, bein' so homely. If you'd quarreled with him, all right; but you callin' him gorilla broke his heart. That was the finish for him."

"Oh, Austin, don't," she begged. "I was mad at him just then—and I've been sorry ever since; but he wouldn't let me make up. He's got to come back!"

"What to?" asked Chickadee bitterly. "Every livin' soul in this here town has turned him down. He feels he ain't got a friend left in the whole world. I tell you, he's sensitive; things gripe him the way they don't most folks. He wouldn't show it for



In the sudden hush, a lumberjack raised the old river cry, "Jam below!"

the world, but he feels every little thing."

"Oh, look," she said, "he's out past Buffalo Rock! Surely he don't need to go that far."

"That's the kind of a man he is. He don't care about anythin', just so he gets the job done right," returned Chickadee.

"What's he doin' now?" she asked.

"Punchin' a hole with his bar to put the dynamite in. He wants to get it well in under the ice. He's goin' to make sure that when he sets her off, she'll blow everythin' to blazes—maybe him too."

"He's lit the fuse," she said. "I can see it."

"I hope it's a good long one—give him time to get back to Buffalo Rock, anyways. But, my God—do you see? He ain't movin'!"

Ted had not stirred. There was no air of bravado about it; he merely stood with his back to the evilly sputtering fuse, looking down at the water, a dejected droop in his broad shoulders.

"I told you, I told you!" cried Chickadee. "He ain't comin' back—he's through. Vi, call him—maybe he'll listen to you! Call him!"

She lifted a high, clear voice: "Ted, come back!"

"He didn't hear you," said Chickadee. "He ain't lookin' this way. Call again—loud!"

She cried again: "Ted, oh, Ted!"

"He heard you that time, but he's shakin' his head. Vi, if he dies, you're the one killed him."

She stepped to the very edge of the bank and cupped her hands. "Ted—Gorilla, Gorilla!"

Ted started, lifted his head and stared at her. She beckoned frantically.

The whole crowd took up the cry: "Gorilla, Gorilla—come back!"

"He's grinnin'," gasped Chickadee. "He's grinnin'. But the dynamite will go off in a second. I can't look." He covered his face with his thin hands.

"He's jumped in the water now!" screamed Vi. "He's comin' this way. Oh, Austin, he'll drown."

Behind the struggling man the jam went up with a crash, and the whole thundering mass of ice came charging tumultuously through the gap torn by the dynamite.

But Ted was out in front, hurling himself forward with great leaps, rising waist-high above the water at each bound. The forerunners of the pack were snarling at his heels as he dashed through the shallows and scrambled up the bank.

He was laughing and panting, his great dog-teeth shining in the sun.

As the folk crowded around him, he waved them off. "G'wan, it wasn't anythin'. All right, all right, just leave me go now. I want to go get some dry clothes on—I'm half froze."

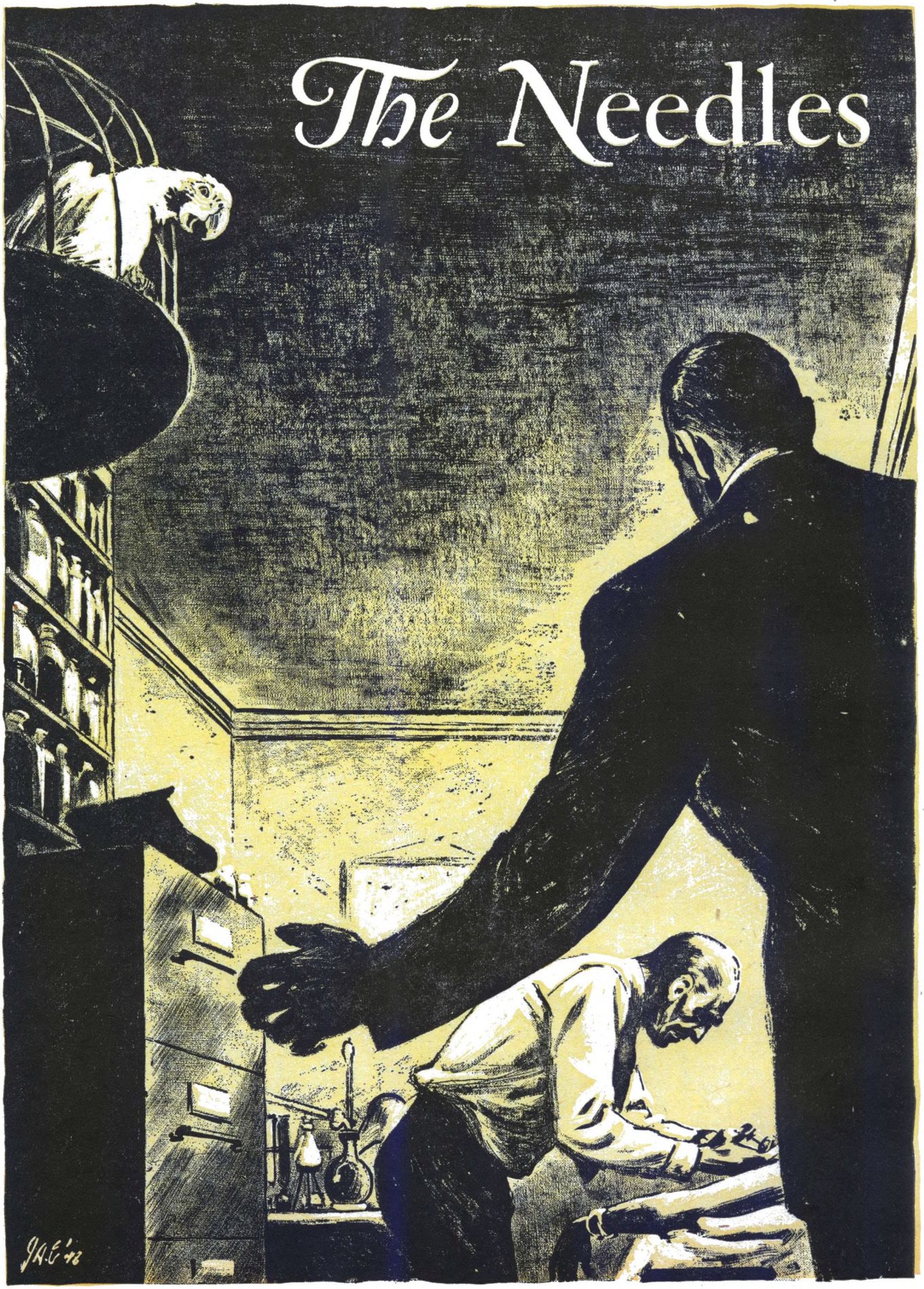
HE began pushing his way through as men pounded him on the back and yelled: "Atta boy, Gorilla! Atta boy."

He halted, though, when Chickadee and Vi barred his path. When they held out their hands to him, he took both in one vast paw.

"Say, did I hear you hollerin' Gorilla at me just now?" he demanded.

"Well, yes, I did," she admitted. "I—"

He gave a hearty joyous shout of laughter. "Aw, well, what's the odds? I guess I never will get anythin' but 'Gorilla' around this here town! I don't care—I like it."



"Relax now. That's better; quiet now." She was conscious only of the tingling prick of the needle, then darkness.

# of Dr. Rheinfrank

Scotland Yard deals with the most weird of all crimes. . . . A complete novel,

by DENISON CLIFT

YOU REACH THE BLACK MUSEUM BY TREADING along a dim, vaulted corridor which, while modern, smacks intensely of medievalism. The very granite under your feet, and the heavy gray-grim columns, bespeak the Yard as a bulwark against crime. You feel that here is a citadel, with resolution built into its very stone and mortar, erected by good men for the suppression of evil men. Something of this resolute power, like a formidable, chilling, silent wall, telegraphs terror from your brain to your nerve centers. And when the key is turned and you enter the long gloomy rooms, the figures of nightmare begin racing, and the phantom shapes of the crime masters return from the dead, or from the darkened cells of the living, to plague the curious innocent. But as it happens, few men ever enter the Black Museum. It is shut away from the world—private, secretive, institutional. On rare occasions the key is taken from Superintendent Holland's desk, and the horrific symbols are revealed.

You pass into the three rooms in the basement, facing the courtyard housing the cars of the Flying Squad. Three heavily-barred windows let in the pale sunlight in the west wall. In Room No. 1 are the tools and gadgets of the forging and swindling fraternity; in Room No. 2 are the famous murder-trial relics; Room No. 3 boasts the collection of the Metropolitan Police Force trophies.

One day in this present year the symbols were revealed as a divertisement on the last day of the arduous International Conference of Criminal Investigation in London, to M. Robert Verrier of the French Sûreté, Hendrik Haarmen of Amsterdam, and big Michael McCrell of the New York police force.

On this occasion Inspector Barcaldine did the honors. He flashed on the lights as the men entered Room No. 2. The quartette gazed at the glass cases, cabinets and rows of shelves bordering the walls, and at the elongated cases that filled the center of the room.

"I wonder if you remember these cases?" said Inspector Barcaldine. He was still a young man, verging on thirty-six, and was dressed in plain dark-blue clothes. He was not at all the type of man you would classify as a detective; true, he was six feet tall and well muscled; his hair was dark and resisted combing; his nose was narrow and patrician, high-bridged and Roman. A city broker, you would say; or an automobile salesman, or a bank cashier. But his eyes, pale gray, gentle but alert, gave you the uncomfortable feeling that he missed no movement, no physical or mental nuance. They were the windows of a photographic mind, all-encompassing, clear and scientifically accurate. His voice, when he spoke, was modest and low-pitched, but soft with pride; the three high criminal investigators knew that he had solved many of the crimes symbolized by exhibits in the room.

"The murder of Vera Page," said Inspector Barcaldine, "shocked London to its core. She was a ten-year-old child. The only clue we had to go on was a finger bandage found in the crook of one of the child's arms. We finally traced the murderer through his injured finger. There is the bandage." The men gazed in silence at the dirty wound piece of linen held together by a pale-green thread. "An equally shocking crime," said Barcaldine, moving deeper into the room, "was the Charing Cross trunk murder." He halted before a black leather trunk with three stout straps; on the lid were the initials "I.F.A." "In that trunk we found a young woman's dismembered body. The clues we had to work on were the dead woman's handbag and shoes, and this garment with a laundry mark." He opened the trunk and displayed the contents. "But they didn't get us very far. Notice the label, a piece of cardboard bearing the inscription, *'F. Austin to St. Lenards.'* That, it turned out, was copied by the murderer, wrong spelling and all, from an old begrimed label already on the trunk when he purchased it. In the end we identified the woman as Minnie Bonati and found her killer."

The Inspector moved on and indicated a four-inch glass-covered box on the shelf. In the box rested a single nickel-plated bullet. "That is the bullet that passed through the body of Doctor Zemenides, the Cypriot professor, at Hampstead."

Close by the box rested a revolver. "Is that the gat that fired the bullet?" asked Michael McCrell.

"No, that's the revolver that was used in the murder of Walter Spatchett in the blazing-shed crime at Camden Town. We fished it out of the Regent's Canal. We captured the murderer, Furnace, but before we could bring him to justice, he poisoned himself. He'd sewed this tiny vial in his overcoat." Opening a small box, Barcaldine revealed the one-inch poison vial. Beyond, along the shelf, was a small folding gun which fired a .410 cartridge. "This is the weapon used in the shooting in Whistling Copse." He handed the gun to Michael McCrell for examination. "It was used by the poacher Rawlings to kill the gamekeeper Walker."

BARCALDINE turned now to the elongated glass case in the room's center. There, in turn, he indicated the white silk jumper that was used to throttle Norah Upchurch in the empty shop in Shaftesbury Avenue; the dented hammer used by the youth Jacoby to bash out the brains of Lady White; and the flashy jewelry, the pince-nez and the false teeth of poor Emily Farmer, the elderly lady tobacconist who was murdered one dawn by two ruffians. Then:

"This, gentlemen, may have special interest for you." Barcaldine unlocked a cabinet. There were two shelves, on each a small box. The Inspector lifted the box from the upper shelf and opened it. M. Verrier, Hendrik Haarmen and McCrell gazed at the queer contents. They saw what appeared to be a piece of parchment, less than six inches long, creased and crumpled. "That," said

Inspector Barcaldine to the puzzled men, "is the fragment of skin from the body of Cora Crippen that sent Doctor Crippen to the gallows. His wife's body was found in the basement lime-pit, and the only identification left, as though by Providence, was this bit of skin with this scar from an old operation." Then, casually, Barcaldine replaced the box and picked up the other box from the lower shelf. This was of black morocco, well worn, of German make. It contained three Guerard-Bross hypodermic needles. "And these," he announced calmly, "are the famed needles of Doctor Rheinfrank."

An icy silence held the men for half a minute; then, "You mean," exclaimed McCrell, "that these are the actual needles he used?"

"Yes. Then you remember the case?"

"*Voilà!* Does not the whole world remember the case?" declared M. Verrier.

"You were then a detective-sergeant; it was you who brought Doctor Rheinfrank to justice, is it not so?" said the Amsterdam police head.

Inspector Barcaldine allowed the men to handle and inspect the needles, which they did with a definite grave and imaginative intensity.

"Yes, I was a detective-sergeant at the time. In fact, this was my first major case. When Superintendent Holland put me on it, of course he had no idea that it would develop into the unique and startling affair that it did. Which perhaps was fortunate for me. When I first encountered Doctor Rheinfrank and his partner Doctor Usk, they were a pair of pseudo-scientists, or medicos, who had come to the protection of this island from the continent, from Munich and Leipsic respectively—where, we discovered later, they had practised precariously and had been forced to flee because of ill-chosen political aggression. They crossed the frontier into Switzerland, and found their way to Paris, where they met and formed a partnership before crossing the Channel.

"The record shows that there had been no criminal activity up to that time; on the contrary, Doctor Rheinfrank had been noted for experiments in restoring life to the dead, but no one seems to have taken that very seriously. The man was a remarkable character: learned, shrewd, dominant, crafty, and possessed of resource and imagination that brought his monster crime to the absolute crest of success. . . . There were several features of the case that confound me to this day. Why, for instance, did Doctor Rheinfrank choose that lonely and most obscure village in the far north of England for the *mise en scène* of his crime? Did he know Poe's 'The Black Cat' when he permitted the parrot to bring such avenging terror to his soul?

"No, Herr Haarmen, it is not quite accurate to say that I brought Doctor Rheinfrank to justice. Actually, he and Doctor Usk brought themselves to justice. Do you, Monsieur Verrier, recall the meaningful words of the illustrious Marcabrum? 'In every crime that is plotted in our world, the seeds of destruction for the criminal are inherent in the very conception of evil in his mind.' One of our principles here at the Yard is that if you give a criminal sufficient scope, he will destroy himself. Doctor Rheinfrank destroyed himself. But before the end he had all England, and the Continent—in fact the entire world—aroused and stupefied. Do you recall the excitement, gentlemen, in the press and pulpit, and among the people, before it was discovered that Doctor Rheinfrank's momentous 'miracle' was a colossal crime? The miracle was that two such rogues, springing from drab beginnings, could secrete themselves in an obscure English village and set fire to the imagination of the world."

IT was shortly after eleven o'clock on that day in mid-February that Dr. Rheinfrank returned hastily from his bank in the West End to the offices and laboratory on the fringe of Harley Street. Harley Street, as you must know, is the seat of London's fashionable doctors. Here are elaborate and richly appointed suites with smart receptionists to greet you; here are laboratories fitted with the latest scientific equipment from America and the Continent. On the brass plates are the names of distinguished physicians, surgeons, dentists and scientists. The impressive atmosphere is maintained at excessive expense. Beyond the street, radiating east and west, in less fashionable purlieus, are other offices belonging to the second-raters. Many of these are old Georgian residences, suitably converted, standing brown and grim and murky among rows of old-fashioned houses.

It was in one of these Georgian houses that Dr. Rheinfrank and Dr. Usk plied their secret traffic, and to which Dr. Rheinfrank, stepping from a taxi, now hurried. The money he had drawn from his Pall Mall bank represented his entire balance—£115.3.8—which was the last of the savings he had smuggled across the frontier when he fled Munich. Month by month he had seen his account dwindle; little had been added; his position was now desperate.

DR. RHEINFRANK climbed the staircase with swift, purposeful steps. His manner was jerky and tense. He entered the reception-room and closed the door. He hesitated a second, then locked it from the inside. The sickly winter sun shone palely through a barred window as he moved on into the laboratory in the rear. The rooms were severe and shabby and sparsely appointed. The walls were dark and cast their spell of gloom. There were desks, files, a surgical couch and table, a few nondescript pictures, and a case of books; there were cases, too, of rare and delicate surgical instruments, shelves of bottles, retorts, and many other scientific paraphernalia. A cage containing a white rabbit, evidently for experimental purposes, stood on a table at the far end of the room. The rabbit gazed with docile eyes at Dr. Rheinfrank and went on chewing at a head of lettuce that Dr. Usk had placed in the cage that morning.

Only one unusual item characterized the suite: a brilliant green-and-yellow parrot that could sing and whistle and chatter ingenuously. This remarkable bird was called "Lord Nelson," and was Dr. Rheinfrank's valued property; he loved Lord Nelson and treated him as a fellow-human, and talked to him fondly for long stretches.

With alert movements Dr. Rheinfrank got a heavy leather suitcase and a black Gladstone bag from an alcove and placed them on the surgical table. He then began removing the surgical instruments from the glass case, wrapping them protectively and placing them in the bag. His graceful hands—they might have been the hands of a very great surgeon—worked swiftly and deftly. His time was short.

Indeed, the overall impression of Dr. Rheinfrank was that of distinction: he might have been a famous scientist or university professor; in reality he was a second-rater, befitting his surroundings, lacking in moral character, and impatient of his humdrum life and wretched progress. He was in his early fifties, when failure irks like a throbbing wound. He was wiry, dark, with a shock of streaked gray hair, a beaked nose, and deep-set eyes with drooping, sinister hoods. The sides of his thin, straight mouth were savagely lined; he seldom smiled. He was electric when his interest was aroused; then, when he addressed you, his eyes were alive and glowing.

Within twenty minutes Dr. Rheinfrank had looted the safe, desk, files and cabinets, stuffing the precious valuables into the two bags. As his last act, he crossed over to Lord Nelson and released the catch of the cage, which he set upon the floor. In another minute he would be forever out of the office and on his way to St. Pancras Station. But in that final minute which he devoted to filling Lord Nelson's cup with fresh water, he heard a heavy footstep mounting the staircase. He wheeled and

faced the door, and listened intently. It could not be Dr. Usk. He had chosen this half-hour because his partner had gone into Great Windmill Street on a personal errand, and was not expected back until after lunch.

But the footfall was that of Dr. Usk. He reached the door, fitted his key into the lock, and discovered that the door was bolted on the inside. This struck him as odd. He knocked, once, twice, vigorously. He got no answer. He knelt down and peered through the letter-slot. He caught a glimpse of Dr. Rheinfrank moving quickly about at the far end of the laboratory. He could see Dr. Rheinfrank shifting two packed bags out of view behind the curtain of the alcove. This strange circumstance of his partner wearing hat and coat, with the bags, and the locked door, aroused instant suspicions. Was Dr. Rheinfrank looting the office? Was he preparing for flight? Had he, Dr. Usk, arrived, fortunately, at a moment of crisis in their affairs?

He knocked again on the door, soundly. He called loudly: "Manfred! Manfred!" Still there was no response. Dr. Usk stepped back and poised his body for an attack on the door.

Usk was a hulking figure of a man, obviously a plodder. He towered six-feet-three, and was marked by a prognathous jaw. He lacked brilliance and deftness in his technique; he had always been content to wrest from life a meager but certain living, which had been his prime weakness. In Leipsic his career had been checkered and mediocre. In a way, birds of a feather!

Angered, bewildered, he hurled his powerful body against the door. It shivered and vibrated, but held. "Manfred! Will you open?" There was silence for some seconds. Dr. Usk stepped back and prepared to attack again. But before he could do so, he heard footsteps approaching the door within. The key turned in the lock; the bolt was shot back; Dr. Rheinfrank opened the door. Dr. Usk entered, closing the door behind him, and confronted his partner.

"Manfred, what are you up to?"

Dr. Rheinfrank's features twisted into a sardonic smile.

"I'm going away."

"Where? Why? Why are you going away?"

"We have failed here, both of us. I perhaps was a burden to you—"

"Manfred, you are lying!"

CROSSING quickly to the open safe, Dr. Usk checked through the meager contents, searched the desk drawers, went to the cabinets, saw that the precision instruments were missing. Then striding into the curtained alcove, he seized and brought forth the suitcase and the Gladstone bag and laid them on the operating-table. Unstrapping them, he revealed their contents.

"My case-books and the most valuable instruments!"

Fury shook his great body. In a torrent of bitter words he damned his partner for a series of mishaps since they joined up. The confusion of the Mallalieu case, the loss of the Darton research contract, the failure to perfect the cure for aortic aneurism. He moved slowly upon Dr. Rheinfrank as his black words spewed out; his big hands, like sledges, opened and closed with murderous intent.

Dr. Rheinfrank, mentally superior, but physically terrified of the expression upon the man's face, retreated half a dozen steps. He defended himself cavalierly. After all, he declared, he had instigated the partnership: he held the right to dissolve it. And what right had Usk to complain? What rewards Dr. Usk had reaped had been through his, Dr. Rheinfrank's, shrewdness. His words flowed smooth and inflexible: only by a stinging defense, without trace of fear, could he hope, mentally, to overwhelm the physically superior man. But Usk was not easily daunted. His hands indicated the case-books, the dossier of experimental notes, and bottles of precious compounds which he had removed from the

"Stand aside!" the constable ordered brusquely.

bags. His voice rose vehemently. "You are a thief, Manfred! You were going away with our hormonic compounds—and the experimental notes. A thief!" he repeated; and in a black rage, he thrust forward, and his powerful hands closed on Dr. Rheinfrank's throat.

For a full moment the two men rocked across the room; it seemed that in his fury Dr. Usk would snuff out his partner's life. Dr. Rheinfrank choked; his voice rasped brokenly like an animal's; his eyes glazed; the veins at his temples rose like whipcords. He was helpless as he writhed in the avenging grip. Suddenly Dr. Usk loosened his grasp, and in violent disgust, with loathing, as though the man had been infused with the plague, he flung him savagely back against the wall. Dr. Rheinfrank half-crouched, half-lay, flattened against the plaster; his hands extended to support himself, and clutched the wall; his breath came in heavy choking gasps.

"Thief!"

When he could speak, Dr. Rheinfrank said hoarsely, and slowly, and with contempt: "You're a fool, Usk.... You're a fool to do this—"

Usk stood in the center of the room, granite-hewn; his lips curled venomously.

He saw Lord Nelson cock his pert head and heard his hollow cry: "You're a fool—you're a fool—you're a fool—" And heard the laughter.

"So—you wish to kill me when I can make for us a quarter of a million pounds or more?" said Dr. Rheinfrank.

Dr. Usk heard and stared incredulously. Dr. Rheinfrank straightened out his lithe body, smoothed back his shock of graying hair, and adjusted his collar and tie. He rose slowly. What rascality lay behind his astonishing statement? His hooded eyes stared ahead shrewdly. Usk caught his faint chuckle.

"You see, I have found it," he said.

"Found what?"

"The compound."

Dr. Usk paused in surprise, and reflected.

"And it has just come to me," declared Dr. Rheinfrank; "you are a vital and needed instrument in making that quarter-million. Why didn't I realize that before? Of course! Your stature, your strength, those powerful hands— Exactly! Will you cool off and listen to me?"

Dr. Usk listened with suspicion.

His partner proceeded to remind him that his own one claim to distinction—or notoriety, however you looked at it—had been his daring theories of reviving the dead. In Munich he had experimented; and here in London he had struggled to bring his theories to fruition. He had tried his ideas out with rabbits and guinea pigs, with intra-cardiac injections of adrenalin and various hormonic compounds. His researches had been, in fact, as all the scientific world knows, the subject of a treatise in *The Lancet*. "Well, Usk," concluded Dr. Rheinfrank, "I have not succeeded in raising the dead, but I can reduce the living to a state of apparent death, and then revive the seeming dead with this reagent." His hand closed over one of the bottles on the table.

There was a pause, while Dr. Rheinfrank's cold eyes narrowed, and the hoods dropped; he spoke now almost in a whisper. "Do you grasp what this means? Have you no imagination?"

DR. USK continued to stare in mingled disgust and skepticism.

"You wish proof, naturally? You shall have it."

So saying, Dr. Rheinfrank removed his coat. Reaching in the Gladstone bag, he withdrew the morocco case and took out one of the Guerard-Bross needles. Next, he brought forth two violet-colored bottles, octagon-shaped and four inches high, one containing a dark-brown substance, and the other the reagent, a pale amber-toned liquid. He filled the bright silver-plated syringe from the first bottle.

Going now to the cage, he picked up the full-grown white rabbit by the ears and carried him back to the surgical table. The rabbit, with an animal's instinctive fear, squirmed and kicked and fought vigorously. Dr. Rheinfrank laid him flat and called to Usk: "Hold his hind legs." The next instant Dr. Rheinfrank thrust the sharp point home and pressed down the tiny piston. Within seconds the rabbit ceased to move, every muscle relaxed; a long shudder passed through the body. Slowly it keeled over and lay still and inert as in death.

Hardly had a full minute passed when Dr. Rheinfrank urged, "Examine it."

The resentment, the initial anger that actuated Dr. Usk, subsided. The skepticism remained. Treachery bred doubt; it would be difficult entirely to remove that.

Dr. Usk applied a stethoscope and tested the animal for pulse and heartbeat.

There was no heartbeat, no trace of breath, not a vestige of life. The body, still warm, was utterly flexible; the head, when he lifted it, lolled from side to side.

"Well?"

"It is dead."

"But you know it is *not* dead; is it not so?"

"That is the theory: that is what we were trying to develop. But this animal is dead."

A smile of triumph spread over Dr. Rheinfrank's alert features.

"That is as it should be: that you should pronounce it dead. We will wait three hours. You shall see then what happens."

Dr. Usk turned from the rabbit and began to unpack the contents of the bags.

"No!" exclaimed Dr. Rheinfrank. "We are going away. Now we shall go away together. What a *Dummkopf* I was that I did not include you in the first place!"

