MEN!

SCIENTISTS FIND–
GIRLS WHO "GET CAUGHT," WANT TO!

Bluebook

FEBRUARY 1956 ★ 25¢

An Atomic Furnace To Heat/Cool Your House

★

Tax Savings Most People Forget – p. 34

★

Uranium Stocks – Big New Fraud

★

2 SHORT NOVELS

Gold-Plated Gunboat –

Lt. Pettengill vs. the Army, the Navy, the South

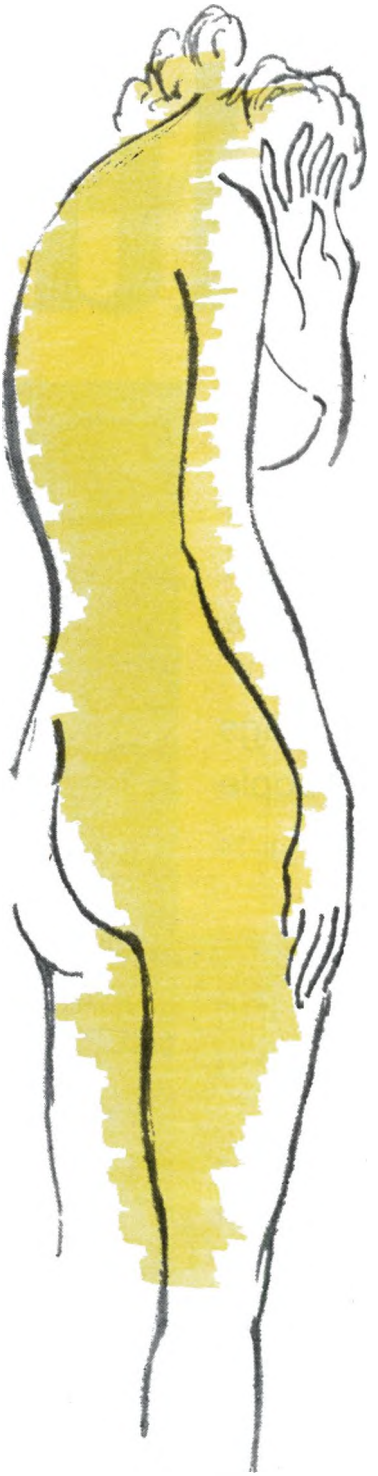
PLUS

A manhunt thriller

girls who "get caught," want to

This startling theory about unwed mothers, held by the social scientists who have had the most experience with these unfortunate girls, is here revealed for the first time in any national magazine. It seems destined to be one of the most widely discussed articles ever published.

see page 22



Bluebook

FEBRUARY 1956
VOL. 102 No. 4
Trademark Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

SCIENCE: Girls Who "Get Caught" Want to, *by John Kord Lagemann* 22

HOUSE: An Atomic Furnace to Heat/Cool Your House, *by Carl Dreher* ... 6
Poison Gas in the House, *by Fritz Howard* 45

MONEY: You Can Lose Your Shirt in Uranium, *by Lester David* 10

CARS: PTG: Hidden Killer, *by Terry Galanoy* 19

OFFBEAT: Lincoln's Rebel In-Laws, *by William H. Wilson* 29

SPORTS: Famous Firsts in Sports: Millrose Games, *by Bill Gottlieb* 13

HUMOR: Unsung Hoosier Humorist, *by Al Spiers* 15
A Perfect Evening on the House, *by Loyd Rosenfield* 101

FEATURES: Pro and Con..... 2
The Head Man..... 4
Editor's Note 5
Read All About It..... 14
Wordly Wise 95
Crisis: Pay-Off 129

LEND-A-HAND DEPT.: It's Your Money..... 34
What's New and Good..... 37
Man Around the House..... 41
Man Outdoors 43

2 SHORT NOVELS: The Edge of the Knife, *by Robert Craig*..... 47
The Gold-Plated Gunboat, *by George Fielding Eliot* 16

STORIES: Night Call, *by Richard Wormser* 8
Fear Is a Brassy Taste, *by Robert W. Krepps* 20
Return of the Wolf, *by Edmund Gilligan* 24
The Mail Must Go Through, *by John Reese*..... 26
Good-by, Rudolph, Good-by, *by Walter Goodman*..... 30

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

UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, unless accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes, will not be returned.

BLUEBOOK is published each month simultaneously in the United States and Canada by McCall Corporation. Marvin Pierce, President; Lowell Shumway, Vice-President and Circulation Director; Edward M. Brown, Secretary; William C. Auer, Treasurer. Publication and Subscription Offices: McCall Street, Dayton 1, Ohio. Executive and Editorial Offices: 230 Park Ave. New York 17, N. Y. MANUSCRIPTS and ART MATERIAL will be carefully considered but will be received only with the understanding that the publisher and editor shall not be responsible for loss or injury. SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: $2.50 for one year, $4.00 for two years, $6.00 for three years in U. S., Canada and Pan-American countries (add $1.00 per year for other countries). Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions to our publication office: McCall Street, Dayton 1, Ohio. IF YOU PLAN TO MOVE SOON please notify us four weeks in advance. Subscription lists are addressed in advance of publication date and extra postage is charged for forwarding. On sending notice of change of address give old address as well as new, preferably clipping name and old address from last copy received. FEBRUARY ISSUE, 1956. VOL. CII, No. 4. 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.

Pro and Con

Traffic Traps

David Dressler has done a great public service in helping expose the outdated traffic laws and attitudes ("Even the Cops Don't Know Traffic Laws," November). I have heard people speak of the rotten traffic traps in the eastern U.S. that are upheld by hoodlum-faction city councils and equally low-life enforcement officers, and I think I can offer a remedy.

What Mr. U.S. Citizen needs is an agency which would compile a list of all known traffic traps, keep it up to date, and market it for a small fee. That way travelers

could plan their itinerary to shun these plague-infested communities. I would gladly pay a dollar or two for such a list and I'm certain other travelers would too.

Merton A. Hegseth, *Wheatland, Wyo.*

Censorship and Saucers

In your November issue you state that BLUEBOOK will pay $10,000 for a photograph of a flying saucer from outer space that, in the opinion of the editors, is both genuine and artistic.

You don't stand to pay out any money because you merely have to say you don't think the objects photographed are from outer space or are artistic. Do you think you would reproduce the photographs in your magazine?

In the first place if I, say, should send such negatives to a photographer for development, I should never see them again—they would become "lost." In the second place, if the photographer should happen to send them to me and I sent them to you, then the Air Force would descend on my neck.

You think we don't have censorship in this country? Why don't newspapers report sightings that are going on all over the world? Why are the radio commentators silent on the subject of saucers?

H. S. Conard, *Port Orchard, Wash.*

Naturally we wouldn't fork out 10,000 clams for a photo we thought was a phony. But if we got a good, clear photo (that's what we meant by "artistic") that seemed to us authentic, we'd bust our necks to get it in the magazine. That's the only "censorship" that goes on around here. As you can see from the following letter, we're *hardly "silent on the subject."*—ED.

Re the continuing flying-saucer controversy in Pro & Con:

I have always been cynical about flying saucers. I have flown over 10 years with Pan American, and hence am a fairly well-trained observer. In 1954 I was working on the Bomarc (guided missile) with a bunch of engineers who have trained minds, believing nothing unless they see it.

One day in May of that year, one of the project engineers happened to look up and said, "What are those two streaks?"

They were parallel and about 75,000 feet in altitude. They were traveling at a tremendous rate of speed—at least 1,800 miles an hour. The streaks could have been caused by jets, but for the fact that the vapor trails were blue, not white. A deep, steely blue.

Then, after we all got a good look, they disappeared. Completely. We watched for an hour but no reappearance.

I called the CAA and air command, but they said they knew of nothing over 25,000 feet that day. Several local people saw the streaks and their stories jibed with ours except, not having engineering minds as we did, they didn't estimate the altitude and speed as closely.

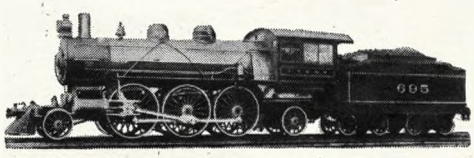
The blue trail, the parallel track, the sudden disappearance—whence? what?

It sure beats me. I saw "saucers" before—but always a telescope proved them either balloons or jets. These didn't follow the visual pattern.

B. P. Lane, *Seattle, Wash.*

Railroad Buff

When I spotted that prairie-type locomotive on the cover of November BLUEBOOK, I was intrigued to know whether the artist, Gurney Miller, could have painted it from an old Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad picture. That road had 40 locomotives, numbered 660



to 699, built by the Brooks Locomotive Works at Dunkirk, N. Y. L.S. & M.S. is now part of the New York Central.

As a young man I frequently saw engines #660 to 699 go through Elyria, Ohio. This was between 1903 and

1911, and I recall #666 was one of the first to pull the 20th Century between Buffalo and Chicago.

I doubt if any other person in America tied your cover picture with old L.S. & M.S. engine #696.

H. S. Ludlow, *Vermillion, Ohio*

Gurney Miller used L.S. & M.S. engines #695 and 4670 as models for his painting. Both were Brooks' Prairies. #695 was exhibited at the St. Louis exposition.—ED.

Indestructible Tradition

In "Football Fans Are Crazy" (November) it said the installing of steel goal posts would do away with "one of football's finest old traditions"—the tearing down of goal posts.

But the steel goal posts put up by the University of Toronto were pulled down by Queen's students after the game of October 8th played in Toronto. The goal posts, embedded in six feet of concrete, were described as indestructible when first installed last year.

Bill Crawford, *Queen's University Kingston, Ont.*

In Kingston they got muscles!—ED.

The Head Man

I just purchased my first copy of BLUEBOOK. The page by Oren Arnold ("The Head Man") was completely delightful. Assuming this is a regular monthly part of your splendid magazine, my entire family join me in a desire to add BLUEBOOK to our regular reading material.

Dr. V. C. Shelton, *Pasadena, Calif.*

Oren Arnold will be with us every month, so welcome to the fold.—ED.

Space Flight

When I spotted the November issue featuring "We CAN Build a Space Ship—SHOULD We?" I picked it up fast, being one of the space bugs.

Congratulations—best article yet. If this doesn't get people thinking, I don't know what will. Solving the mysteries of space is worth any amount of money.

W. C. Brandt, *Oakland, Calif.*

Mr. Mallan is to be congratulated for this extremely well-composed study on space flight.

Hans G. Clamann, M.D., *USAF School of Aviation Medicine Randolph Field, Tex.*

Dr. Clamann is one of the great pioneers in solving problems of space flight.—ED.

Debate on Lightning

We compared John Dunlavy's October article on lightning with another article, "Lightning Is Under Your Feet," October 1955 *Catholic Digest*, written originally for *Collier's* by Alfred M. Lansing, and found the two articles very much in conflict.

(1) Dunlavy says the charge we see comes out of the cloud, while Lansing contends it comes out of the earth.

(2) Dunlavy tells us to avoid using telephones during a storm, and Lansing terms this "folklore and misinformation."

(3) Dunlavy says heat lightning is occasionally a reflection on upper cloud layers of cloud-to-earth flashes beyond the horizon, but most often it is a lightning flash within clouds. Lansing says it "really is just the reflection of distant lightning on the clouds . . ."

I work in the line department of a public-utility company (electrical), and the comparison of the two articles has started quite a controversy among the linemen. We would appreciate it if you could clear up the points in question for us.

E. J. Nelson, *Franklin, Pa.*

John Dunlavy's answers, point by point:

(1) Lightning is still subject to debate. Mr. Lansing has taken definitely known facts and formed a theory. I've done the same. The theory expressed in my article is supported by most workers in the field.

(2) Mr. Lansing's view is undoubtedly based on the well-known fact that phone companies have installed lightning arresters which prevent passage of current from

the strung lines into individual homes. My view is based on insurance studies which show that most injuries from lightning in the home result from standing too close to masses of metal such as stoves and from use of electrical appliances—including telephones. When lightning strikes a home it follows the path of least resistance. This can easily be the telephone line.

(3) There is no conflict between our views on heat lightning. We both indicated that it is simply a manifestation of lightning which takes place beyond the horizon. I went further to indicate that it is most often cloud flashes rather than cloud-to-earth flashes which are reflected on upper cloud layers.

Address all letters to: The Editor, Bluebook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

the HEAD MAN

By Oren Arnold

Marvelous weather we have here in my town of Phoenix, Arizona, in February. Gentle breezes, blue skies, air just nippy enough to fire a fellow with ambition to take a snooze in the afternoon sun. . . . "Tense yourself up out of that hammock," my Mrs. ordered last Saturday, "and go wash the car. You're not a winter tourist."

•

Bought the wife and kids some of the gosh-awfulest comic Valentines ever created, but lost my nerve about mailing them. As head man of the house, I know only too well I'm doubly vulnerable.

•

I can't think whatever became of my boyhood plans to be a great man like Washington and Lincoln. Seems like I've always been as truthful as George and as homely as Abe. What turn in life's road did I miss?

•

It's easy for you to be a good shipmate on the sea of matrimony, Mister. All you have to do is obey your captain's orders.

•

If you are operating your business this year just as you did last year, or if you are imitating your older competitors, pause now and take stock. America's greatness stems not from followers, but from men who dare to break precedents.

•

This is the month that reveals the family character. The optimistic member will look out happily at the sunshine and predict that winter is having its final fling. The pessimist will shiver and swear that this horrid cold is bound to last until May.

•

Came home from bowling and told my wife I wouldn't go there any more with Zud Bradley because he told a risque story. "Quite right, dear," she nodded approvingly. "What was the story?"

•

So far nobody has been able to stop me from pursuing happiness. But quite a few have prevented me from catching up with it.

•

If you have no principle, you aren't likely to collect much interest.

•

By careful propagandizing, campaigning and bribery of kids, Mom and I got the Christmas Tree tossed out before February this year.

•

They say that George Washington couldn't tell a lie. It is evident, then, that he too was married.

•

"Our business office," says neighbor Bill Hood, "has already had 164 requests for money this year, all for 'urgent needs and worthy causes.'" That's darn near as many as I've had from my children.

•

Wasted, weakling words in any home: "I told you so."

•

I gather from my conscientious wife that it isn't what you do in a house that shows. It's what you don't do.

•

I'd take that big new record player back to the dealer if I could. When I bought it for Christmas, the man assured me it would reproduce symphonies, operas and boxing matches with delightful high fidelity. But he never mentioned that my high-enthusiasm high-school sophomore would keep it screaming constantly with high-volume jitterbug rhythms.

•

Mom and I figure that if we live and do well and don't nothin' happen, we can get all the Christmas bills paid by March; and all we borrow for income taxes paid back by August.

•

Freedom requires us always to nurture our rebel spirit. So, don't paddle your youngsters too strictly for not carrying out your orders. Whenever you whip all the disobedience out of a kid, you also whip much of the Americanism out of him.

•

Some husbands' definition of "gentleman" would be a man who kindly holds open the door while his wife carries out the ashes.

•

That dark, ominous cloud looming just over the horizon is probably just another snow storm. Income taxes aren't due until April.

•

Helpful home hint: to use less juice in your electric blanket on these long, cold winter nights, maintain a soft, warm wife.

•

If you see a man who isn't minding his own business, you can be pretty sure he has no mind or no business.

•

It's not so hard to be content with your lot, if you have a lot.

Editor's Note:

The other day we had a letter from Dorothy Randolph, of Phoenix, Arizona, which enclosed the picture you see here. Letter said:

"Bet you can't guess who this is. It's the Head Man (see opposite page) himself, *trying* to ski. He crash landed. His family lives only five blocks from us and *my* head man said you might like to have this picture of him. We do enjoy BLUEBOOK. Am I supposed to, being a woman?"

Well, yes. We're not opposed to women; we love 'em. We don't hold with the nonsense that they're inferior to men. They're just different and hooray for them! For instance, we're one of those odd characters who gets a charge out of slogging our pint-sized sloop into a head sea in a lash of rain and half a

Oren Arnold

gale of wind on a distance race. The Babe, who normally is equally wacky about sailing, thinks it's insanity. So she stays home and does whatever women enjoy doing when there are no men around.

Besides, Mrs. Randolph, the fact that you enjoy BLUEBOOK shows you have remarkably good judgment.

While we're on the subject—of the guy who runs the column next door—we want to pass along one of his stories, which was inspired by Bill Nicholas' article "Football Fans Are Crazy," in the November issue.

Seems the late, great Knute Rockne had stopped off in Arizona on his way to the Coast to play Southern Cal in the Los Angeles Coliseum (Bill Nicholas, Prop.). While Rockne was visiting Arizona's coach an alumnus named Clyde Rowe came in, was introduced and said he wished he could see Notre Dame cream Southern Cal. Rockne said heck, he'd get the guy in; just report to him at the field house before the game.

Rowe did; Rockne took him to the nearest tunnel and said to the guard, "I'm Knute Rockne and I want to take this man in to sit on the grass as my guest."

The guard beamed. "Knute Rockne, eh? Well, well, you're the fifth one today! I'm Napoleon, myself. Now beat it before I call a cop."

Rock tried two other gates with the same results. Furious, he took Rowe to the field house and gave him a Notre Dame uniform. Rowe was built something like a broom handle and had never played football in his life, but when the Big Irish trotted onto the field, Rowe trotted, too, and had a whale of a time shagging punts and passes. Watched the whole game from the Notre Dame bench.

Since this seems to be the time for cleaning up odds and ends anent the November issue, we might as well get on with the business of eating crow over the blooper in the "Tips On Hunting" in that issue. In one quote from C. E. Hagie we said something about "rifles used for migratory waterfowl." Everybody involved in this one—the writer, the copy editor, we—knows perfectly well that migratory waterfowl aren't hunted with rifles. You use bazookas. But it got by all of us. We're sorry.

Talk of waterfowl brings us, by a process too devious to go into here, to "The Edge of the Knife," one of our two short novels this month. It was written by Robert Craig who is, of all things, manager of the Florida Symphony Orchestra.

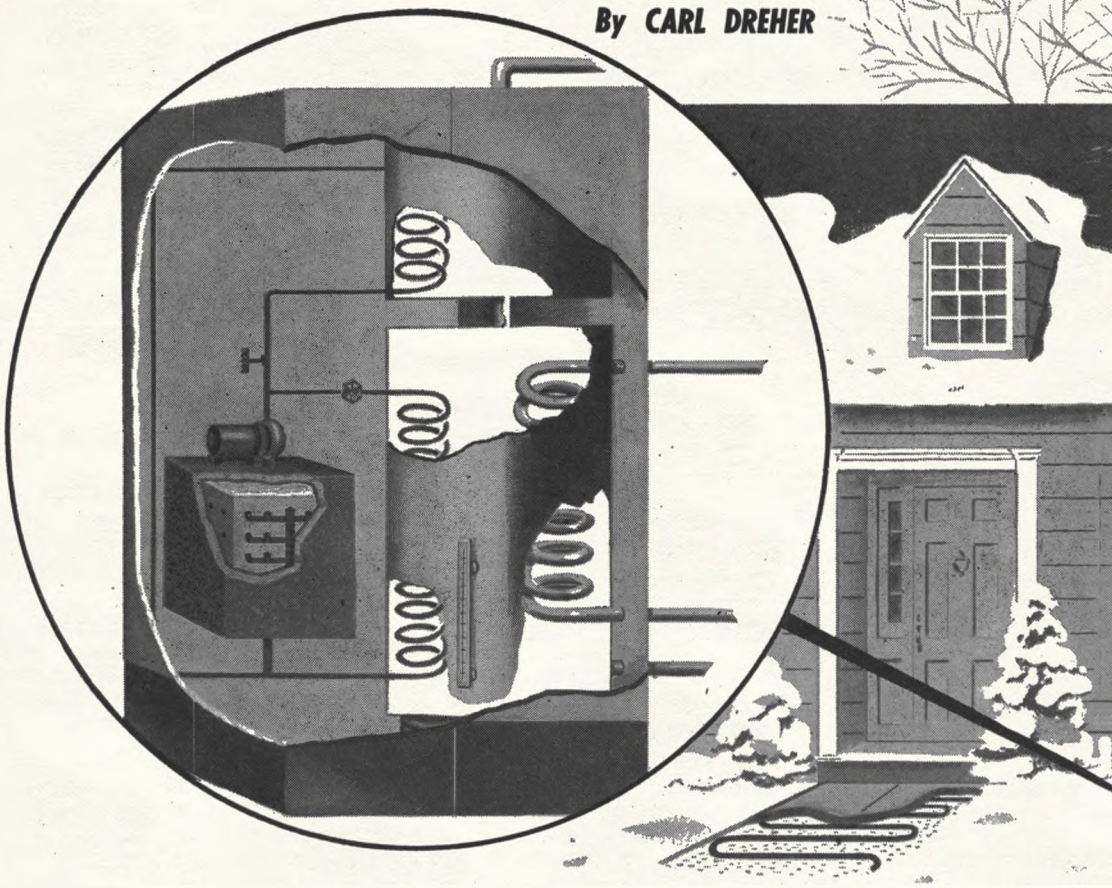
We want to call Craig to your attention not only because he's written the fine suspense novel, but because he did a thing lots of men want to do but don't dare. He threw up a job, moved 1,500 miles, and took a chance on making a living in a strange city because it offered him the kind of life he and his wife wanted.

It happened after the war. Craig had been working for a publisher in New York, had one play produced in San Francisco (flop!) and had been a tank driver in the Army. When he got out he and Jenny decided they wanted to bring up their kids out of doors—fishing, swimming and so on. They moved to Winter Park, Florida, where Craig worked as copy chief in an advertising agency for six years while trying to get started as a writer.

Then he made it. If you'll turn to page 47, you'll see how well.—*A.F.*

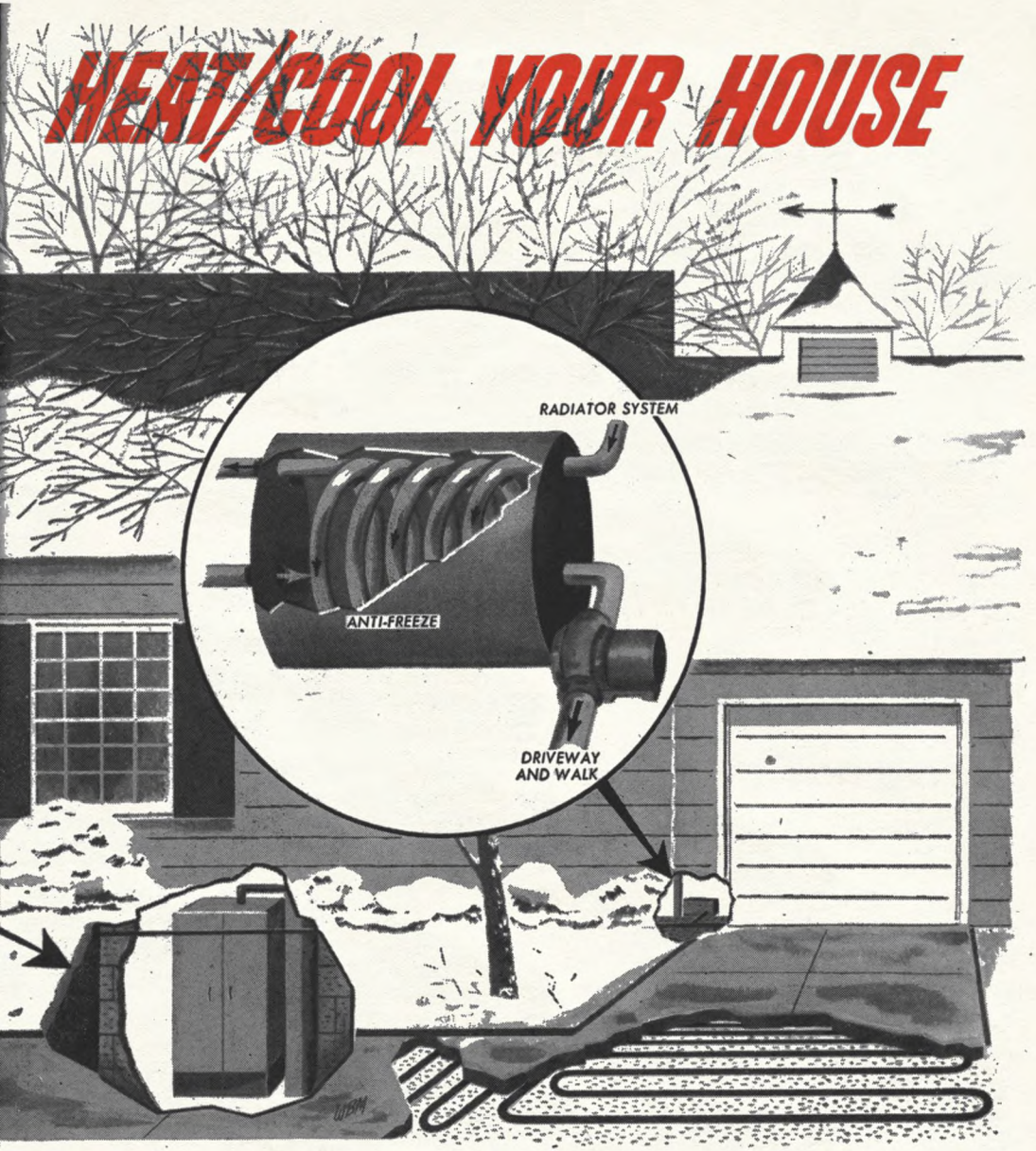
AN ATOMIC FURNACE TO

By CARL DREHER



It'll come in about five years, will be twice the size of a storage battery and will cost you $50 a year. Your house won't need a chimney and there'll be enough heat left over to make hot water and to melt snow on your driveway. Maybe it will come in

HEAT/COOL YOUR HOUSE



less time than that; maybe more. But if it's more, the slow-up won't be caused by technical difficulties; those are well on the way to solution. What may delay this great new boon to homeowners is (1) a renewal of the atomic arms race among the Great Powers; (2) resistance by industries and/or interests which have a stake in conventional fuels and heating-cooling equipment, or (3) the old plague of closed-circuit thinking which has always hampered engineering progress. (And most other progress.)

Last June the Institute of Boiler and Radiator Manufacturers held a convention at Absecon, New Jersey, a town which may turn out to be an historic spot. For here the lid was pried off some of the unnecessary secrecy which has surrounded the domestic uses of atomic energy. The convention was attended

Continued on page 92

Illustrated by Wesley McKeown

NIGHT CALL

By RICHARD WORMSER

A doctor always remembers his first patient as something special. In this case, that patient came back with a gun in his hand.

WHITE SHOES were placed side by side on the floor with fresh white socks, inside out, on top of them. Above them a pair of freshly starched white pants stretched ghostlike up onto a straight chair, and ended in broad suspenders. A sleeveless tunic was under the suspenders.

All this, and the white coverlet of the bed, and the dark shiny hair of Dr. Peter Rennick were picked up and highlighted by the shine from a street lamp just outside the window. This was the medical resident's bedroom at Eastside Hospital; and ex-residents now dead or retired by honorable age had complained about that light before Peter Rennick was born.

But the truth was that there was so much for the medical resident to do at Eastside that a spotlight and siren would not have kept Peter Rennick awake.

A telephone, though—that was different. It rang; and at once he turned over, lifted the instrument, and snapped on the reading light. "Doctor Rennick."

It was an outside call. A voice thick with pain or anxiety said: "Doc, this is Romey, at the corner."

Peter Rennick looked at his watch. It was 3:37 A.M. A hell of an hour, but he said: "Yes, Romey."

"It's the wife, Doc. The old lady. She won't wake up."

"I'll be right there, Romey." The bridge of the phone went down, up again. "Doctor Rennick here. I'm going out. The candy store at the corner. Romey's." Before the girl's yes, doctor, could come back the phone was down, the hands were reaching for the suspenders. Like all the residents before him and all that were to come, he slept in his underwear.

Down the corridor, into the elevator, out again, past the emergency room where loitering blue uniforms told him the surgical crew had a police case; out the ambulance entrance, vault to the ground from the loading ramp, cross the courtyard. Two drivers, smoking cigarettes in the clean fall air, muttered: "Evening, Doc," and he was on the deserted street. He passed the base of the lamp that lit his room, and there was Romey's; the candy store that for 20 years had given cigarette and ice-cream credit to Eastside's internes and residents.

No light in the store; Romey and his fat, overworked wife lived behind the curtain he could see dimly in the reflected streetlight.

He reached for the doorknob and a voice behind him said: "Easy, Doc. Just take it easy, boy."

That was a gun or a reasonable substitute in his ribs. He started to raise the hand that was not holding his bag, and the cheap, hard voice said: "You don't have to do that, Doc. You wouldn't be carrying a heat." A hand came out and took the bag. "Just back up, Doc, an' we'll go around the corner and into a car."

He said: "Which of your friends got shot, Whitey?"

The voice chuckled, while its hand pulled Peter Rennick's shoulder back, got him started around the corner. "Well, since you know my voice, no harm in your seeing me."

"How could I forget you, Whitey?"

IT had been his first case. Strep throat, complicated by malnutrition and an allergy to the antibiotics. Peter Rennick had been an interne then. When the head of Medical had told him that the patient, John Robinson, was to be in his sole charge, there had been a moment of sheer panic, and then one of the finest moments of Peter Rennick's life. . . . A doctor's first patient, he thought bitterly, is as special in memory as a girl's first lover; and in this case the return was bringing at least as much grief.

They were at a car now. Whitey said: "Wanta give me your word you'll be good, Doc?"

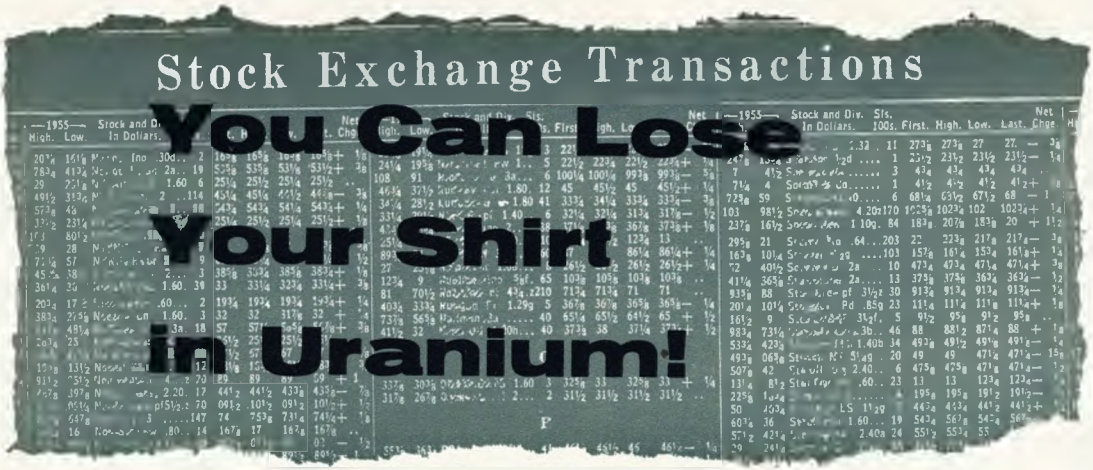
"I want to live, Whitey." The name John Robinson had been made up, of course. Whitey had been a petty hustler who almost starved before the infection gave him the right to hospital food and a hospital bed.

Whitey started the car. In the glow from the dashboard he showed more assurance than he had five years ago; and more fat. There was the shadow of a double chin beginning to show. "I hate to do this to you, Doc," Whitey said. "But sometimes there ain't no other alley you can run up. You know?"

Peter Rennick said: "No. Tell me about it, Whitey. Tell me about life. You look successful, Whitey. Good suit, good car, nice shirt. Me, I'm still

Continued on page 96

Illustrated by John Prentice



BY
LESTER
DAVID

People are pouring $100 million a year into mining stocks in a stampede that makes the California gold rush seem like a Sunday-school outing. Of course the sharpies are having a field day.

THE COUNTRY is smack in the middle of a riproaring gambling spree that makes Las Vegas seem like penny-and-two poker on a dull midweek night.

Farmers, doctors, shipping clerks, housewives, mechanics, office workers (you too, friend?) are rushing to buy penny stocks in mining ventures, mostly uranium. This small-cost speculation, grown to literally fantastic proportions in the past 18 months, is far and away the nation's newest and biggest gambling fad.

As one investment counselor told me: "It's the same old story, the hunt for the easy buck, and it's never going to change. First it was gold, then oil, then just a little while ago natural gas. Now it's uranium." Said another: "The boom shoots up, then ebbs, then someone hits a big one and the speculation fever mounts again. It got a big shot in the arm last August, after the U.N. held its atoms-for-peace conference in Geneva. Every one began thinking that atomic ships, planes, heaters and what-have-you were just around the corner, and a few dozen million more uranium shares changed hands."

Been itching to take a flier yourself with that few hundred that's not doing anything? Have you been keyed up by stories of men who made hefty bundles in these stocks which go for a dime or a quarter per share?

Well, listen to a few facts of life. Rep. Arthur G. Klein of New York, who has just concluded an exhaustive cross-country study of the whole incredible situation, told me in Washington:

"You have as much chance of making money in these deals as you have of cashing in on a sweepstakes ticket. In fact, some promotions are so bad they ought to plaster skull-and-bones signs on the stock certificates and label them 'poison' in red ink!"

G. Keith Funston, president of the New York Stock Exchange, thinks your prospects are a bit brighter—and he passes along the cheerful estimate that one deal in 10,000 can turn out to be profitable.

As so often happens when customers with money and not too much discretion are available in great numbers, the sharpie promoters and the downright crooks are having a field day. Nathaniel L. Goldstein, former New York State attorney general who made a specialty of securities prosecution during his dozen years in office, says a cool $100 million is poured into penny stocks each year and much of this sticks to the pockets of the unscrupulous promoters.

Now get the picture straight. Many of the largest and most respected mining companies in the U.S. are in the uranium business. Besides, the speculative boom does have its constructive side—it is bringing exploration and development money into mining areas where more of the precious, vital stuff is likely to be found. BUT: The National Better Business Bureau says that the great majority of the shares being offered to the public now "are in companies *which have little more than a hope of finding uranium on unproved*

claims to which they may or may not possess legal title."

Adds the BBB: "It is almost certain that inexperienced investors in the majority of these promotions will lose the entire amount of their investments. Such is the lesson to be drawn from every mining boom in the past."