Dr. Usk cast a puzzled, sharp look at his partner.

"Where are we going?"

"All in good time." Dr. Rheinfrank's manner changed now, exhilarated by the unfolding of fresh and delectable thoughts. He strutted about the room and hummed a song of Mendelssohn's. He crossed to the parrot's cage and addressed himself to Lord Nelson.

"You'll soon have a new home, milord. We're through with London."

"You're a fool—you're a fool!" screeched the pompous Lord Nelson, swinging energetically across his cage.

Dr. Rheinfrank chuckled deeply and long with amusement. Dr. Usk muttered huskily: "I wonder—"

At two-thirty the sunlight, slanting across the room, had grown paler. A feeble yellow shaft, striking through the outdoor mist, illuminated the still body of the white rabbit.

"Examine it," insisted Dr. Rheinfrank.

Again Dr. Usk applied the stethoscope, and the tests, with, again, every indication of death. The body, when Usk touched it, had grown cold; there was but one verdict: "Dead."

In silence, Dr. Rheinfrank filled the little syringe from the second bottle containing the reagent; the liquid amber drops passed into the transparent container. He pressed the needle into the soft flesh and depressed the piston.

Seconds passed. A full minute. Dr. Usk leaned close over the animal, watching anxiously. The animal moved, twitched. There was a faint quiver of the muscles. Through the stethoscope Dr. Usk heard the first almost-imperceptible action of the heart: at first a nebulous tremor, a faint muffled rumbling, then the beat. The beat! A hesitation; then again the beat, louder, firmly, as the reagent awakened the cardiac plexuses. Presently the animal jerked its hind legs, slowly rolled over, struggled to get on its feet, slumped, and lay crouched weakly on the table gazing about in a daze.

"*Gott!*" exclaimed Dr. Usk. "You have found it!" His great body trembled.

Dr. Rheinfrank calmly emptied the syringe and replaced it in the morocco case.

"But what is in your mind? Do you mean that you can make a human body react like that?"

"Exactly. I have never tried it, but I am certain of the reaction."

"Then what do you propose? Had you not better tell me everything?"

Dr. Rheinfrank smiled his cold, evil smile.

"There is much to tell you, my friend—but there is nothing until I prove the reaction of this hormonic compound upon a human body." He paused; he had read the question in Dr. Usk's mind. "If a suitable patient comes to us—"

THEY had not long to wait. The outer door opened, and a young woman entered the reception office. She was, one would say, about thirty; her face was pale and strained; her hair was tinted a golden-bronze; and she was dressed flashily with silver fox fur and high-heeled French pumps. She gave the unmistakable impression of being a streetwalker. To Dr. Usk, who had gone out to greet her, she said: "Is the doctor in? Are you the doctor?"

Dr. Rheinfrank, glancing through the doorway at her, was quick with appraisal. As a human being, as an atom in the swirl of a great city of nine millions, he judged her value, to herself, to society, to him. If anything happened—if the experiment went wrong? What loss? He called: "Ask her to come in here."

The woman was in distress, and obviously suffering.

"Won't you sit down? Now—"

She gave her name as Frances St. Aubyn—which Dr. Rheinfrank instantly surmised was not her real name at all; gave an address on Weymouth Street; age—twenty-

nine. She was ill, she explained; for four days she had eaten very little, and had not slept. She suffered from terrible migraine headaches. "I've been to two doctors before, and they could do nothing for me—at least, they didn't. I wondered could you help me?"

"Yes, I think so." The German's voice was smooth and comforting. "Will you remove your hat and fur? And now will you come over here and lie down on this couch. That's it. Relax now. That's better; quiet now for a minute."

Frances St. Aubyn closed her eyes, and her poor tired ravished body let go; all her muscular force dissipated as in sleep. She was conscious only of the tingling prick of the needle, then darkness.

Dr. Usk silently entered the room, and stared down at the inert body.

"Will you examine her?" said Dr. Rheinfrank.

With trembling hands, Dr. Usk tested her heart, listened with the stethoscope: there was no beat. Her pulse: there was no tremor. Her breathing: there was no trace upon the mirror. Her eyes: they were glazed as in death. "Manfred," said Usk, "I'm afraid you have killed her."

Dr. Rheinfrank exhibited no qualms, no doubts or fears. "I will let her remain in this state for three hours; then I will revive her. I would like to wait five, six hours; but in this first case, perhaps we will allow a margin of safety. Does that make you feel better?"

Usk's face mirrored his growing inner terror. It was gray and bloodless; his jaw had dropped; and sweat glistened across his leathery forehead. "But if you fail, Manfred, we will be held for murder. No! I will have nothing to do with it!"

Sudden contempt for the man's weakness, and rage at his outburst, welled up in Dr. Rheinfrank. "Do you fear that she will not live again?" he demanded. "Do you think I would risk such a mistake? Usk, you talk like a fool and a coward! Wait! In three hours you will behold a miracle. Come now, my friend, have faith." He glanced at his watch. "It's long past the lunch hour. We will go over to Josef's for a spot and a bottle of hock. *Nicht wahr?*"

They got their hats. As they went out, Dr. Rheinfrank very carefully locked the door.

Lord Nelson shifted on his perch and tossed after them a saucy tidbit: "Now what? Now what? You're a fool—you're a fool—you're a fool." It rang through that great silent room like a Greek chorus.

Chapter Two

MAD MAGGIE, THE CHAR, USUALLY ARRIVED IN the early evening to clean the offices. There were four business suites built into the old Georgian house. On the ground floor were a psychiatrist and the Keleket X-ray Laboratory; on the first floor above were the dental offices of Mr. Godolphin; and in the west wing, adjoining, were the offices and laboratory of Drs. Rheinfrank and Usk. Two quiet, nondescript families lived in the flats above the offices.

Mad Maggie was hired by the landlord, Mr. Charlington, to attend the offices; and as London chars go, Maggie was efficient in her humorous, semi-maudlin way. She had been a flower-seller in Piccadilly Circus some years before, and Maggie knew life as it is lived in the fashionable West End. From calling: "Roses—lovely roses!" or "Violets—buy my violets!" she now swished back her skirts and waddled across the linoleum floors on her fat knees. She was indeed a caricature for *Punch*. She wore a hat, in the dead of winter, with four levels of bright spring flowers mounting one upon another. Wrapped tightly about her was a frayed mouse-colored cable sweater; over this she wore a man's old tweed coat; and beneath trailed her skirt, gay with the vivid plaid of the valorous MacWhimples.

Maggie never started her evening's labors without a fulsome appreciation of the dew o' Glengarry. This day she had already had her ration, with a wee drop added, as the winds were gusty and the skies laden with rain. Mr. Godolphin had had the painters in. The place was in a mess. He had sent word to Maggie to come round in midafternoon and help them put the offices in order.

Maggie whipped up her MacWhimple plaid and pinned it at her back. She got out her soap and brushes, but her pail was missing. She remembered, vaguely.... She had left it.... She ambled along the narrow hall to Dr. Rheinfrank's door. She twisted the knob. The door was locked. This seemed odd, in midafternoon. She got out her passkey, turned it in the lock and went in.

She was greeted affably by Lord Nelson. Cocking his head and half-spreading his wings with nervous curiosity, he screeched: "Now what do you want? Now what do you want?"

"None o' your gab!" called back Maggie.

She passed the cage and waddled toward the alcove. Suddenly she stopped dead. She thought at first that the girl was asleep. She lay on the couch on her back, with her face looking straight up; her features were set; her eyes were half open, and dull and glazed; there was about her the pallor and aura of death.

"Coo," muttered Maggie and stood for a brief moment frozen against the couch while speculative thoughts raced through her mind. Was she a patient? Why was she here, sleeping or unconscious, alone? Where were the doctors, Rheinfrank and Usk? But dominating her bewildered thoughts, and striking uncanny terror, was the question: *Is she dead?*

Maggie moved away from the couch. The slight pressure of her body jarred the position of the girl's head; it rolled to one side, and the mouth flew open. Maggie fled, past the parrot, down the hall, and into the arms of startled Mr. Godolphin.

Mr. Godolphin, shocked and greatly confused, heard Maggie cry: "Coo! There's a dead woman in there!"

The dentist was a short, ruddy-faced man wearing a soiled white coat. He lifted his hands defensively and pushed Maggie apart from him. "A dead woman? Where?"

Maggie led him into the adjoining offices, and they stood beside the couch.

Mr. Godolphin stared a long moment at the silent figure. There was no movement, not a sign of breathing or of life. He reached down and felt the woman's pulse.

"No pulse. She is dead," he said. Then, gazing about: "Where the devil is Rheinfrank? I wonder does he know?" He glanced through the rooms as though expecting the German to make his appearance at any moment. He observed the two bags on the surgical table, fully packed, implying flight. He became very grave: this savored of crime: this was the closest he had ever been to an actual crime—perhaps murder! His mind leaped ahead: what effect would it have on the neighborhood—on the tenants of the building—on his own established and conservative practice?

"Well, it's clearly our duty to call the police," he concluded, turning back to Maggie, who had edged nearer the door. He could see that she was frightened and trembling. "You run down and find a constable, Maggie, and bring him here. I'll phone Scotland Yard. This looks bad for someone, I can tell you!"

"AND NOW," said Dr. Rheinfrank to his apish partner, "I shall relate to you what is about to happen, and point out your part in the affair. Your natural greed, my dear Usk, coupled with your imagination, will picture the emoluments; but I must warn you that there is danger.

A slip anywhere—the slightest mishap—and we are done for. *Ach*, it will not be an easy business."

The luncheon had been pleasantly satisfying—Continental dishes such as only Josef could serve. The hock had been a superb vintage. Dr. Rheinfrank, it was evident, was feeling confident and expansive. He reclined luxuriously in the plush alcove seat. He called the waiter and ordered two kümmels. His hooded, sinister eyes glanced about the restaurant. There were now very few patrons at the tables. He wished to make sure that his conversation would not be overheard.

DR. USK, inwardly, was highly nervous and anxious. He had struggled to restrain himself until this moment when he would fathom his partner's mind. He thought, too, of the unconscious woman lying helpless on the couch not fifteen minutes away. A nervous, creeping fear obsessed him; he could feel his stomach turning over. He heard the low guttural tones—

"Where are we going? We are going up to the far northern tip of England, to the black country, in Northumberland. That is where I went on the trip I took in January. I was searching for a far-removed, isolated village. There I found it. High Moor Coombe, lying across a narrow valley from Low Moor Coombe, with its great collieries."

The waiter brought the kümmels, and Dr. Rheinfrank continued in his low, cautious voice:

"I found an old Tudor house, dark and desolate, set far back beyond its iron gates among fine old yew trees. The ideal house, Usk, for one engaged in the resurrection of the dead. There I shall live, alone, shut away from the villagers. Oh, but they shall know what is going on. I shall see to that. They will understand that Dr. Rheinfrank has secluded himself from the world to labor for humanity.

"There will be the inevitable whispers, gossip, and strange figures seeking to peek through the ancient shutters. Fear and suspicion. And superstition. An atmosphere, Usk, of divided emotion: of hope and proclamation, of skepticism and intolerance, or fear and terror."

Dr. Usk interrupted. "What has all this to do with me?"

Dr. Rheinfrank smiled wanly; he did not answer directly.

"*Ach*, now, my friend, we approach the miracle. Weeks will go by, and one day death will strike in the village, unexpectedly and dramatically. There is a physician there, a kindly man, without guile; he will pronounce the dead as dead.

"Fellow-men will think of Doctor Rheinfrank, the German scientist from Munich, living in the old house. They will come to me and implore me to do what I can—and I will do what I can: I will restore the dead to life.

"What, then, will all the village say? What, indeed, will all England say?

"The only known resurrection the world has witnessed for nearly two thousand years!

"I wish I could foresee what will happen. Frankly, Usk, it is the one thing that I fear. It is the Unknown, and it must remain the Unknown until that hour. You see, there is no precedent. Nothing like this has ever happened in the modern civilized world. You know the intense prejudices of the church; you know the swift excitements of the press; you know the volatile reactions of the Continent, and the emotional impact of America. We can hardly expect the incident to be scoffed at and forgotten. We must be prepared for a tumultuous world reaction. Do you understand?"

Dr. Usk heard the amazing statement; he felt the droning of fate in his brain. He stared at Dr. Rheinfrank with the concentrated power of his gimlet eyes. Finally he said: "Still I do not understand. How are we to profit by this 'death' and 'resurrection'?"

Again Dr. Rheinfrank smiled. The faintly twisting lips, the shade of expression in those hooded eyes, mirrored the pool of evil in his mind.

"My good friend," said Dr. Rheinfrank, "we now come to the crux. Imagination, Usk, imagination! The greatest power in the world!" He paused abruptly. He was silent for a full minute. Then quietly he said: "No! Does not the Bible say there is a time and place for everything? I shall not entrust that final secret even to you, my friend." He saw the swift nuance of resentment and potential anger cloud Usk's eyes. He was quick to appease. "I call you 'my friend.' I say to you, that should I reveal to you the life-or-death tragedy of that last act, you would exclaim: 'Fantastic! Impossible!' But nothing is impossible, my friend. In that last hour you will agree. *Ja doch!*"

Like lightning cutting across the night sky, Dr. Usk glimpsed the depths of his partner's mind. Until this moment he had not really known Manfred Rheinfrank. Doubtless for months—perhaps for years—this monstrous act had been shaping itself, with all its subtle, intricate details, in that warped brain.

"You see, it is like one of our Salzburg Festival dramas. In the First Part the atmosphere is spread, the seeds are sown; in the Second Part there is the resurrection and the life, and confidence is begot; in the Third Part—"

Dr. Rheinfrank paused. The savage lines of his face tightened. His eyes mirrored his awareness of difficulty and peril.

"Before we reach the climax, many strange and progressive events must happen," whispered Dr. Rheinfrank with grave emphasis. "I repeat, it will not be easy or simple. There will be danger. There will be Scotland Yard. One slip—and we shall be prisoners in this island. Every port will be watched. There is small chance of escape from England. And in the end Pentonville, and perhaps the gallows."

He gripped Usk's arm tightly, and his eyes brightened sardonically. "But what rich banquet of life can a man win without the adventure of risk and danger?"

Chapter Three

POLICE CONSTABLE BUELL HAD TAKEN UP HIS position on guard just outside the door of Dr. Rheinfrank's office. Already curious groups of people were gathering on the pavement, and creeping up the staircase to the hall. "All right, move along now; get back down those stairs. Wot do you think this is, Madame Tussaud's?"

A cluster of gaunt faces darkened the front doorway.

"Wot, a woman dead up there?"

"Murdered cruel!"

"They say the char found her in that German doctor's office—nude and cut up."

"'Ave they got the beast?"

"They 'ave 'im cornered."

Upstairs, Chief Surgeon Hammer bent close over the unconscious woman on the couch. He examined her heart, her pulse, her eyes; and he noted that her flesh was cold.

Detective-Sergeant Barcaldine made a rapid survey of the room. The two bags, fully packed, told their own story: seemingly a tragedy had occurred, and the bags indicated hurried preparations for flight. Mr. Godolphin and Maggie, detained by the police, watched as the Yard man examined every article. He then picked up the woman's shagreen handbag, dumped the contents on the surgical table, and went over each item: A key to her flat, a pound note and some silver, a letter addressed to her, some cards bearing her name and address, a handkerchief, lipstick, cigarettes, an envelope of matches.

The detective went over to the surgeon at the couch.

"Streetwalker," he said. "Frances St. Aubyn, Weymouth Street."

The surgeon glanced up and removed his horn-rimmed glasses. "I should estimate death at between two and three hours ago," he said.

"Any wounds?"

"No trace of any."

"Cause of death?"

"I can't say. I'll order an autopsy at once."

Barcaldine turned abruptly to Mr. Godolphin.

"What time did you discover the body?"

"Maggie discovered it, sir. She does our charring. She has a passkey to the offices; she came in looking for a pail. I sent her down for the constable, and I phoned the police."

"Have you seen Dr. Rheinfrank or Dr. Usk today?"

"I heard them come in and I heard them go out, but that was a usual thing, and I paid no attention."

"What time did you last hear them go out?"

"Well, now, I should say almost three hours ago."

"Have you any idea where they are now?"

"Well, no, sir."

"Where do they have lunch, do you know?"

"I think, usually at Josef's, sir, near Golden Square. Dr. Rheinfrank once told me he favors Josef's because of the German food."

"Did you hear any noise—cries, or a thump?"

"No, nothing, sir."

"You, Maggie?"

"Oh, no, sir; I'd just come."

"Well, that's all for the moment. You can go now. I may need you later."

"Thank you, sir," said the dentist.

The chief surgeon picked up his hat.

"I'll report to the coroner, Barcaldine, and notify Holland. You'll want to question the doctors—"

"I'll look in at Josef's first. . . . Buell!"

"Yes sir?"

"You take charge here till I return. Don't touch the body, and don't let anyone else touch it until the coroner arrives. Don't let anyone in—except the doctors. If they come back, hold them. All clear?"

"All clear, yes sir."

FIFTEEN minutes later a taxi rolled into the street. Dr. Rheinfrank, accompanied by his apish partner, stepped out; the fare was paid, and the two men strode toward the house.

They were surprised to see the group of loungers thronging the entrance. As they pushed their way through, the group, with burning curiosity in their faces, fell apart, then closed in again, and Dr. Rheinfrank heard:

"That's him!" "He did it." "She was found dead in his office—"

The staircase was empty and silent. As they moved up, Rheinfrank threw a tense whisper to his partner. He said in German: "Someone's in there. Whatever happens, create a scene—anything—to divert attention from me—"

"Hallo! Are you Dr. Rheinfrank?"

"Yes. Why? What are you doing here?"

"And you're Dr. Usk, I take it?"

"I am."

"I've been waiting for you birds to return. You're both under arrest."

Constable Buell closed the door behind him and faced the two men.

"Do you see wot's on the couch? Your char found 'er there—dead—about an hour ago. Mr. Godolphin called the Yard, and—"

Of course. Dr. Rheinfrank had not anticipated the char. She had the only passkey. Wasn't it always the unexpected that was sure to happen?

From a dim corner there emanated a rasping screech.

"But, Officer, there's some misunderstanding—"

"No misunderstanding. Dead is dead!"

"But this woman is not dead—"

"Chief Surgeon Hammer says so. That makes anybody dead."

"Chief Surgeon Hammer has been here?"

"He made the examination. He and Sergeant Barcaldine, sir. Look 'ere, I must warn you—anything you say may be taken down and used against you."

"I understand. But there has been a mistake—do you understand that?—a serious mistake."

Buell reached for the notebook in his tunic pocket, got out a stub of a pencil, and jotted down the protesting remarks.

With sharp and rising indignation, Dr. Rheinfrank addressed himself direct to the constable.

"This young woman is my patient. She came to me for treatment. Write that down in your little book! I left her asleep here in the seclusion of this office. Those meddling fools, yes, and the police too, have broken in here and created this wretched and embarrassing scene—"

As he went on in a swift torrent of hot, protesting words, his razor mind was elsewhere. He glanced at Frances St. Aubyn; he saw that her shagreen handbag had been examined. He saw, too, with a start, that his own suitcase and Gladstone bag had been delved into and investigated. But with tremendous relief he saw that the small morocco case and the two bottles containing the compound and the reagent were resting untouched upon a narrow glass shelf. It would take but a few swift seconds— He nodded significantly to Usk.

Dr. Usk towered angrily and exploded with a stream of violent condemnation. Was this the sort of stupidity the police imposed upon peaceful law-abiding citizens? Breaking into their private quarters, interfering with their private practice?

"It's an outrage!" cried Dr. Usk, raising his voice in stentorian thunder. "What right had Mr. Godolphin breaking in here and calling the police? I'll have an explanation from Mr. Godolphin—"

"Easy there! You're not to leave this room," ordered Constable Buell, as Usk made a sudden movement toward the door.

"Then you summon the dentist," demanded Usk.

"My duty is here, sir," replied Buell.

"Then I shall go for him!"

Thrusting his big frame past the constable, Usk reached for the door. The constable seized his arms and forced him aside. "Stand aside!" he ordered brusquely.

Usk skillfully maneuvered himself against the wall to the right of the door, so that Buell, alert and bristling, faced him squarely, with his back to Dr. Rheinfrank.

Usk blazed with indignation; his face grew red and contorted with anger; his voice bellowed through the rooms. And with each mock thrust forward to reach the door, the constable, with both hands now gripping the lapels of his coat, forced him back.

"A consummate piece of play-acting," thought Dr. Rheinfrank; his esteem for his partner rose accordingly. It was play-acting that would be desperately required in the later crises.

With deft, silent and furtive movements, Dr. Rheinfrank inserted the hypodermic needle in the bottle containing the reagent; in another precarious second he had administered the drops of the amber-toned liquid. He replaced the needle in the little morocco case and hastily joined his companion at the door.

"Don't be a fool, Usk!" he exclaimed. "We must recognize that the officer has his orders, and is carrying out his duty."

Dr. Usk subsided.

"Thank you, sir," said Constable Buell.

"And why should we condemn Mr. Godolphin? Wouldn't we have done the same thing in his place—call the police?" Then, facing Buell: "How soon will the chief surgeon and the sergeant return?"

"I expect any minute now, sir—"

Even as he spoke, the clatter of footsteps was heard outside on the stairs. The door was opened, and in strode Detective-Sergeant Barcaldine and Hammer, followed by the coroner and his assistant.

"Dr. Rheinfrank?" said Barcaldine, glancing quickly at both men.

"I am Dr. Rheinfrank."

"And you are Dr. Usk?"

Usk nodded stolidly.

"I'm afraid I'll have to ask you gentlemen to come with me to Headquarters for questioning. This woman, Frances St. Aubyn, was found dead an hour ago and—"

"Barcaldine! *Wait!* Look here!"

Hammer and the coroner had crossed to the couch where the unconscious figure of the woman lay. The coroner, a short, red-faced little man with keen gray eyes and a red mustache, had reached down and was examining for heart. The detective was quickly beside them.

Frances St. Aubyn was moving. Her eyes opened and closed sleepily; her head twisted slowly from right to left. She made an effort, weakly and with a sense of desperation, to raise her hand to her mouth; it dropped back and dangled helplessly from the couch.

"Good God!" said the chief surgeon in a choked voice, "I would have sworn—"

The coroner pressed his thumb to her wrist.

"Her pulse is weak. . . . It's growing stronger." He faced the chief surgeon. "Hammer, why have you brought me here on this wild-goose chase?"

The chief surgeon remained speechless; he gazed from the coroner to the young woman in amazement.

Dr. Usk stood apart, a graven image as he watched the signs of returning life. Dr. Rheinfrank watched his patient with his keen, hooded eyes. He knew that the reagent had reached the endothelial cells: that the auricles and ventricles were functioning.

He turned quickly to a cabinet, poured some brandy into a glass, then thrust himself between the surgeon and the detective. Lifting the woman's head, he held the glass to her lips.

Barcaldine and the surgeon watched this procedure in astonishment. The coroner, who was beholding the "dead" girl without previous prejudice or conviction, smiled thinly. "Well, Hammer," said he, "I thought you knew a corpse from a live 'un!"

Hammer winced under this friendly rebuke. Within himself were conflicting doubts and speculations that staggered his mind.

"But I examined her. . . . There isn't a chance for doubt. . . . By every test she was dead."

Frances St. Aubyn raised her head and stared blankly upward at the group of faces through her heavy, film-veiled eyes.

"Wot, me dead?" She laughed feebly. "Wot's this all about, Copper? I had horrible pains in my head, and the Doctor has cured me. Wot's funny about that?"

Sergeant Barcaldine handed her her handbag. "Nothing. Nothing's funny about that. We're glad to see you're alive, that's all." Then to Dr. Rheinfrank: "You don't have to answer this question unless you wish to. What was the nature of the treatment you gave her?"

Dr. Rheinfrank paused but a split-second; he turned suddenly, went over to a shelf containing a long row of various bottles, selected a small sea-green one, and handed it to Sergeant Barcaldine. The detective made a note of the label and passed it on to Hammer.

Hammer asked: "You administered this—for what?"

"Migraine."

"How did you administer it?"

"Hypo."

Pausing thoughtfully, Hammer handed the bottle back to the detective, then turned and watched intently as Frances St. Aubyn struggled to sit up. Dr. Usk assisted her and brought her her hat and fur.

Sergeant Barcaldine crossed over to the table with the two packed bags.

"Are you going away, Doctor?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Devon."

"For long? I mean, permanently, or just a holiday?"

"I don't know. I haven't decided."

"Well, I'm sorry we disturbed you. But you understand; we have to look into all matters like this. Good afternoon."

He joined Hammer at the door, and they went out, followed by the coroner and his assistant.

Frances St. Aubyn stood up, swayed a little.

"Coppers. I hate them. Nosey!" she said.

Dr. Rheinfrank asked: "How do you feel?"

"Oh, all right. A bit balmy maybe, but the headache's gone. How much, Doctor?"

"Five shillings."

"Thanks ever so much."

She walked out slowly, and they heard her French heels clattering down toward the street.

Dr. Rheinfrank turned eagerly to his partner.

"Now do you believe?"

Dr. Usk nodded gravely. "*Ja. Lieber Gott!*" he exclaimed. "When do we go to High Moor Coombe?"

Dr. Rheinfrank rolled his hands together with meaty pleasure, and the hoods dropped down over his eyes. He did not answer, but strode across to commune with the elegant Lord Nelson.

Superintendent Holland dropped the credentials of Dr. Rheinfrank and Dr. Usk on his desk, leaned back thoughtfully in his wide swivel chair and faced Sergeant Barcaldine and his chief surgeon.

He was a big, brusque man, heavy-set, ruddy-faced, with a close-cropped graying mustache. He'd been a famous Oxford Blue in his time at Magdalen—rowed seven in the Varsity Eight; and later he'd distinguished himself at Lord's. Deduction and detection had fascinated him all his life: he had solved a number of violent crimes, and had then moved up as one of the Big Four. His instinct for crime was intuitive, uncanny; he reasoned from motive; he could sense the criminal in a confused case; he reveled in a tangle of conflicting clues.

The last of the pale sunlight crept in through the tall west window and streaked Holland's face. He arose and paced the floor before the two men. He said slowly:

"There's nothing criminal in the records of Dr. Rheinfrank and Dr. Usk in any sense. Their papers are all in order. They registered at Bow Street, and their police books were properly issued."