But few persons heed these cautions. Each fresh announcement of a uranium discovery brings a renewed clamor for uranium stocks. As a result, the situation has become so acute that some of the most highly-placed financial figures in the country, not to mention official Washington, are plainly worried. Action is already being taken on a number of fronts to help stem the almost frantic race by Americans to "bury their money in moose pastures." (The apt phrase is Mr. Funston's.)

Here is what's happening and what people who count are saying:

● In Washington, the new House of Representatives will soon consider a set of recommendations made by the House Sub-committee on Commerce and Finance, headed by Rep. Klein. The committee spent months digging into all phases of the strange gambling fever and its proposed solution has just been put in the hands of the lawmakers.

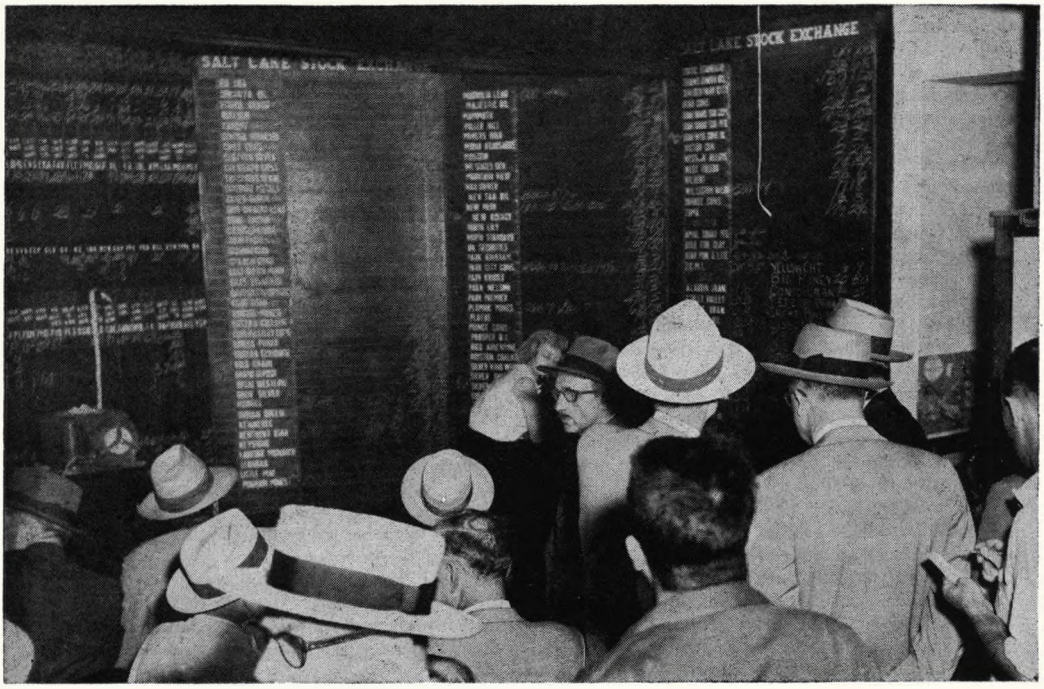
● The Senate Banking and Currency Committee, headed by Sen. William J. Fulbright of Arkansas, has also been looking into the penny-stock business. This is the committee which made headlines not long ago during its spectacular Wall Street investigation. Robert A. Wallace, its staff director, told me in Washington: "It's quite possible new hearings will result, this time on penny stocks."

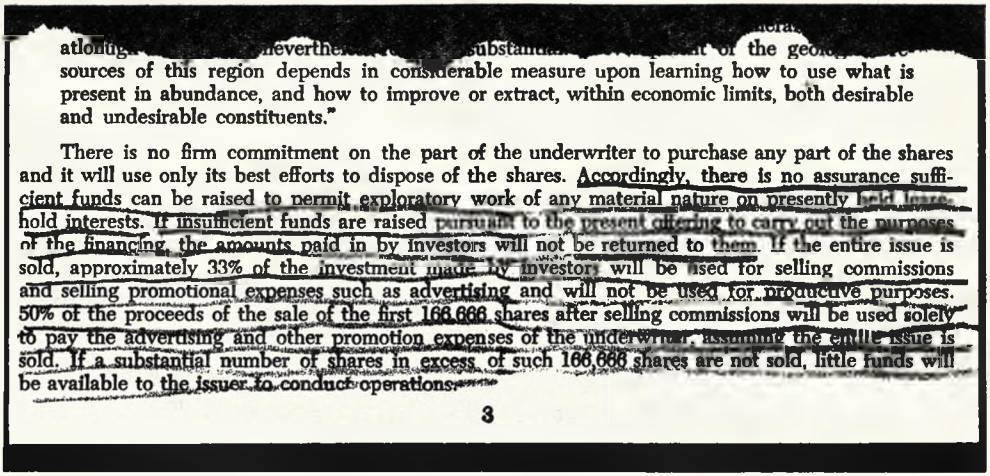
● The Securities and Exchange Commission, spotting loopholes in its regulations, is now trying to sew them up and keep the crooks out. In addition, the SEC has expanded its staff at Denver, where many of the new issues are filed, and opened an office in Salt Lake City to "have a policeman on the beat." The beat is the Colorado Plateau, that fabulous four-state area where most of the new uranium discoveries are being made.

● Local officials are worried too. For example, Attorney General Jacob K. Javitz of New York declares that fraud in the sale of securities is "increasing at an alarming rate." He has just asked for—and got—more teeth in his state's securities laws. The Pennsylvania Securities Commission says it receives daily complaints from people whose names are on sucker lists. Mayors, town councils, local police officials get

Radioactive with excitement, men jam Salt Lake Stock Exchange during "penny" uranium boom. Recently, 30 million shares of uranium stock were traded here in a single week.

United Press Photo





atlonug... ...neverthe... ...substanti... ...nt of the geo... ...e sources of this region depends in considerable measure upon learning how to use what is present in abundance, and how to improve or extract, within economic limits, both desirable and undesirable constituents."

There is no firm commitment on the part of the underwriter to purchase any part of the shares and it will use only its best efforts to dispose of the shares. Accordingly, there is no assurance sufficient funds can be raised to permit exploratory work of any material nature on presently held leasehold interests. If insufficient funds are raised pursuant to the present offering to carry out the purposes of the financing, the amounts paid in by investors will not be returned to them. If the entire issue is sold, approximately 33% of the investment made by investors will be used for selling commissions and selling promotional expenses such as advertising and will not be used for productive purposes. 50% of the proceeds of the sale of the first 166,666 shares after selling commissions will be used solely to pay the advertising and other promotion expenses of the underwriter, assuming the entire issue is sold. If a substantial number of shares in excess of such 166,666 shares are not sold, little funds will be available to the issuer to conduct operations.

3

Close reading of mining company's stock circular reveals big risks investors take.

streams of complaints from people who invested, want their money back and find they can't get it.

One important brokerage house says the uranium boom makes the California gold rush seem like a Sunday-school outing. A look at the statistics shows that this comment is not a bit farfetched.

In Salt Lake City not long ago, 30 million shares of uranium stock were traded in a single week, with the turnover hitting 7 million a day two days in a row. The last time the big board in New York had this kind of a day came after President Eisenhower suffered his heart attack last September, and that was called the heaviest day at the exchange in more than 25 years.

There has been a 300 percent increase in the number of stock offerings since 1952. And there are now 272 broker-dealer firms in the Denver area alone, half of which have gone into business within the past 24 months. When one issue, priced at 25 cents per share, came out recently, all 400,000 shares were oversubscribed in less than five hours.

Heavy buying is going on, not only in the uranium-area states, but in San Francisco, New York, Jersey City, Los Angeles and New Orleans. The stocks are being peddled door-to-door in sections of New York, Illinois, Connecticut, New Jersey. They are being pushed at high pressure by honey-voiced salesmen sitting at telephones in "boiler rooms," sucker lists at their elbows. They are being sent down from Canadian cities, accompanied by alluring come-on literature which holds out visions of mink coats and Cadillacs in a matter of weeks.

In Salt Lake City, one restaurant has set up a rack of offering circulars and company prospectuses. Diners can grab a few, study them while chomping on the sandwiches and then, if something strikes their fancy, buttonhole the salesman who has set up a securities shop near the kitchen. Down the street, a loan company has a sign offering ready cash to anyone needing money to get in on the uranium boom.

In Las Vegas, an automobile agency offered a block of uranium stock free with every purchase of a car. In a number of western towns, stock certificates are being given away free in grocery stores, like soap coupons. The Rochester *Sun* reports that a Colorado furniture store offered 1,000 shares of stock with each purchase of a $400 living-room set. "This might furnish the whole house," the ad read. Said observers: "It might at least provide wallpaper."

The boom came about because of two easy-to-understand reasons. First, times being good, Americans have stashed away more savings than ever before. Second, uranium actually is being found. Along comes one Charlie Steen, who lives on beans for years, and then hits a $60 million jackpot. Along come a few more penniless prospectors and hit the stuff that clicks a Geiger counter. These strikes fire the imagination, start the blood racing, and visions of sugar plums filled with pure uranium dance in heads.

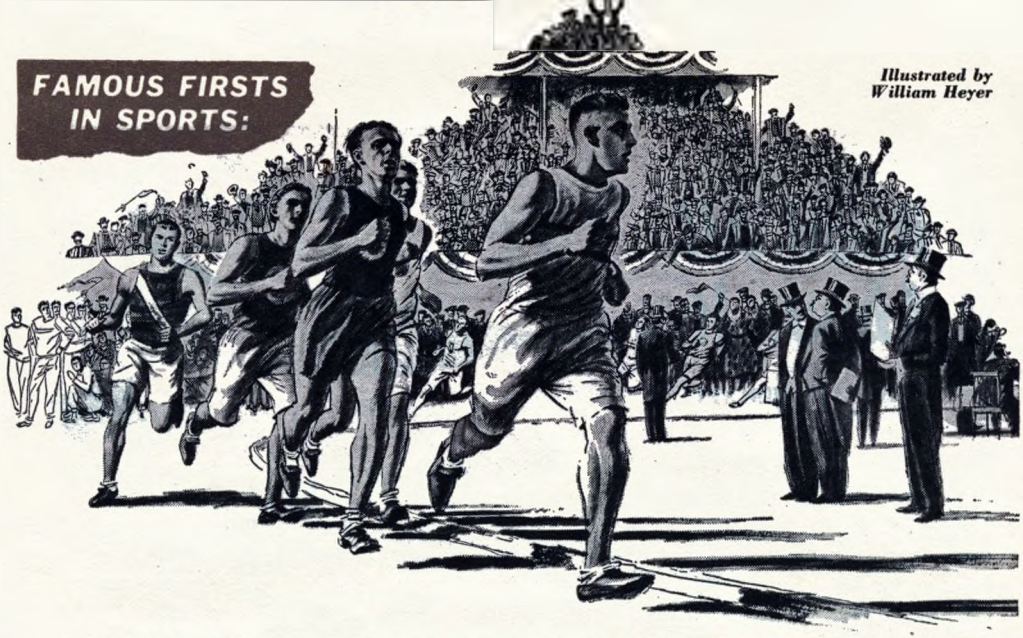
A canny and candid promoter made this observation to a St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* reporter in uranium-happy Salt Lake City: "Put the word uranium in the name of the company and your stock is bound to trade well. Or chuck in an Indian name—Cherokee, Kaibab, Apache or Navajo—and they flock to buy. Combine the two, and you will have to fight them off the doorstep."

And because this is too true, the swindle boys are in there pitching. How do they work? Slickly, methodically and thoroughly. As Mr. Funston of the Stock Exchange puts it: "For independent nerve and

Continued on page 98

FAMOUS FIRSTS IN SPORTS:

Illustrated by William Heyer



MILLROSE GAMES

THE MILLROSE GAMES, now the top U. S. indoor-track event, were started in 1908 by a New York department store. They were originally started to help keep John Wanamaker employees happy and, of course, to get a little free publicity for the emporium.

The meets, sponsored by the store's Wahna Athletic Association, were held from 1908 through 1913 in whatever New York City armory was available. But in 1914, after a whopping sellout at the 71st Regiment Armory the year before, it was decided to hold the annual affair at the old Madison Square Garden. And on January 28, with the Wahna AA now named the Millrose AA after Rodman Wanamaker's summer estate, the Games made their major-league debut.

While all-in-all the event was a large success enjoyed by a noisy full house of 12 thousand, the meet opened and closed on off-notes. One of the widely advertised features was a two-mile race between two crack distance runners, Hans Kolehmainen, the world champion, and Willie Kramer, two-mile indoor whiz. Unfortunately, just four days before, Hans had raced against Abel Kiviat, a talented two-miler. They had loused it up badly in a two-mile dead-heat finish with a time of 10 minutes, 5.8 seconds that could have been negotiated by a pair of fat men at an outing, and both worthies were suspended by national track authorities for collusion. Despite threats of injunction, lawsuits, and what have you by the Millrose officials, the suspension stood.

The other discordant note took place a day after the meet in a comic battle of arithmetic and tape measures. Willie Kramer had run the two-mile event in 9 minutes, 16.8 seconds—fastest indoor time ever covered in the city. However, three other guys with 75- to 100-yard handicaps had beaten his time, so all Willie got for his record-breaking performance was a fourth. The papers shouted about the sensational pace of the quartet with such fervor that several officials decided to recheck the track. When this was done, they discovered that the track had been laid out short by a new man, so that Kramer and company had covered 20 yards less than the two miles—or a mediocre 9 minutes, 20.8 seconds. Millrose measurers found nothing wrong, and the battle raged—to this day unresolved.

Fred Schmertz, now director of the big event, chuckled as he recalled the night: "You should have seen us! Every last official—the starter, the announcer, the timers, the judges—all wore top hats, white ties, cutaway tails and fancy underwear pants. The runners sported all kinds of costumes—knee-lengths trunks, those whatchamacallit-gatkes (long woolen underwear) and funny colored bathrobes to keep them warm between races."

While the famous Wanamaker Mile hadn't yet been instituted, they did have the forerunner of the Mel Sheppard 600. This was won by Fred Wilkins (now Millrose AA president) in 1 minute, 23.6 seconds. There was a two-mile bike race in which more than half the riders took a flop as their wheels caught in several of the loose, bouncy centerboards. Such events as the 70-, 300-, and 1000-yards; mile relay; two-mile walk; and 12-pound shotput, were won in times and distances that a good schoolboy could duplicate today.

There was a colorful road run of 9½ miles that started in the Garden, and took the competitors up Fifth Avenue to 110th Street, across to Eighth Avenue, and back to the Garden for the final lap. In it were 101 starters, half of whom, if the race were run today, would have been run over by the busses and autos which choke those streets. Fred Travalena (now a Millrose judge) with a seven-minute handicap, was the nominal winner in 56 minutes, 53 seconds. But Handsome Harry Smith, popularly acclaimed as "King of the Coney Island Mardi Gras," running from scratch, copped the "fastest time award" with 51 minutes, 28 seconds. Today, Harry is a Long Beach tax collector.

—BY BILL GOTTLIEB

SNOW

SNOW IS NOT frozen raindrops (like sleet or hail). It is ice crystals formed directly from water vapor in the atmosphere by a process of sublimation —a direct change of a gas into a solid. Water vapor that has sublimed on your window is called frost; on airplane wings it is called rime; in the wake of high-flying planes it is a condensation trail. Water vapor that sublimes directly in the air—snow—requires temperatures of freezing or below and a bit of dust, salt crystals or electrified molecule for a nucleus. Snow can form in a cloudless sky and often falls when ground temperatures are as high as 37 degrees F. On the other hand, it is never too cold to snow—*if* there is enough water vapor in the air. It has snowed at minus 52 degrees F. in Alaska. Ordinarily, though, extremely cold air is very dry.

SNOW CRYSTALS are mostly six-sided columns or plates. Single snow crystals can reach the ground, but normally they will unite with a number of others and fall as snowflakes. Snowflakes range from tiny "diamond dust" which can be less than 5/1000's of an inch in diameter to ¾ of an inch on the average. Flakes as large as 8 by 15 inches were reported at Ft. Keogh, Mont., in 1915. In all the trillions of snowflakes nature has made since the dawn of time, the chances are that no two snowflakes have ever been identical.

SNOW CRYSTALS are not white at all —they are absolutely transparent and colorless. The whiteness of snow stems from the fact that the snow crystals are so minute. There are so many reflecting surfaces that the light is diffused and we call this white (just as powdered glass looks white). Red snow, and sometimes emerald, blue and black snow, is traceable both to the presence of microscopic plant life or fungi as well as minute impurities such as dust or carbon.

WHY DOES wet snow make better snowballs? The pressure of the hands melts the fern-like points of the snow crystals, and on refreezing, the flakes stick together. Dry snow is not as easily melted by hand pressure; thus the flakes do not freeze together. It is difficult to make snowballs in very cold weather for the same reason. . . . Salt melts snow and ice by physical rather than chemical action. A salty solution has a lower freezing point than water, hence salt spread on the surface forms a solution with a lower freezing point than snow or ice.

WHY IS snow slippery? Authorities are not in entire agreement. The general consensus is that the pressure (of a steel runner, a ski or toboggan) melts the snow forming a thin film of water which reduces friction. . . . The Encyclopedia of Sports estimates skiing in the U.S. is a billion-dollar industry with nearly three million enthusiasts. . . . Ski jumpers have been timed at better than 50 miles per hour at Intervales Olympic jump at Lake Placid by the National Ski Association. . . . Skilled experts on snowshoes have nearly equalled the fastest running records on dry land, covering 100 yards in slightly more than 10 seconds and a mile in about five minutes.