"That is all quite correct, sir," said Barcaldine.

"What is the complaint, then?"

"No complaint. But Rheinfrank lied, and is up to something."

"What?"

"I don't know."

After a pause Holland said to his chief surgeon: "The German rather made a fool of you, Hammer."

Hammer had sat tight-lipped and grim, facing his chief. Now he arose.

"Sir, that woman was dead. As dead as Hamlet's ghost."

Holland glanced at the surgeon's tense white face, and grinned.

"But the corpse got up and walked out on you. Is that the way your corpses usually act?"

"Holland,"—he dared to be familiar in this earnest moment—"I made the examination. By every test she was dead: heart, pulse, breathing; and her flesh was cold. The others accepted the fact. . . . I can't understand it. I never made a mistake like that in my life."

"Well, I think we can allow you this one mistake."

"But I'd stake my reputation on the fact." He shook his head in a kind of solemn desperation, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. His face was like chalk. "There's something mighty queer there."

"But the woman lived. And there's no crime."

There was a silence, then: "All right, Hammer, thank you."

As the surgeon left, Holland asked: "Rheinfrank lied?"

Barcaldine took a small green bottle from a pocket.

"Doctor Rheinfrank told me he administered this for migraine."

"Well?"

"Look at the label. It would never produce that state of simulated death. Hammer agrees."

"They're leaving London?"

"Rheinfrank said Devon. I saw the tags on the luggage: 'St. Pancras Station.' That means north—the Midlands or—"

Holland interrupted briskly.

"Barcaldine, I'm taking you off Plagett. I'll take care of that. . . . I have a feeling—well, I want you to watch these men. Day and night—every move that Rheinfrank and Usk make. Don't lose them for a minute; follow them into the north. Report back to me what happens. It may take weeks, or months. I think you'll find that everything squares on the surface, and you may be properly bored. But one day, well, I've an idea you'll have plenty to report." Then alertly, cockily closing one eye: "Can't you just smell it?"

Chapter Four

CRIME HAD BEEN UNKNOWN IN THE TWIN VILlages of High Moor Coombe and Low Moor Coombe for almost a century.

Within the memory of the living there had been no murder, suicide, robbery or arson—no act of violence. In the legend of the beautiful valley that lay between the villages there was the story of the lad Jock O'Day, who had been hanged for stealing a sheep: a long-ago event of the eighteen hundreds. There was the night in '87 when Roger Camden's noble Fourteenth Century tithe barn burned and illumined the countryside for miles around in a furnace of saffron glory. But Roger Camden had no enemies, and no one was ever suspected. Life indeed over the years was wholly without its excitements; there was only the pall of serenity and peace. Then, oddly, paradoxically, into this atmosphere of beauty and isolation, shut away from the roaring cities and the market towns, suddenly came this thing that startled the world.

You must not enter the twin villages as a stranger if you are to understand all that transpired. There are the mines, and the separating valley, and Alexandrinus, Sir Richard Mollett's country seat, and the lovely village, and the quaint people. . . .

The great Crofty mines lie in a bleak, desolate landscape, with the pit-heads, gaunt black sheds, the nearby rows of miners' cottages and shacks, and the pubs. There are no green things here, no trees or gardens; only the stark, dead terrain with the desolate moor unfolding for miles into the distance. . . . Striking down into the valley, another world opens to you: wooded beauty, Jackdaw Quar, the little Saxon chapel with its gray churchyard; and the lush wolds and sheepwalks. Great trees tent the slopes: oaks, lime, plane and mighty beeches. Here the lilies of the valley grace the southerly slopes; and the trees ring with the screams of jays and the shrilling of the yaffles.

Across the valley to the west is High Moor Coombe with its crooked roads, great shady trees, and flowering meadows. Above the village, on a gently sloping hill, stands Alexandrinus—so named by Sir Richard's forebears after that Alexandrinus of Rome, who declared that, "The wool of Britain is spun so fine that it is in a manner comparable to the spider's thread." The drive passes through great wrought-iron gates; a quarter-mile beyond lies the sprawling manor with its stately towers. There, to the left, is the lake of white swans, the spacious park with the little deer that greet you with curious soft eyes; and the great Old World gardens and courts and fountains: an estate graciously befitting one of the wealthiest men in all England.

ON a gloomy, windy, roaring day in March, when monstrous black clouds were scudding across the somber sky—a day fitting for a villainous entrance—Dr. Rheinfrank made his appearance in High Moor Coombe. He had taken the old Marsden place, an old dark house with Elizabethan half-timbers situated at the far upper end of the main road. A low iron gate let into the grounds; the garden and hedges had run wild; the paths were overrun with nettles and dog's mercury. Three great yew trees brooded above the eaves, and bent low with a maternal benediction. The cries of the stone curlews echoed like the ghostly whimperings of the dead.

The first visitor to Dr. Rheinfrank in the Marsden house was Dr. Horatio Meadows, the village practitioner. Small and gray and rustic in manner, he was a simple man, kindly and sympathetic, and beloved by the country folk among whom he had lived and practiced for thirty-two years. Dr. Meadows, of all the villagers, felt it his duty to call upon Dr. Rheinfrank, partly from curiosity, principally to extend the hand of fellowship and welcome.

If Dr. Meadows had not come, Dr. Rheinfrank would eventually have sought him out, because this simple country doctor, who was trusted by all, was the keystone in Dr. Rheinfrank's pattern of evil.

Dr. Meadows opened the iron gate and approached the house. There were no lights in the windows; it was completely dark; it looked completely abandoned. He wondered if the strange new doctor was at home. He struck the knocker and waited.

The March evening wind was biting and gusty. It echoed dismally through the yews. The restless curlews flew about noisily among the higher branches. The whole atmosphere was one of brooding, savored of doom. . . . The door opened slowly, creaking a bit on its dry hinges.

At first Dr. Meadows saw no one. The door swung back halfway. Inside the house was darkness. It gave

"I shall make your little dog live again."

him an uncanny feeling. Then, almost imperceptibly, he distinguished the outline of a face, the way a pattern appears and grows on a photographic plate.

"Good evening," said Dr. Meadows. "Is this Dr. Rheinfrank?"

The face was sharp and foreign, the nose beaked; the eyes, peering out under their hoods, were bright and challenging.

"I hope I am not disturbing you. I am Doctor Meadows."

"*Ach!* Doctor Meadows, *ja, ja.* Won't you come in?"

The last glimmer of vanishing light eased in through the high windows of the sitting-room.

"Will you please sit down, Doctor Meadows. There is a large comfortable chair just behind you."

The two medicos sat facing each other. Dr. Meadows knew the house well, and its old furniture. It belonged to the elderly Marsden sisters. It had been rented on and off for years: neglect had lessened its value and kindled a feeling of haunt. Its smell was damp, musty; moths had eaten into the imitation tapestries on the walls; electricity had never been installed: there were the ancient oil lamps and tarnished candelabra.

"Isn't it very dark here?" said Dr. Meadows uncomfortably.

"*Ja.* But darkness is good for meditation. I sit in darkness always after the strain of the day."

"Well—" Dr. Meadows leaned forward with his hands on the arms of the chair. "I have come to extend you a welcome on behalf of the village, and on behalf of myself."

"That is indeed kind. I have met no one in the village. I am afraid that I am—well, not anti-social; perhaps shy; and then I have my exacting work—"

"That particularly interests me," said Dr. Meadows, his voice rising. "Do you find the facilities here for such experiments—"

"Experiments!" Dr. Rheinfrank rose. He paced in sudden protest and anger. "I have not wanted anyone here to know of my experiments—"

The smaller kindly man trembled nervously.

"Well, I mention this only because I read your very interesting treatise in *The Lancet.* The question of the dead—the revival of the dead—has always held a fascination for me. For years I studied—" He paused, apologetically. "But in the end I abandoned the idea as futile—as belonging to a realm of thought and power beyond the understanding of man."

Dr. Rheinfrank was pacing the room savagely. His agitated figure flitted back and forth in the darkness, which was now like night.

"Beyond the understanding of man!" he exclaimed. "Is that not a purely defeatist attitude? How could man progress with such a thesis? 'The works that I do ye shall do also.' Man has but to aspire, to realize the power that lies within him!"

In the silence that followed, Dr. Meadows shifted awkwardly. He sensed the fiber, the self-willed quality of this man. Finally he ventured: "Adrenalin?"

"No! A new hormonic compound—"

Dr. Meadows exhibited an inordinate curiosity.

The German ceased pacing; he paused and gazed straight at Dr. Meadows, and beat his breast.

"But it is my secret," he asserted impressively. Then: "Nothing is certain or positive as yet. In fact, it is merely in the experimental stage. You see, I have transformed the great west room into a laboratory. I labor there throughout the day, and the night I give over to reflection." He paused in the reflected glow from the marble overmantel. "One day I will have a statement for the people. Until then—there is nothing."

It was obvious that he wished to end the conversation.

But Dr. Meadows observed: "Aren't you terribly isolated and lonely here?"

"No. It is as I wish."

"You have no housekeeper?"

"No."

"But surely you can't trouble yourself with the house, and meals. If it would help you, I will find you a woman in the village, to clean—"

"No," repeated Dr. Rheinfrank, "it is as I wish." He struck a match and lighted an oil lamp on the console table. In the yellow glare Dr. Meadows saw that his face was marked by harsh lines, and deep inscrutable eyes. A swift glance around revealed the untidiness of the dust-laden room. The faded tapestries against brick walls, the discolored lambrequins, the worn stuffed chairs, a tall gilt mirror and scagliola pilasters. Suddenly from a dim corner there emanated a chill, rasping screech.

Dr. Meadows leaped to his feet.

"*Ach,* it is Lord Nelson—you see, it is my parrot."

Dr. Rheinfrank drew the parrot upon his hand, displayed him in his green-and-yellow splendor before Dr. Meadows. He talked to him, mincingly, in German, in endearing tones, and Lord Nelson chatted back; he stroked his brilliant feathers and fondled him in a kind of ecstasy. "I am not lonely in this old house with Lord Nelson. He is my comrade. *Ach,* he is such a good comrade!"

Dr. Meadows turned to go.

Then it was that Dr. Rheinfrank, quickened by a sudden thought, moved alertly between Dr. Meadows and the door, and lifted a hand to stay him. His question seemed an odd one.

"Explain to me," he said, "is there a typewriter in the village?"

"A typewriter?"

"One who types, for pay—one who can be trusted?"

"No. There is no one in High Coombe who does such work, I'm afraid."

"Wait! *Ja?*"

Whipping the parrot from his hand, so that the bird fluttered upon the mantel, Dr. Rheinfrank went hastily into the west room that he had designated as his laboratory, and briefly returned with a black leather portfolio. Opening it, he held forth a sheaf of manuscript meticulously hand-written in crowded characters.

"This is my monograph that I am preparing. It is history—it chronicles man's yearning to protract life, beginning from the first century; and I write here of the amazing supernatural attempts in the dark ages to give back life to the dead." His face clouded darkly with mockery and contempt. "The quacksalvers! The mountebanks!" he exclaimed. "*Lieber Gott*, what did they know? What truth?"

A few seconds of silence, while he thumbed through the pages of his script. He gazed steadily into Dr. Meadows' face, and read there that his visitor was impressed. "The English writing is not *gut*," he went on, now in a deprecating tone. "*Deutsch* idioms, awkward phrases, solecisms—someone must interpret in *gut* precise English."

"I see," said Dr. Meadows, urgently wishing to impress his hospitality. "D'you know, I believe that my portable typewriter is the only typewriter in the village. My daughter Cathy operates it. She keeps my accounts, does my letters, and types all records of my cases."

Dr. Rheinfrank's face lighted enthusiastically.

"*Ach*, to have such a daughter!" Then eagerly: "Would your daughter have the willingness—"

"I will talk to Cathy. It happens that she's well schooled in composition and syntax. I think she would be happy to be of service."

"Please—you will send your daughter? It would be very kind of you—very kind."

CATHY came.

In the morning Dr. Rheinfrank heard the tap of the knocker. When he opened the door, she stood on the threshold, curious and diffident. Behind her the sun had broken through the morning mist and was streaming into the doorway, a fitting accompaniment to this young girl of eighteen who smiled, cool and clear, and who radiated an aura of sovereign beauty. She was wearing a flowered yellow muslin dress with a light shawl thrown across her shoulders. Her honey-colored hair was done up in a knot high on her head. She carried in her hand the black case of her portable typewriter.

"*Ach*, Miss Cathy," exclaimed Dr. Rheinfrank, "come in, do come in!"

Cathy stepped in quietly with a feeling of awe for this foreigner who, as her father had explained to her, hoped to bring the dead back to life.

One quick glance about the room, and she saw how untidy everything was. Lord Nelson was on the floor strutting arrogantly before the fireplace. With a sudden whir of his wings he flew up to the mantel. From that cold marble perch he surveyed Cathy.

Dr. Rheinfrank surveyed Cathy too, his hooded eyes dilating as he looked at her searchingly. He was obviously pleased with the presence of this slim young girl with her lovely face and natural charm. "It was thoughtful of your father to send you to me." Then apologetically: "I am sorry—the house is very upset—I have not had time to put it in order."

"Please don't worry about the house," Cathy replied. "I will soon put it in order."

She placed the typewriter case on a table and waited. "Father said you had a manuscript to be prepared for the press. Now, where am I to work?"

"*Ja.*" He produced the thick sheaf of pages. "The writing is not *gut*—it will be difficult to understand—and will take time. Each word, each sentence, must be precise English. You can do it, *hein?*"

"I will do my best, Doctor Rheinfrank."

"There are *Deutsch* words—notes—very bad in places. If you do not understand you will ask me—"

"Thank you. Now do I work here?"

"*Nein.* Come, please—after me."

They passed into the service hall and up a flight of dark, narrow and uncarpeted stairs, and came to a gloomy master chamber. The furniture was ancient Adam; the great rug was worn and mothy, the divan frayed, the damask hangings forlornly faded; and the windows were thickly grimed and filmed from accumulated dirt, so that the natural light of day was mostly shut out.

Instantly Cathy, an extremely sensitive girl, reacted unhappily. Dr. Rheinfrank placed her typewriter on a low table, and shifted the table to the window.

"Holy saints," exclaimed Cathy, "I can't work here till I've cleaned the room up, and washed those windows. Have you a pair of steps?"

The German, suddenly embarrassed, said: "I think—in the back. Will you come? We will see."

HE led the way slowly down the stairs, through the dining-room, and out through gloomy, musty-smelling passages. Cathy followed him. For some reason which she could not immediately explain, she felt a sudden rush of fear. She was trembling. Stupid! she said to herself. But the feeling was alive and real. In her innocence there was nothing for her to suspect and be afraid of. Was it the house with its big shadowy emptiness, its shuttered gloom and macabre atmosphere? No. She had been through the old castles across the border in Scotland: at the scene of Rizzio's murder, and the Queen of Scots' tragedy; dark rooms, winding stairways, hidden doors and secret closets held no terrors for Cathy Meadows. Was it the stranger himself? Because he was a foreigner, alien? Or because his thinking was of the dead? Of the realm beyond this earth, of bodies and spirits, and the penetration of that last overwhelming mystery? She did not know. She could not reason. Perhaps, she thought, she should be grateful that the Doctor had selected this quiet, uneventful village for his great work, for all the world would surely know of High Moor Coombe, and she might play some small part in it. Thus reassuring herself, she heard his voice in kindly tones:

"Mind! There's a step here. Don't stumble."

"I can feel it," Cathy answered, "I won't fall." A door was suddenly opened onto a back veranda, and the sun struck down like an explosion of white light.

"*Ach, ja*, there are the steps! And the pail and cloths. You see, I have not explored the whole house. I have been too busy arranging my laboratory."

The door closed, and they were in semi-darkness again. Cathy, half-blinded by the glaring sunlight, groped her way along the hall, suddenly stumbled and fell on her knees. He placed the steps against the wall, and she felt his hands reach down and grip her like talons as he helped her to her feet. She shuddered under his touch. "Oh, I'm all right," she cried. "Don't touch me, please!"

When they reached the service hall, Dr. Rheinfrank pointed his long prehensile index finger toward the high double doors leading to his laboratory.

"Cathy, as long as you are in this house," he said gravely, "you must never enter that room. That is my laboratory. That is where I work in secret. That room

contains my records and experiments, and no one must enter it."

"Of course, Doctor Rheinfrank; I will never go near it."

She was soon clearing the windows, and the sunlight was dancing through.

As Dr. Rheinfrank watched her: "Cathy, what do you do in the village? I mean, what is your life?"

Cathy glanced at him quickly. "Oh, I've finished school. Father told you, didn't he? I keep his records and accounts; but mostly—"

"*Ja,* mostly—"

Then, with frankness and diffidence, she told him of her dream of becoming an artist.

"I paint flowers. I love flowers, and I try to make them live on canvas. But I'm afraid I'm not a very good artist —not yet, anyway. . . . David brings me flowers each time he comes from the manor—"

"Who is David?"

"David Adams. He's Sir Richard's landscape engineer. He laid out the great gardens two years ago. They are beautiful! One day David will be famous." Cathy's tremulous tribute betrayed her ardent emotions.

At mention of Sir Richard, Dr. Rheinfrank cocked his head slightly with curiosity. There was no trace of any unusual reflex as he asked, "Sir Richard? Who is Sir Richard? You see, Cathy, I am a stranger—"

"Oh, you'll soon hear of Sir Richard! He owns the Crofty mines. Everyone says he's one of the richest men in England. His estate—the manor and the gardens and the park—is glorious! There's not another place in Northumberland like it. We're all very proud of Alexandrinus, Doctor Rheinfrank."

"*Ja, ja,* I see. Very beautiful—and David is a fortunate young man—"

"Sir Richard is fortunate to have David to care for the gardens!" said Cathy spiritedly.

Dr. Rheinfrank smiled gently.

"I should like very much to see your paintings," he said. "I have always been interested in European art—"

"I should love to show them to you, but you must not judge them by Continental art. And please, you must not be too critical!"

"Do you want to run home and fetch them now? The typing can wait."

When Cathy returned with the portfolio she placed five paintings about the room for Dr. Rheinfrank's critical observation. She watched him breathlessly.

The German doctor studied them in silence for ten long minutes. He strode from one to another, examined them closely, then from a distance. Finally: "*Sehr gut,* Cathy—excellent!" he exclaimed. "You are a true artist. The spirit, the soul, your love of flowers, is there. It is only in technique that you fail. Perhaps so because you are very young. In a few years, who knows? You can become an impressive artist." Then with a kindly smile: "I would like to help you. I shall send to London for a full set of artist's materials. Would you like that? And you may use this upper room for a studio. You may paint in solitude, between periods of typing, while I carry on my researches. We shall not disturb each other."

Cathy's eyes misted with wonder. To be encouraged—to enjoy the criticism and sympathy of one who was familiar with the masterpieces of art!

"There is one thing I ask. When David Adams comes to see you, you will bring him here. I want very much to meet the young man whom you will marry."

"Doctor Rheinfrank!"

"But it is so, isn't it?"

"We haven't talked of marriage. We—well, we just like each other, that's all."

"That is enough. You will bring him to me?"

"Of course. I shall be very happy to."

David Adams was a ruggedly handsome young man, sturdy, forthright and likable.

Cathy, gay and exuberant, tripping through the rooms, introduced David to Dr. Rheinfrank, showed him her studio in the upper south chamber, and was happy over the huge basket of fresh spring flowers that David brought her to paint. There were wallflowers and daffodils, white may, blood-red poppies, violet-blue meadow-crane's-bill, and a milky cluster of moon-daisies. What a joyous holiday of painting she would have!

"Some day," said Dr. Rheinfrank, "I hope to see the gardens that you have laid out. I am familiar with the great formal gardens of Europe: the Pinzio in Rome, the Bois and the Tuileries, and the Alcazar in Seville. But none has the charm of an English old-world garden."

David, proud and enthusiastic, gave the German a brief description of the estate where he worked: of the lake and park, the ancient Roman sundial, the fountains, and the mystic maze running down to the border of the lake. Beyond the sunken gardens was a little hill— David got out a pencil and sheet of paper and drew a sketch. He quickly outlined the landscape's features. Here was the hill, behind the manor to the south: David had plans for the hill—he would transform it into hanging gardens and terraces. . . .

Dr. Rheinfrank took the sketch and studied it. He held it firmly in his hands as David was saying: "The roads are finely paved, and every morning when the weather is sunny, Miss Preece takes Robin into the park, where he rides over the estate on his pony, and plays with his toy boats at the edge of the lake."

"Miss Preece—"

"She is Robin's governess. She's a severe woman of forty-five. Poor Robin is constantly in her care, and she has a horrible British sense of duty."

Robin and Miss Preece—Robin playing with his boats at the lake's edge—the mystic maze skirting the waters of the lake. . . .

Dr. Rheinfrank listened attentively.

Chapter Five

Having sowed the seed, Dr. Rheinfrank was now ready for the curtain to rise on the first act of the High Moore Coombe drama. With his arrival in the village, it had quickly been whispered about in the shops, in the pubs and at chapel on Sunday, that this strange German doctor who had fled from Munich was experimenting with bringing the dead back to life. The effect upon the village folk was twofold: there were those, principally the religious ones, who heard the gossip with awe, and spoke in solemn tones, and mentioned "miracles" and "the raising of Lazarus." What had been done once upon earth could be done again, they said. Perhaps the Lord had chosen High Moor Coombe for the scene of these latter-day miracles—in which case the village had best rise to its sense of high responsibility.

But on the other hand there were, as always, the skeptics, those who openly scoffed and sneered: these were for the most part men and women who had never been known to attend chapel, the publicans and the racetrack touts and the hard drinkers. "Bloody nonsense," they called it; and instinctively, as men have done through the centuries, without knowing why, they were for stoning the foreigner and driving him from their village.

Then, a few days later, the villagers caught their first glimpse of Dr. Rheinfrank.

About noon he walked from the old Marsden house into High Street, which was the market street. He wore a long, heavy dark coat (for the day was wild and blustery), and a black Homburg hat. His hands were thrust

into his pockets. His figure was hunched over, and he walked slowly, deliberately, looking curiously at the shops. He walked alone down the middle of the road.

Whispers followed him. As he passed the greengrocer's shop, Henry Kite, Mr. Stacey's apprentice, saw him through the windows. "There he is!" he cried. "There's that Doctor Rheinfrank!" Instantly Mr. Stacey and the two maiden Wemyss sisters, who were engaged at that moment in buying leeks and Bar-le-duc currants, hurried to the windows. "So, that's *him!*" breathed Miss May Wemyss awedly. "Do you think he can really raise the dead?" Miss Dolly Wemyss asked Mr. Stacey; whereupon Mr. Stacey gave utterance to the remark: "God only knows, Miss Dolly; I know I can't."

Old Ron Tiddy, the hoary tobacconist, saw him at the moment that he handed a customer a packet of fags. "Lummydays!" he uttered. "Domme, it's that 'ere furriner come to take the old Marsden house fur his devil's work!"

But Mr. Teapot, the cobbler, and his wife looked upon the event with charity of heart in contrast to Mrs. Salt, the fishmonger's wife next door. Mrs. Salt's daughter Opal was down the road playing with a host of other children under the Randwick elms. As Dr. Rheinfrank approached the children on his way to the chemist's, stomping down the road in his odd Homburg hat, with the wind blowing out his coattails, Mrs. Salt rushed from her doorway and ran helter-skelter in the direction of the great elms. Dr. Rheinfrank had already reached the children. He stopped and smiled at them. They were a lovely group of merry youngsters, clustered about Ellen Teapot, who held a little brown dog in her arms; each of the children clamored to hold it and play with it. The childish voices piped: "I'm next!" "No, it's my turn!" "Ellen, can't I hold Tail Wind?" The little dog writhed and squirmed in Ellen's arms; his tongue protruded and his tail waggled; he barked and emitted joyous sounds under the mountain of adulation.

Mrs. Salt brushed sternly past Dr. Rheinfrank and seized Opal's arm.

"Come with me, Opal—come home!"

"But why, Mother? I want to hold Tail Wind—"

"I don't want you near this man. Remember that, Opal! Now come."

The children stared in astonishment. They stared at the strange German doctor, but they were not afraid.

"There's been no evil in this village—and we want none now!"

Opal, understanding nothing, burst into tears as her mother dragged her away.

Dr. Rheinfrank approached the children. They stared at him in silence.

"I am very sorry for your little friend," he said. "Of course she wanted to play with the dog. Tail Wind—it is a nice little dog." To Ellen, he said: "I wonder, would you let me hold it?"

Instantly, gladly, Ellen answered: "Of course. He won't bite you."

She placed the dog in Dr. Rheinfrank's arm. The German smiled, kindly. "Tail Wind," he said, "you nice little Tail Wind!" His right hand came out from his coat pocket, and he stroked its head, its soft belly, its active, flailing paws. The dog almost jumped out of Dr. Rheinfrank's arms. The children laughed gleefully. What fun it was watching the dog's antics! Dr. Rheinfrank, seemed greatly pleased and amused, too; the hard lines of his face softened; he was a picture of benevolence and gentility.

BENEVOLENCE and gentility—a smile and kindly words. Is it not always so with men of evil heart? Evil masquerading as good. What chance has evil parading as itself? Evil masquerading as good. . . . Suddenly the little dog gave a yelp under Dr. Rheinfrank's stroking hand. The doctor hastily withdrew his hand as Ellen reached for her pet. It was over in a second. Ellen pressed the dog lovingly against her face; the little tongue licked her cheek; the tiny tail quivered and whipped about in playful frenzy.

With a friendly wave of his hand Dr. Rheinfrank passed on toward the chemist's shop.

Within a few minutes Dr. Rheinfrank had made his purchases, some herbs and a balsam. Suddenly both he and Mr. Wilson, the chemist, heard a piercing cry—the desperate, heartbroken wail of a child. Both men went into the doorway and gazed out into the road. A hundred yards away, under the elms, they saw the children. Ellen, in the center of the group, was holding her dog in her arms, jumping up and down in the dust in an agony of spirit. Tears streamed down her cheeks. The other children milled about in a helpless vortex of poignant sympathy.

"It's the cobbler's girl, Ellen," said Mr. Wilson. "Something's happened to her dog."

The child's cries, ringing through the street, brought the parents hurrying to the elms. Mr. and Mrs. Teapot, Mrs. Salt, Henry Kite, Ron Tiddy and half a dozen mothers.