STRANGELY, one of the most important functions of snow is to keep the earth warm. Snow is a true blanket, both figuratively and literally, for it is 9/10th air, 1/10th ice. With its protective pockets of air, snow protects vegetation and the earth's surface from the cold of winter and prevents the warmth of the ground from escaping. Temperatures of the ground under a body of snow are often three to four degrees above freezing. It is this insulating character of snow that makes it possible for many small animals to survive the winter and that makes the igloo livable. Contrary to popular belief, however, these snow-block houses are really not common among Eskimos.

SNOW CAUSES floods only when warm spells follow suddenly after large snowfalls. Normally snow gives up its moisture at a rate the ground can easily absorb. Actually snow often serves to prevent floods by absorbing rain and preventing sudden run-offs.

AN EXPERIMENT in Canada may save millions of acres of land which now lose their snow cover too soon to make crops possible. Tests have shown that carbon strewn over the snow by helicopter cuts down the rate of melting. This experiment stems from the observation that dirty snow melts more slowly than fresh snow.

A FOUR-INCH LAYER of soft snow absorbs as much as 90 percent or more of the intensity of impact noises. . . . Snowballs more than 2 inches in diameter fell in Fitchburg, Mass., on January 3, 1943. . . . Impurities in an average snowflake amount to less than one-billionth part of the flake. . . . Although one-third of the world has never seen snow, it has fallen in every state in the U.S. at one time or another.

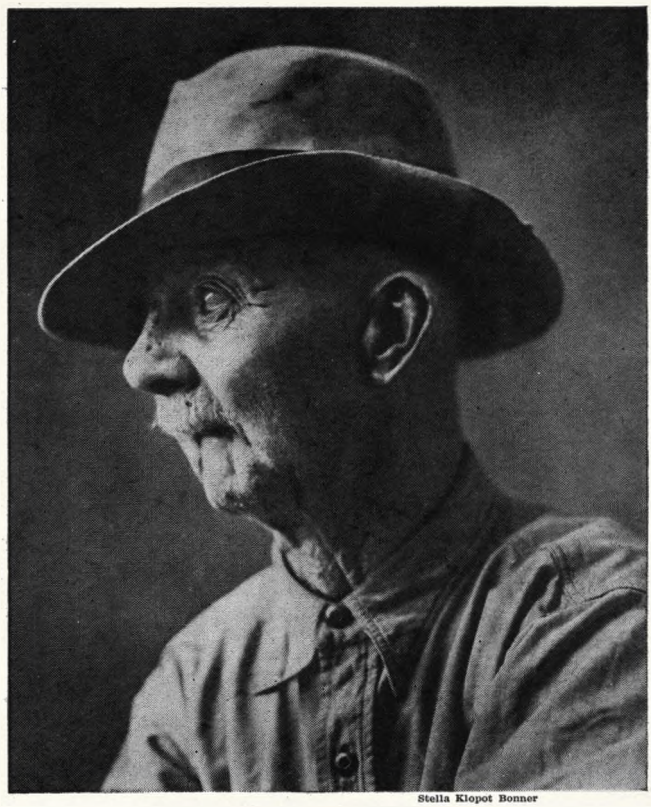
THE ALL-TIME RECORD snowstorm in the U.S. was only recently acknowledged by the U.S. Weather Bureau. The storm lasted three days and 13 hours between April 13th and 15th, 1921, and buried Silver Lake, Colo., under a fall of 100 inches. This storm also holds the record for one day (76 inches) and two days (95 inches). The record had previously been attributed to Grand Forest, Calif., where a fall of 60 inches was recorded on one day in January, 1933. . . . In the winter of 1906-7, 884 inches or almost 74 feet of snow fell at Tamarack, Calif. . . . The snowiest area in the United States is the Sierra Nevada Mountains which averages 530 inches annually.

ACCORDING TO the *World Almanac*, the heaviest snowfall in New York City's history (25.8 inches, December 26-27, 1947) was 4.9 inches more than the blizzard of 1888 (March 12-14)—yet it was not classified by the Weather Bureau as a blizzard. It cost $6.6 million and took 30,000 men to remove the estimated 90 million tons of snow.

Unsung Hoosier Humorist

By AL SPIERS

A bedraggled little man who wobbled through a long life in rural Indiana has a growing fame as a genuine homespun wit.



Stella Klopot Bonner

SUSTAINED BY AN IRREVERENT SPIRIT, an off-beat perspective and—when properly lubricated—a nimble tongue, Milton (Bunk) Seagraves was born some 90 years ago in Knox, Indiana, a cozy, rural county-seat in the northern part of the state. A kindly town (pop. 3,034), it tolerated the living Bunk with more sympathy than perception. Like many true artists, he wasn't fully appreciated until after his death in 1946. Now, Knox is inclined to brag about him as his legend spreads, and at least one historian has begun to collect his quips, capers and tall stories.

Bunk, one of six children, was early tagged with his nickname because even as a lad he had a natural gift for tall tales.

Bunk's father was a stolid, toiling blacksmith, but his mother, Phoebe Ann, had a saucy Irish wit. Phoebe Ann once attended a red-hot revival. The preacher, carried away by his own sizzling harangue, wound up belaboring the whole sinful congregation—and was indignantly talked back to by several worshipers. Whereupon Phoebe Ann arose and snapped: "I have noticed that when you throw a can over the fence, the dog that gets hit is the one that hollers!"

Bunk loved Phoebe Ann and attended her until death. No doubt it was her wit that flowered in Bunk.

Bunk had two other loves—whiskey and the outdoors. The first he indulged whenever flush. The second he satisfied—usually when broke—by slipping off to the nearby Kankakee River country, which in those days teemed with fish, game and wildfowl.

In early manhood Bunk was whisked off to fight Spaniards in Cuba. He never got beyond Florida and logged ample guardhouse time. When he came home and a crony asked if he'd seen hard fighting, Bunk replied: "I was where the bullets were thickest!"

"You were?"

"Yep—I slept under an ammunition wagon!"

In his early years, Bunk was a hard, continuous worker. He fired on the old C.I.&S. Railroad (now part of the New York Central) long enough to be elevated to engineer.

Bunk celebrated and in the process painted the nose of his engine red. "To match mine!" he explained.

The railroad took a dim view of red-nosed engines and engineers and fired him.

After that Bunk worked at odd jobs when necessary. More often he fled to a small shack on his beloved river. He ignored game laws as blithely as

Continued on page 123

A BLUEBOOK SHORT NOVEL

The Gold-Plated Gunboat

BY GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

One jump ahead of a court-martial for the slightly unofficial way he'd got his gunboat modernized, Lt. Caleb Pettengill wasn't going to let beautiful secret agents, the U. S. Army or a spy's treachery keep him from proving his vessel's worth in the fire of battle. And then, with swift fury, that test was upon him.

ACTING LIEUTENANT CALEB PETTENGILL, standing on the hurricane deck of the brand-new double-ender gunboat *Lycoming*, eyed the roofs and church spires of the little city of Annapolis with acute distaste. It wasn't that Pettengill had anything against Annapolis, not even that he had sometimes encountered graduates of the Naval Academy who were a trifle uppity with salt-horse seamen like himself. Anyway, the Naval Academy and all its works had been safely hauled off to Newport months ago—back in May of this year 1861—to get them away from the uncertain temper of Maryland secessionists. What Pettengill didn't like about Annapolis was the telegraph line to Washington.

Young Mr. Pettengill—Captain Pettengill now, by the custom of the service—was a fugitive from a telegraph ticker until he'd had a chance to prove by the test of battle the worth of a few unofficial improvements he'd bribed and bullied the Brooklyn Navy Yard's mechanics into making in the *Lycoming*.

He'd thought he was safe when he'd been shooed out of Brooklyn under rush orders to join Flag Officer Dupont's squadron at Hampton Roads for the big attack on Port Royal. There was no telegraph at Hampton Roads these days, and the rivers and narrow inlets around Port Royal were just the sort of waters the *Lycoming* was built to fight in. By the time the eminent blockheads in Washington who thought gunboats didn't need armor or watertight bulkheads had caught up with what Pettengill had done to correct their stupidities, he'd have some answers for 'em—answers that could be figured in terms of seamens' lives saved and missions accomplished, instead of dollars. But he'd hardly made his number to the flagship in the Roads when a flag-lieutenant arrives with an order to make all speed for Annapolis to provide escort for a convoy of Army supply-vessels.

So here he was within reach of a wire's end again, and well he knew what the eminent blockheads would do to Acting Lieutenant Pettengill if they found out—before he'd had his chance—that he'd practically converted a wooden gunboat into an ironclad without so much as a by-your-leave-sir to their lordships. By dollar reckoning, as his chief en-

gineer had dryly observed, he might as well have gold-plated the *Lycoming* from stem to stern.

Pale cloud-filtered sunshine warmed his pock-marked mahogany face, a brisk easterly breeze whipped the skirts of his shore-going frock coat around his long legs, but neither sun nor salt air could erase the warning signal that flew before his mind's eye, plain as a string of flags at a consort's yardarm: *You are standing into Danger, Pettengill.*

Nor could they erase the ache in the secret corner of his heart. . . . But that was another affair altogether. That was not for now.

"Stand by the port anchor!" he roared. "Slow!"

He felt the beat of the great paddle-wheels slacken. The *Lycoming's* slim hull crept toward the anchorage off the railroad dock.

"Stop! Slow astern!" The paddle thrashed madly: the gunboat lost way. "Stop! Let go the port anchor! She's yours, Mr. Frye. Get my gig in the water and bear a hand about it!"

The chain-cable was still roaring out through the hawse-hole as Pettengill galloped aft and down the ladder to the quarterdeck. If that hook was in the ground more than half-an-hour, it'd be because the damned convoy wasn't ready—which it probably wasn't, being an Army convoy and a pack of windjammers at that.

Luckily there were only three of 'em—the two ships that were anchored near the *Lycoming* and the bark that was taking in cargo alongside the dock. The ships were deep-laden: the bark was the immediate question-mark. Pettengill's orders were peremptory. These three vessels were carrying the first-line ammunition, guns, engineer stores and tentage for Brigadier General Thomas W. Sherman's army—the troops that were to take over the forts at Port Royal after Flag Officer Dupont's squadron had battered those forts into submission. Pettengill was to escort them down to Hampton Roads to join the squadron without delay.

Reading between the lines of his orders, Pettengill guessed that the real reason he'd been sent to Annapolis was to hurry the convoy along. Probably the general was insisting on waiting for it, and Dupont didn't want to be delayed by Army excuses if he got a favorable break in the weather. That meant that in the Flag Officer's book, any more delay would be just too bad for Pettengill, regardless of the fact that he had no real authority over chartered Army supply ships except when they were actually under way as a convoy. All of which would have been worrisome enough without the sword of his Brooklyn crimes hanging over his head at the end of that blasted wire.

His only hope was to get out of here fast. The gig was being swung out smartly enough. Pettengill clamped his jaw to keep his surging impatience from becoming vocal—which would do more harm than good.

"Shore boat coming off, sir. Mail flag," reported the quartermaster of the watch.

All the mail for the squadron went through Annapolis, the base of operations. Somebody in the post office had had the wit to sort out the *Lycoming*'s pouches when the signal station had reported her standing in.

"Tell Mr. Frye I'll just have a look at the mail before I shove off," said Pettengill, and went into his cabin, slamming the door as though to drown out the sharp protest of his conscience. He had no business wasting time on the mail—his business, his only business, was to get that convoy under way and out of here. That was his duty; it was self-interest as well. But only five minutes—maybe 10?—pleaded the small voice of the hope that would not die. Maybe this time . . .

He flung himself into his desk chair and glowered at the dancing pattern of reflected sunlight on the white paint overhead. The ports were open—the breeze swept in, fluttering the green baize curtains.

Pettengill cursed the breeze. It was freshening, and showing signs of hauling round to the north. That meant that Dupont's squadron, weather-bound by easterly gales in Hampton Roads for the past week, might be able to put to sea—maybe tomorrow. Dupont mightn't wait for the convoy if he got a fair wind for Port Royal. He couldn't afford to, with all the weak steamers and sailing vessels in his motley fleet. Pettengill's orders covered that possibility: in that case he'd have the miserable job of shepherding his three windjammers all the way to Port Royal. Lord help him if one of their lubberly skippers hung himself up on Frying Pan Shoal or was dismasted in a gale off Hatteras. At this season—October—the easterly storms rarely blew themselves out until the wind hauled round by the south into the west: a northerly shift one day was quite likely to shift back easterly and rise to gale force the next. Pettengill could picture himself with a paddle-wheel gunboat built for river service and rolling her guards under in any kind of seaway, trying to help an undermanned, overloaded square-rigger claw off Hatteras in a real buster. He pulled a chart toward him.

Deep down he knew he was whistling up minor anxieties to keep from thinking about his real ones. He knew he'd be only too glad if he could just get safely to sea with his convoy in any kind of weather. It was the storms that might blow up ashore that were his real anxiety. Yet he sat here playing games with a chart and wasting precious minutes just because—

There was a knock on the cabin door. At last. The ship's writer poked his head around the edge of the door-frame at Pettengill's permissive snarl.

"Mail, sir."

"Leave it there on the transom," growled Pettengill, barely glancing up from his chart. The chart continued to absorb his attention until the door clicked behind the departing sailor. Then Pettengill was out of his chair and across the cabin in two long strides, burrowing into the pile of envelopes and

Continued on page 69

CARS:

DICK MORRILL

PTG: Hidden Killer

BY
TERRY GALANOY

A startling new study points to a mysterious culprit that is killing more people than reckless driving, fatigue and speeding combined.

FOR EVERY ONE of the over 30,000 Americans who will be slaughtered on the highways this year there will be a full-scale investigation. Crash-weary police and safety experts will probe the twisted wreckage, will question survivors, will take analytical photographs, will make notes on the location of the crash, the weather at the moment, the exact time, and some dozen other unrelated fragments of information. When these pieces don't fit together satisfactorily—and any safety man will tell you they seldom do—accident blame is tossed haphazardly into one of three pet catch-all areas: speeding, fatigue or reckless driving. Yet, these three classifications may have little, if anything, to do with the majority of highway deaths!

New research pinpoints a heretofore undiscovered killer on the highway, a killer which climbs aboard the victim's car some 400 to 600 miles back down the road, anywhere from six to 14 hours before the accident actually happens. Tagged with a high-sounding name, "The Psychology of Trip Geography," this newly-uncovered factor is, according to a group of crack scientists, killing more of our motorists than fatigue, reckless driving, and speeding combined.

When they began their research two years ago, three California scientists discovered that the combination of human psychology, the actual driving trip, and the geography of the roads to be covered had never before been considered a destructive force. Tracking down this theory, they learned that long-distance drivers are not the same people from one hour of a trip to the next, from one type of highway to another, even from one kind of scenery to another. They also found that the psychological outlook of the driver was conditioned by many external and internal influences which, singly or combined, could lead him into a fatal accident.

PTG is the brainchild of Dr. Heinz Haber, Robert Brenner and Slade Hulbert, researchers with the Institute of Transportation and Traffic Engineering at the University of California in Los Angeles. Their theory was evolved, paradoxically, from a series of car crashes two states away, in New Mexico.

Continued on page 102

Fear is a Brassy Taste

BY ROBERT W. KREPPS

Lost in a maze of tunnels worn in the reeds by the hippos, Will Muir knew that if the huge beasts panicked he and the lad would be crushed to death.

THEY CAME IN THE EARLY MORNING, cresting the rise from the south, bringing unwelcome racket to the breaking day. Boko Muir, six-feet-two of loose-hinged muscle, gazed out at them from the veranda; and the geniality of his long brown face died away into a scowl. Trouble descended on him, worse than a rogue elephant, more serious than a drought; for he had handled rogues and dry spells, but he was new to Jane Cochran's brand of affliction.

The jeep stopped. She came up the steps and he took her hand, looking down at brown eyes with glints of topaz in them, at a nose almost snub, a good jaw line and full pale mouth. In her mid-twenties, hardly a beauty, but that was a fine face, with dark hair in soft waves to top it, and a full-blown figure below that gave no cause for complaint. He hadn't imagined her thus, his notion had run to horn spectacles and angularity. Her letters, sensible and quite sexless, might have come from a man.

"Hello, Jane Cochran," he said, and knelt to the boy, who was seven years old and already leanly handsome. "Shake, Pat," he said. The child put out a hand without shyness. A good grip—oh, this was Jack's kid all right. "Are you my Uncle Will?" asked the boy.

"Here in Africa they call me Boko. I think you might drop the 'uncle,' Pat."

"Yes, sir," said the boy. "What does Boko mean?"

"I'll show you in a bit." To the man who had driven them up-country from railhead, he said, "Get yourself a peg, Bobby, we'll have a yarn shortly. And thanks." Bobby winked and departed for the bar of Boko's big guest house.

"What's a peg?" asked Pat.

"Orange juice. You want one?" The boy nodded vigorously. "Go through this door and straight back to the kitchen, you'll find a tall dark fellow there in a white coat, and you tell him Bwana Boko says you're to have juice. Okay?"

Pat vanished with a child's spurt of enormous vitality. Boko said, "All boy," admiringly, and motioned the woman to a wicker chair.