"Ellen! What's happened? What is it?" cried Mrs. Teapot.

The child's voice quavered in piercing heartbreak. She held forth the little dog for her mother to see.

"He's dead, Mother. . . . He just rolled over on the ground, and died—"

"But what happened?"

"Nothing. . . . He just rolled over—"

Mrs. Salt's voice shrilled.

"That German doctor touched him—he put a curse on him, he did!"

"No, he was very gentle with him," sobbed Ellen.

MR. WILSON arrived and examined the dog. It lay inert in his arms—dead.

"I can only think," said Mr. Wilson with pompous judgment, "that the excitement was too much for the little thing's heart. I could see that the play was quite violent."

"Children are so unconsciously cruel," clucked a woman on the outskirts of the crowd.

Ellen heard and cried, sobbingly: "I wasn't cruel! Were we, Joy? Were we, Freddy?"

Before the children could answer, suddenly there fell a startled silence on the group. The sobbing, the garrulous chatter and the bitter words of recrimination ceased. It was a silence as stark as though the earth at that moment had opened at their feet. Entering the circle and appearing in their midst, was Dr. Rheinfrank. His very presence was dramatic, standing there with the wind billowing out his greatcoat. Dramatic in the sense that he contrasted so violently to the immediate breed of villagers, like someone from a lost world; that he was the one they had whispered about, with his weird and secret manifestations; and that now, in horrible silence, staring around at them with his deep, piercing eyes—

The women shuddered from him and seized their children as Mrs. Salt had seized Opal.

"What has happened to your little pet?" asked Dr. Rheinfrank as he reached out and gently touched Ellen's pretty hair.

"He's dead!" cried Ellen inconsolably. "He's dead—he's dead! Look—"

Dr. Rheinfrank gazed upon the little dog in Mr. Wilson's arms. Amidst the silence, broken only by Ellen's sobbing, he reached out and took Tail Wind in his own arms.

"Too bad—they've killed it," said Mr. Wilson. "They didn't mean to."

Everyone in the crowd watched intently as Dr. Rheinfrank caressed the soft, lifeless, wobbly little body. He

turned again to Ellen; he said then what was to be repeated over and over in the village, with grave and stark significance, for countless days to come.

"I shall make your little dog live again."

Eyes stared, and lips parted. Not a word was spoken. Incredulity was writ on every face. There was the dog, so obviously dead. . . . And this man had said—

Only the child's poignant voice was heard: "Oh, please, will you? I loved him so! Please, will you make him live?"

"You shall see."

CLUTCHING the dog tenderly in his arms, Dr. Rheinfrank turned from the group and walked straight down the plane-bordered High Street toward the Marsden house.

Ellen, and the other children and their parents, followed him.

They came to the hedges and the dark overhanging yews and moved up the gravel path in a long crowding row like the Pied Piper leading his innocents.

Cathy and David met them as Dr. Rheinfrank opened the door and they thronged in. Cathy stared in amazement.

"Why, Doctor Rheinfrank, what's happened?"

"Ellen's dog is dead," explained Mrs. Teapot, "and the good doctor has promised to make him live again."

"Live again?" exclaimed David. "But that's ridiculous—"

Cathy quickly shushed him.

"Cathy, will you find seats for the children and for these good people," said Dr. Rheinfrank graciously. He turned without another word, and carrying the little brown body, opened the high double doors to his laboratory and disappeared inside.

Instantly there was a buzz of conversation, soft cathedral snatches of sound. David, who had come to see Cathy's latest paintings, was confused by this vortex of fervent hope and disbelief. Cathy had told him of the German doctor's work; but now, suddenly, to behold it in action—this was too much for the realistic-minded David.

Ellen's cries, the sharp gossip of the fishmonger's wife, and the Pied Piper parade down High Street had lured a number of other villagers from their cottages. Cathy saw old Ron Tiddy hobble in on his stick, and the fluttering Wemyss virgins, and excited Henry Kite. She tried to find seats for them all; but the children had to sit on the floor, grouped both sorrowfully and hopefully about Ellen; the others found places on the chairs and sofas. The last to enter was Mrs. Salt, who crept back with Opal, overcome by curiosity.

The voices died to infrequent whispers. The eyes were focused on the high oaken doors. What was going on behind those doors? Processes as divergent as the imaginations of man. Processes of medicine, of invocation; fragments of wild and inconsistent dreams, of incantation, of the witchery of Macbeth, of sorcery from the Middle Ages. . . . The whispers in the great gloomy room died to silence. Now there was heard only the hammer of a clock. Cathy had had David pour a trickle of oil in the machinery of the ponderous grandfather's clock in the entrance hall; now, after years of silence, the antique piece was pounding out the meaning of time. Each stroke synchronized with the pounding of hearts, waiting in suspense. It seemed like hours of waiting: it was but thirty muffled and choking minutes. The faces now were chalked with fear. Mrs. Teapot had edged closer to Ellen: she was ready to reach forth, grip her child and shield her from something nebulous and macabre. The peaked, sharp-nosed faces of the Wemyss sisters protruded like gargoyles. At one side of the room in the shadows David gripped Cathy's hand tightly. He could feel her trembling. He leaned close above her and whispered: "Not you too, darling! Oh, Cathy, don't be afraid! It's all so stupid—"

And at that moment in the heavy stillness there was heard a sound so electrifying that it froze the blood in one's veins. A sound which at any other time would have gone unnoticed in the symphony of earth's sounds. It came from the other side of the doors. It was the unmistakable playful bark of a little dog.

Ellen screamed. "Oh, Mamma! Oh, Mamma!"

Mrs. Teapot screeched a contagious cry. Old Ron Tiddy's stick clattered to the floor. The Wemyss girls gasped in frenzied chorus. David's hand fell away from Cathy's: she heard his throaty voice: "Good God, it isn't possible. It can't be—"

But it was possible. The doors swung inward, and standing outlined against the blazing sunlight of the far windows was Dr. Rheinfrank, now without his hat and coat, holding in his arms the squirming, barking, *live* little dog.

Ellen broke from her mother and rushed forward.

"Tail Wind! Oh, Tail Wind! Oh—"

She took the dog in her arms and crushed it against her face. It seemed dazed and quieted down, but Ellen felt its tongue brushing her cheek.

Mrs. Teapot made her way across the room.

"Doctor Rheinfrank!" she exclaimed, and stopped short. She had no thought of thanking him at the moment; her mind was beyond Ellen and the dog; she could think only of the miracle she had witnessed. "I'm a God-fearing woman, sir, but until this moment, all my life, I have never seen anything like this!"

In simple words Dr. Rheinfrank replied: "I am rewarded if I have made your little maid happy."

Ellen, with happy tears welling in her eyes, said feelingly, "Oh, thank you, Doctor Rheinfrank—thank you for Tail Wind." She bounded out of the door and her playmates followed her into the road.

"And now," said Dr. Rheinfrank humbly, "you will excuse me, please." Shy and retiring, he returned to the room that served as his laboratory. He closed the doors upon the speechless and frightened assemblage.

The news spread like wildfire, just as Dr. Rheinfrank intended that it should.

"BUT, Sir Richard, the story is true! It all happened exactly as I've told you."

"Bosh, David! Where's your common sense, man? No one since the days of the great miracles has done anything like that."

"But that German doctor did it! Cathy and I both saw it. The dog was dead. Mr. Wilson, the chemist, will tell you so."

"'The dog was dead.' Then the dog is still dead, and you've been taken in by some folderol."

"I thought so at first," answered David. "I doubted and sneered too, with the others. But what I've seen with my own eyes—I must believe."

David and Sir Richard Mollett were standing at the base of the little hill where David was shortly to begin landscape operations. Blueprints and sketches were stretched before them in the crisp spring sunlight; but it had been difficult for David to concentrate.

Sir Richard, the proud squire of Alexandrinus, was fifty. He was a stolid, brusque man, an industrialist of the Black Country. All Northumberland agreed that he was a hard man who had made his millions the hard way. But, paradoxically, he had been knighted for his benevolence: he had built and gifted the Midland Hospital to the county; he had contributed a hundred thousand pounds toward cancer research in London; for his mine workers he had established a generous Welfare Fund, the finest working conditions in the North; and he gave handsomely to their sporting clubs. Sir Richard had married late; his wife, a beautiful Shropshire woman,

had died in childbirth, leaving a son. Robin was the very heart of Sir Richard's affections, his very life.

"What the devil's the matter with you?" Sir Richard asked the shaken David.

The story of the cobbler's child and her dog had served only to rouse Sir Richard to scorn.

"If those fools in the village want to believe, let them!" This was the first time the word "fools" had been used to brand the believers: it would not be the last. "Haven't you a mind, David? Doesn't your mind reason that it couldn't be done?" *The works that I do, go ye and do likewise*—had long been forgotten. "Come now, David, shake off this silly business. I've only this half-hour and I want to see what you've created there on the charts—"

But Sir Richard would soon again hear of Dr. Rheinfrank; this time he would be shaken into belief.

Chapter Six

BEYOND THE SPRING-GREEN VALLEY, OVER AT THE Crofty, amidst the stark and sterile terrain, men were emerging from the Bitchburn Seam. Men fouled and begrimed, half-blinded from the darkness, crawling out of the earth's bowels. Coal-getters, hutchers, hewers, pitmen and the pony drivers, emerging into a world of lightning lashing downward through black ragged clouds that released clean, sweet rain.

A fellow named Fishlock, a pikeman, watched keenly a certain man trudging through the rain in front of him. He had seen the man before—several times, in fact; and each time he had been impressed by his huge hulking body, by his silence and his strange aloofness. He was a morose man, a hard worker, a coal-getter. The first time Fishlock noticed him, coming off the north gallery of the main drift, the rolley wayman had called his name —Storr. He'd sold him a pair of used boots for six bob. Storr paid the money, grunted his thanks—that was all. Now, as Fishlock followed him, he saw him roll up the thick collar of his coat to protect his throat from the rain. He plodded along the duck-board, past the gray shacks and the ammunition hut with its grim warning of DANGER. Soon he was in the road, with a hundred of his fellows, beating through the mud. Many of them were headed for the pubs with their beckoning bright lights and warmth. The "Ring o' Bells," or the "Engine," or Jock O'Larkey's "Coal Hole."

The second time Fishlock had spotted Storr had been in the Ring o' Bells, where he'd sat in an isolated corner till closing-time, a somber introvert hunched over his bitters. Now he was headed for the Ring o' Bells again.

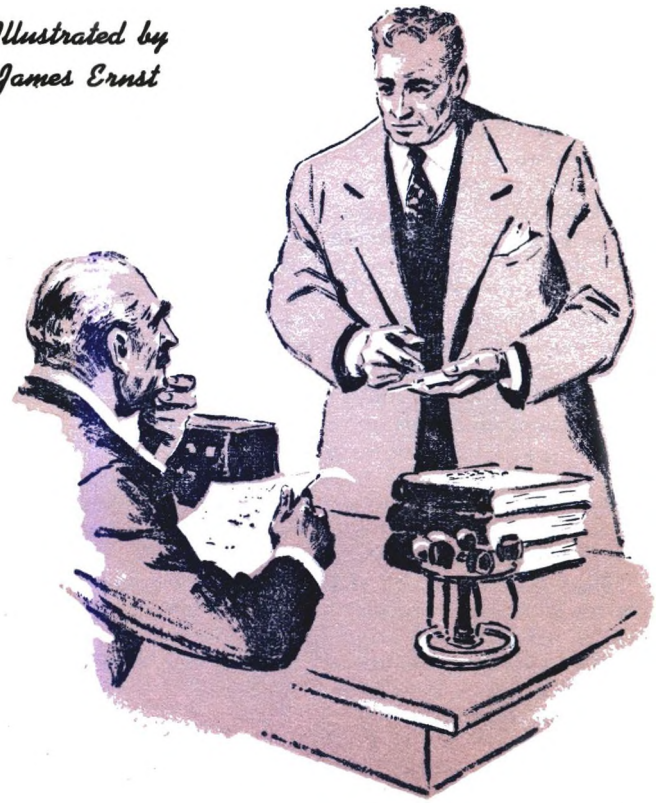
The pub was warm and dully lighted with smoking kerosene lamps. There was the heavy acrid odor of smoke and beer. Some miners were playing shove-ha'-penny; others were throwing darts. There was camaraderie and human warmth and humble pleasures that reached deep into simple hearts. Storr went in with a dozen others, and Fishlock followed.

Storr joined Jamie Ackroyd, the ridder, and Hugh Thomas, the shot-firer, and they ordered their bitters. The talk was loud and ribald. The men were high-spirited, like a pack of animals let out of pen.

Fishlock played darts. Storr noticed him, casually. He was tall and powerfully muscled, about six feet; his figure bulged in his heavy, dank pikeman's clothes; his face was dark and begrimed and covered with a week's growth of hair. When he shouted in the excitement of the game, his voice was accented with the North Country drawl.

He saw Storr go over and sit alone at the end of a long table. The poor fellow looked lonely, unnoticed and forsaken. He had only been at the mine for a short time, and he had made no friends.

Illustrated by James Ernst



"This needle is the key to Dr. Rheinfrank's 'miracle'."

Fishlock joined him. He ventured in a kindly way: "Have a game of darts?"

Storr shook his head moodily.

"You're a new man?"

"Yes."

"You live on the Row?"

"Number 19."

"Wife, family?"

Again Storr shook his head.

"I live at Number 31. My name's Fishlock. Why don't you come over one night and split a bottle with me. We could play cards, and I have a gramophone. Records are pretty old, but all the best ones. Marie Lloyd and Harry Lauder—"

"Thanks. I'll remember—"

Suddenly—what was that commotion at the end of the bar? Phil the drover had come in. He was over from High Moor Coombe. As he downed his ale, he told a queer story. For some reason the miners gathered around him jeered and heckled him.

Phil the drover was an uncouth fellow with a face like leather, seamed and crinkled from days in the sun. Fishlock and the coal-getter listened as Phil went on, loudly:

"Ye'll laugh, will ye? An' say I'm a crazy mon? I saw it with these own eyes, an' I'm saying only what I saw.... It was Ellen Teapot, the cobbler's girl, owned the dog. I heard her scream as I drove the herd down the High Street."

Jamie Ackroyd slapped his wet shoulders genially. "Have another one, Phil, and tell us the tale," said he.

Gulping a fresh drink, Phil repeated his story:

"D'ye ken her wee brown dog? It was dead, as dead as Old Tump's bones this hundred year. An' the lass a-crying like a banshee, an' Mrs. Teapot an' the chemist, an' a' the women a-crowding around.

"Then of a sudden, from nowhere, comes this Doctor Rheinfrank—he that can make the dead live again. He stood there before us a' like as a black scarecrow, an' reached out an' took the wee dog in his arms. 'Too bad, they've killed it,' said Mr. Wilson. Then Doctor Rheinfrank said: 'I shall make your little dog live again.'"

Above the guffaws and the brutal laughter, Phil waved his arms angrily for silence.

"Hear! hear!" bellowed the crowd. "Let him speak!" "Let him spin his silly tale!"

"It's no silly tale!" shouted Phil, madly fanning the air. "Half an hour, an' I see Ellen Teapot run from his house wi' the other childer, an' the wee dog in her arms, barkin' an' wrigglin' like a worm a-comin' up for the sun. That German doctor made the dog live!"

Voices, laughter, derision rang through the smoke-choked room. Phil revolted, snarling and wildly gesticulating. His croaking voice was lost in the flood of scorn and mockery. Hugh Thomas handed him another pint of ale for his old wives' tale. The men retreated to their darts and cards and shove-ha'penny. Over by the fire a caunchman raised his gravelly voice in song.

Fishlock, edging closer to Storr, heard the coal-getter mutter: "Brought the dog back to life—maybe."

Fishlock watched him sharply. Then he asked a question that brought Storr's head around with a jerk.

"Do you know this Doctor Rheinfrank?"

Storr stared, starkly, at the pikeman. Something was racing through his mind. "No—don't know." His voice grated. He shook his head, thrice.

Fishlock's eyes switched ahead, saw nothing. He lighted a gasper—casually.

"Think he can do it?"

"The drover said he did."

"How do we know the dog was dead?"

"Mr. Wilson, the chemist, said so."

"He could be mistaken. I don't think it can be done. I think it's a fraud."

"Why?" Storr shifted awkwardly. His voice lurched deeper, raven-harsh. "If a kindly old German doctor brings a dog back to life to make a little child happy, why is it a fraud? What had he to gain? It is kindness, benevolence. So—why should we condemn him?

"One day there may be an explosion, or a cave-in. The rolley wayman says every three years. The last explosion was marsh gas—that was three years ago. You might be killed. I might be killed. Who knows?"

His heavy grimed face contorted with dire conviction. It thrust, dark and almost threatening, close to Fishlock's.

"Fraud, you say. Fraud? All right, we're dead. What more can we lose? Maybe a chance. Maybe this German doctor— What'd the drover say his name was?"

"Doctor Rheinfrank," said Fishlock.

Storr nodded alertly, as if some cell in his brain had snapped loose.

"Rheinfrank." He repeated the name slowly. He gave the impression that he wanted to stamp it indelibly in his mind. "Rheinfrank." His big hand waved away the smoke vapors from Fishlock's gasper.

"Listen, Fishlock. They always sneer. But who can say that Dr. Rheinfrank cannot perform this miracle? *I believe.* If anything should happen to me tomorrow—and I am dead—I want my body taken to Doctor Rheinfrank by someone—" He broke off; he was silent for thirty seconds. "I have no friends. I have no family. There's no one to notify. But *someone* must—" His hand gripped Fishlock's right arm. "*You*—" Fear suddenly cut through him. "If an accident should happen—take my body to Doctor Rheinfrank. Beg him—implore him—to bring life to my flesh. I want to live again!"

Fishlock shrugged.

Storr's hold tightened. The fellow was trembling. "I am afraid of death," he said. "Will you remember?"

"Yes," said the pikeman, "I will remember."

THE explosion came on April the sixteenth, at eleven o'clock in the morning.

The concussion tore the bowels out of No. 4 North, opening off the main drift. The reverberation ripped along the level from the valley side. A blanket of white snarling flame, integrated with coils of black smoke, choked the tunnel. Deadly marsh gas again.

Half an hour before the explosion, a miner was snubbing the undercut coal preparatory to drilling shot-holes. Hugh Thomas, the shot-firer, attached the wires to the charge at the working face; he'd then gone to the heading to set off the charge, but the roar of the upheaval and the burst of rolling fire stopped him with his hand on the lever.

Fortunately the men were not at work in No. 4 that morning. But with the first tokens of danger, they had flattened on the ground in the Red Ash seam. Like snakes they crawled on their bellies toward the Clutch and the ventilation shaft. They reached the pit-head and safety—all but one man. The missing man was Storr.

By now a hundred women—wives and sisters and daughters of the men—had rushed to the pit-head. There was hysteria, then prayers of relief.

The explosion had come in one searing burst. The flames died down quickly.

FISHLOCK rushed among the men. Where was Storr, where was his friend? he cried. He got hold of Jamie Ackroyd and Hugh Thomas. He said desperately: "We can't wait for the superintendent—we've got to go in there and find Storr and get him out!"

"He won't be alive," said Jamie Ackroyd dismally.

Fishlock urged the men, faces down, along the main drift. Billowing waves of smoke floated above them. Their lanterns, in the utter darkness, searched out the scorched buttresses.

The air was clearing in No. 4 North. As they penetrated the seam Fishlock shouted: "Storr! Oh, Storr! Are you there?" Only his voice bounced back, quavering along the galleries.

Beyond the fissure they came upon the cave-in.

The working face was rubble—masses of the black rock had ripped apart and blocked further entrance.

There, at the edge of the black mound, they found Storr.

His legs and torso up to his chest were covered by the coal. In the light of the lanterns he appeared to be dead.

"What in hell was he doing beyond the fissure?" Jamie Ackroyd asked, puzzled.

Fishlock paid no attention, but knocked away the coal and knelt close beside the prostrate man. He examined his body, his arms, his heart; he sifted the coal with his hands; he seemed to be searching for something. After several minutes, "Dead," he pronounced.

Hugh Thomas said: "Come, we'd better get him out. If we can get a pulmotor—"

"He's dead," repeated Fishlock. "A pulmotor will do no good. Come, help me carry him."

The men lifted the heavy body.

But they did not move at once. Fishlock, with Storr's feet locked in his right arm, swung his lantern about with his left hand—surveyed the mass of coal, the far walls on either side, with their thousands of ledges and crannies, and paused, concentrating keenly. Behind his eyes was sharp, razor-edged speculation—

"Hurry!" exclaimed Hugh Thomas. "Why will you no come?"

They began the slow, tragic trek toward the pit-head.

Fishlock said: "This man was my friend. One night he asked me something that was the most important thing in his life. He had heard of Doctor Rheinfrank over at High Coombe. He honestly believed that that German doctor could raise a man from the dead. He asked, if ever an accident overtook him, that I take his body immediately—"

"Rot!" snarled Jamie Ackroyd. "He listened to Phil the drover's tale."

"Is it for us to judge?"

"Bloody nonsense!" put in Hugh Thomas.

"But I shall do as he asked," exclaimed Fishlock determinedly. "A man has a right to his body even after death. They put it in wills. His last request to me was his will. . . . Move along now—quickly! Before the coroner can stop us. Jamie, is there a cart?"

"Aye. There's a cart by the ammunition hut—"

"And a tarpaulin, Hugh? Where is there a tarpaulin?"

"The rolley wayman will have one."

"Good! Then we'll cover him with it and get him across the valley quickly. And if he lives again, he'll thank us all from his heart for being his true friends and doing this swiftly."

The strange cortège entered the village at the northern end and passed slowly along the High Street toward the Marsden house: A ramshackle cart, crude and befouled with coal-dust and with big creaking wheels, with something in it covered by a tarpaulin, pulled and pushed by a dozen sweating miners under the clear, warm April blue. Fishlock in the lead, flanked by Jamie Ackroyd and Hugh Thomas, and some hewers and pitmen and ridders from the Crofty.

The news of the explosion had winged across the valley via the telephone: One man dead. . . . The miners were taking him to Dr. Rheinfrank, the message said.

The village street was soon crowded. An excited, whispering throng of men and women from the shops and cottages poured along under the great old trees. Stifled emotions, shock and awe held them in leash. At the windows appeared gaunt faces, like foxes, sharp, staring with burning eyes. They focused on the heap under the tarpaulin.

FROM his high living-room window Dr. Rheinfrank saw the cortège reach the hedge before the house and stop.

Cathy exclaimed: "Look! They've something in the cart—"

Very deliberately, Dr. Rheinfrank answered. "*Ja*, the miner who was killed this morning at the Crofty. His comrades are bringing him to me, thinking I can endow him with life." Then sharply, half-angrily: "The fools! Why do they come here? Why do they break in upon my solitude?"

"But"—Cathy's face mirrored an intense poignancy—"if you only *could* help them, Doctor Rheinfrank! If you could—"

"No!" The impact of the German's voice was terrifying. "This is a case for your father. Run home, Cathy—quickly! Ask your father to come here at once."

The deep boom of the knocker reverberated through the room.

Cathy opened the door.

Fishlock stood, cap in hand, on the threshold.

"Is Doctor Rheinfrank at home?"

Cathy slipped away, running lithely through the crowd.

Dr. Rheinfrank saw before him a miner, a tall, bowed, gaunt fellow in his shapeless, bulging pikeman's clothes; his face was begrimed with smoke and coal-dust, and the sweat had cut tiny rivers down his cheeks. A miner, a clod, a nondescript who had come from deep out of the earth.

The poor wretch, now surrounded by his equally lowly fellows, spoke. His words burst forth in crude, pitiful, broken cadences. The dead man in the cart was Storr, his friend; he had been killed in the cave-in. He had said, many days ago, that if death ever came to him, he wanted to be taken to Dr. Rheinfrank. He had faith; he believed that man could be restored to life—

As Dr. Rheinfrank listened, his face contorted, almost bursting red. The veins in his neck swelled like ropes. His lips twitched vehemently, repeating the syllables and phrases. Then amidst the awful silence, while the men waited, his voice burst like an explosion.

"No! I cannot help you! Go away! Go away—all of you!"

A horrified gasp rose from the awe-stricken crowd.

"Can a man have no peace?" implored Dr. Rheinfrank quaveringly. "This is my home, my castle, and you invade my utmost privacy." His voice shook in agitation. It caused a wave of humiliation that silenced the people.

Then suddenly, feeling that he had hurt them, his voice softened.

"I am sorry that I cannot help you," he said. "I am sorry that your comrade is dead. But I have never experimented upon a human body—I am not prepared to go that far."

Fishlock was not to be frustrated. He held a great hope.

Dr. Rheinfrank waved him aside as Dr. Meadows, accompanied by Cathy and David Adams, hurried up the gravel path. In a few terse words Dr. Rheinfrank revealed the situation. He gestured to the miners to bring their comrade in.

Fishlock and the others bore him in, covered by the tarpaulin. In silence Dr. Meadows applied his stethoscope to the man's heart, tested his pulse, drew back his eyelids. Without hesitation he pronounced: "This man is dead."

The big room was crowded now, as it had been on that former occasion when the good doctor had resurrected Ellen's little dog. Faces peered down at the dead man. He lay on his left side, his head back; his mouth was not closed, and his teeth projected.

Fishlock's voice shattered the stillness. "In God's name," he implored, "while there is yet time, save him, help him! You alone in the world have this great power—"

Dr. Rheinfrank gazed in the faces. The miner's desperate plea was writ on every countenance. These were humble, helpless people, the lowly of the earth. The stark pause ended as he said abruptly: "I will do what I can."

Cathy and Dr. Meadows felt the great relief, the poignant, bleeding hope that filled the room.

The three friends of the dead man carried his body into the secret west room. A moment later they returned and joined the silent, waiting throng.

Then Dr. Rheinfrank closed and locked the doors, and was alone with the dead miner.

Chapter Seven

CATHY, WAITING BREATHLESSLY BY THE HIGH north window, saw the priest coming. The living-room was thronged with the miners from the Crofty and the villagers who crowded in; and outside, in the garden, along the gravel walk, and surrounding the hedge, were more than a hundred others. Their whisperings, born of startled imaginings, were uncanny to hear. Inside the house was the dead man, the miner Storr, borne in the cart by his fellows; would the strange Dr. Rheinfrank succeed in raising him from the dead? It was sacrilege—witchery! . . . Now comes the priest: he will righteously condemn this show of impiety and profanation.

Father O'Dala was a young priest. He had been ardently conscientious for the good of the few Catholics in the parish and among the miners. But he was stubbornly opinionated, self-assertive, and unyielding in his faith. This audacity of Dr. Rheinfrank's hinged on religion; hence, he felt, it became the priest's business, and he was a crusader about the priest's business. The dead man may have been a Catholic: Father O'Dala was ready to bestow absolution.

The crowd made way for him as he left the road and strode magnificently along the path toward the house. He was a fiery, purposeful figure in his flowing black

cassock. He burst into the living-room like the passionate leader of a deputation out of the Middle Ages. Whispers ceased. He paused, glanced around with deliberation. He saw Dr. Meadows standing beside Cathy and David Adams, and crossed to him.

"Where is Doctor Rheinfrank?" he demanded.

"He is in his study," replied Dr. Meadows.

"Where is the dead miner?"

Dr. Meadows indicated the locked doors.

The priest moved boldly up to the doors. He knocked, gently. There was no response. He knocked again, this time with impatience. Seconds passed, and then he repeated the knock, now with a vibration of command.

The priest grew angry and turned away. He paced the floor; his thin lips tightened, and his face paled. He was engaged in God's work, and he had been challenged. He continued to walk up and down the room, with his head bowed and his long thin fingers lacing and unlacing. He was oblivious to all about him: his face was tense and set: words trembled on his lips: *"Ego te absolvo in nomine Patris."*. . . He made the sign of the cross.

David whispered, "I'm going, Cathy."

"No, David, don't leave us—"

"I must go to Sir Richard at once. He will know about the explosion, but he *must* know about this."

"Do you think that Doctor Rheinfrank will make him live?"

"I don't know. It's uncanny. I feel very queer about it. Those locked doors, the angry priest, the emotional thoughts of these people. Can you feel them? I'll come back soon, Cathy."

He squeezed her hand, rose quietly and made his way out of the room.

Meanwhile other forces of anger and indignation were converging on the Marsden house.

The superintendent of the Crofty had arrived at the pit-head minutes too late to circumvent the departure of the cortège. He reasoned that he was in no way responsible for what had happened, and yet he knew that he would be called to account for permitting the removal of the body. He was acutely conscious of Sir Richard's orders in case of accidents.

His first act, before notifying Sir Richard, was to call up the Northumberland Constabulary. He got a constable on the other end, and asked for Sergeant Rudder.

"Hallo, Rudder! Owlpen here at the Crofty. I say, we've had a spot of trouble. Explosion and cave-in—lucky, only one man killed. New man named Storr. What the hell he was doing beyond the fissure I don't know. But some friends of his have taken him in a cart to High Coombe to that crazy German doctor over there. Have you heard of him? Bloke named Rheinfrank. Well, they think he can bring him back . . . Hallo! When the Guv'nor hears . . . Right! Wish you'd get right over there, Rudder. I'll get onto the coroner and tell him."

The coroner, Mr. Herbert Lear, whose jurisdiction extended to five or six communities in the county, listened as Superintendent Owlpen related how uncontrolled forces were usurping his duties. Mr. Lear was short, squat, monkey-faced and bald, with an Old Bill mustache; like many midgets, he was pompous and explosive.

"Why, the bloody vandals, cartin' a corpse around like that! The law distinctly says no one must touch the body till the police arrive—and then *I* take charge. Look here, Owlpen, I'll git m'self right over to the Marsden place. Thanks for notifyin' me."

ALEXANDRINUS lay serene and proud under the dripping of the yellow April sun.

The ancient manor rested like a gem in its lovely setting. Vast acres of grass were freshened by the spring rain; the elms, oaks and mighty beeches paraded their new-green leaves in conscious majesty; and the great gardens were already a sea of blue, yellow, red and white. The deer which Sir Richard had recently added to the estate wandered through the trees; they were beautifully tame, and accepted the presence of man and the appearance of the long black engines of man rolling up from the iron gates to the porte-cochère.

Robin, laughing and carefree, was making his pony perform before Sir Richard near the mystic maze at the lake's edge—the lake, cobalt blue and graced by five sailing white swans.

Robin, who was six, was a manly, unspoiled little tyke. Dressed in his blue playsuit, he carried himself with something of the aristocratic bearing of "The Blue Boy." His hair was soft brown and thickly curly and defied combing. His chin was attractively cleft, and his frequent laughter overwhelmed you with natural charm.

"See, Father!" cried Robin. "Jackie will bow before you. Come, Jackie, bow to Sir Richard." The pony stood still, eying his young master. "Jackie! Come and bow." Still the pony did not move.

Sir Richard chuckled in amusement. "Can't say you're much of a ringmaster, Robin."

"Oh, he'll do it. . . . Jackie! Come here! No bow—no sugar."

The pony jerked his head up at the magic word, as if a button had been pressed. He pranced over to where Robin stood beside Sir Richard. Then, taking his stance before Sir Richard, he bent down on one knee and lowered his head in obeisance.

Robin threw out his hands triumphantly, and Sir Richard applauded loudly.

The pony promptly rose and rushed at Robin, eagerly sniffing his pocket. Robin tossed out the sugar, and he pranced aside and chewed the rewarding sweet.

Robin called: "Now, Jackie, the Irish jig!"

But the jig was not danced, for Sir Richard, glancing up along the esplanade, saw his secretary, Mr. Tewks, hastily approaching from the manor.

"I'm afraid there is bad news at the mine, sir. Mr. Owlpen just rang through. There's been an explosion and cave-in, and one man has been killed."

With instant decision, Sir Richard gave an order for his chauffeur to have the Daimler ready in five minutes.

"Good-by, Robin. You stay with Miss Preece, and we'll have Jackie dance his jig later."

He set out rapidly for the manor, but was stopped, surprisingly, by David Adams racing up from the gates.

"Beg pardon, sir, but something has happened—"

"I know, David. I'm just going to the mine."

"It isn't that, sir. They've taken the dead man to Doctor Rheinfrank—"

"Who's taken him to Doctor Rheinfrank?"

"A man named Fishlock and some others. The whole village has crowded into the Marsden house. They're waiting—"

David paused abruptly. He saw the anger flush Sir Richard's face.

"What the hell right had they to take him to that fraud?"

"Well, they did. And the German doctor is working on him now. I know how terribly concerned you are about your men, sir. I thought you ought to know."

David accompanied Sir Richard toward the porte-cochère, where a long black limousine rolled into view.

"Yes—yes. Look here, David, you'd better come with me. I want to know everything that's happened."

THERE was a swift, bright flash of the hypodermic needle in Dr. Rheinfrank's hand, and a second later his thumb pressed down the tiny piston.

A minute passed, two, three . . .

Nothing must fail now—nothing! Dr. Rheinfrank had no reason to question his complete success. Up to this hour his plans and acts had materialized with consum-

mate craft: first the rabbit, then the experiment with the streetwalker, then again the lesser trial with Ellen Teapot's dog, and now the major and vital link in his progressive march toward fortune.

Slowly, as he automatically replaced the empty hypo in its morocco case, his eyes fixed the prostrate form of the miner. With the anxiety of a physician fighting to prolong ebbing life, so Dr. Rheinfrank with a quiet, controlled tenseness, awaited the first sign of life. He opened the man's shirt and placed his stethoscope over his heart. In his left hand he held his watch. Four minutes. . . . In another sixty seconds—

If the huge body did not respond—if the heart failed to react to the compound? But Dr. Rheinfrank had guarded against all possible contingencies. He had instructed Dr. Usk in the precise amount and administering of the powerful agent: only blundering or stupidity could affect the foreordained result. In reality, secretly, Dr. Rheinfrank was not concerned with the man's life. If he died—if in reality he was already dead, through some misjudgment—it was not likely that an autopsy would be performed in the case of this unknown. The men had found him "dead" in the gallery; and Dr. Meadows had clearly defined his verdict. No, it was not this man's life at this critical moment that taxed Dr. Rheinfrank's nerves; it was his life as a cog in the sinister mechanism he was creating that so vitally concerned him.

The body lay upon the couch, on its back. The head jutted back; the mouth was partly open, and the teeth protruded. The face was drained of blood; in the brief time since the explosion, the cheeks had hollowed. The living warmth had left the flesh. The hands had clenched and had stiffened. Death. . . .

Dr. Rheinfrank stood like a column of granite beside the body. He knew that life must stir, that in the next hundred palpitating seconds— There it was, the first pulsing beat! Faint, almost imperceptible. Instantly he removed the stethoscope and turned away. He glanced at his watch It had taken six minutes and fifty-three seconds. Deliberately, he crossed to a cabinet, poured a stiff brandy into a glass and carried the glass to a table beside the couch. He sat on the edge of the couch and fixed his gaze on the body. The heart was functioning again; blood was coursing through the veins; warmth returning. The eyelids fluttered. They seemed struggling to open. The sensual lips quivered. The right hand was slowly relaxing.

An unctuous smile broke on Dr. Rheinfrank's lips. Of course it would be this way. Every step in the pattern would be this way. He had but to assume the mask of good. This humble unknown had been brought to him to save: he had been reluctant to experiment, but under pitiful pressure, had consented; and now he had succeeded. Could the world condemn him for that?

Presently he leaned forward and said in a low voice: "Usk! Usk, can you hear me?"

If Usk heard, he gave no intimation. His body was responding rapidly to the heart action. His eyes had now opened, and he gazed upward, dully; he succeeded in thrusting his body slightly on his left side; one hand, his right, lifted slowly to his face and brushed across his parched and parted lips.

Dr. Rheinfrank gave him the brandy.

"Usk! Look at me. Can you hear?"

A moment later the fellow forced himself to a sitting position. One word came from his lips: deep, painful, guttural:

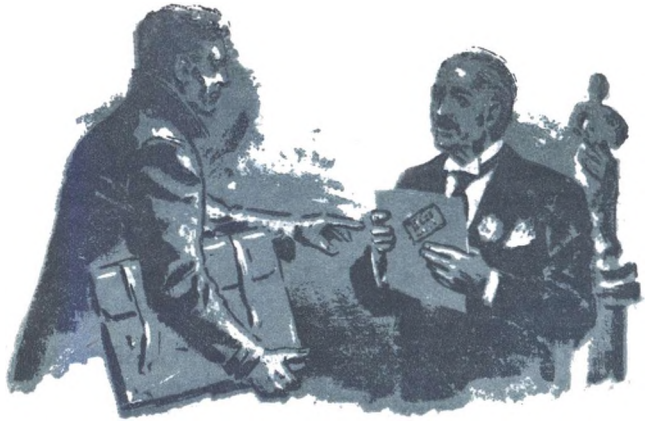
"*Gott!*"

Dr. Rheinfrank tried to get him to drink the rest of the brandy.

"You are feeling *gut?*"

"*Nicht gut.*"

"A few minutes—and your strength will come back."



Sir Richard exclaimed: "But that is Storr!"

There was one vital question tormenting Dr. Rheinfrank's mind. There could be the one fatal slip if—

He asked: "What did you do with the needle?"

Dr. Usk's hand tightened over his forehead. He stared, sluggish, insensate.

"Do you hear me? Where is the needle?"

When Usk did not answer, Dr. Rheinfrank gripped his shoulders, brought his face close; his voice vibrated with tenseness.

"That needle, Usk! Is it safe? Where?"

Words filtered brokenly from Usk's parched throat.

"*Ja*—safe—deep crevice behind the ledge—deep."

Dr. Rheinfrank turned away and moved across to where Lord Nelson was preening his brilliant feathers on the top of the cabinet. His mind was turbulent with speculation. "Deep crevice behind the ledge—" *Before* the explosion, or *after?* If *before*, the cave-in might have shattered the ledge, the working face would be torn away; and the needle—

It was at this moment that there came a startling knock on the doors. It was the *second* time that the priest, impatient and resolute, tried to arouse Dr. Rheinfrank within. The German faced the doors, but did not go near them. He had taken the precaution to lock them against any violent act by that emotional, dangerous crowd outside.

As he glanced now through the curtains at the windows, he perceived that the front walk and the garden, and the piece of road before the hedges, was thronged with villagers. There was an atmosphere of tenseness surrounding the house; it was terrible in its mental impact.

Dr. Rheinfrank brushed aside one of the curtains. "Usk!" he called. "Do you see? They are waiting for you. They are morbidly hungry for the story of your 'life after death.' "

With a sardonic grin he dropped the curtain and returned to the couch.

Usk moved freely now: he glanced about the room, observed the parrot, the glass cases of instruments, the confused, revolving blur of medical paraphernalia. He saw Dr. Rheinfrank bending over him.

"Who is this fellow Fishlock?"

"He is my friend, Manfred."

"What does he know?"

"Nothing."

"Fishlock brought you here."

"I begged him to, in case—"

"Are you certain he has no suspicion?"

"*Nichts.*"

He sought to whip Usk's brain into acuteness.

"Do you remember all the things you are to do?"

"*Ja.*"

"The hate—the attack—the escape?"

"Ja."

"Stand up!"

Usk staggered up from the couch.

"Achtung!"

He came to attention, eyes directly ahead.

"Walk over to Lord Nelson."

He strode across the room, stiffly. He swayed for a second or two, checked himself violently, reached the parrot on the cabinet, faced about and returned.

"Gut!"

There was a pause, while Lord Nelson flew down to the floor and circled about, chattering gibberish.

"What is *gut*, Manfred?"

Dr. Rheinfrank wheeled and saw the look of challenge in Usk's face. The docility and compliance of the giant had suddenly vanished. He stood there, towering, shaken, his great arms swaying menacingly.

Startled, Dr. Rheinfrank said assuagingly, "That you are alive and well—that the reagent—"

"That I am alive!" returned Usk hoarsely. "*Ja*, I am alive—but it is *I* who take the risk—*I* who play with death. While you remain safe and fish for a fortune—"

Usk's outcry and sudden revolt at this moment of crisis threatened havoc. Dr. Rheinfrank, concentrating his superior mental prowess, sought to subdue his partner.

"Usk, are you mad? Do you want to ruin the plan? Do you want to walk out there, and confess, and go to prison? The money we will divide. It was all understood—"

"What is understood?"

"That you and I—as partners—"

"Partners! Partners are open with each other. There are no secrets. Where will the money come from? In London I ask you. You answered: 'Does not the Bible say there is a time and place for everything?' *Now* is the time, Manfred! Am I a *Dummkopf? Now* you will tell me—"

Seconds of silence, pregnant with suspicion and latent hate. Finally, obdurately, Dr. Rheinfrank replied. "No—now is not the time."

Usk flared; his eyes narrowed, and his hands tightened like hammers.

From the other side of the locked door came voices, ill-tempered and sinister, rumbling like the sea under storm.

"Manfred, in London you looted the offices, you betrayed me, you prepared to flee—"

Fiercely, Dr. Rheinfrank interjected: "Fool, Usk! Do you hear them, the priest, the coroner, the police—waiting for your corpse, thinking you dead? And you choose this moment to resurrect the past!" He moved purposefully in the direction of the door.

"Manfred, before you unlock that door—" The voice carried the timbre of murder, of death. Dr. Rheinfrank halted instantly, his hooded eyes bright with defiance.

"Don't make a last mistake, Manfred. Don't cross me again."

DEEP silent seconds. Then Dr. Rheinfrank turned abruptly and faced the doors. For at that moment a burst of angry shouts broke the silence from the other side. Voices raised in condemnation, violent protests, clamorous threats; and weaving through the clamor like a *leitmotif*, the impassioned importunings of the priest.

This went on for a full minute, and was followed by a great pounding on the door.

Directing Dr. Usk to one side with the command, "Wait!" Dr. Rheinfrank went up to the doors, unlocked them, and passed into the living-room to face the excited assemblage. He closed the doors tightly and stood with his back to them, as though on guard.

Confronting him directly was Sergeant Rudder of the Constabulary, a tall, sharp-eyed man breathing authority. To his left was the dark-robed priest; flanking him on the right was Sir Richard Mollett, so eminently the village squire; and seeking to impose his somewhat overshadowed personality was the coroner, Mr. Lear, red-faced and bristling. Beyond this regimentation of authority were faces, foxlike and startled, gaunt and eager—crowded against the walls and into the open front doorway.

An involuntary gasp went up as Dr. Rheinfrank appeared suddenly before them.

The German doctor felt instantly the impact of emotion, the surcharge of hate, bigotry, religious hope, faith, doubt, outraged authority and bewilderment.

It was the pompous Mr. Lear who felt it incumbent upon himself to exclaim with brittle firmness, "Do you realize, sir, that you have broken the law?"

"Half a mo', Lear," broke in Sergeant Rudder. "I'll handle this. I'm Sergeant Rudder, Northumberland Constabulary. Are you Doctor Manfred Rheinfrank?" Dr. Rheinfrank nodded. "Don't you know that it is the duty of the coroner to take charge in cases of death?"

BEFORE Dr. Rheinfrank could defend himself, the miner Fishlock spoke up.

"I brought Storr here," he said. "We were his friends. He had asked that his body—in case of accident—"

Sir Richard turned angrily on the pikeman.

"You must know that we do everything possible to protect the men; but cases of death are for the coroner. It was a willful, lawless act, bringing him here!"

"It was sacrilege in the sight of God!" proclaimed the young priest, and his voice resounded rich and metallic through the room.

"I am here," said Sergeant Rudder, "to demand Storr's body in the name of the law."

Dr. Rheinfrank remained poised and calm under this attack.

"I did not ask them to bring the man's body here," he answered. "I did not want to experiment with him—but this man Fishlock and his friends insisted."

Sir Richard, with more dignity than the others, but with acid condemnation, fixed Dr. Rheinfrank.

"Experiment!" he said. "Who are you to claim the power of life or death over a human being? Such power has not been known in the world for twenty centuries."

Dr. Rheinfrank's face tensed; his body grew taut; the savage lines tightened about his mouth viciously; and his eyes narrowed to slits and hooded bitterly.

"Who are you to challenge my experiments?" he exclaimed. "Who are you to say that it is eternally beyond the power of man to have dominion over death—or even to create life? . . . A humble, unknown miner dies. His comrades bring his body to me, praying that he be restored to life. The law, the church, the patrician come to scoff and damn!" He flung out his arms in a violent gesture. "Go away, all of you!" he cried. "This house is mine. Get out!"

Sir Richard, with quiet authority, touched the Constabulary officer's arm.

"Sergeant Rudder, I think you know your duty regarding this charlatan."

Sergeant Rudder strode forward to open the doors.

"Charlatan?" cried Dr. Rheinfrank. "Charlatan!" His eyes, stark and somber, steadied, level with Sir Richard's.

At that instant one of the women who had been looking toward the doorway screamed and swooned.

Swiftly every eye was fixed on the doorway. The doors behind Dr. Rheinfrank had opened. Standing there like a statue, like the specter of Death itself, horrible and hollow-eyed, staring at them all from out those sunken sockets, was the "dead" man Storr, returned to life.

A sudden chill swept the room. Every voice was stilled in horror. No one moved; they just stared, transfixed.

The man's hands were outstretched against the doorjambs, as though to support himself. His head hung forward on his chest; his tangled dark hair was matted over his forehead. But it was his eyes that riveted and

held you as he gazed as from another world, deep-riven with tragedy.

The men and women shuddered away from him. Some edged through the front doorway, out into the sunlight. Sir Richard, the priest, and Sergeant Rudder drew back in stunned amazement. Cathy, frightened and trembling, took hold of David's arm and held him close. Dr. Meadows' face was gray with anxiety.

Dr. Rheinfrank alone was unafraid. He reached out to feel the man's heartbeat – when suddenly the miner raised his powerful hairy arms and struck him back against the wall. The act was violent, and it seemed to break the spell in the room. There were gasps and cries, and many rushed for the door. Sergeant Rudder reached for the miner's arm, but was hurled brutally back. Then he turned again upon Dr. Rheinfrank; sounds came from his lips, guttural, animal sounds, and with awful malediction he cried out: "Why did you bring me back?"

Fishlock broke through the group and tried to quiet him. "Storr! This man has saved you—"

But with welling fury the "saved" man gazed into Dr. Rheinfrank's eyes. Hate, rebellion, flared within him, and again he cried as in agony: "Why did you bring me back?" Then like a wounded animal he thrust forward through the crowd and made for the open door. No one moved; no one dared to stop him. He burst from the house, rushed into the sunlight, and with long, swift strides gained the High Street and vanished distantly behind the mass of elms and limes.

After a minute Dr. Rheinfrank hurried from the house.

Chapter Eight

THE THING THAT HAD HAPPENED IN HIGH MOOR Coombe could not be confined. The impact of Dr. Rheinfrank's miracle winged its way swiftly through the villages, to the neighboring towns, and across the countryside to the cities. Liverpool, Manchester, London, were aroused and stupefied. It seemed impossible, at first, to accept the news. Curiously, the keenest interest in the event, and a hungry demand for the most intimate details, came from Canada and America. New York, Boston, Chicago, Toronto received it somewhat as a sensation, much as those cities would receive a declaration of war, or sudden news of enemy surrender. . . .

A dead man had been resurrected to life—a dead man had been made to live again. The multitudes, reading the brief flashes and listening to the radio commentators, were shocked, amazed and incredulous. There were hospitals from coast to coast overcrowded with untold thousands who were waiting to die. Everyone knew someone who was going to die soon. What now was the meaning of this momentous thing that had happened so far away in that unknown English village? If death came, could a loved one be brought back to live, to live on and on?

THE cable editor of the tabloid handed MacNamara the first flash from London. It was 4:30 on April twenty-third—nearing dawn. A hooded white light blazed on the littered desk. It shaded Mac's face, which was seamed, strained and hallowed like a skull. In a split-second his eyes encompassed the twenty-two words splashed across the yellow half-sheet. He tried to piece their meaning. They didn't make sense. He read them again. Then slowly they went through him like slicing knives. He leaned forward, taut like steel, across his desk. "Matt, do you get this? 'Today High Coombe Northumberland Doctor Rheinfrank German refugee medico-scientist resurrected miner killed explosion after three hours death. Event witnessed. Death certified.'" He jumped up from his chair. "Why, damn it, if this is true— You don't suppose they're hoaxing us, Matt? 'Death certified.' Why, this is a dilly! The hottest bust for two thousand years. Listen, sweetheart, phone Marriott—shoot him up to High Coombe. I want everything—interviews, telephotos—and that miner's experience during his three hours in the next world. Tell Marriott to get that—or else!"

BISHOP LANDON, a white-haired, benevolent intellectual, stood in the lantern of the cathedral in Liverpool; his voice rang forth with vehemence and fire: "Why—why should the world marvel at this thing that is reported in this English village? Many years ago upon this earth miracles happened in another obscure village. Why do we call these things 'miracles'? A man passes into the estate of so-called death. He is restored to life. Is there any reason why mankind should not accept that as a natural phenomenon? Man progresses—man's thinking pierces the armor of limitation—mankind will ultimately reject the order of death."

White-shrouded men skilled in the daily routine of saving men from death were concentrated in the Surgeons' Room of Guy's Hospital when the news first came in. "Why can't it be done?" demanded Sir Christopher Davies of his incredulous and cynical colleagues. "Isn't it what physicians have been fighting for for more than a thousand years? Isn't it the final victory of our profession—the last achievement?"

IN High Moor Coombe, in the village itself, people came all day long to stare at the Marsden house and whisper strange things. When night came, the shopkeepers and miners thronged the bars, and there was wild talk. This man had made a little dead dog live again, and now he had restored a man to life. *It had happened.* Many had seen it with their own eyes. They could not explain it even to themselves. *But it had happened.*

Dr. Rheinfrank shut himself away from all the curious throng; he had taken the resurrected miner back into the house with him, had fastened the windows and bolted the doors, setting himself up in a state of siege. Only Cathy was allowed to come and go freely, to continue typing and editing the manuscript; but the devious reason was that Cathy brought in the news from the outside world.

The frank statements of Sir Richard Mollett, Dr. Meadows, Coroner Lear, Father O'Dala and Constabulary Sergeant Rudder had pivoted the event with authenticity. They could not define what had transpired: that remained Dr. Rheinfrank's secret; but they confirmed the two essential facts: the miner had been killed by the explosion, evidently by shock and the rush of gas to his lungs; and he had been miraculously made to live again.

The miracle caused the immediate furor. Telegrams arrived by the thousands. The limited telephone service was unable to deal with the long-distance calls. New York editors kept the transatlantic wires open and howled for the news. The *Daily Mail* and the *News Chronicle* sent their correspondents north by plane; medical correspondents of the *Times* and *Telegraph* came by night express; and dozens of cars pounded over the roads to Newcastle and through the Northumberland villages, with journalists, scientists, the AP and UP correspondents, and photographers.

When they arrived, they found Dr. Rheinfrank besieged in his castle. No one answered the knocker. Not a vestige of life was seen within. The blinds were closed; no smoke emerged from the chimney; and the haunting stillness was shattered only by the uneasy, screeching yaffles. So the impatient and frustrated news-hounds ranged around the house and through the gardens in vain.

Meanwhile the camera-men photographed Ellen Teapot holding little Tail Wind in her arms; they laid him under the elms and shot him "dead;" they shot him "before" and "after" until the pooch howled his protest

"Do you realize, sir, you have broken the law?"

and ran away. Then they shot scenes at the mine and the humble hut where Storr had lived; and they shot the old Marsden place from every angle, featuring the gloomy yews and rendering the house a habitation of ghosts and visitant devils.

At last, defeated and a bit desperate, the journalists appealed to Dr. Meadows.

Bill Kerr, the AP man, tall, distinguished and impressive, was chosen as spokesman. He was accompanied by correspondents of the *Daily Mail, Times, News Chronicle, Telegraph, Evening News,* the UP and Reuters men, Marriott of the New York *Mirror,* and a photographer for *Life.*

In Dr. Meadows' sitting-room Bill Kerr led off with the pointed question. "You say that you examined this miner, Doctor Meadows. Are you positive that he was dead?"

Dr. Meadows was by now weary of answering this precise question. "I have practiced for thirty-two years," he replied tartly, "and I think I know a corpse when I see one."

Bill Kerr immediately softened his tone. "Well, this 'resurrection' is of such overwhelming interest to people everywhere, that we've come to urge you to arrange an interview for us with Doctor Rheinfrank—and with the miner."