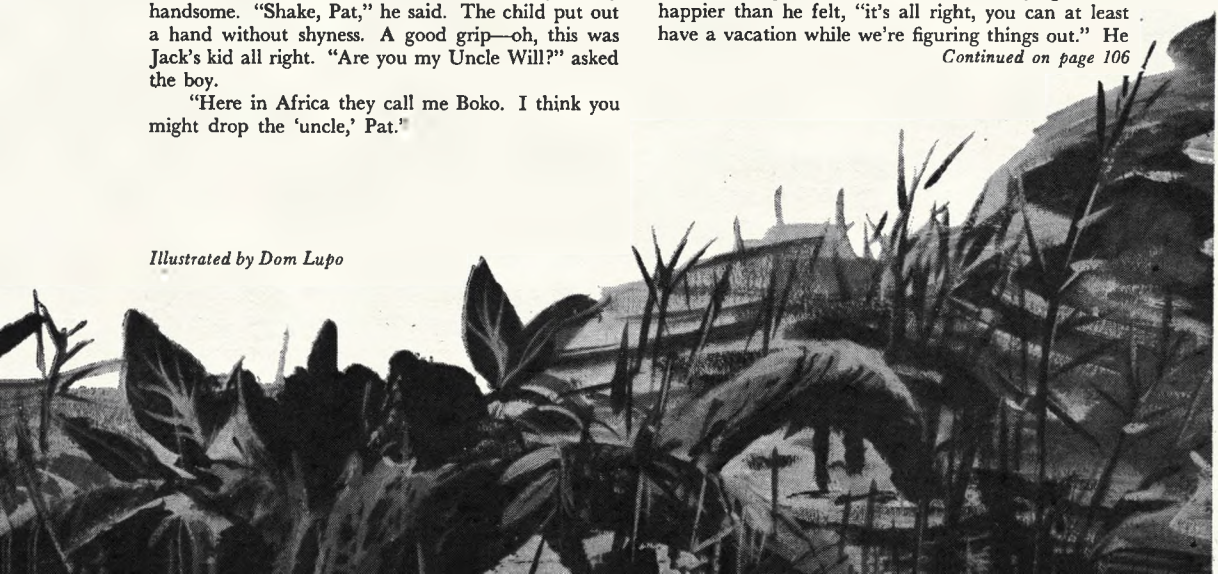
"Well," he said, "you came anyway, Jane Cochran."

"I had to, Will; I had no choice. Truly I didn't."

"I told you not to come. Don't apologize," he said, perching on the veranda rail and trying to look happier than he felt, "it's all right, you can at least have a vacation while we're figuring things out." He

Continued on page 106

Illustrated by Dom Lupo



girls who "get caught" want to

by John Kord Lagemann

At some time in his life most every man will meet a girl who, without preliminaries or effort on his part, will offer herself. It's usually not because the man has sex appeal. It's because the girl wants to have a baby.

IN THE ELEVATOR coming down from the office you take another look at the girl standing unnecessarily close to you and decide you aren't just imagining things. You remind yourself that you're happily married and too old for her anyway. Not only that, but she's a "respectable" girl —you know her family from way back. Just the same you ask if you can give her a lift. When you stop at her house she asks you in for a drink —and remarks that there's nobody home. When the door closes behind you, all the barriers drop away and she's yours to do with as you please.

This sounds like the kind of daydreaming that men indulge in from time to time—the kind where a girl throws herself at a man without preliminaries or effort on his part. Well, the daydream materializes in real life a lot oftener than people think.

When it does, the "conquering" male thinks he's quite a guy. In most cases he couldn't be more wrong.

For he is merely a *convenient* guy the girl is using as a means to an end. She may—and usually does—use all the romantic cliches she has picked up in books and movies. But she doesn't really care about the man. *All she wants of him is to make her pregnant out of wedlock.*

For this reason the girl usually selects a man who is either unsuitable or unavailable as a husband. That's why older, married men with children are favorite candidates. One out of five fathers of illegitimate children is a married man, and usually he already has legitimate children. Or, at the other extreme, the girl may choose a boy who has many years of schooling ahead of him before he can support a family.

Soldiers and sailors are also favorite subjects because they're here today and gone tomorrow. The same is true of traveling salesmen. If the girl comes from a religious family, she is apt to pick a man whose differing religious background is pretty sure to arouse her parents' disapproval. Half the Jewish girls pick fathers outside their faith—usually Roman Catholics. A similar proportion of Catholic girls choose non-Catholic men. Race differences are exploited for the same reason.

If there are no unsuitable men close at hand, the girl will go to the most likely place to find an unlikely candidate—a bar, drug store, bus station or street corner.

Sounds fantastic, doesn't it? Why should any girl bring down on herself the shame and hardship of pregnancy and childbirth without the protection of marriage or the solace of love? Till recently, the answers seemed obvious: The girl was over-sexed, promiscuous, ignorant, immoral, irreligious, or simply careless. The man who impregnated her was either an unscrupulous seducer or a normal male obeying his natural instincts—depending on your point of view. Even today these views are the basis of both public opinion

and law. But psychiatrists, physicians and social workers who actually deal with unwed parents have been re-examining these popular beliefs about illegitimacy—and have found most of them dead wrong.

In most cases, having an out-of-wedlock baby is no more accidental than stuttering or alcoholism. For both the girl and the man, "getting caught" is an attempt to satisfy in adult life the kind of love needs that belong to infancy and childhood.

Though almost unknown to laymen, this new concept of illegitimacy is being used by most of the leading institutions which care for unwed mothers and their babies. It is helping them give many of these girls a fresh start in life—and a normal chance of success in marriage and parenthood. It may some day enable us to spot the pregnancy-prone girl before she involves herself, her sex partner, family and child in a tragic situation.

There's a popular belief that most girls who "get caught" do so simply because they don't know how to take precautions. But take the case of Betty. She was a bright, 22-year-old college girl who knew all the so-called facts of life. She became pregnant, and when the doctor asked if she'd tried to guard against it she seemed astonished. "Why, no. I never thought about it. It just never occurred to me."

Betty is typical of the vast majority of girls who become unwed mothers. The girl and the man know all about precautionary measures, yet fail to use them. With rare exceptions, they don't even consider them. When they do, it is only to reject the idea.

"Jim said a couple of times something might happen," said Iris, a pretty 18-year-old waitress. "But I told him, 'Forget it, don't bother'. I didn't think anything could happen to me."

According to her boy friend, another girl, Mary June, halted sex relations when she discovered he was using a birth-control device. "When she saw what I was doing she told me she wouldn't go on if I didn't throw it away. So I did."

Some unwed mothers had used such devices previously, but had failed to continue to protect themselves.

"One of the first myths to disappear is the idea that having an out-of-wedlock child is something that just happens," says Prof. Leontine Young of Ohio State University's School of Social Administration and one of the leading authorities

Continued on page 111

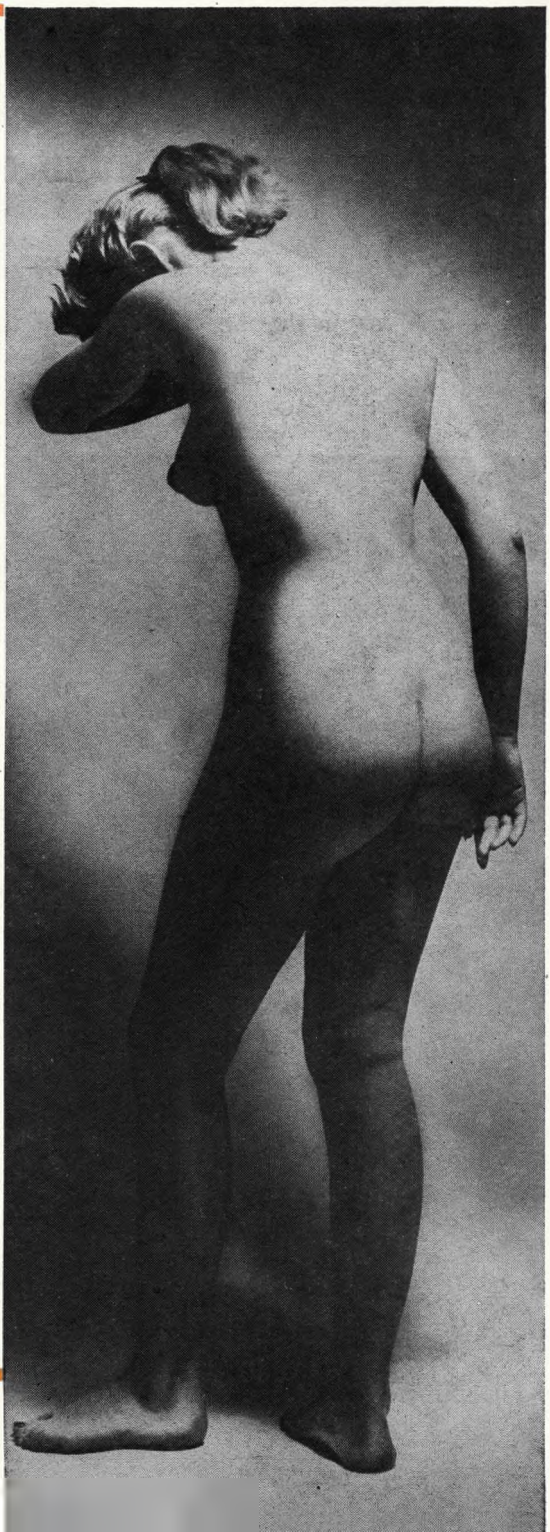


Photo by Ed Vebell

RETURN OF THE WOLF

BY EDMUND GILLIGAN

Illustrated by George Withers

The snow was darkened by sheep wantonly killed,
and at night the howls of the marauder rose in the hills.
Was the boy's sheep dog, with it's reddened jaws, the murderer?

UNTIL THAT MOMENT, there hadn't been a wolf killed in the Catskill Mountains for a hundred years. Now she lay dead in the first snowfall. They had trapped her because she had been at the sheep back in the Notch. So they said. Two bullets had finished her off. Down she sagged, all alone.

"She's a wolf, all right." This assurance came from Dan Killane, top sawyer for the lumber mill and a partner in the sheep herd. He bent over the trap, his hands gripped together behind him in that odd way he had of standing, his eyes taking in everything by green, foxy glances here and there. The others knew that Dan was just trying to make sure of things by gabbing. They wouldn't want to rile him by saying anything, whether they agreed or not. They just stared at the wolf.

What was the matter? This: since there hadn't been a wolf in the hills for such a time, who there could tell a wolf from a wild dog? Couldn't a big shepherd have crossed with a wolf of the Adirondacks, where there's plenty of wolves? None of them could say for sure. They weren't the kind that went traipsing around to zoos. And a picture in a book is no great help. To tell the truth, a wolf was just an idea with most of them. Big, colored a certain way, a music-maker on winter nights, and, of course, a sheep-killer.

Her howling had convinced them. And that's odd, too. How was it they knew the wolf's howl, if they'd never heard such music? "Hear him now? He's working over toward Mount Tobias." That's what they had said when first the long cry sounded. But they couldn't know for sure that it was her howling they had heard. For all they knew, a real wolf was in there. Maybe she was running with him,

Continued on page 115

The Mail

Old Jim's mail route just wasn't something you could handle by the book—and try to explain that to the strict young postmaster who was gunning for his hide!

By JOHN REESE

Must Go Through...

He was just leaving the post office by the back door when Rudy Smith, the postmaster, looked out of his office. "Just a minute, Jim," he said. "I told you I wanted to have a little talk with you this morning."

Jim Endicott put his pouch down. "Hope it won't take long, Rudy," he said. "These people want their mail. They're used to getting it on time."

"I'll be happy if they get it at all," Rudy said, closing the door. "That's what I want to talk to you about."

Jim plodded back toward Rudy's office. He was 62 years old. He had taken this job 24 years ago, when his kids were small and a steady job of any kind was the most important thing in the world, and this was a dinky little town in the Southern California foothills with not more than 3,000 people in it. Now Jim looked his age, and the city was a bustling young city of 20,000, and hardly anybody knew anybody any more.

Jim was not a big man. He did not look tough and wiry, like so many smallish, gnarled men of 62. He just looked like a little old man who should have taken more pains when he shaved this morning, and whose worn gray uniform would have made him look right at home among the tattered rebels who had surrendered at Appomattox.

He went into the postmaster's office. Rudy Smith was one of those young examination passers — two years of college and five of experience, and he could sing the Postal Laws and Regulations to any tune you could name. Jim had broken Rudy in on the job here himself. He had broken in most of the men in this post office, but he was still carrying letters on a route himself.

"What's eating you now, Rudy?" he said.

"Jim," said Rudy, "we've got to have a little talk."

"On Tuesday? Me with a hundred and fifty magazines and—"

"I know. I tried to catch you yesterday but you deliberately sneaked out on me. This is it, old boy."

Rudy was just back from a week in the Sierras, where he liked to ski, and he looked fit and fresh and ready to face things. Things he had been putting off.

"Jim," he said, "don't you think you had better change your mind and take an inside job?"

"Why?" said Jim.

"You know why. I'm appalled when I think of the way you do your job. We've been over it again and again. You treat your route as though you had built it up like—well, like your own private business."

"I did build it up," said Jim.

Rudy held his hands to his head. "You don't build up a mail route like you do a laundry route or milk route! I'm afraid this is final—I'm going to have to put a younger man in that job."

"No," said Jim. "Those people have been getting their mail from me ever since those houses were built. They're my customers and that's my route."

Rudy got a sort of a wild look behind his rimless glasses. He slammed his open hand down on his desk

—hard. "It is not your route! That is the United States Government's route."

Jim touched the badge on his cap. "What do you think this is, Rudy—Russian secret police?"

Rudy got up and crossed the room and stood with his back to Jim, studying the clammy plaster wall. He was silent about the length of time it took to count to 10. Then he turned around.

"You're going to make it tough on me," he said. "Very well then, I have no recourse but to be tough too. This is an order—report tomorrow to the stamp window."

JIM thought of Gracie, his wife. If he took an inside job, where he had to meet the public, she'd make him buy a lot of new shirts and wear a clean starched one every day. She'd make him waste time on a close shave every morning and a weekly haircut. Of course Jim met a lot of people as it was; but what Gracie didn't know about walking a mail route wouldn't hurt her.

Besides, there was the principle of the thing. Those people had been getting their mail from him for 20 years. There were several other old-timers among the carriers, and Rudy was talking of shuffling all the routes. Somebody had to have the spunk to stand up to him.

"Have you had any complaints about me?" Jim said.

"No, but the Fourth Assistant Postmaster General—"

"To hell with the Fourth Assistant Postmaster General," Jim said. "I met him twelve years ago at the letter-carrier's convention. He never walked a route and doesn't know anything about it, and you can tell him I said so."

He went out. Behind him Rudy yelled, "Jim, this is rank insubordination. You come back here!"

Jim did not go back. Instead he got his mail pouch and went out to his car, fuming silently. The postal service certainly was getting some strange people in supervisory jobs! Well, he had taught Rudy a thing or two.

But as he drove north to San Mateo street, where his route began, he started to worry. Rudy was a tough cookie, a born cleaner-upper of difficult situations. Rudy went by the Postal Laws and Regulations to the last letter.

Jim hadn't kept up with the P.L. & R. He had been too busy delivering mail. Whether the Government knew it or not, the people on his route were a certain type. They took from the same milkman year after year, and the same dry-cleaner. The same garbage men and meter-readers had been hoofing those streets for years. Those people didn't like for utilities or even the United States Government to take liberties with their lives. Take the time the police chief had tried to reshuffle his patrol cars. He had backed down on that one in a mighty big hurry!

Jim smiled. Rudy would die if he knew the part Jim had played in getting old Buff Hanson back on this beat. *But I know what my people want, and they wanted Buff,* he thought. *If they didn't, they should have. . . .*

There was no sea-breeze today. This would be a scorcher. Jim parked under the flowering eucalyptus in front of the Hessel place. He could see Mrs. Hessel waiting for her mail in the doorway. The Hessels had moved out here from New York last spring. They had made no friends here and apparently had left none back east, to judge by their mail.

This was one of the few rental places on Jim's route, and it seemed to be jinxed. No tenant ever stayed long. Jim had noticed that there were hard-luck houses, just as there were hard-luck people. Mr. Hessel was a hard-luck guy. He worked first one place and then another. He had given Jim some tips on the races, but Jim had not bet them. A good thing, too, because all of Mr. Hessel's picks seemed to be hard-luck horses.

Mrs. Hessel opened the door and reached for her mail. She was a tall, chilly, regal-looking woman in her 40's, with the look in her eye of expecting an insult any minute.

"Is that the only place you know to park?" she snapped.

"I always park there," said Jim. "I don't like to leave a good car out in the sun all day."

"Good car! I'm ashamed to have that disgraceful old junk-heap in front of my place every day."

"Junk-heap?" Jim snorted. "At least it's paid for. That's more than some people can say."

"Meaning you won't move it? We'll see about that! Let's see what the postmaster and the police have to say about this."

Jim started down the steps. "All right, but if you get me worried I'll make mistakes, and tomorrow's the day for the delinquency notices from the finance companies. I might get rattled and leave yours next door. You wouldn't want that to happen, because everybody knows them long, thin, mean-looking envelopes. Don't get me rattled, please, Mrs. Hessel, because that's when I do everything wrong."

He went away and left her steaming. He felt sure he had taken care of the parking situation. Mrs. Hessel wasn't going to call anybody.

JIM had started parking here when he rode a bicycle and that tree was just big enough to lean a bike against. Everyone knew he parked here. People with a late letter to mail left it on the back seat. With a package, they left money and a note saying, "Lv. chg. in stamps tomorrow, thanx." His car shaded the neighborhood dogs on hot days, and on cold ones he always came back to find three or four cats on the hood, soaking up the engine heat.

But Rudy wouldn't understand that. Rudy would have advised Jim to park somewhere else.

He walked on up the street, his pace timed by a metronome in his shoe—the squeak of his left arch-support. He turned off San Mateo on Old School

Continued on page 125

Lincoln's Rebel In-Laws

FEW PEOPLE today know that Abraham Lincoln had seven brothers-in-law in the Confederate army. They were the four brothers of his wife, Mary Todd, and the three men who married Mrs. Lincoln's sisters.

George Todd became a surgeon in the Confederate service.

Samuel Todd was a member of Company I, Crescent regiment of infantry, which consisted of Louisiana troops. He was killed on the second day of Shiloh, April, 1862.

David Todd was wounded at Vicksburg. He never recovered, but lived on as an invalid.

Lieutenant Alexander H. Todd was killed in a skirmish at Baton Rouge in August, 1863.

Martha Todd married Clem B. White of Selma, Alabama, who was a Confederate captain.

N. H. R. Dawson, also of Selma, was the husband of Elodie Todd. He became a colonel.

Then there was Emilie's husband, Ben Hardin Helm. There seems to be more information existing about him than on the others. Son of a former governor of Kentucky, he was graduated from West Point in 1851. Because of ill health, he resigned from the service and went into the practice of law. Some time after his marriage to Emilie Todd in 1857, he had a law case which took him to Springfield, Illinois. There he met for the first time his sister-in-law Mary's husband, Abraham Lincoln, who was 23 years his senior. The two men took a great liking to each other.

About four years later—in that fateful April of '61—Lincoln invited Helm to Washington. After his arrival, Lincoln gave Helm a sealed envelope.

"Think this matter over by yourself and let me know what you will do." Helm promptly opened the envelope. It contained a commission in the U. S. Army as paymaster with rank of major.

The young man thanked Lincoln for this kindness, and promised an answer shortly.

That same afternoon, April 27, Helm ran across Colonel Robert E. Lee of the Second U. S. Cavalry. Helm showed Lee the papers he had received from Lincoln.

Since Lee, a Virginian, felt he could not strike at his own people, he had written his resignation. He said: "My mind is too much disturbed to give you any advice. But do what your conscience and honor bid."

After Helm had returned to his home in Kentucky and had thought the matter over, he wrote to President Lincoln declining the commission. Then he entered the Confederate army where he rose to the rank of brigadier-general. On the second bloody day at Chickamauga, Helm's brigade formed part of the Confederate right wing under Lieutenant-General Leonidas Polk. And storming the Federal breastworks with his men he was killed.

At the time of the battle, Mrs. Helm was living in Selma, where two of her sisters also lived. She was notified of her husband's death by General Braxton Bragg, C.S.A., who summoned her to Atlanta, where she arrived in time for the funeral.

General Bragg applied for a pass for her to go through the Federal lines, so she could proceed to her old home in Kentucky. Mrs. Helm's pass reached her from Lincoln.

It was well that this arrived because General Grant had already refused to give her a pass.

Mrs. Helm proceeded north to Fortress Monroe, Virginia. But there she was stopped. Federal army officers there said that she could not go on to Kentucky without taking an oath of allegiance to the United States. She felt that it would be treason to the Confederacy, and so firmly refused.

The Union officers argued with her reasonably, but without results. An order had been given them regarding families of Confederate soldiers and they could not alter it even for the President's sister-in-law. At last one of the officers, in desperation, decided to telegraph the President concerning the situation. In a few hours the answer came, and it was shown to Mrs. Helm.

Send her to me.
A. Lincoln.

With a load off her mind, Emilie went on to Washington. She stayed several days at the White House with Sister Mary and Brother Lincoln, as she called them, before proceeding home to Kentucky.

—BY WILLIAM H. WILSON

A Short Short Story by Walter Goodman

Good-by, Rudolph, Good-by

ON THE DAY I was promoted to sales manager of the J. J. Corango Classy Cummerbund Company, Rudolph was elected chairman of the board of directors. Which pretty much tells the story of how it's always been between me and Rudolph.

We started out in Corango's shipping department on the same Monday morning almost 20 years ago, and somehow I never caught up again. By Tuesday Rudolph's undependable heart was preventing him from rising to pack the cummerbunds himself, so I packed and he filled out invoices. "You don't mind, do you?" Rudolph wheezed at me, and panted a little.

"Naw," I replied, figuring shrewdly that my diligence would be remarked on by our superiors and that poor sickly Rudolph would be canned within the month. By Wednesday it was commonly accepted throughout the firm that Rudolph was the new shipping clerk and I was the new assistant shipping clerk.

When I was sent out to Staten Island to plug our special fancy pastel models with pleats—an innovation of J. J. himself—Rudolph's heart kept him indoors where he soon became right-hand man to the Chief, Home Office, an octogenarian named Arthur Legpacker. By the time I returned to Corango after four years as a private in the Army, the octogenarian had retired to a boarding house in Yonkers and Rudolph, who had been deferred on account of his weak heart, greeted me in his capacity of Chief, Home Office. "You are a hero," he told me and gasped, and wept a little. "I only regret that I never had your opportunity."

It was Rudolph too who bade me farewell when I departed for Alaska to open up virgin territory to Corango's cummerbunds. The job I did in Anchorage and environs has gone down in the annals of the industry. I convinced 1,200 youthful Eskimo nationalists that the absence of cummerbund's from their igloos was the mark of a savage culture. I planted cummerbund flags for them; I hung cummerbunds on their icy windows; I swaddled new-born babes in cummerbunds; I cut the stuff up as bandages for frostbitten noses. I devised an ingenious uplift cummerbund for the lady Eskimos. On my triumphant homecoming, I was received warmly by Rudolph's personal secretary. Rudolph had married the President's daughter and was now Director, Over-All Policy.

In fairness, I must recall that Rudolph did extend the hand of friendship after I'd been back a couple of weeks. He drew me over to the water-cooler one morning and coughed pitifully. "I want you should understand about my marriage," he whispered. "It was not consummated out of ambition."

"Of course not, Rudolph," I said. "Just because the girl is seven years older than you, homely as sin, and Mr. J. J. Corango's daughter is no reason to accuse a person of ambition."

"My heart," he breathed. "My heart." He patted his chest affectionately and dug into a coat pocket for a pint jar of pills. He tossed a handful down his throat, swallowed a cup of water and continued. "I myself am no Tyrone Gumbash or Ronald Festerbasket, thank heaven. A presentable, well-proportioned wife would very likely be the death of me. My ticker couldn't take it." He patted himself. "Ramona is seven years older than I am; as you say, she is homely as sin. When I look on her nothing happens. Absolutely nothing. And also she, like me, likes salt-free food."

WHILE I was progressing arithmetically in the firm's ranks, Rudolph was taking geometric leaps. Each time I came home with news of a promotion my wife, who (I have snapshots to prove it) was an uncommonly demure type when we became wedded, would sneer at me. "Dope," she would say, "you make nine thousand, he makes twelve thousand. You struggle up to twelve thousand, he's pulling in twenty-seven thousand."

"But, darling," I would explain patiently (except when it came to Rudolph, Ida was rational for a woman), "he is married with Ramona Corango."

"So, dope," my wife would retort, "why didn't *you* marry Ramona Corango?"

"Because I married you, darling, sugar plum."

My wife would curl her lip. "Some excuse!"

It was after one such exchange that I met Marilyn. Met? Rather was drawn into her field of radiation at Romney-Plaza. She was wearing a simple black frock at the time. The neckline plunged, the rest of it clung. She was 122 well-arranged pounds of pulsating Life Force, and I basked happily into the magic perfumed fall-out that surrounded her.

Whenever I needed comfort, Marilyn was there,

Illustrated by Robert McGinnis

rippling beneath her silk dress, 30 or 40 of those Life Force pounds throbbing away—without any effort on her part or consent or even knowledge. (Does an atomic bomb know what it is doing?) Lips parted, breathing deep and audible, eyes barely opened, she held out her soft, soft arms to me as matter-of-factly as another woman might shuffle the cards for a hand of canasta.

Afterward, I despised myself. Not only was I in love with my wife, but I am by nature monogamous and, besides, it was costing me a packet of money. Still, what choice did I have with Ida eating both our hearts out over Rudolph's success? So long as his star shown in the Corango firmament, my married life was destined to be a bitter thing.

That was how the situation stood the afternoon I got word of my promotion to sales manager. Immediately, I called my wife and relayed the happy tidings with great enthusiasm. Her manner was as gracious as ever: "All right, big shot, so what did Rudolph get?"

"Rudolph got elected chairman of the board," I mumbled and my heart sank.

"Chairman of the board," Ida snarled; I could hear the calculating wheels whirring. "That's seventy-five thousand per annum."

I grunted.

"Sales manager is twenty-one thousand," she said.

"Twenty-one thousand three-fifty."

"You are fifty-three thousand six hundred and fifty dollars behind."

"It comes out less by the month," I murmured.

"You dope, you," Ida shot back. "You were better off yesterday."

You see how it was. Again the wife I cherished had kicked me into Marilyn's sphere of influence. And Marilyn was waiting, waiting as always in an aura of unbelievable ingenuousness. She turned on her divan and stretched to put out the cigarette she'd been smoking. Her hip rounded up at me; her leg, outlined in its silk kimono, trembled a little. You will have to take my word for it, the leg trembled on its own. Marilyn knew nothing of artifice.

Later (quite a bit later, as a matter of fact) I told Marilyn of my promotion to sales manager, and she suggested that we celebrate with a cozy and expensive dinner. (Marilyn could order a mean meal over the phone.) Then I told her despondently about Rudolph being made chairman of the board.

"Why don't we ask Roo-dy along too?" she said. (For Marilyn, all mankind was as one.)

I shook my head.

"Wouldn't Roo-dy like me?" she pouted.

"He doesn't care for salt . . ." I began, and all at once an immense brightness enveloped me.

I called Rudolph. "A friend of mine is having a small dinner in honor of my elevation to sales manager, Rudolph. We would like you to join us."

"I never eat out," Rudolph wheezed.

I coaxed him: "A salt-free meal, Rudolph. Positively. The only condiment to be used is lemon extract. Also you will not have to look at your wife for a few hours."

"Lemon extract, eh?" he repeated with interest.

"Positively," I enticed. "For a beverage we are having celery juice. There will be assorted vitamins and hormones scattered around the dining room."

"It is beginning to sound definitely tempting," Rudolph responded much more amiably. "No females, I presume?"

I glanced at Marilyn and sighed. "Only the hag who does the cooking."

The date was for seven and at seven punctually the buzzer buzzed. I opened the door, took Rudolph's hat, motioned him to the most comfortable armchair in the room (it had cost me $269 plus tax), and set before him a large plateful of carrot sticks and celery slices. "It is very kind of you to remember me this way," Rudolph puffed. "The life of a chairman of a board is a lonely one, especially with an untrustworthy ticker and an aging horse for a wife." He nibbled mournfully on a carrot stick.

I patted a cushion and placed it behind his head. "I have long wanted to do something like this for you, Rudolph," I assured him.

My old friend was reviewing for me the lackluster tale of his rise to board chairman when the scent of Marilyn wafted out to us like a touch of paradise. Rudolph's nose quivered suspiciously. "An unfamiliar odor," he mused. I calmed him: "It must be from the big pot chockful of nutritious herbs boiling away on the gas range." "Mouth-watering," sniffed Rudolph. "Mouth . . ."

And Marilyn appeared. She drifted forth as effortlessly as the perfume and paused to curve herself around a bronze nude. She was wearing scanty silk shorts and an angora sweater.

"This is Marilyn," I announced, holding tight to the end of a sturdy mahogany sideboard.

Rudolph gasped; he turned pale; he looked at me as Caesar must have looked at Brutus on that Ides of March, but almost immediately his eyes pivoted back to Marilyn.

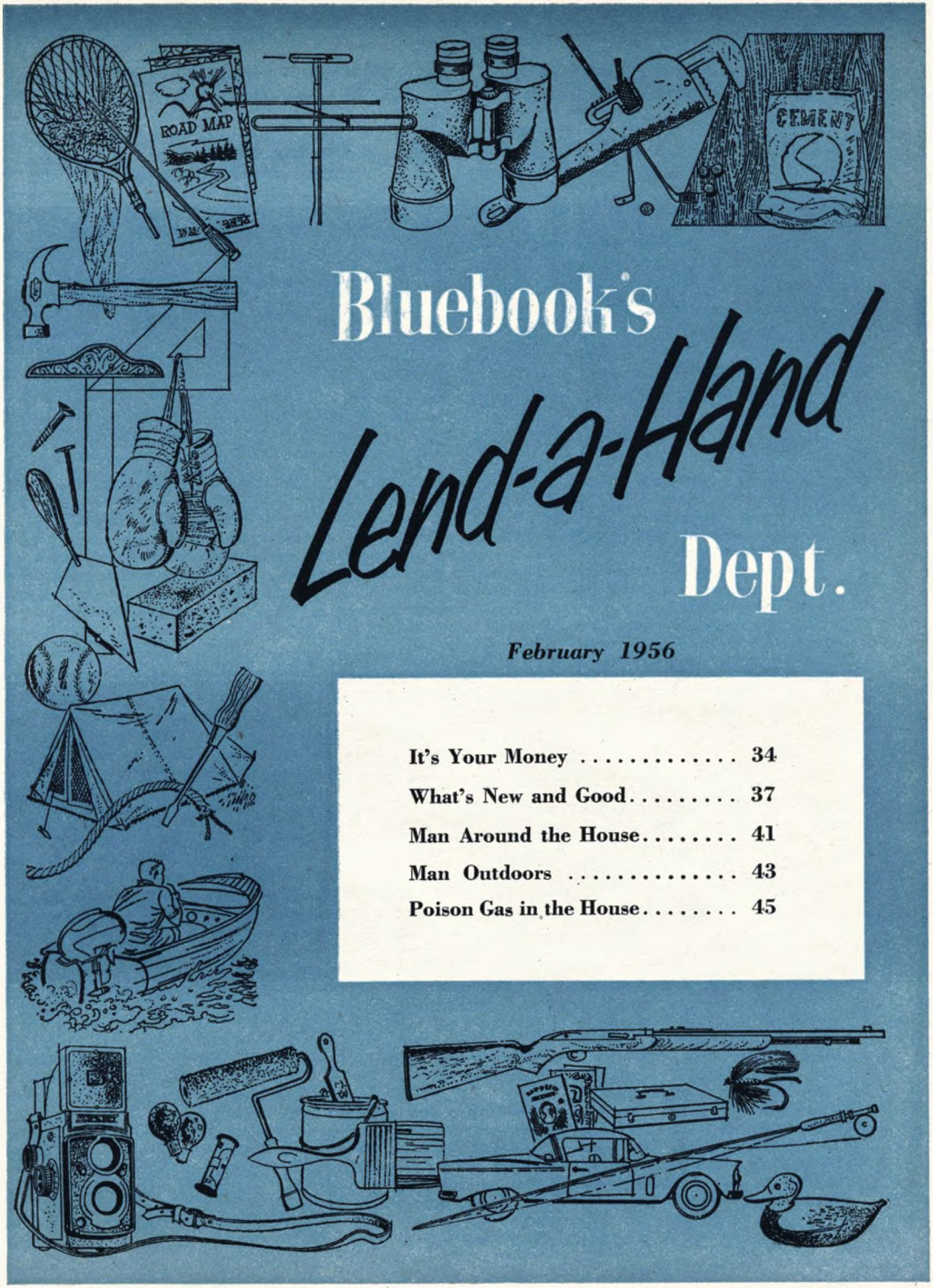
"This is Rudolph," I said.

Marilyn approached him, the wool of her sweater quivering with energy. She bent low over his chair in order to save him the effort of rising. "Nice to meet you, Rooooo-dy," she crooned in her throaty way. Rudolph's jaw hung; his eyes bulged; he groped for something in his coat pocket; he blushed. "Poor Rooooo-dy," Marilyn breathed and ran her fingertips gently over his cheek. His color deepened and, with a decorous gulp, Rudolph expired.

"Tch, tch, tch," I tched, dreaming of a happy domestic life forever after.

Marilyn smoothed her angora and turned on me, distrust in her eye. "Now tell the truth: did you sprinkle salt on his carrot sticks?"

—By Walter Goodman



Bluebook's Lend-a-Hand Dept.

February 1956

It's Your Money 34

What's New and Good..... 37

Man Around the House..... 41

Man Outdoors 43

Poison Gas in the House..... 45

- **The tax savers many people pass up**
- **Building a retirement fund**
- **Where to get a mortgage**

THE AVERAGE wage-earner takes an unnecessarily severe beating on federal income taxes because he is shockingly unaware of the simple facts that can reduce his tax bill.

Most men of moderate means, especially if their taxes are deducted from wages, tend to take the easy way and send in the short-form return rather than figure out their potential deductions. Often they have little idea of their rightful deductions, and exemptions for people whom they help to support.