Dr. Meadows shrugged dubiously. "I don't think Doctor Rheinfrank will see anybody. Only my daughter here, Cathy, is allowed to enter the house. She's been doing some secretarial work for him since he came here in March."

Bill Kerr turned eagerly to Cathy. "Will you take a message to Doctor Rheinfrank?"

"I don't know," answered Cathy nervously. "The Doctor is very bitter about all this. Sir Richard's attack on him, and the way the others treated him, has been a shock. I know he has suffered. I don't think he'll see you—"

"But we've come all the way from London. Surely he must understand that the country—in fact, most of the world—wants to know about his experiments. The world acclaims him! Will you tell him that? And tell him who we are who humbly request this meeting?"

An hour later Cathy returned from the Marsden house.

"Doctor Rheinfrank says that as you have come a long way, he will see you at four o'clock, but only those who are in this room."

DR. RHEINFRANK faced the assembly in his living-room, timid, harassed, seemingly reluctant to speak. Bill Kerr and the journalists fixed their gaze upon him with an even keener sense of awe and curiosity than the villagers had exhibited. *Here was the man!* The face was taut and haggard; the cruel lines flanking the mouth had deepened; the hooded eyes peered at the faces in the shadows with hawk-like intensity. To Cathy, he seemed to move like an automaton. When he spoke, his voice was deep and low and hollow, as if it had hit a sounding-board and flexed back.

"Gentlemen, I must tell you at once that my formula for the restoration of life is not yet ready for the world. I appreciate your interest and your eagerness. But it is all premature. I have acted impulsively, overpersuaded by my personal emotions. A mistake. I should not have listened to the tragic appeal of the miners." He paused. "Years—years lie ahead—before I am ready. Struggle, certainty, and scientific precision—" His voice rose hoarsely. "Until then I cannot speak!"

The silence was painful. You could hear the great clock recording the seconds, and the scraping of green-budded branches against the shutters in the April wind.

Then, rising, Kerr asked the key question.

"Doctor Rheinfrank, may we see the miner Storr? May we talk with him?"

Dr. Rheinfrank looked from face to face. He took a few steps across the room toward the books, and slowly returned. He said warningly: "I beg of you, gentlemen, not to excite him. He is still under my care in this house, a sensitive, neurotic case since his experience. Mr. Kerr, I will permit you alone to question him."

Dr. Rheinfrank then opened the door to his laboratory, and a moment later the miner Storr entered the room.

There was utter silence as the journalists beheld the big raw-boned hulking fellow. His eyes stared ahead unseeingly as if he were in a trance. His face was set, almost expressionless.

Bill Kerr addressed him quietly.

"Please understand, sir, we have no desire to intrude in your life. But millions of people—surely you can understand!—millions of people are tremendously interested in your recent experience. And most particularly in your state of life after death—"

The AP man seemed unable to go on. He paused, and the miner turned his head, and his eyes came level. Then his lips moved. "There is no death," he said. It was a strange and revolutionary declaration; no one answered; every man sat chilled in his seat.

Then almost like a child: "I did not die. My body, yes—but not my spirit. My spirit lived—"

No one spoke. No one moved. The stillness was insufferable.

Very gently Dr. Rheinfrank said: "You may tell them—"

Through poignant seconds Storr appeared to be groping in his mind, struggling to remember, or to find symbols to express that which he did remember. "I seemed to be in a great boundless space. It was white—like the sun. Beside me were my father and my mother. They died when I was seven. They walked with me through the white light. My mother seemed to be happy; I saw her smile, and she said that I would be at peace. My

father linked his arm with mine. He laughed and said that all the people on earth were afraid of death—and here we were, 'dead,' and happy and together and at peace. It was—I remember—a very good joke on the living. My father laughed heartily."

His voice rose like the tremulous chords of an organ.

"I saw them all—multitudes!—living! . . . I saw a little boy that I used to play with—Homer. He was drowned in the lake when we were both about nine. We used to have a whistle to call each other, and now he gave the same whistle and ran over to meet me. Oh, yes, I heard the whistle!

"We went to the same school together, and we used to read about Alexander the Great. He was our wonderful great hero. And there, Homer said, over there in the light, was Alexander the Great!" His voice took on a frenzied ecstasy. "I saw Alexander the Great! I saw his beautiful face, like a woman's, his imperious carriage, his grace and his glory. He walked like a conqueror. I saw Alexander the Great!" His big hands covered his face.

Very quietly Kerr asked: "Did your father and mother and Homer look the same to you as when you knew them here on earth?"

"I don't know. No. But I seemed to know them. . . . There was that great cloud of light beyond. They were taking me toward the light. . . . Then—the light dimmed—the voices stopped. When I turned, my mother was gone, and Homer was gone too!" Suddenly his voice quavered in a torrent of anguish that paralyzed with fear and terror. "There was a roar—and darkness—and when I could see again, I was back here!" He faced Dr. Rheinfrank. His knotted hands lifted convulsively to his face. His whole being trembled in violent revolt. "Why—why did you bring me back?" he cried.

At that instant the photographer's flash exploded.

Storr wheeled and started forward. His arms flailed out murderously.

"You shouldn't have done that!" cried Dr. Rheinfrank. "It's his neurosis—the explosion—"

The miner seized the camera and crashed it against the wall. Cathy screamed. Lord Nelson, who had been amiably strutting about the room, emitted a shriek and fluttered wildly to the top of the bookcase. In evident alarm, Dr. Rheinfrank clutched Storr's arms and gestured the men to go. The photographer recovered his camera, and they made a swift exit, with nerves raw and stinging.

As the journalistic group moved into the road, Bill Kerr said to Marriott, the *Mirror* man: "Well, what's the answer?"

"Damned if I know," answered the *Mirror* man. "That guy's either a benevolent superman or a phony so-and-so."

DR. RHEINFRANK promptly locked and bolted the door and gazed out through the windows at the disappearing crowd.

Dr. Usk smiled grimly and asked: "Are we ready for Act Three?"

Dr. Rheinfrank replied, "The curtain is going up."

Lord Nelson fluttered his yellow wings on the crest of the bookcase and quavered: "You're a fool—you're a fool—you're a fool."

Chapter Nine

"THE VITAL THING IS, IF HIS EXPERIMENT SHOULD fail, it would be murder." The two men faced each other, rigid and silent.

May Day in London was warm, fragrant, brightly sunny, harbinger of a brilliant summer. Outside, the broad green parks were filled with sunbathers; Piccadilly and the Strand, like flowing rivers, were dotted with gay colors; and the sounds of Whitehall busses and taxis crawling through the early heat into Trafalgar Square rose with a droning clatter.

Superintendent Holland got up from his desk and half-closed the blinds to tone the sun flooding his office, which otherwise was cool and spacious. For twenty minutes he had listened to a remarkable story. Detective-Sergeant Barcaldine had been terse and dramatic. The scenes surrounding the "resurrection" of the miner Storr, alias Dr. Usk, needed no pointing-up: they were sufficiently startling in their baldest outline. Now Holland watched as Barcaldine reached into his pocket, took out a chamois container and revealed a hypodermic needle.

"This needle is the key to Doctor Rheinfrank's 'miracle,'" declared Barcaldine. "You see, it's a rare Guerard-Bross, identical with the needle we found here in his London office. I went back to the mine; after a two-day intensive search, I found it behind a ledge among the debris from the explosion. Smell it."

Holland pressed it to his nose. There was a strong odor of kerosene.

"When I found Usk's lantern, the stopper to the oil-well was missing. It seems clear that he had planned to hide the needle in the oil-well, after taking the shot. But at the last moment he changed his mind and hid it in the debris. The kerosene has probably killed our chance of analyzing the content."

HOLLAND paced his office slowly. His eyes closed, and his face twisted with grave speculation. "Obviously," he said, "there is a connection between the 'dead' woman you found in his office here, and the restoration of Doctor Usk.

"In the case of Frances St. Aubyn, Rheinfrank injected her with a compound that produced a state of simulated death. In Usk's case he injected himself, knowing, or hoping like hell, that you, his 'friend,' would get him to Doctor Rheinfrank in time to be injected with the reagent. Fortunately for him, it came off. So we can accept the fact that there is a compound and a reagent in Rheinfrank's box of tricks.

"Now there is no question but what we are dealing with two arch conspirators. But what is the game? What are they playing for? Who is the next victim?

"Let's admit we're up against one of the strangest cases we've had here at the Yard. In fact, I can't recall anything like it. There's a long-range sense of plotting here, and craft and cunning. Something weird about it, don't you think? These rogues are playing with people's lives. But—we must face this fact: no crime as yet has been committed, and we cannot charge them. What, then, is the motive?"

Holland got his pipe out of his pocket, lit it, and continued reflectively: "In the case of Frances St. Aubyn, there seemed no object in placing her in that state of death. She suffered from migraine headaches—Rheinfrank could have given her several other established treatments.

"And what in heaven's name was gained by putting that little dog to sleep and then bringing it back to life?

"And take Usk—the 'dead' miner. Why that sensational *coup*? No money involved—no fraud, no crime. Just a noble, humanitarian performance for the benefit of the world! I assure you, no English jury would ever convict those men on the evidence you've gathered, Barcaldine.

"But motive, Barcaldine, motive! Build from that!" He wheeled back across the room, and his hand closed with a thud on the desk. "What's it all building to? Who are they after? What's coming next?" There was a dramatic pause, then: "Take the express back to Northumberland tonight, get the answers to that, and I think you'll net two of the cleverest, most calculating criminals in our history."

On the estate of Sir Richard Mollett, little Robin was at the edge of the lake playing with his newest and most wonderful boat.

The day was May 11th, just eighteen days after the resurrection of the Crofty miner.

The early English summer had already spread its mantle of beauty through the countryside: the hedges were rich with soft variegated greens; the robins and thrushes were nesting; and all the gardens of the estate were magical with wild and vivid color.

Robin's boat was no ordinary boat. It was a pirate ship, five feet long, a galleon splashed with bright gold, intricately constructed, such as had been sailed by Captain Kidd upon seas of bloody adventure. In the winter, seated before the roaring fire in the great baronial hall, Miss Preece had read "Treasure Island" to Robin: the derring-do of *Jim Hawkins,* and the blind beggar *Pew,* and *Long John Silver.* In bold imagination Robin was *Jim Hawkins.* He had trembled with excitement as he discovered the manuscript map of Captain Kidd's treasure, and later found the glittering hoard with the aid of old *Benn Gunn* on the island.

"Father, can I have a pirate galleon to sail on the lake?" Robin had begged of Sir Richard.

Robin had but to ask. The order to build the model went to London. Hundreds of pounds and many weeks produced the ship; and today the *Hispaniola* sailed the blue waters of Alexandrinus.

Earlier in the morning Robin had made the rounds of the estate on his pony Jackie. He had stopped by the little hill to chat and laugh awhile with David. When he tired of riding, Cobbett, the groom, had returned Jackie to the pasture.

The *Hispaniola,* at the moment, was more fascinating than his pony. The wind had swept it out toward the middle of the lake; now it veered back with the changing breeze and was slowly fringing the eastern bank. Robin ran along the bank keeping pace with the galleon. Once the ship brushed the shore, and Robin leaned out over the water and tried to grasp it.

Miss Preece, who was sitting on a rustic bench under a great beech tree, reading Aldous Huxley, called out sharply:

"Robin! You'll fall in and drown! Be careful!"

She laid aside her book and went to the lake's edge.

"Haven't I warned you, Robin," she said, "never to go that near the edge? You know what your father would say!"

"But I want the boat to go out in the middle again," pouted Robin.

"It doesn't matter. The wind will carry it out. There, you see—"

The galleon had veered again, but the next moment it swung back, hugging the shore.

Finally Miss Preece went back to her book under the beech. For some minutes she watched Robin. He continued along the grassy bank, parallel with the boat's course; and now he came to the point where the high thick hedge of the mystic maze reached to within a dozen feet of the water.

As the governess watched, dutifully, from her position in the cool shade of the tree, Robin disappeared from view. But at that moment he was dancing playfully along the bank, half-singing, half-talking to himself, and avoiding the abrupt edge. In Miss Preece's consciousness there was no presentiment of danger. In another two or three minutes she would be able to see Robin emerge into view at the far side of the labyrinth. So, with her thoughts upon him, but at ease, she returned to the philosophies of "A Brave New World."

The mystic maze fronted the lake for one hundred and thirty feet. In the center of each side of the huge square was an opening, or entrance; the center was a labyrinth of narrow twisting paths where one could be lost for hours seeking an exit.

It was at this moment that, peering cautiously through the entrance facing the lake, Dr. Usk saw Robin approaching. The boat by now had tacked closer to the bank; its blunt prow ran in and scraped the tangle of roots and vines. To free it, Robin, ignoring Miss Preece's stern admonitions, ran to the edge, bent down and reached for the golden figurehead.

Ten seconds later Miss Preece heard the splash. She looked up sharply. She could not, of course, see Robin. She heard, and yet the swift fear in her heart denied that she had heard. Wonderingly, with her limbs halting and rubbery, she got up and forced herself to run toward the high walls of the labyrinth. The scream that she might have uttered was killed in her throat by the horror of what she saw. Robin, apparently lifeless, was drifting five or six feet from shore beside the galleon. Miss Preece cried loudly, tragically: "David! *David!* Come quickly, David. Robin's in the lake!"

David heard her cry and came racing down from the hill.

Robin was sinking when he reached the bank. Instantly David plunged into the lake. Gripping the prostrate little figure, with a few powerful strokes he regained the bank and dragged him up onto the grass.

"I warned him! Oh, I warned him not to go near the edge," sobbed Miss Preece.

David worked desperately over the little boy. He turned him over on his stomach, stretched and pumped his arms, and kneaded his slender body.

"We'd better get him to the house quickly," he said, lifting the lifeless child. "Run ahead, Miss Preece, and tell Sir Richard and call Doctor Meadows."

Miss Preece staggered blindly forward up the hill, reached the house and came face to face with Sir Richard in the great hall. White-faced, trembling, she pointed back to David, bearing in the tragic burden. Her words were broken, raw, and accompanied by deep agony.

"Robin! Robin! My God, what has happened?" David saw the raw glare of anguish in Sir Richard's face. The little body lay still on the couch. Not until Dr. Meadows arrived and applied his knowledge intensely but hopelessly would Sir Richard believe that his beloved son was gone.

He had loved Robin with all the pride and passion of a father's heart, and now in his extremity his sorrow was heartbreaking to behold.

He turned away from the sympathetic grip of Dr. Meadows' hand, and blindly crossed and recrossed the hall. His footsteps tapped out a metallic requiem on the stone floor. Miss Preece, overcome with guilt and grief, fled to her room. Mr. Tewks, the secretary, appeared, like a ghost, and asked if there was anything he could do. His words were lost in the silence.

The sunlight blazed in a diffused flood through a great stained-glass window at the head of the staircase; its colors tinged the row of ancient battle flags suspended above. A ray of cadmium yellow fell across the couch and illumined the still figure in a golden luster.

Sir Richard suddenly stopped short and looked at his son. Into his mind, subtly at first, but inevitably, then with the force of an electric shock, came the impulse. He remembered, through his grief—a dead dog brought back to life; with his own eyes he had beheld the dead miner alive in the doorway and stalking forth in the sun. Rheinfrank! The name rang through his mind with the clangor of an alarm bell. Rheinfrank—Dr. Rheinfrank. It was, in this moment of his tragedy, his one last fleeting hope. It was the only straw at which he could grasp. A man had conquered death. If only this man— He moved quickly to the couch and lifted his son in his arms.

TWENTY minutes later the knocker thudded on Dr. Rheinfrank's heavy oaken door. There was impatience, fear and desperation in the metallic crash. There was a pause of ten seconds, then again the knocker crashed. It was tumultuous with emotion. Something had happened. Someone was bringing the alarm.

Cathy was in the upper room which she used for a studio. She was mixing white and burnt sienna on her palette preparing to paint a bowl of butterfly orchids and Solomon's seal. She laid the palette down instantly and hurried downstairs.

As she opened the door, she saw her father, David, and Sir Richard bearing Robin in his arms. The face of each was grave and stricken.

"Where is Doctor Rheinfrank?" demanded David. "Call him—call him, Cathy!"

With a little gasp of surprise and dismay, Cathy knocked on the laboratory doors.

Dr. Rheinfrank, apparently irked at being disturbed, entered the living-room. He stopped with surprise and glanced quickly from David and Dr. Meadows to Sir Richard. Sir Richard had just placed Robin's body on the couch. Now he turned and faced the German doctor. His face was haggard, tense; there was a terrible desperation in his manner. He was no longer the arrogant skeptic; he was broken by sorrow.

"I have come to you, Doctor Rheinfrank, because my son has been drowned in the lake. I have come to ask your help—to ask you to use your power and restore him to life."

Dr. Rheinfrank did not immediately answer. He moved across to the couch and placed his hand over the boy's heart. Then slowly he faced his father.

"I am indeed sorry, sir. I can understand what your only son has meant to you. Your companionship with him, your ideals for him, your dreams of his future—your heir."

"I loved him, more than you could ever understand. He was my life—everything that life meant to me—could ever mean. I can't lose him! Oh, God, I can't lose him!" Sir Richard's agony was pitiful; it hurt deeply everyone in the room. Cathy and David looked away: it was more than their young hearts could bear. Now Sir Richard moved closer to Dr. Rheinfrank. This man, this one man in all the world, could, if he would, make his loved one live again. He held his hands forth in fervent entreaty. "You saved that miner. You did that noble and wonderful thing. Now will you save my boy?"

Suddenly the pity and compassion that for a fleeting moment had shown in Dr. Rheinfrank's face, faded. His voice when he spoke now was harsh and inflexible.

"You speak of the miner, that poor creature of the earth, and of what I did for him. But was it not you who came here to condemn me?"

Sir Richard started at the unexpectedness of the Doctor's tone. He flushed, and moved restlessly. He heard:

"Was it not you who joined forces with the church and the law, and, without a hearing, heaped curses and maledictions upon me? You, Sir Richard, would have stoned me through the streets and driven me from the city!"

Through the stark and dreadful seconds of this attack Sir Richard fought his overwhelming despair.

"Forgive me!" he said.

"Charlatan!" exclaimed Dr. Rheinfrank. "Charlatan! I can never forgive *that*."

Sir Richard, devastatingly weak and beaten, stepped back and leaned against the table. Something bulked in his throat, raw and choking.

Dr. Rheinfrank did not move. But as he stood there the malignity seemed to go from his dark, tightly drawn face. His voice lost suddenly its metallic challenge. He sighed heavily. His hands drooped in a resigned gesture, and his manner became one of self-pity.

"I live here in poverty," he said, his voice low. "You can see that I am a poor man. I have not been ready to perform these things. But because a little girl is brokenhearted over the loss of her dog, because some humble miners plead for the life of their fellow-worker, I cast away my resolutions. For gratitude I receive blows and execrations. I am pilloried. But this comes from bigots who do not understand." His voice rose again; with a surge of challenge he began moving slowly toward the couch on which the still, innocent little figure lay. "I shall not let them crucify me! I shall remember always the multitudes, the poor and the stricken. I shall devote my life to this greatest service to humanity. . . . But I am not yet ready."

Sir Richard's thoughts, surmounting his tragic emotions, were cold and clear and swift: I can help this man. If he will make my son live again, I can help him to make untold thousands live again. There is my fortune—

He reached out, and with his two hands gripped Dr. Rheinfrank's hand. His face was ashen; his voice was hoarse and shaken, but alive with fiery intensity.

He spoke of his fortune. It was at Dr. Rheinfrank's disposal. He would endow a Foundation in his name. Then the agony streamed back like fire. "In God's name," he pleaded, "will you save my son—now—before it is too late? If you will do this, I promise you—all that I have—anything!"

After what seemed an eternity Dr. Rheinfrank reached down and lifted the silent little figure in his arms. He passed with him, alone, through the great high doors.

Chapter Ten

THIRTY MINUTES — FORTY — AN HOUR. TIME pulsing by with its pullulation of anguish. . . . Dr. Meadows and David watched Sir Richard with rigid intensity. Cathy sat at one side of the great still room huddled in a corner of the couch: her teeth bit into her lips and her fingers twisted and unwound like ropes as she lived through the suffering and suspense that she knew Sir Richard was living through.

For in those moments of tragic hope, the father of Robin was the atavistic sire with his son suddenly killed and lost to him. He struggled with all the force within him to control his emotions; but realization, growing and tearing him, betrayed itself in his ashen face, his twitching muscles, his thudding heart. His eyes were fixed on the high doors; his ears were attuned for the slightest sound. But the stillness was as of a tomb. It was broken only by the impersonal rasp of the clock, by the robust merriment of far-off birds in far-off trees, and by the laughter of little children down the road. The laughter pierced Sir Richard's heart. They were alive, romping, shouting, happy and carefree, while his own little son—

Memories, now poignant and torturing because of their beauty and reality and happiness: The hour that Robin was born. A son! *His* son. Lying there in his own wee bed with his thumb in his mouth, humming contentedly. His first tooth—no squalling; taking it like a little man. The day that he crawled across the nursery floor. That was a day. Summer again, the great lawns a sheet of green gold; his first step, taken in ecstatic frenzy, toward his father's outstretched arms. . . .

Sir Richard got up suddenly and walked to the doors. His hand reached out to twist the knob and open them. He stopped short. An interruption might prove fatal. He could no longer sit still and wait. This waiting was slowly killing him. He moved about the room, insensate, like a man blind. He was unconscious of anyone in the room. Once he uttered quietly, "Oh, God! If only—" but whether in prayer or torment the others could not

Cathy uttered a low, sharp cry and tottered.

tell. One thing they knew, as he did: this was the darkest hour of his life. Without his son, his life, with its richness and fullness, was ended.

The clock struck one. There followed the soft flutter of the chimes. Hardly had the musical notes ceased than there was another sound, faint and nebulous, but Sir Richard and the others heard it. There were really two sounds: the first was a sharp, choking gasp like a newborn baby drawing its initial breath. Sir Richard stopped dead in his pacing. He stood like a statue in the center of the room, rigid, gazing at the doors as though to penetrate them with his vision.

And then he heard, faintly, weakly, a pathetic little cry: "Father—"

A tremendous upsurge of relief and hope gripped him. He was freed suddenly from an unbearable anguish.

He hurried to the doors and turned the knob frantically and called, "Robin! *Robin!*" When the locked doors did not yield, he thrust his body against them as though to break them in.

Dr. Meadows and David quickly restrained him.

"You must wait! Be patient," Dr. Meadows admonished. "I think your boy lives. I think you will see him in a moment."

Dr. Meadows' hand was trembling on Sir Richard's shoulder. The impact of emotion engulfed them all. David could not speak. Cathy was crying on the couch; her face was buried in her hands, and the hot tears ran down her cheeks.

They heard the click of the key on the other side of the doors. The next instant the doors were opened. Dr. Rheinfrank stood there, just inside the threshold, holding Robin by the hand.

Sir Richard went forward and fell on his knees before the dazed child. His arms closed convulsively about him. "Robin," he cried, "oh, Robin! You're—all right again, Robin—aren't you?"

Robin stared at his father as though awakened from a deep sleep. He said slowly, with difficulty: "I'm sorry, Father, that I disobeyed Miss Preece and went so near the edge. You won't punish me, will you?"

"Punish you!" Sir Richard crushed his child to him. "No, no, Robin!" Tears were frankly and unreservedly welling in Sir Richard's eyes. Ashamedly, even in this deeply poignant moment, he fought them back. He rose and faced Dr. Rheinfrank.

Dr. Rheinfrank had stood behind Robin in the doorway, intently watching Sir Richard's emotional outbreak. Upon his face was a slight sardonic smile, expressive of his intense inner satisfaction.

But no one, except possibly Cathy, sensed the German doctor's grim sardonic power. Some instinct which she could not define made her doubt; why, she did not know. The odd and dimly defined sensations that frightened her that first day in this house, when she had passed with Dr. Rheinfrank through the shadows and labyrinthian passages in quest of the steps, assailed her once more. Even now, confronted by this wondrous miracle, doubt, fear and an uncanny terror made her tremble.

She saw Sir Richard seize Dr. Rheinfrank's hand and hold it hard in his two hands. His voice, deep and roughened by his feelings, choked when he tried to speak, to pour out his gratitude. His words were broken, monosyllabic. He kept a tight hold of Dr. Rheinfrank's hand. Then he said quite clearly: "Come to me tomorrow. I will send the car. I want to talk with you."

Cathy never took her eyes from Dr. Rheinfrank's face. He had spoken not one word. But in his face—

DR. RHEINFRANK looked around at the faces in the drawing-room with humility and bewilderment. He had prepared himself for this occasion, which was to be the supreme event of his life. He wore his long, heavy black coat, which seemed to dwarf his body, and his Homburg hat rested on the table.

The luxurious car that rolled so smoothly through the escutcheoned gates of Alexandrinus was to him a symbol of the wealth and pleasurable ease which he would soon enjoy. He had seen the excited crowd of journalists and photographers just outside the gates. Many had met the car as it approached and run along the road several hundred yards. A few bolder ones had climbed onto the running-board and peered inside. There was the explosive whiteness of flash-bulbs. Dr. Rheinfrank, lost and alone in the rear of the tonneau, appeared oblivious. At that moment his mind was on the south of France, or a villa in Italy, or an estate amidst the eternal blue of Bermuda. As the car moved up the long drive along the border of the lake, his keen, hooded eyes had seen the mystic maze and the entrance fronting the east bank, the seat under the tree where the governess had conveniently sat, and the position on the bank where Robin had reached for the galleon. . . .

Now—"I have chosen this occasion to express my deep gratitude to Doctor Rheinfrank," said Sir Richard Mollett, "both in words and in a form, I trust, more substantial than words—"

William Kerr of the AP rose and interrupted.

"Will you pardon me, Sir Richard," he said. "I represent the American press, Mr. Stone the *Times*, and Mr. Kinglake, Reuters. We all greatly appreciate your courtesy in inviting us here. But we've left behind a lot of fellow-correspondents, and I promised them that I'd appeal to you—"

Sir Richard moved around the table and glanced through the windows at the men, and a few women, he noticed, massed far down at the gates. His face clouded.

"No!" he ejaculated. "I'm sorry, but I can't turn this occasion into a circus. I can understand the excitement of the public, and the newspaper and radio interest, but I instinctively shudder from all that sort of publicity. Besides, I feel the results to Robin may not be too wholesome."

He turned back from the windows.

"What I have to say I can say in a few words, gentlemen. You all know what has happened in our village. There has been some doubt expressed—there would be, naturally—that my son was dead. But there can be no question of that. Doctor Meadows here was sent for immediately. He examined Robin, just as he did the miner."

Sir Richard looked to Dr. Meadows for confirmation.

"There isn't the slightest doubt," acknowledged Dr. Meadows firmly. "The boy was dead."

"But damned if I'm concerned with the doubting Thomases," pursued Sir Richard. "I have my son alive and with me today. He's a bit constrained, and seems a little dazed after his experience, but that will pass. He's alive! Can you, as fathers, understand what that means to me?"

He placed his hand feelingly upon Dr. Rheinfrank's shoulder.

"What Doctor Rheinfrank has done for my son I hope—fervently—that he will do for thousands of others in the years to come. To make this possible, I have in mind a Foundation—the 'Rheinfrank Foundation'—to be established in London and to be freely available to all humankind. Its operation shall be solely within Dr. Rheinfrank's jurisdiction. It is my great privilege to bring this Foundation into being and to aid its progress from time to time."

He opened a drawer in the table and took out a check which he handed to Dr. Rheinfrank.

Dr. Rheinfrank did not glance at the check. He held it mechanically in his two hands. His dark face lighted slowly with a play of vivid emotion. For a moment he seemed almost childlike in the simplicity of his emotion.

"The 'Rheinfrank Foundation,'" he repeated with an inner fervor, "for all human-kind."

The AP man leaned forward just far enough to scrutinize the check. It was an open check payable by a London bank and made out for three hundred thousand pounds!

HALF an hour later, Dr. Rheinfrank left the manor in Sir Richard's car.

The crowd at the gates had meanwhile increased. Many of the villagers, aware of the ceremony at Alexandrinus, had joined the journalists and photographers. The car swung away slowly, while hundreds of eyes peered through the windows to catch a glimpse of the famous doctor. The scene resembled that of the populace striving for a glimpse of royalty. Many flash-bulbs exploded; there was a brief burst of huzzas; and the car moved on.

Precisely at that moment, coming down the road from the direction of the village, was another car, a Vauxhall belonging to the county Constabulary. The two cars passed each other without recognition, and the Vauxhall proceeded through the gates up to the manor. A tall man bearing a portfolio got out, entered the hall and asked to see Sir Richard.

"Whom shall I say wishes to see Sir Richard?" queried Mr. Tewks.

"Detective-Sergeant Barcaldine of Scotland Yard," answered the visitor.

Mr. Tewks' eyebrows went up suddenly as he left to summon Sir Richard.

Sir Richard, who was equally surprised, asked: "What is the reason for this visit?"

"You have just handed Doctor Rheinfrank a check?" countered Barcaldine.

"Yes."

"Exactly. Scotland Yard anticipated that. It is for this moment that we have been waiting."

"But—this is purely a personal matter having to do with my son. What has Scotland Yard—"

"Look at me closely, Sir Richard. Do you know who I am?"

Sir Richard, puzzled, studied the face confronting him. This man was tall, lean, well-groomed; he had declared himself a Yard man—

A faint smile lightened Barcaldine's features.

"No, of course," he said, "you wouldn't recognize the begrimed miner who called himself 'Fishlock', and who brought the body of Storr across the valley to Doctor Rheinfrank—"

Faint recognition broke over Sir Richard. "*You* are Fishlock?"

Barcaldine nodded, and his smile became a grin.

"I was the miner in your employ who engineered Doctor Rheinfrank's first sensational 'resurrection.' Now the fraud has reached you—and your son. I have a rather amazing and appalling story to tell you, Sir Richard, if—if we can talk privately."

"Fraud?" echoed Sir Richard. Then apologetically: "Yes, yes, of course. Won't you come into my study? No one will disturb us here. I must say all this is very upsetting."

THE two men seated themselves. Barcaldine laid his portfolio on a nearby console table and opened the straps. The study was pleasant, mahogany-paneled, and redolent of leather and old books that lined the walls. The sun sprayed languidly through the mullioned windows.

"Do you know anything of Doctor Rheinfrank's case history before he came to High Coombe?" began Barcaldine. He reached out and removed a packet of documents from the portfolio. "Originally he came from Munich, a political exile who escaped into Switzerland and made his way to Paris. In Paris he met another exile, a Doctor Usk, and the two of them set up a partnership and proceeded to London. There they practiced as doctors, and failed. For years Rheinfrank had been dabbling in methods of restoring the dead, and in London, suddenly and unexpectedly, he made an important discovery."

Sir Richard listened in grave silence.

"That discovery," went on Barcaldine, "was a compound that induced a state of apparent death, and a reagent that would resuscitate the apparently dead human body.

"Coming to High Coombe, Rheinfrank's first act was to impress the world—and you—with his power. But he needed a partner, someone whom he could trust to administer the compound. Who better than his London colleague, Doctor Usk?" So saying, Barcaldine handed Sir Richard an enlarged copy of a passport photograph.

After some seconds Sir Richard exclaimed, "But that is Storr, the 'dead' miner!"

"Precisely! And it was Storr—or Doctor Usk—who forced your son Robin into the lake and prepared the final *coup* for his master, Rheinfrank. Robin, of course, was *not* dead."

Sir Richard stared at the detective with startled challenge.

"But Doctor Meadows pronounced—"

"Doctor Meadows quite honestly pronounced Doctor Usk dead too."

"But how do you know all this?—how can you be so certain?" Sir Richard demanded. He gripped the arms of his chair, obviously greatly shaken.

"After a two-day search, I found the hypodermic needle Usk had used in the debris at the mine. That was the key. This morning I found Usk's footprints within the entrance to the maze, and leading down to the point

where Robin fell in the lake." Barcaldine paused, and studied the look of incredulity in Sir Richard's face.

"If you wish further proof," hastily pursued Barcaldine, "I think you will find it on the child's body, if you examine him immediately."

After some moments of hesitation Sir Richard summoned the governess and ordered her to dress Robin only in his bathrobe and bring him promptly to the study.

WHILE he waited, Sir Richard reflected upon the implacability of Scotland Yard, slowly and inexorably closing in on these two arch-rogues. He marveled, too, at the cool and calculating manner of Detective-Sergeant Barcaldine, sitting there in his study with supreme patience, preparing for the moment of the kill. It gave him for the first time a close and intimate sense of the law, and he felt it as a tidal wave rolling in to engulf those who live by crime. But it was impossible, at that moment at least, for Sir Richard, or indeed for Barcaldine, to know the processes of these foreign minds when confronted by English law, or to comprehend the venomous cobra power of Dr. Rheinfrank's brain.

Miss Preece fought to maintain her composure, but she was visibly nervous and afraid of events. Her conscience still tortured her. Robin was very quiet, bewildered and negative, not having recovered as yet his mental exuberance.

"Robin, this is Mr. Barcaldine," said Sir Richard quietly. "He wants to ask you a few questions."

Barcaldine smiled easily as he sat close to the boy. "I'm glad you're all right again, Robin. It wasn't much fun falling in the lake, was it? . . . Robin, when you fell in, can you remember if anyone seemed to be behind you? Did you feel that anyone pushed you?"

Robin listened but did not answer.

"Try hard to remember," urged his father.

"I don't know, Father."

As eager as the men were to stir Robin's memory and uncover the truth, they knew that only patience and restraint would do that.

"Did you hear any footsteps? Did you see the shadow of a man on the grass?" questioned Barcaldine.

After a moment Robin muttered: "I don't know—"

"Did anything hurt you, Robin? Did you feel a pain like a pin-prick?"

Robin's face screwed up unhappily. Thoughts were stirring dully in his mind. "I think maybe I did. . . . I don't know. . . . The water looked so black I was afraid. After that, I don't remember."

A moment passed, and Barcaldine turned to the governess.

"Miss Preece, did you see any trace of a stranger lurking near the maze yesterday morning?"

"No sir, none at all. I—"

"You're positive? You saw nothing, heard nothing?"

"Nothing, sir. From where I sat, Robin had disappeared around the edge of the wall. Oh, if I had only followed him, or called him back!" Her composure broke and tears flooded her eyes.

"Please, Miss Preece!" commanded Sir Richard with a sympathetic gesture. Miss Preece checked herself rigidly; a flush of humiliation made her pitiful for this display of her emotions. Turning to Robin, Sir Richard said: "Son, I want you to lie here on the couch. Now, let me just open up your robe. Mr. Barcaldine and I want to examine you for a moment. . . . That's fine."

Quietly, deftly, Barcaldine ran his hands minutely over the child's flesh. Smooth as satin, clean, firm, white, without blemish. A child's beautiful flesh. Without blemish? Barcaldine's hands searched feverishly. The right limb, the groin, the torso. He gently rolled the child over on his stomach. Higher, higher. The upper arm. The shoulderblade— Sir Richard, bending close, heard the detective's almost imperceptible gasp. He saw the pointing finger. A faint scarlet mark like that from the sting of a bee lay midway between the shoulderblades. Exactly where it would be in an attack from the back. Sir Richard nodded. Not a word was spoken—not in the presence of the governess.

Then the examination, now with greater intensity, went on. The second injection, that of the reagent, calmly administered by Dr. Rheinfrank in his laboratory—it would not be so openly visible. Caution, concealment. Naturally, in the crevices. . . . there! Virtually lost in the left armpit. The second dim red mark—the mark of Rheinfrank's needle. Sir Richard stared at the pointing finger, and nodded that he saw.

Barcaldine pulled the robe tightly again about the boy.

Sir Richard addressed the governess. "Miss Preece, take Robin upstairs and see that he rests." As Robin trotted off, his father patted his shoulder affectionately.

When the two men were alone, Barcaldine said: "His acceptance of your check has doomed him. I want you to charge him, and I will make the arrest."

Sir Richard looked long at the detective. He was calm now. He thought of how perilously close to his dearest interest this evil had come. He reflected, swiftly, upon the enormity of the crime, upon its sinister conception, and of how warped and bestial the human mind can be. A shudder ran through him. Without speaking, he dropped his hands to his sides in a gesture of capitulation.

"May I use your telephone? I want to get through to the Constabulary. I want Sergeant Rudder to join me in the village."

While Barcaldine waited for his call, Sir Richard ventured: "Of course I can phone through to the bank and stop the check with an order not to pay."

Barcaldine smiled thinly. "I don't think Doctor Rheinfrank will ever present the check for payment," he said.

Chapter Eleven

"DAVID! . . . DAVID!"

Crying, frightened, her slender body aquiver, Cathy ran on through the great gnarled trees of Redmarley beech wood toward the fork that led to Alexandrinus, where she was to meet David.

In the ghostly dusk the dew lay heavy in the meadows. The dog-violets and helmeted flowers glistened like diamonds tossed wildly about. A hare bolted suddenly across her path and leaped over a low stone wall.

She came to the wall; breathlessly, exhausted, she crumpled against the lichened stones.

"Oh, David, where are you? Why don't you come?"

She lay and shivered among the dank tussocks. She pulled her honey-yellow shawl tightly about her shoulders to ward off the chill.

Behind her the Marsden house—whence she had come—lay dark and desolate and soundless, stifling within itself its secrets of machination and evil.

After fifteen suspenseful minutes, she saw David's head and shoulders rise above the dark edge of the copse. She rose and called frantically, "David! Oh, David!"

"Cathy! Where are you?"

"Here, by the wall."

David came bounding over. Her hands clutched his shoulders in a kind of desperation.

"Cathy—you're trembling—you've been crying. What is it?" He held her close, and felt her shudder.

"I just ran away from the Marsden house. Doctor Rheinfrank—" She shuddered again.

"What about Rheinfrank? What's he done to you?" He helped her gently to the wall and sat beside her. His arm enfolded her, and his voice was tense. "Tell me, Cathy; it's important I should know, because things are happening—"

"I don't know, David. There's something wrong—something fearfully wrong. I felt it the day he brought Robin back to life. You all believed in him—Sir Richard did. But I felt it wasn't real. There was something horrible and hideous— Now, I think he's gone—fled—"

"Fled? What happened?"

She told him in a torrent of quivering speech: "I had just finished the last page of his manuscript when I heard Sir Richard's car drive up. Doctor Rheinfrank got out and hurried into the house. I don't think he knew I was upstairs. I heard the door slam fast, then his footsteps moving swiftly across the living-room, then into his laboratory, then into the service hall—finally back to the living-room. It was strange; he always had moved about so slowly.

"I sat still and listened. I thought: *Something's wrong—something's happened to him. Why is he running like that? Why the awful hurry? What is all that banging about?* . . . I could hear him shutting the windows, and locking the doors. It frightened me to be alone in the house with him.

"I thought I'd better go down and see. I gathered up the pages of the manuscript that I'd worked so hard over, and written and rewritten, and went downstairs.

"I saw a fire blazing in the fireplace. He'd been burning a lot of papers. And there was an ABC railroad guide open on the desk—he'd been looking up train schedules."

"Where was Rheinfrank?" asked David eagerly.

"He wasn't there. The door of the laboratory was open. I looked through and saw his Gladstone bag on the table, open and ready for packing. He wasn't anywhere in the rooms. It was almost dark, and the house was so deathly silent. I called, 'Doctor Rheinfrank!' Only the parrot screeched at me.

"I went along the hall to the rear. Then I saw him—with his coat off, out under the yews, digging a hole with a spade. It was like a shallow grave. Then he picked up a bundle of clothes and threw them into the grave. They were old coarse clothes: a man's dirty topcoat and shirt and cap, like that miner Storr's. Why would he be burying the miner's clothes, David?"

Instantly David said: "Cathy, listen: They're going to arrest him, for criminal conspiracy. I got it from Tewks." Tersely he told her of the Foundation and the check, and the discovery of the hoax. "I think he may be going to kill Storr, who stands in his way. That's why he buried his clothes: he wants to remove all trace of him."

CATHY continued breathlessly: "I heard his footsteps coming, and ran back into the living-room. When he saw me, he stopped dead. '*Ach*, Cathy!' he said. He hadn't expected me. He looked—oh, *guilty*. 'I've finished the manuscript,' I told him, and handed it to him. What do you think he did? He never looked at it. He turned brusquely and threw it into the fire. 'After all my work!' I cried.

" 'It is of no consequence now,' he said; 'but I will pay you—tomorrow—ten pounds. Your work is finished here, thank you. Now—please to go home.'

"I told him I must take my typewriter and paintings, but he seemed terribly anxious for me to go. 'I will send them to you tomorrow,' he said. I said, no, I'd get them now; but he wouldn't let me go back upstairs. He unlocked the front door and hurried me out. . . . I ran so fast to tell you this, David."

She clung to him tightly, while a relieved shudder passed through her.

David told her: "He's preparing to escape—if he can get away. He may have fled already. I've got to rush now. Sir Richard must know of this."

They rose abruptly, and David urged Cathy toward the fork in the path.

"Cathy, Cathy, go home—go home! Don't go near that house again. There may be death—"

He caught her in his arms as she swayed, yielding, in the dusk, and kissed her.

Afar off, the faint roar of a train trembled across the silent hills.

The next second David, with excited strides, thrust upward toward the manor.

Cathy tightened her shawl about her head and hurried through the dew-drenched meadow. She paused at the foot of the slope where the sheepwalk crossed Redmarley Pike, and looked beyond at Marsden bulking in the night. Had its master already fled? . . . There was her typewriter and the paintings—

"MANFRED!"

Surprised, and starting violently, Dr. Rheinfrank, in his laboratory, looked up from packing his Gladstone bag and beheld his partner towering in the shadows, his face tightened with suspicion and black hate.

It was instantly obvious to Dr. Usk that Dr. Rheinfrank was preparing for flight. For the doctor was wearing his long black coat and Homburg hat, and he was placing a last few articles in the bag before closing it. The bag was on the small glass-topped table, and, Usk noted, the last of the articles were, significantly, the small morocco box containing the needles, and the precious compound and reagent. There were also three or four surgeon's knives, and a pair of forceps belonging to Usk. These gleamed brightly in the yellow light of the kerosene lamp on an adjoining table.

Dr. Rheinfrank had not heard Usk come in. There had been no crash of the knocker, and the front door was locked. The west side entrance, of course! He had left that door unlocked because he intended to make his departure that way. A mistake.

"Manfred, what are you doing?"

Dr. Rheinfrank continued to stare at Usk for several seconds, without answering. The man literally towered above him. The lamplight reached him obliquely and threw his giant's shadow against the wall. The light also shadowed his head; it stressed the cavernous creases in his face; it revealed his angry, desperate mood.

Dr. Rheinfrank had not moved. He stood there stolidly like a pillar of granite as he regarded the intruder.

Receiving no answer, Usk's anger rose and his voice thundered: "Are you running away?"

Dr. Rheinfrank's mind swiftly appraised the other man's mind: his process of thinking, his greed, his distrust and suspicion, his grim purpose in coming here at this moment. Finally he said: "Usk, why have you come here? Do you want to ruin everything?"

"You have the check, Manfred?"

"Yes, I have the check. It is for three hundred thousand pounds."

"You are ready to leave me without a word—"

"I told you to go back to the mine and wait—to avoid suspicion. If they find us together now, if Sir Richard or Meadows or anyone suspects collusion or conspiracy, what becomes of us? I warn you, every minute you are here is dangerous. Go away at once, quickly!"

This attitude of command, this brusque sense of disdain, ruthlessly brushing him aside, further inflamed Dr. Usk. He came a step nearer. He walked like the primordial man, throwing aside all caution, and stood transfixed with naked fury: if Dr. Rheinfrank cheated him, if now, with fortune in their hands, he cast him off and betrayed him, he would kill him—here—now—with his naked hands. He countered with dire meaning: "No, not without my share, Manfred."

Urgent and savage protest welled up in Dr. Rheinfrank, which he sought to control. Better to deal with craft and persuasion at this moment than to feed Usk's antagonism. Both were deadlocked, interdependent.

He knew that. The check was in his possession, in his name. Usk was helpless to profit by it without his, Rheinfrank's action. If Usk's fury led to attack, if he went so far as to kill him in his madness, Rheinfrank's own death would be his revenge, for Usk would be helpless, shut out. Caution, restraint, persuasion—those were his weapons. He ventured, simply and quietly: "How can I give you your share now? I must first cash the check in London."

"I will go with you to London," promptly countered Usk with decision.

Dr. Rheinfrank threw up his hands in protest. "No! Can't you see that that is impossible? You will ruin yourself—and me."

A CUNNING smile now suddenly eased the harshness of Usk's face. It was evident that he was not going to be outwitted. His voice, when he spoke, was cold and final.

"This is not the first time you have done this to me, Manfred. Always at the critical moment you make ready to flee. In London you were packed to go, with my most valuable instruments. And now again you make ready for flight." He moved across to the glass-topped table. His face twisted with a sardonic quirk. "And again you are taking my instruments." His hands reached for the knives and forceps on the glass beside the Gladstone bag.

"Usk," declared Dr. Rheinfrank, "of course I am taking the instruments. Could you come here and pack them and take them away? Do you want to betray our secret?"

"Verdammt, nein!" cried Dr. Usk, dropping the pieces of metal to the glass with a clang. "I warned you not to cross me." He felt himself caught helplessly in the trap by this man of his own breed whom he had trusted. This implacable fact seared his disordered brain; the long, smooth period of deceit, the subtle treachery— "You will not go away this time, Manfred." He moved forward by inches, inexorably. It was this catlike movement, and the stark look in his hollowed eyes, and his hands tightening, that caused Dr. Rheinfrank to retreat a step with an awareness that here was something to fear.

He thought of the hypodermic syringe and the compound in the bag; but that was too late now; Dr. Usk, as he came on, separated him from the table.

Caution! a voice said sharply in Dr. Rheinfrank's mind. They faced each other across the little table, nerves raw.

Dr. Rheinfrank jerked backward as he felt Usk's hands, like avenging instruments, tightening upon his throat. He heard a roaring in his ears; his vision darkened; and through the mist, he saw the lamp circling and bursting into wheels of fire. He tried to cry out. He was stifled with unbearable agony. Gathering his strength, he thrust his head downward, twisted it violently to free himself; and as he did so, Usk flung him pitilessly back against the doors.

There, bent over, his hand clutched his throat; his breathing came hard. When he could speak he rasped, brokenly: "Fool, Usk! Fool to do this. . . . All right—go to London—go to Paris. Wait for me at the Dome—at the café where we met. One week—wait one week."

Go to Paris—wait for him at the Dome. *Ja*, and would he come? Never! Never would he come. Twice now he had betrayed Usk—twice now had Usk caught him in flight. How could he trust him again? Three hundred thousand pounds. Would he come to the Dome and say briskly and smilingly: *"Ach*, Usk, how happy I am to see you! You see, I have kept my word. Here, in this envelope, is your full share: one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. You kept your bargain, and now I have kept mine. *Ja wohl!"* Wait one week. One week —one year—eternity. Wait until the Dome crumbles and is dust.

He moved forward again toward Dr. Rheinfrank, cowering against the doors. The anger in his brain, the blind, berserk fury of his senses, condensed his consciousness of foul and wanton treachery into the impulse to kill.

Dr. Rheinfrank, gazing at the mask of his face, felt the first real terror of his life. He edged quickly along the wall to the fireplace. There was an iron poker there; without turning, his hand groped and touched the heavy ornamental head.

In one flashing and terrible moment he struck. The metal thudded dully. There was no outcry. Only the vivid apparition of the giant body stopped dead in its tracks. It weaved and wavered against the light; the blows lowered it to its knees; it swayed and fell, and lay quietly at the foot of the mantel.

For endless stark seconds Dr. Rheinfrank stood poised grotesquely with the poker half-lifted. No, there is no danger now. Put the poker down. He began speaking to himself, incoherently. He told himself, clumsily, that he had not meant to kill. Kill? A mistake. Something gone wrong.

He stood over the darkened blur, and got down on his knees and called Usk's name, hoping in some wild, unreasonable way that he would answer. Dread seconds pulsed by. The whole dangerous pattern had climbed to a climax. What to do?

He must do something. . . . He began moving around and around the room, forcing his brain, trying to think the thing through. He must act quickly, too: there were miles to travel tonight before he could catch the London express.

He thought of the attic above, of the cellar below, and swiftly discarded both places. The gardens, the drains, the woods close by, the solitude of Icomb Pond—

While these thought were coursing through his mind, he paused suddenly, startled. A footstep—was that a footstep in the living-room? He listened intently. Yes. Someone had entered the house and was furtively crossing the floor.

WHEN he opened the doors, he saw her. There was a triple-pronged candelabrum burning at the far end. Dimly, silhouetted against the light, she stood there. Her face, in the instant that she looked through the open doorway, contorted with horror.

"Cathy!"

He closed the doors quickly behind him. Then sharply: "Cathy, what are you doing here—at night?"

When she could speak, she said haltingly: "I came to get my typewriter and paintings, Doctor Rheinfrank."

"Did I not say I would send them to you tomorrow?"

"Yes. But aren't you going up to London? David told me—about the Foundation. The house was dark; I saw no light; I thought you'd already gone."

"I see—*ja wohl.*" Then craftily, "I shall miss you, Cathy."

She forced herself to say: "Thank you, Doctor Rheinfrank. You have been very kind to me."

"Wait. I will get the lamp. I will go upstairs with you and help you pack your things."

He returned to the laboratory. It took but a second to charge the hypodermic. He lifted the lamp from the table, and rejoined Cathy in the living-room.

"Now, will you go ahead, Cathy, and I will light the way."

She moved, tremblingly, into the service hall and came to the foot of the staircase. She started up. Dr. Rheinfrank followed close behind her, holding the lamp high in his left hand, so that the light reached the gloomy top of the stairs.

Their heels clicked on the worn oaken boards. Midway, Dr. Rheinfrank reached up and cupped Cathy's elbow, to help her. "Slowly," he said, "go slowly." As she felt the touch of his hand, the same tremor of fear that had come over her that first day in this house, swept her. She should not have come, not alone and at night.

She should have let her father, or David. . . . She uttered a low, sharp cry and tottered against Dr. Rheinfrank's arm. Terror compressed her heart like a cramp. She sank down helpless, and fluttered like a bird with its wing broken, then became still.

Dr. Rheinfrank was flattened against the wall, his left hand holding high the lamp. Now he set the lamp down on a step, and lifting Cathy in his arms, carried her down the stairs through the hall to the living-room and laid her on the couch. He then fetched the lamp.

What she had seen in that one swift glimpse between the doors must remain with her in oblivion. Oblivion —where? Sweat poured down Dr. Rheinfrank's face. Fever crept like mice through his bones. Someone, he knew, would soon come for Cathy. He must think quickly. Act quickly. No trace. But where?

He thought of the walls. The thick old brick walls. The far south wall of the living-room was of brick behind the huge imitation Audenarde tapestry with its figures of Psyche Going to the Sacrifice. He began tapping the wall. The house had been built in 1801, and had seen much interior reconstruction. Near the center, where there had been a closet a hundred years ago, his tapping returned a hollow sound. It was here that he removed the bricks.

He went into the laboratory, and seizing Usk under the arms, dragged him through the doorway and across the living-room floor to the wall. The body was very heavy. In death it seemed to have life, to resist. The tension and the weight caused sweat again to pour down into Dr. Rheinfrank's neck. He breathed convulsively.

Dr. Rheinfrank lifted the head and shoulders, a foot, and forced them into the hole. The opening was not large enough. The body fell back to the floor.

Again lifting the body, Dr. Rheinfrank forced it into the opening with the pressure of his knees. He trussed back the stiffening limbs and wedged them in. The body dropped out of sight within the hollow—like a Neolithic burial in a megalithic barrow.

The relief was stark. He felt, somehow, freed of uncertainty, of the crucial terror of the last thirty minutes. He felt no remorse. Usk was merely an instrument. The emoluments were now entirely his. It was unfortunate that Cathy had come. He had liked her; he regretted what had to be done. He started toward her on the couch.

Lord Nelson, attracted by the lights, strode pompously across the floor. He approached the wall, chattering, chattering. Dr. Rheinfrank, in emotional despondency, became furious at its gibberish. *"Geh doch!"* He leaned down, and with one swipe of his hand brutally belted it out of his way. With feathers flying, it sailed and landed, screeching, across the room under the escritoire. It righted itself, bristling, strutting disdainfully, and cocking its shining head, muttered: "Thank you—thank you very much!"