Recently I had to get a bumper ironed out after plowing into another car. I couldn't collect for the damage but, as I remarked to the body repairman, at least I could deduct it on my tax return. He was astonished. Of all people he should have known that, as should every car-owner.

Then there was the fellow who wrote us that he wasn't taking a tax exemption for the support of his mother-in-law this year because her veteran's widow's pension was now over $600. We wrote back telling him to take that exemption. You can't claim an exemption for anyone you support who has $600 of *taxable* income, but his mom-in-law's pension, like most other types of public pensions, is *not* taxable.

Another man moaned that the water pipes in his home had burst while he was away during a hard freeze, and the insurance company wouldn't pay. His policy apparently didn't cover water damage. But he could at least claim a tax deduction for the damage not only to the plumbing but to his ceiling and furniture. A homeowner ought to know his potential deductions as well as he knows the size of his lot.

The effect of this widespread uncertainty about the tax rules costs the little fellow a good deal of money. Higher-income taxpayers can afford to employ specialists who can sniff a potential deduction from miles away. The little guy can't.

This doesn't mean you have to become a tax expert. But it will pay you on April 15 to know the simple tax-savers you can use. The chances are you spend more for federal income tax than for your family's medical care, or even your car, clothing, or any other item except food and rent. A family of three with income of $90 a week pays around $490 a year just in federal income tax. That's $9.40 a week.

The instruction booklet with your tax forms and lots of other inexpensive guides will give you the complete ground rules on how to make out your return. But here is a check list spotlighting the important tax savers that moderate-income folks tend to overlook. These tips can save you many tax dollars, and a buck saved is 20 percent bigger than a buck earned. That's because you don't have to pay tax on the buck saved.

Don't pay tax on sick pay. During the first week of an illness, the pay you get *is* taxable. But after that you can subtract from your taxable income up to $100 a week of pay received while sick. Or, if you were hospitalized at least a day, or your illness was due to an injury (even if not on the job), you can subtract up to $100 of pay for the first week too. Even servicemen can now subtract the pay they get while hospitalized. You can subtract sick pay from your taxable income even if you don't itemize other deductions.

Payments from workmen's compensation, sickness insurance, or damages you recover for injury are completely tax exempt.

Take all your dependency exemptions. As mentioned earlier, even if a relative you help support has some income of his own, you may still be able to claim this person as a $600 exemption on your return. The rule is that you can't claim anyone as a dependent who has $600 or more *taxable* income of his own for the year (except children still under 18 or in school). But many types of income are *non*-taxable (see below). So you may still be able to claim exemptions for relatives who have mostly non-taxable income as long as you provide more than half their support, which includes not only board but medical and other expenses. You can take exemptions for close relatives that is, relatives closer than cousins even if they don't live with you, but not for distant relatives or other people you support unless they do.

If several of the family support a close relative but none contributes more than half his support, they can agree to let one take the exemption, or alternate as they want. You are permitted the full exemption even if the dependent lived only part of the year. *(Continued on next page)*

Don't pay tax on exempt income. Not only for the sake of possible dependency exemptions you can take, but to make sure you don't pay tax on any of your own income that is really exempt, keep in mind that the following are *not* taxable: Social Security, state assistance, rail retirement, vets' pensions, accident and sickness benefits, unemployment insurance, insurance proceeds and gifts. Annuities and pensions from employers are partly tax free. Military subsistence and rental allowances are exempt. But military retirement pay based on age or service is taxable.

Choose the best return. Before you decide whether to use the simple but sometimes costly short form, or the long form on which you itemize deductions, add up your deductions to see whether they total 10 percent of your income. If they don't, you'll profit by using the short form which automatically allows you a standard 10 percent deduction.

The following tax reducers, which many people overlook, are usable only if you itemize deductions:

Damages. Property damages are frequently overlooked by moderate-income taxpayers. You can deduct for any damage to your car for which you weren't reimbursed, *even if an accident was your own fault,* as long as you weren't willfully negligent, as in driving while drunk. You can also deduct for any other sudden and unexpected damage to your home, boat or other property, for which you weren't reimbursed.

Many potential deductions for windstorm damage are overlooked, such as television aerials that get knocked down, shingles and storm doors that get torn off, uprooted trees or shrubs, breached retaining walls, etc. You can deduct for any non-reimbursed damage from storms, fire, flood, lightning, freezing, burst water pipes, heater and boiler explosions and other natural forces. You can also deduct the fair market value of items stolen from you.

Interest payments. We nominate as the second most-overlooked deduction, various types of interest fees. Most homeowners know enough to deduct mortgage interest payments. But lots of folks pass up deductions for interest paid on installment purchases and loans. The finance fee for a car alone makes a sizable deduction.

Non-cash charity donations. Besides cash, you can deduct for the market value of goods and food you donate to charities, community agencies, churches and schools, and even for the gas and oil you use in rendering services to charity and government organizations like schools and civilian defense agencies.

Work expenses. People who work for wages have deductible expenses just like businessmen and professionals. Among the most important are: costs of any special work uniforms or safety equipment you may have to buy, like helmets, safety gloves, steel-toe shoes, work aprons, uniform insignia, etc.; dues paid to unions and professional associations; tools, technical magazines, books and similar supplies; business-entertainment expenses; fares and travel costs required on your job, including part of your auto expenses and depreciation when you use your car for work (but not commuting expenses); fees paid to employment agencies and costs of bond if your job requires it; costs of repairing your work equipment.

Child-care payments. If you have to pay someone to take care of your children, because your wife works or because you're a widower or widow, you can deduct up to $600 of these payments. The deduction counts for children up to 12, or older if physically or mentally incapable. You can take this deduction even if you pay a relative, such as your mother, to take care of the child while you are at work (but not if you also claim the relative as a dependent). It doesn't matter if the child is taken care of in your home or elsewhere.

All medical expenses. Sometimes taxpayers overlook certain medical expenses. Besides obvious doctor, dentist and hospital bills, you can also deduct: all medicines, even if not prescribed by a doctor, including aspirin, cough medicine and all the other household remedies every family buys; fares to get medical treatment; premiums paid for health insurance; all medical appliances such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, arch supports, etc.

Other taxes. In these days of widespread state and city income and sales taxes, the non-federal taxes become a sizable deduction. If you buy the typical 700 gallons of gas a year, and your state gasoline tax is five cents a gallon, you have a $35 deduction right there. Among other frequent taxes you can deduct on your federal return are: property taxes; city and state sales and use taxes; auto registration and driver's license fees; personal property or use taxes on cars in some areas; city amusement taxes and occupational licenses fees. But you can't deduct federal excise taxes (on jewelry, admissions, etc.) unless you incur them for business.

Special credits. These can be used to reduce your tax even if deductions are not itemized. One is the retirement income credit for older people, which saves them some taxes on income from rents, interest, dividends and other retirement income. Another is the credit on dividends from mutual fund shares and stocks.

Men who have a sideline job in addition to their regular work should be sure to take credit for any overpayment of Social Security taxes. Generally both employers deduct the tax, but you are legally liable for Social Security tax only on the first $4,200 a year of income.

Building a Retirement Fund

"I am 37 and can set aside some money each month. What is the best method of accumulating a fund that can serve as a backlog now and eventually be used for retirement?"
—S. W., Huron, S.D.

There are three favored ways to build retirement funds. One is to invest in stocks—either directly or by buying shares in mutual funds. This has the advantage of a greater yield on

If you need information on money problems—insurance, investment, budgeting, government pensions, unemployment insurance, borrowing, etc.—write this department. Unfortunately, we can't give individual replies in all cases, but will try to do so in many; others we'll answer here. For an individual reply a self-addressed stamped envelope must be enclosed with your letter. Write to Sidney Margolius, Bluebook, 230 Park Ave., New York 17, N. Y.

your savings, but the disadvantage of a greater risk. You may get back more than you invested—probably will if you hold the shares for many years—but there's always the chance that the value of your shares will be down at the time you want to get your money.

The second way is to put your money in no-risk savings depositaries. These include savings banks, credit unions, U.S. "E" bonds and savings-and-loan associations. Here there is no risk of losing your money, but the return on it is generally only around 3 percent, as compared to 3½ to 5 percent for mutual funds and the more conservative stocks.

The third way is to buy annuities and insurance policies. These have a yield of 2½-3 percent and so do not build up in value as fast as mutual funds or stocks, or even 3 percent savings accounts and bonds. But they have the advantage of providing the one way a man can't outlive his savings. If you knew exactly how long you were going to live you could plan almost to the dollar how much a savings you would need. Unfortunately, you can't. But by pooling your savings with others in an annuity fund, you can be assured of an income no matter how long you live.

Insurance as a form of savings has the same disadvantage of annuities. You can accumulate funds faster by self-saving. But many life-insurance and endowment policies do have a valuable feature in the privilege of converting the cash-surrender value to a monthly annuity.

Smartest approach for a young man building savings is, in our opinion, a combination of two or three of these methods to gain their advantages while minimizing their defects. You can do this by investing at least half your savings in "E" bonds and savings accounts, and the balance in mutual funds, or directly in stocks—if you can get sound advice on selecting the stocks and timing your purchases. Then when you actually retire, with part of the accumulated funds you can buy an annuity outright.

However, if your employer has a group annuity plan, it might be worth buying into it ahead of retirement. You pay into the plan on an installment basis, and the cost is lower than if you bought an annuity on your own. If you join a group annuity plan, a well-hedged formula for savings would put possibly 35-40 percent into mutual funds or stocks, 30-35 percent into savings accounts and bonds, and 25-30 percent into the annuity.

Shopping for a Mortgage

"I am in need of cash. If my house is worth $12,500 with the improvements I have made, and my mortgage is $7,200, where would be the best place to up my mortgage to $9,500, thus giving me $2,300 in cash?"

—R. W., Watertown, N. Y.

If your home actually has an appraised value of $12,500, you may be able to secure a new first mortgage of up to 80 percent of its value (or $10,000) from a savings bank, commercial bank, savings-and-loan association, insurance company or mortgage company. These are the chief sources of mortgage loans. Compare rates and other conditions among at least three such lenders. Keep in mind that the higher the percentage of appraised value you want to borrow, the higher interest rate you generally have to pay. FHA mortgages only charge 5 percent interest, but the FHA appraisal is sometimes stricter than other appraisals. It would be advisablo to try for an FHA or other 5 percent loan first, and if not forthcoming, shop for a conventional loan at a little higher rate.

A less-attractive alternative is to leave your first mortgage alone and get a second mortgage for a term of three or five years. You will have to pay a much higher interest rate, possibly 6 percent, and may even be required to pay a bonus. Beware of this, because sometimes individuals or mortgage companies who give second mortgages require a very high bonus or "discount."

In either case ask about the cost of the new closing fees because, if excessive, they push the cost of your loan up. Also request that the mortgage contract include the right of prepayment without penalty. This allows you to pay up beforehand if you accumulate the cash, and thus reduce your total interest cost. It is especially vital to get the prepayment privilege if you have to pay more than 5 percent to get a new mortgage. Sometimes banks and other lenders insist on charging you a premium if you want the right to prepay on non-FHA mortgage loans, but will grant a partial prepayment clause *if* you request it.

Interest on Postal Savings

"You said in November BLUEBOOK *that interest on postal savings is not automatically compounded annually. Isn't it true that the government now pays compound interest?"*

—R. H. N., Sidney, Ohio

Yes. This partly eliminates one disadvantage of postal savings. But the interest rate is still only 2 percent (1½ in Mississippi). This is below the rate currently being paid by the majority of savings banks, savings-and-loan associations, credit unions and even many commercial banks. In addition, most of these institutions compound interest quarterly or semi-annually, which gives them a slight extra edge over postal-savings deposits, which are only compounded annually.

Vets' Pensions, Insurance

"Thank you for your information about World War I vets' pensions. The V.A. has okayed a pension for my husband. Does such a pension continue in part for the wife of a deceased World War I vet? What type of veterans' insurance should my son continue? He is a World War II vet, age 30, and getting his M.A. in college."

—Mrs. A.B.F., Santa Ana, Calif.

Most widows of World War I vets are almost automatically eligible for widows' pensions if their annual income from all sources doesn't exceed $1,400. This is what's known as a "true" veteran's pension, unlike that granted families of World War II and Korean vets. (They are eligible only if the vet was getting disability compensation, or had service-connected disability when he died.)

On the score of veterans' insurance, we recommend strongly that the vet continue his full coverage. If he can't afford to convert his policy to a costlier whole-life or endowment policy without reducing the amount of coverage, we advise he keep the full amount on the original "term" basis, which costs very little. You can't buy life insurance at anywhere near that low price. The reasons for the low cost of the GI insurance is not only that the government foots the administrative expenses, but that vets are a select group of above-average health who have demonstrated a lower mortality rate than the population as a whole. "Term insurance" is simple protection insurance. It pays the survivors if the insured dies, but doesn't have any cash-surrender value. Its strong point is its low cost, which enables a man with limited funds to carry more insurance, and thus give more protection to his family.

Veterans who have converted their service insurance to the more expensive permanent plans similarly would be wise to continue it. You can't buy them from private companies as low in cost.

When you waterproof your cellar • What to look for in bath scales Electric handsaws are wonderful tools.

DON'T DO THIS YOURSELF: A number of waterproofing materials are on the market and they have worked fine for some householders plagued with wet cellars. *Some* householders, we said—those with cellars where the infiltrating water wasn't under much, if any, pressure.

If you have a severe wet-cellar problem, better think twice before trying to cure it yourself. Above all, don't call in an ordinary mason or builder; the chances are he won't know much more about it than you do. Worse, he may "know" things that aren't so. Don't do anything until you can locate a professional waterproofer who has a record in the neighborhood of consistently curing obstinate cases and a string of satisfied owners to attest to it. He should guarantee the work for five years or longer. And be prepared to pay him; he's not going to be cheap. He can't be, because what he does is expensive. Only one thing can be said for it: It works.

One waterproofer who fits this description is Joseph L. Johnson of Johnson and Welzer Waterproofing Co., Pompton Lakes, N. J. Johnson, a civil engineer, writes for *Practical Builder,* and some of the stories he tells in it are hair-raising.

One poor devil had a $45,000 house in northern New Jersey where "ground water and wet basements have become notorious." Power for his sump pump was costing him around $35 a month.

At one time, the cellar had been dry, or nearly so. Then, in the November 1950 hurricane, the ground water rose and burst through the 4" concrete floor. A mason put a new 4" floor over the old one, but it cracked in a few weeks. And the walls were leaking too. Another 3" of concrete were laid, which likewise cracked. By this time headroom in the cellar had shrunk from 5' 10" to 5' 3". And when Johnson was called in the owner had already spent $2,000 on that basement.

Johnson proposed knocking out the whole 11" of ruined concrete, digging down another 4", laying an 8" floor reinforced with ¾" steel rods on 8" centers, plastering the walls with waterproof cement with a cove at the base, etc. The bad news: $2,300. The owner decided he'd had enough and sold the house.

How can water crack 4" of cement? Fill your sink with water and push a pail or saucepan down into it without shipping any of the water. The water level will rise and the pail will push up against your hands with the exact weight of the displaced water. Archimedes worked out the physics of it 2,200 years ago, but many builders still don't know the first thing about it.

Now apply this to a house with a 40' x 20' cellar —800 square feet. Assume the ground water is three feet higher than the cellar floor—pretty bad, but houses have been built in places like that. The theoretical upward pressure on each square foot of the floor is the weight of three cubic feet of water at 62.3 pounds per cubic foot, or 187 pounds. Over the entire floor, it's about 75 tons. If this full pressure were exerted and the floor didn't crack, the house would float!

These We've Tested

For the weight-conscious: *Borg "Flight" bath scale; Borg-Erickson Corp., 1133 Kilbourne Ave., Chicago 51; $15 in states having fair trade laws (75 cents higher Denver and west).*

"Counselor Capri" Model 600 bath scale; the Brearley Co., 2107 Kishwaukee St., Rockford, Ill.; $7.95 east of Rockies, $8.45 west.

Detector Model 709 bath scale; Detecto Scales Inc., 540 Park Ave., Brooklyn 5, N. Y.; $7.95 east of Mississippi; $8.45 west.

A girl who weighed herself on one of these scales cracked, "Beautiful but wayward!" True, the virtue of a scale is its accuracy and this one made her a couple of pounds heavier than she thought she was. But since she had all her clothes on, including shoes, the scale might have been nearer right than she was. She was right about one thing, though: They sure are handsome—all of them. Whatever you may think of the 1956 automobiles, you've got to hand it to the industrial designers when it comes to bath scales.

As for the technical aspects: Low-priced bath scales like these are spring scales. You can't make them as uniform and accurate as a beam scale in which the unknown weight is balanced against a much smaller but exactly known weight on a lever calibrated in pounds and fractions of a pound. But you can calibrate your spring bath scale accurately enough by checking your weight next time you're at your doctor's office. He can give it to you within four ounces, certainly eight. Then go home and weigh yourself in the same state of dress or undress. If the two don't check, adjust the zero setting of your scale until they do. After this procedure your scale shouldn't be more than half a pound off—certainly not more than a pound—which is plenty good enough. Your weight varies a couple of pounds in the course of a day, so why split hairs? The calibration may drift, but probably won't drift enough to worry you until your next visit to the doctor.