For one fleeting second a pang of remorse stung Dr. Rheinfrank. It was the one savage act he had ever administered to his beloved pet. He had not meant it; but his nerves were as taut as gut on a violin.

Cathy lay with the inertia of death. It might as well have been death. Her face was marble-white; her satin flesh, when Dr. Rheinfrank lifted her, was already growing cold. He carried her gently across to the cavity in the wall. She was a little thing, and he had no difficulty in placing her inside the hollow. There she would lie until her bones would traject a cry that would arouse and electrify the countryside. He turned away abruptly; he could not bear to look upon her face.

His brain became a vortex of cold fear, desperation, remorse. His mouth was parched, yet perspiration dripped from him. The shadowy walls—the very walls —were closing in and threatening to beleaguer him.

He staggered to a cabinet and poured himself a stiff brandy.

There was exacting work ahead. The wall to be sealed, the concealing tapestry to be replaced, the poker to be cleaned, every telltale sign to be removed. It was now eight-thirty. Still time for him to catch the London express. But hurry! He returned to the wall and began deftly and precisely bricking it up.

At nine-thirty he was ready to leave. He had on his coat, his Homburg hat, and had locked his bag.

One last look around. He picked up the candelabrum and in its flickering light went over each detail again. The wall. The tapestry. The poker. The spear of blood upon the floor where Usk had fallen. He had removed it with acid and covered the spot by shoving the rug slightly nearer the window. He returned to the living-room and blew out the lamp. He still held the candelabrum and glanced about the room in its light. For the last time. The last—

Lord Nelson. . . . He called: "Nelson! Lord Nelson!" Even in his stress and pace, he could not forsake his one friend. What might happen to him? Into whose indifferent hands might he fall? But as he gazed about the room, there was not a trace of the bird. He looked under the escritoire where he had last seen him. He moved quickly into the laboratory, the service hall, all the lower rooms. His frozen, guttural cry echoed frenziedly: "Lord Nelson!" He searched the ledges, the shelves; he hurried back to the cage with its open door, in the corner. Empty. It was incredible. He stood for a moment and raised the candelabrum aloft. The parrot *must* be here —he was always here— As he revolved, convinced that his eyes must find the bird in some outlandish spot, suddenly his eyes fixed upon the tapestry—the wall. . . . *Gott!*

He set down the candelabrum and tore at the tapestry, his hands weaving like claws; and gazed blindly at the tragic wall. The room was as still as the death on the other side. Transfixed, he listened. There was no sound from the hollow between the walls.

Then, when he heard it, his blood slugged into his throat. The next instant he blew out the candles. He stood in darkness and listened. From outside the front door came a cacophony of voices. And again the clatter of the knocker. When he did not open, he heard his name called.

"Rheinfrank! Doctor Rheinfrank! Open in the name of the Law!"

He recognized Sergeant Rudder's voice. He heard other voices: Dr. Meadows', David's. . . . The men were forcing the front door. Gripping his bag, Dr. Rheinfrank retreated toward the rear of the house, along the dark passage to an alcove, or niche, concealed by heavy chenille hangings. He heard the door burst open. The men—there were four of them—entered the living-room and lighted the candles.

Detective-Sergeant Barcaldine called: "Rheinfrank! We want to question you, Doctor Rheinfrank."

Barcaldine and Sergeant Rudder then searched the laboratory. Dr. Rheinfrank could hear them moving about, and shortly they returned. Barcaldine gave the order to search the whole house, every room. The lamp was lighted. The Yard man and Rudder covered the lower floor, and Dr. Meadows and David clumped up the staircase.

Presently Dr. Rheinfrank heard David cry out: "Here's her shawl, Doctor Meadows. She *has* been here." The shawl. He had forgotten it. But that wouldn't matter now. He heard them enter the studio above. Their feet tramped over the boards for several minutes; they searched through the other rooms, fumbled up into the attic, and at last returned.

Dr. Meadows exhibited Cathy's shawl to Barcaldine. His voice was tragic and unsteady. "She came back for

Foxface saw only a blur, as the screaming substance catapulted down into the darkness.

her typewriter and paintings. They're still upstairs—untouched. Where is she?"

"When we find Doctor Rheinfrank, we will know," answered Barcaldine. "Evidently he has fled. His hat, coat and bag are gone—"

David broke in excitedly. "Yes, and he's taken his parrot with him. Where is the parrot? Look at those feathers on the floor—"

David pointed, and the men stared at the scattered puffs of green-and-yellow feathers.

The parrot. A deep, convulsive shudder writhed like a stroke through Dr. Rheinfrank. He heard, swimmingly above the roar of terror in his brain:

"Look here, Rudder, you wait in the house. In case Rheinfrank or Usk come back, arrest them at once and hold them. I'll keep in touch with you. Don't leave the house under any circumstances, understand?"

"Yes sir."

Sergeant Rudder crossed the room, settled himself in a chair and drew out his pipe. He leaned leisurely back, almost lazily, and began his vigil. He balanced himself against the Audenarde tapestry covering the brick wall.

Chapter Twelve

IN THE SMOOTH, MUFFLED RUSH OF STEEL OVER the line, Dr. Rheinfrank could hear a voice rising hushed and anguished to damn him. *Murderer . . . murderer.* He had not meant to kill. That was his answer, cried out over and over again deep within his soul, to the voice that trumpeted his crime. He had escaped, but he could not escape the vision of Usk's grisly death-mask as he forced him into the wall. If he had not killed Usk, the fellow would certainly have killed him. Better the way it all happened. Who would miss Usk? No friends, no kin, no one to care—a clod, a failure. No remorse or suffering for anyone. Far better off asleep in the wall. . . . But he could not drown the sweet innocence of Cathy's face as he lowered her into her tomb. For that he condemned himself. In the gloomy house her laughter, her tripping step, her smile, had come like the sun breaking through clouds. But she had been the danger in his path. He had done what he had to do with gentleness and dexterity. . . . Even if he cashed the check, and lost himself in a secret pocket of the vast continent across the Channel, never could he forget the naked horror of this night.

For six hours, at least, he reflected, he was safe. Safe, secure, free and beyond the implacable justice of English law. He had escaped successfully from the house of death; now there were six hours ahead of him before the express rolled into St. Pancras Station in the early London morning.

HE sat alone in the third-class compartment of a carriage that was the second from the end of a long train. He wanted to be thus alone. His face was haggard and grimly set. His mind was chaotic, and he wanted to still his emotions.

The train was flying. Newcastle and Durham were far behind; ahead were Darlington and Northallerton, then the unimpeded run to York. Selby would be passed, and the train would stop again at Doncaster. After that —"Next stop, London." He remembered that from his trip to Northumberland in January.

He could not sit still. His nerves were raw and taut. He felt as though a tumor were about to burst in his brain. He got up and paced the narrow aisle between the seats. He was glad for this reason that he was alone in the compartment, as it afforded him physical relief to pace even these few steps. His mind, once cold in its ruthless control, was now fevered with fear. His face, gaunt and ashen, betrayed the awful agony of his thoughts. His hands twitched as he repeatedly wiped the streaming sweat from his forehead.

He was thinking of the situation at that moment in the Marsden house. The parrot. Of course, the parrot had strutted into the opening in the wall unseen by him. That was why David and Dr. Meadows were unable to find it. His beloved parrot, that he had so painstakingly taught to talk—to say those foolish and amusing things!

Once before in his youth he had had a parrot, a white parrot with a yellow crest. He had loved his pet, and had wept bitter tears when a neighbor's cat had killed it. His emotions for Lord Nelson were a throwback to his earlier emotions of pride and pleasure and boyish love. It seemed odd and fantastic now that this gay and companionable bird should be the instrument of his destruction. For that was the way it seemed meant to be. Often, at night, Lord Nelson's harsh and garrulous voice would cry out: "You're a fool—you're a fool—you're a fool—" and "Can you lend me some money?" and "Run! run! The house is on fire!" And he'd whistle shrilly. Now, in the metallic click of the rails, dissolved in the roar of the fast-flying train, he could hear the bird's voice like a chorus: "You're a fool—you're a fool—you're a fool!"

In the black night beyond the wall, imprisoned, without food or water, Lord Nelson must inevitably cry out. A song, a squawk, a whistle. A cry of betrayal. . . . Dr. Rheinfrank reflected: it was not an accident or coincidence that the Constabulary Sergeant had taken up his position against the wall, and tilted his chair back against the bricks. He had never wholly believed in Providence, nor the avenging manifestations of Providence; but he believed, fearfully, in the law of compensation. Now, in the torturous fluctuations of his mind, he conceived

the subtlety and implacability of a power beyond human power, a nebulous and ghostly overtone which man is scarcely conscious of, but which directs his destiny. It was this invisible hand that had directed Rudder to the wall.

His mind leaped ahead to the great St. Pancras Station in the early morning.

The picture in his mind was vivid. Too vivid. The express would creep slowly along the platform's edge, and stop. There would be the usual chaos of noises, the tangle and confusion of porters and baggage and taxis. The carriage door would be opened, and he would step out. There to greet him would be two men. "You are Doctor Rheinfrank?" He would answer that he was. "Will you come with us to Scotland Yard? We wish to question you." It would be said quietly, but it would be an order. Then one morning, shortly after dawn, the black flag would be run up over Pentonville prison, tokening a hanging.

He paced swifter as the express leaped southward. Under the dim blue night light in the carriage his hand trailed downward across his loose mouth and trembling jaw. The hoods of his eyes closed down like a hawk's. His was a microcosm of terror and conscience and naked fear. He slumped into the seat at the window, and looked out at the world of night. The moon's glow over wold and copse lay pale and sickly. Now a row of low rounded hills swept into view, and an instant later was gone; and the moon's shimmer lay on a pond. The lights of a crofter's cottage shone distantly and forlornly.

Darlington. The train slowed down. Lights flared from houses; there was a rumble of sound, and the long line of coaches came to a stop.

Dr. Rheinfrank could hear the rattle of baggage trucks, and the cries of guards as passengers hurried along the platform. He hoped, desperately, that no one would enter the carriage. It was difficult for him to sit like stone, alone, at the end of a row of seats and stifle his inner self. Restrained, he felt entrapped; the carriage, narrow, circumscribed, might be a cell, and he was violently moved by the urge to escape. . . . *Verdammt!* someone was coming. Along the narrow aisle that led to the compartments he heard a man's footsteps. Perhaps he would pass on. No. The other carriages were overcrowded. There was space in here. The glass-paneled door was slid back, and a little fox-faced man with a long, well-worn tweed overcoat and a cap and stock, came in. Dr. Rheinfrank jerked erect. Foxface carried a parrot in a brass cage!

THE sight of the parrot startled Dr. Rheinfrank. It was green and brilliant yellow; it circled and maneuvered on its perch with all the dignity and self-importance of his own Lord Nelson. Dr. Rheinfrank gazed at the parrot with chilling perturbation. To escape its unpleasant connotations he half-turned away and stared out of the window at the fleeting landscape. There were only the bare black wolds and the late moon riding the sky above a stencil of little combs.

But he could not escape the North-Country voice of the fox-faced man talking to his parrot.

"Alfred," he called it. "Well, Alfred," he cooed, "you're going to London. D'you think you'll like London town?"

"Who cares? Who cares?" rasped Alfred.

"Are you hungry, Alfred?"

"Don't give a damn, don't give a damn—"

The man laughed in raucous amusement; it obviously puffed him up to show off his bird. He got a bit of sugar from his pocket and poked it into the cage.

This byplay crisped Dr. Rheinfrank's nerves. It bound his thoughts back to the wall. Then—

"Do you like parrots?" the fox-faced man called across in a friendly tone.

Dr. Rheinfrank kept silent. He could hear the meaningless cries, now meaningful, of another parrot, mixing with the train's roar and this idiotic prattle.

Foxface thought he hadn't heard. "My Alfred's from Australia. My brother-in-law sent 'im to me at Christmas. No chum like a parrot, I say. Talks to me all day long. Keeps me company. Here, ask 'im something. He takes a fancy to strangers—"

The fantastic presence of the parrot enraged Dr. Rheinfrank. The man's ease and friendliness and urbanity inflamed him with an overwhelming fury. He wanted to strangle the man and whip the head off the parrot. It was well after midnight, and this idiot— He stood up, paced the narrow aisle, sat down again, slumped against the window. He struggled to control his rage.

"Say 'Hallo' to the gentleman, Alfred. Come, come! You like to make new friends—"

"Who cares a damn?" echoed Alfred.

Gott! Would this go on all night?

He had endured with a silent masochism; now, unable to endure longer, he jumped up and shouted:

"Shut up, will you! Shut that parrot up!"

The little man stared incredulously. He was more surprised than offended. "Oh, I'm sorry," he muttered, "I didn't think Alfred annoyed you." His face wrinkled apologetically.

DR. RHEINFRANK settled back in his corner, and silence fell upon the carriage. Presently in the faint light of the night lamp he saw the man lean back and drift into sleep. There was only an occasional guttural sound from Alfred as he shifted on his perch. So, through the early hours after midnight, the train rushed on. Northallerton. There was a brief stop here. Thirty miles beyond, there was a longer stop at York. Then, twenty minutes later, the sleeping town of Selby flashed by; and on to Doncaster.

Doncaster. Last stop before London. The long line of coaches ground to a stop with a rattle of luggage in the racks and a metallic jangling of couplings. Outside, the shambling of baggage trucks, the clank of milk containers, the bustle of passengers.

The stop here would be brief. Ten or twelve minutes Dr. Rheinfrank peered out at the long dim-lit platform. Doncaster, meaningless enough of any other journey, was now suddenly a theater of crisis. If he passed this station, escape was cut off until the express reached London. Soon it would be dawn, and the new day, and St. Pancras. As swiftly as his mind could operate, in a few tense seconds, he envisioned anew the two Yard men waiting on the platform. Only now they were no longer nebulous images: his terror made them real. They seemed to move toward him, implacably — slow motion. He could see their blue-veined English faces. One was heavy-set and wore a dark suit and bowler hat, a heavy gold chain across his waistcoat, and had a broad toothbrush mustache. The other was tall and gaunt and wore a raincoat and carried an umbrella over his arm. "You are Doctor Rheinfrank?" said the tall one. "Would you please come with us," said the other.

Dr. Rheinfrank jumped impulsively to his feet and seized his bag. He let down the window in the door by its strap, reached out, turned the metal handle, threw open the door, and was on the platform.

In darkness he walked toward the wicket. A light stabbed down on the sleepy, uniformed attendant. Some people, carrying bags, were passing out and up a flight of wooden stairs. Decision now. His allotment of life hung like a sword. If he went out through the wicket, he could make his way undetected through the Midlands, perhaps book on a freighter leaving Liverpool or an obscure port in Scotland. No! The alarm would already have gone out; every port would be watched, every road and terminal; there would be no escape from the island.

He paced irresolutely in the dark of the long shed, passing his situation through his mind; its hope of salvage, its danger.

South along the platform he heard the shout of the guard: "Next stop, London." He was swiftly back on the train, in his cell-like carriage. Trapped now. Escape through the North Country could only have given him a reprieve at best, a few more days of liberty. He stamped the speculation from his mind. The shrill piping whistle and the grind of wheels tokened speed again.

He sat huddled at the window, his ears drumming and his flesh oozing cold sweat. Across on the opposite seat, the fox-faced man was still asleep, his head thrust back grotesquely, his teeth protruding. The caged parrot was rotating on its perch, climbing the wires, spewing incoherent phrases. Damn this meaningless human blot for invading his carriage! Damn the fearful sight of this ubiquitous parrot!

Psychologically, Dr. Rheinfrank was already lost, condemned, caught. The confined carriage, rushing him to his doom, was a prison cell, a death-chamber. There was only the waiting now. He could no longer endure. The roar of the express resounded in his ears, crashing through his brain—louder, louder. And like a chorus impacting through the tumult: *The parrot's in the wall—the parrot's in the wall—the parrot's in the wall!* Surely it had squawked by now, shrieked, or cried, or whistled.

Alfred fluttered wildly in his cage. The sight of the parrot haunted him, enraged him, filled him with murderous fury. "What damn' luck – what damn' luck!" chanted Alfred. And—"Knock 'im in the Old Kent Road." And long mocking laughter.

There was but one alleviation. One moment of contemplation. Ironically, the check. Dr. Rheinfrank got his wallet from a pocket, unfolded the check, and gazed at it. Made out to Dr. Manfred Rheinfrank, for three hundred thousand pounds! Ease, luxury, pleasure, security. A banquet of life. The villa at Cap d'Antibes, a little palace among the hills of Rome, the haven at Bermuda. This piece of paper opened the gates. He held it tightly in his hand, fondly. He knew now that he would never cash it.

He dug out the stub of a pencil from his pocket and hastily wrote an endorsement on the back.

While his shaking hand still was writing, Foxface's parrot screeched. Dr. Rheinfrank dropped the check beside his bag, leaped to his feet.

He could stand it no longer. Of penitence, not a tremor. Of life, a crawling, craving thirst.

The parrot's in the wall—

His mind was going—collapsing like a shower of expended fireworks. It was his mind that was destroying him. As yet no human hand was upon him; no walls of imprisonment girt him; he was still mortally free.

Suddenly, violently, he struck the parrot to the quivering floor. The jolt woke the sleeping man opposite. Foxface bounced forward with a start, crying: "What's that? What's happened?"

Rheinfrank already had the window open, and now the door open. There was a fury of sound, clatter of steel on steel. The hurricane rush of air carried in the hot breath of the locomotive in gaseous clouds.

He held the cage to fling it through the open doorway. He felt the other's grappling hands in rescue of the cage. But he hurled it far out, and pirouetted for one perilous instant in the doorway. Foxface saw only a blur, misshapen and darkling, a troglodytic heap, as the screaming substance twisted and catapulted down into the darkness of the embankment.

The train thundered over a bridge. Below, westward, a sluggish river glinted. Foxface reached up and jerked the *Stop* signal.

In the Marsden house the Audenarde tapestry was thrust to one side. The floor was covered with loose bricks and a veil of gray dust. David, tense and fearful of what they might find, received the last of the bricks from Barcaldine and shoved them behind him on the floor. The hole was now large enough for them to explore the interior. Barcaldine looked up abruptly at Sergeant Rudder.

"Let me have your flashlight."

David, in his eagerness, reached for the torch.

"No! Stand back. Wait."

David joined Dr. Meadows. The physician had moved away from the wall and was pacing under strain in the shadows. David saw that the grayness had deepened on his face; he saw, too, the quivering outlines of his mouth and the suffering in his eyes.

Barcaldine took the torch and leaned far inside the opening. The silence went on for a full minute.

Dr. Meadows, breaking, cried out: "Is it Cathy?"

Barcaldine withdrew and touched Rudder's arm.

"Stand by," he said. "Give me a hand."

Again reaching in with both arms, and projecting his body half over the jagged parapet of bricks, Barcaldine seized her shoulders and lifted Cathy into the light.

When Dr. Meadows looked, he saw her white face set as in death.

Rudder took hold of her feet, and together the two officers carried her to the couch and laid her gently down.

"Cathy. . . . O God—" Dr. Meadows bent close over her and tested her heart. He examined her throat, her head. There was no sign of violence. Then with a heroic effort at self-control he said: "She is gone—"

David, unbelieving, shook his arm. "But you said *that*, Doctor Meadows, about the miner, and about Robin, and they lived!"

Barcaldine had gone briskly over to a console table and opened Dr. Rheinfrank's bag that had been rescued from the train. He took out the morocco case containing the syringes, and the bottle containing the amber-toned liquid, marked *"Reagent."*

"There's this one chance," he said sternly: "If Rheinfrank—" He paused, then: "You're a physician—you will know how to administer this."

Dr. Meadows' eyes leveled sharply. Quickly he steadied his hands and filled the hypodermic. How much? How much to enliven that precious heart again? He inserted the needle under her skin. He stood transfixed, a statue, watching her. David took the instrument from his hand and laid it beside the box. Seconds sped by, and they watched her together.

Barcaldine nodded to the Sergeant, and both men returned to the wall.

The Yard man handed Rudder the torch. He bade him look in the hollow.

This Rudder did, leaning far in for a full minute. Then he shifted the torch to his left hand, and strained downward, reaching for something with his right. He emerged and displayed before Barcaldine a curious object. It was Lord Nelson, his head dangling lifeless.

Barcaldine took Sir Richard's check from the bag and passed it to Rudder. "That's what he meant," he said, "when he endorsed the check, 'The parrot's in the wall.' We might never have known. Evil needs only a little rope to destroy itself. 'The seeds of destruction'—"

"Cathy!"

"Oh, God. . . . Cathy—"

She was moving—she was moving—*she was moving—*

They saw David on the floor beside her; they saw him enclose her little hand in both of his, and kiss it frantically. "Oh, my darling—oh, my darling Cathy—" he sobbed.

Barcaldine let the tapestry fall back across the opening. He told himself that he would attend to that later.

Who's Who *in this* Issue

Robert H. Bliss

IT was in January, 1945, when I was incensed at the labor strike situation on the home front, that I first started writing. I wrote a long letter from Luxembourg to the Detroit *Free Press*, stating the soldier's outlook on material delays caused by strikes.

From that letter, which appeared on the editorial page on Easter Sunday, I began writing for two 76th Division papers. In Germany, the summer of 1945, I helped write our Battalion's record, "As It Happened," a factual account of my battalion's action in the United States and Europe.

After the war, I enrolled at Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa, under the G. I. Bill of Rights. I am now a junior "Close Combat" was written at Grinnell, and is an undeviating result of my own war experiences as a Private, First Class, Infantry weapons platoon. It is a story of American combat soldiers, the man in the street, in their words, their actions. It could very easily characterize and represent any infantry platoon or battalion that was in combat operations on the Western Front. This truthful account is of my own platoon during a consecutive period of seventy-two hours. It establishes the fact that Americans are fighters, that we can repulse the best, that we have the courage, when united, to attack and to show those who think differently that we are courageous men-at-arms. I am a recipient of the Silver Star, awarded for action in the mountain town of Speicher, Germany, mentioned in "Close Combat."

Born in Evanston, Illinois, I am now twenty-one years old. My most ardent interests have been athletics, writing and wilderness canoe trips. I am a member of the Men's Athletic Society and the Sigma Delta Chi journalism fraternity on the Grinnell campus.

My wilderness journeyings have taken me over five thousand miles on Canadian lakes and rivers.

I am now working on my second book, a psychological and human-interest story centered in the untouched highlands of Canada. I am married now, and residing in a trailer camp with other ex-members of the armed forces.

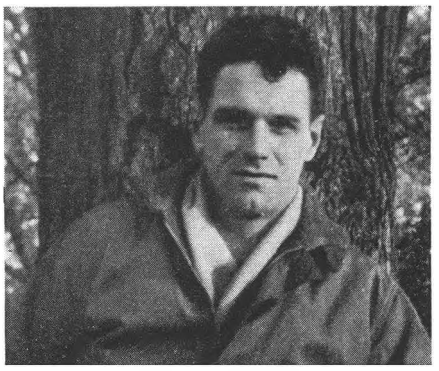
Paul K. Johnstone

Arlington FryBarger

AFTER being born (1911) in Kansas, and sticking it out there for four years, I traveled widely with my family for the next ten years, with a stopover in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to finish high school. Then at Tulsa University, followed by University of Oklahoma, and Southern Methodist University, the various deans of men kept telling me that I'd never get a degree because of my unorthodox choice of studies. And they were right. I made pretty fair grades in everything except mathematics, so forthwith became a successful auditor. Twelve years later I could afford the luxury of becoming a metropolitan newspaper reporter. (During fluctuations of fortune I worked as life-guard, oilfield roughneck, athletic director, machinist, stage-hand, stock-company actor, bit-rôle movie actor, barker for a gambling concession, salesman for a music company, and so on.)

Arlington FryBarger

Starting as police reporter, I covered every beat on the paper, and in three years I was a "trained seal"—a feature writer. Most Interesting Assignment: Getting the answer to the question, "How far down the Pan American Highway is it possible to drive in a stock car?" I found out 3,000 miles down the line, a month later, at Pinas Blancas, Nicaragua.



Robert H. Bliss

After a year as managing editor of a trade journal outfit, with make-up and production experience added to my background, I finally felt qualified (in the fall of 1947) to flap my wings as a free-lance writer. I have only one wife; with our daughter, eight, and son, four, we divide our time between our Dallas home, Colorado ranch, a private school, a first novel and a four-act play.

Paul K. Johnstone

BORN in Missouri at an early age, I had the inestimable benefit of growing up in Oklahoma, where there was plenty of room for it (6 feet 4 and 240 pounds at latest returns). Met Indians, oil-men, hijackers, and pistol-packin' mamas—it was a lively land. At twelve, I had been under fire three times. Returned to St. Louis as an advance agent of the depression, but still consider myself a Sooner.

A decade of intensive first-hand research into how the other half exists. . . . Wheelbarrow chauffeur, ballplayer (I never made the pro grade—good hit, but no field), wrestling referee, door-to-door salesman, florist, art student.

First success was in non-fiction. In '39 my "Mons Badonicus and Cerdic of Wessex" caused the R.A.F. to undertake an air-survey, and the addition of three notes to Hodgkin's monumental "History of the Anglo-Saxons" (second edition). From such archæological speculations, it is only a hop, skip and jump to historical fiction.

Myopic peepers, souvenirs of a childhood bout with typhoid, kept me at home during the recent global incident. However, I burst into uniform as guard at a hush-hush war plant, where I had the honor of capturing a subversive intruder—an undersized stray pony.

My hobbies are boxing, baseball, and collating Dark Age genealogies, traditions and place-names. What carried men of the Fifth and Sixth centuries through their ordeals, are the things we need today—courage and faith.

BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE FOR ADVENTUROUS READING

MAY, 1948

BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE ★ MAY 1948

TEN SHORT STORIES *by OWEN CAMERON, PAUL JOHNSTON, EDWARD McKENNA, NELSON BOND, BILL ADAMS, ERIK FENNEL, KENNETH PERKINS, H BEDFORD-JONES, JOHN BEAMES, RICHARD H. WATKINS*

CLOSE COMBAT
by ROBERT H. BLISS

S-44 AT TORPEDO JUNCTION
by EDWARD L. BEACH