The choice among these scales is largely one of personal preference on the basis of looks. Borg, the most expensive (but they also have an $8 scale), has both chrome and gold trim. Borg is beautiful in a straight-line, quietly elegant way. The zero adjustment is mounted on the base, not the platform, which is an advantage because it gets you away from the tendency to rest your hand on the platform while changing the zero setting. Counselor is handsome in a more curvilinear fashion, and Detecto in still another—more conspicuous but still graceful. They all come in a variety of colors to match the decor of the bathroom, which is on the way to becoming the best-looking room in the house—some houses anyway.

The scale shouldn't be set on a rug, but on a hard, even, level floor. If the scale becomes inaccurate, the manufacturer will service it at a nominal charge and without a time limit. If you can keep the kids from jumping on it, the chances are your scale will last as long as you care to have it around.

Electric handsaws: *Syntron 42B, 8½-inch blade, 115 volts, 9 amperes, weight 19 pounds; Syntron Co., Homer City, Pa.; $89.50.*

Stanley W70 Model A, 7-inch blade, 115 volts, 9.5 amperes, weight 12 pounds 2 ounces; Stanley Electric Tools, New Britain, Conn., $84.50.

Cummins Maxaw 757, 6⅜-inch blade, 115 volts, 10 amperes, weight 10¾ pounds; John Oster Mfg. Co., 5055 N. Lydell Ave., Milwaukee 17, Wis.; $69.95.

Black & Decker 62, 6⅛-inch blade, 115 volts, 9 amperes, weight 10½ pounds; Black & Decker Mfg. Co., Towson 4, Md.; $64.50.

For comparison only: 1950 Skilsaw Model 520, Type 3, 6-inch blade, 115 volts, 8 amperes, weight 10½ pounds; equivalent 1956 model is no. 526; Skil Corp., 5033 Elston Ave., Chicago 30; $49.50 (or Model 552, 6½-inch blade, $59.50).

(Arranged in order of blade size, all the above come with 10-foot, heavy-duty 3-conductor power cords, except Syntron which has a 14-foot cord, and wrenches for changing blades. In addition Syntron and Maxaw provide rip fences—value about $2.)

Next to the ¼-inch drill, the electric handsaw is probably the most useful and widely used of power tools.

It is important for the user to know the characteristics of the handsaw motor if he is to get the most out of the saw without endangering the motor or himself. As the load is increased, the speed goes down and current consumption and power output go up. The power, in other words, keeps pace with the load—up to a point. This peak is reached when the motor has slowed down to about two-thirds of its no-load speed. Any further increase in load will result in rapidly diminishing speed and power, and finally stalling.

This means that an electric handsaw cannot be forced. If you overtax it, the least unpleasant protest it can make is to stall. It may kick back instead—of which more later. If, however, you respect its limitations, it will stay on its best behavior, which is very good indeed.

To show what a wonderful tool this is, consider the record of the 1950 6-inch Skilsaw cited above. Since we began using this, it has run for an estimated 700 hours and cut its way through something like

eight miles of lumber. A saw should be cleaned and repacked with grease every 200-300 hours; this one was run for almost the whole 700 hours without attention. When it was finally taken apart the inside of the motor was solidly encrusted with sawdust. Despite this abuse, it is still in operation with no sign of failure of gear, bearing, or motor. While it's not as powerful as the new saws tested, it can handle the usual wood-cutting jobs with ease.

When you are buying an electric handsaw the things to consider are:

Safety. The manufacturers have done about all they can to make saws safe. All saws have a fixed upper-guard between the blade and the operator, and a spring-actuated lower swing-guard which covers the blade except where it is cutting. Accidents with electrical saws are practically all caused by ignorance or carelessness.

Blade size. Most home-mechanics do little with an electric handsaw except cut 1-inch and 2-inch lumber. A 6-inch blade will cut 2 inches deep at 90 degrees but barely cut 1⅜ inches at 45 degrees. At 45 degrees, therefore, it will just cut a dressed 2-by-4 (which actually is only 1¾ inches thick). Increasing the blade diameter by 1 inch increases the depth of cut by less than ½ inch at 90 degrees. If you are the average home-carpenter, you can get along with a 6-inch blade, although you may prefer a 6½- or 7-incher.

Power. All the saws tested had ample power for woodcutting and probably for anything else you might tackle. Saws are rated on the name plate in voltage and maximum current in amperes. The latter varied between 9 and 10 amperes for the four tested. In sawing 2-inch dressed lumber—usually the biggest project of the do-it-yourself carpenter—the measured current on the four saws was only 5-6 amperes. Hence the power output was no more than ½ to ⅔ of the maximum available. If the top power at the blade is assumed to be 0.8 HP, only about 0.5 HP was used for this type of load—with a new and sharp blade, that is. A pretty good surplus was left for other jobs.

Weight. Most amateurs can handle a 13-pound saw without difficulty, since in action the saw rests on the work. Of those tested, only the Syntron weighs more.

Durability. We haven't operated these saws over a long enough period to say anything about durability, except that they all look and sound as if they were built to last. If you're buying a saw and run a number of makes in the store, you should listen as well as look. What with the gears and high-speed motors, they all sound awful, but any special roughness is a bad sign.

Visibility of cut. Electric saws have an indicating edge on the base, which lies in the plane of the blade. You prepare for the cut by placing this edge and the edge of the blade on the line of cut. Toward the end of the cut, the indicating edge is beyond the work and you need to see the blade to finish the cut accurately. All these saws give good blade visibility except the Syntron, whose blade is visible from the right but obscured from the left. This means a right-handed operator has to move his head over to see where he is going at the end of the cut. A minor disadvantage of blade visibility is that there's nothing to block the upward spray of sawdust, so you must wear either eyeglasses or goggles, and preferably a cap. All modern saws use an air blast to keep the line of cut clear.

Now, let's examine the features of the four saws we've tested. The general design of the Stanley, Black & Decker, and Cummins saws is similar; in fact, almost all electric saws have shaken down to the same basic pattern. The Syntron is an exception. Its blade is driven by twin V-belts, eliminating gears but increasing the size of the tool appreciably. In the use of belts and in size, the Syntron is a cross between the bench saw and the handsaw, and indeed it can be mounted upside down with four belts and used as a bench saw. Hence, it's a good bet for those who have medium-large timbers to cut: By sawing from both sides, you can handle 6-inch lumber. It might also be a good investment for sawing small logs into firewood, provided you have somebody to hold the logs for you—except for a Paul Bunyan, this is a two-hand saw. For even larger work, Syntron's Model 52B with 10-inch blade weighs only a pound more ($109.50).

The three lighter saws tested, although also in the heavy-duty class, are more suited in size and weight for the average amateur or professional user.

Among the individual features of these saws is the Stanley "Motor Saver," an arbor or clamping device designed to hold the saw blade firmly enough for normal operation but to free the motor enough to allow it to continue rotating if the blade should jam. Although most blades are mounted on a round shaft to permit emergency slippage, this may not occur when it should. The reason is that since the bolt which holds the blade must be tightened by the rotation of the shaft (like the bolts on the wheels of your automobile) it may be so tight that when the blade jams, the motor will jam too. If that happens once too often, the motor ends up in the shop.

In the Stanley assembly the blade is mounted between two collars, both of which are rigidly splined to the shaft and independently tightened by a coaxial machine bolt. It doesn't tighten further with running. In the test, with the blade held motionless with a 3-inch common nail, the motor ran and didn't sound too distressed. But since it pulled almost 25 amperes (2½ times full-rated current), jamming the blade isn't to be recommended, motor saver, or no motor saver.

Another Stanley innovation is more successful esthetically than mechanically, but you can easily change it if you feel about it as we do. Electric saws have two adjustments—blade exposure and angle of cut—and wing nuts are the usual means of fastening.

Stanley has substituted handsome blue plastic knobs for the wing nuts, but, at least for the blade exposure, you need stronger fingers than ours to get a firm setting. However, since the wing nuts of Syntron, Black & Decker, Skil and no doubt other makes fit the Stanley screws, there's no problem.

The Cummins Maxaw 757 felt as powerful as any of them and has a number of unique and desirable features, such as a pedestal base at the commutator end of the motor on which the saw can be set when it's not in use. This isn't a trifle, since otherwise many users rest their saws on the lower guard, which isn't considered good practice. This saw has a double index which shows where the kerf or saw cut will fall. The clamps are very convenient and positive; the blade exposure is locked with a long flat lever, the angular adjustment with the characteristic Oster red ball lever. This saw will cut through a 1⅞-inch board at 45 degrees, ¼ inch more than is required for a dressed 2-by-4, and almost as much as many 7-inch saws. The slippage current was over 25 amperes but the 3-inch nail which held the blade was only slightly bent, indicating a pretty good clutch effect in the arbor. This is quite a distinguished tool. Differing principally in the bearings are the Maxaw 737 ($59.95) and 717 ($49.95).

The Black & Decker has the best manual guard-retracting device, although the others are adequate. This is used for getting the lower guard out of the way to make a "pocket" or inside cut—one which doesn't start at the edge of the piece. The lever provided for this purpose on the B & D permits you to pull back the guard without getting your fingers anywhere near the blade and with an unobstructed view of what you are doing.

In the jamming test, a 4-inch spike was required to hold the blade of the B & D, which attests to the power of the saw. It also indicates that the coupling between the blade and the motor might prove too tight for the health of the motor if the blade is jammed frequently. The motor certainly didn't sound very happy during this experience which, if we were writing advertising, would inevitably be referred to as a torture test. Slippage current neared 30 amperes. But the saw seemed as good as new afterwards.

Although the sales of electric handsaws are large, they could be even larger, and more users could realize the great savings in time and energy these tools offer, if there weren't so many potential customers who are afraid of losing their fingers. An electric saw is no toy, certainly. It's like a rifle; if you know how to use it, fine; if you won't take the trouble to learn, you'd better stay away from it.

There are just two things to avoid: getting your fingers in the way of the blade, and kickbacks. Cutting mishaps are caused by accidental starting of the saw while the operator is adjusting it or changing blades. The rule is, *if you're going to get anywhere near the blade, the plug should be out of the power receptacle.* Don't rely on memory or, as the lawyers say, the best of your knowledge and belief. Look at the plug as if you were looking at your wife or girlfriend for the last time, and see that the prongs aren't anywhere near the power outlet.

Kickbacks are more disconcerting than dangerous, actually. Every user of the tool has experienced them, although in skilled operation they are rare. A kickback is a recoil caused by the blade catching in the work. On a bench saw, since the tool is not readily movable, it will throw the work at you; with a handsaw, the tool is thrown out of the work. Subject to correction, we doubt if anyone has ever been hurt in this way. There's a lot of heavy metal between you and the blade and the recoil isn't violent enough to make you let go of the saw.

As for anti-kickback clutches, we're in favor of them, although for our own use we don't particularly care whether a saw has one or not. We question whether they can entirely eliminate kickbacks. Bench saws have built-in slippage in the belt but they still kick back if you misuse them. It's possible, however, that a properly designed clutch will reduce the frequency and force of kickbacks; if it does either, it's worthwhile.

You, yourself, can do more than any mechanical device to minimize kickbacks. Just don't crowd or force the saw. Anatole France never used an electric saw in his life, but he said, "The earth is like a woman; you must be neither timid nor brutal"—a perfect description of how you should behave with an electric saw, as with any power tool. Other rules are:

(1) Don't saw with a dull blade.

(2) Let the saw come up to speed before entering the work.

(3) Don't try to saw badly warped boards.

(4) Support the work so that it can't clamp the blade, which means that the waste end must be free to sag and fall free as the cut is completed. If it's a large piece, it should be supported, but at a level slightly lower than that of the piece from which it is being cut.

(5) Expose only as much of the blade as you need for a given depth of cut.

(6) Listen for the warning drop in pitch of the motor slowing down abnormally.

Although the tests were conducted with the combination (rip and crosscut) blades which the manufacturers furnish with the saws, we prefer a crosscut blade for practically all work in wood. It makes a smoother cut than the combination blade and for the amount of ripping most of us do it's efficient enough. And, in our estimation, it is less subject to recoil if you do get careless.

The saws we have discussed are good, but they're not the only good ones. Portable Electric Tools, Inc., Mall Tool Co., Porter-Cable Machine Co., Dormeyer Corp., Milwaukee Electric Tool Corp., and Fairchild Industries, Inc., are among well-known makes which were not on hand for these tests. —By Carl Dreher

man around the house...

BY
JOHN SHARNIK

Even the guy who is "all thumbs" can now build everything from clocks to garages.

How to pipe dirt out of rooms • Desk with disappearing typewriter table

KNOCKDOWN CONSTRUCTION—the lazy man's version of do-it-yourself—is booming these days. It's becoming a bonanza for the homeowner too short on funds to buy things ready-made, too short on time and talent to build from scratch.

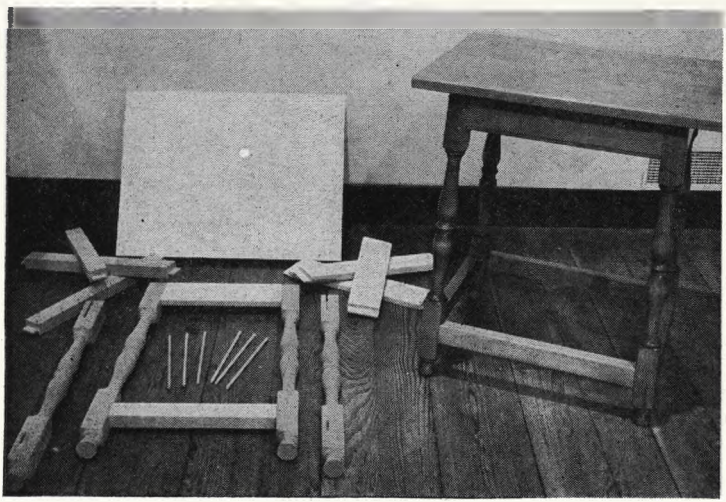
Everything from clocks to garages is being sold in the form of unassembled kits. These come with ready-cut, ready-shaped parts plus instructions for putting them together. You need no tool more demanding than a hammer, a screwdriver and a pot of glue.

Your local department store, hardware shop or lumberyard will take your order for such knockdown items as a backyard tool shed or a playhouse for the kids (with real doors and windows and standing headroom inside). These can save you up to a couple of hundred dollars on labor costs.

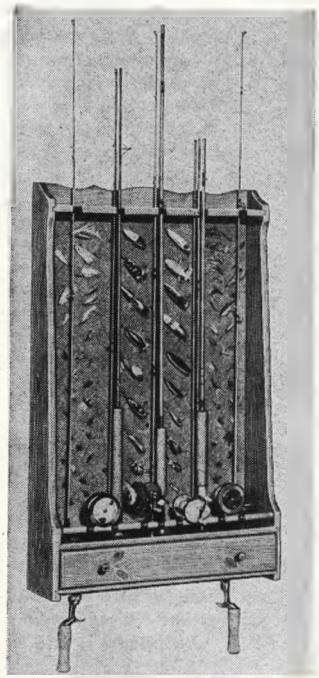
A check for something between $20 and $40 will bring you in the mail a package of hardwood parts which a hammer and screwdriver will convert into a slick-looking modern dresser, living-room cabinet or storage piece for your wife's china and linen.

But you don't have to hew to the modern line in order to get in on the knockdown boom. There are KD kits as well for a variety of convincing looking "antiques." About $20, for instance, buys a package that assembles into an authentic reproduction of a colonial captain's chair—a solid addition to a den or game room. At various prices, you can also buy the complete elements for such items as these: a 1795 cobbler's bench that'll do service as a coffee table;

Knockdown kit for occasional table, reproduced from one made around 1720, is shown unassembled and assembled. Price: $19.95, plus shipping. Kit for rod-and-reel rack at right costs $12.95, plus shipping.



Colonial Williamsburg Photo



a dresser out of Colonial Williamsburg; a solid four-poster bed copied from a museum original; and a high, rush-seated stool for a bar or breakfast counter.

Companies that specialize in these short cuts to fine-furniture making, and that will send you catalogues and price lists on request, include the following: Haggerty Originals, Cohasset, Mass.; Craft House, Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Va.; Yield House, North Conway, N.H.; and Show-Off, Inc., Jamestown, N.Y.

FOR QUIET KITCHENS: Most homeowners and builders look upon cork as a flooring material. But architect Stephen L. Macdonald has reversed the usual scheme of things by using it overhead in a kitchen. The purpose of Macdonald's cork ceiling isn't to confuse drunks—it's something you might want to keep in mind if, like Macdonald, you're bothered with the problem of household noise, which is at its most intense in the modern, all-electric kitchen. Cork, of course, is an efficient sound-deadener. Though it's more expensive than most acoustical materials, cork does have advantages over them: it's easier to apply; it looks better, since it has an interesting texture and is not broken up into squafes.

PIPELINES: A couple of slightly Rube Goldberg gadgets enable you to pipe music into every room—and pipe dirt out.

The dirt-removal gimmick is a built-in vacuum cleaning system. It permits the lady of the house to clean the whole joint without shoving the vacuum cleaner around from room to room. It consists of a series of flexible hoses that run from special outlets in every room down to a single outlet in the basement, to which the cleaner itself is hooked up. The cleaner stays put; the liberated housewife just carries the attachment, on a single length of flexible, stretchable hose, from room to room and plugs in.

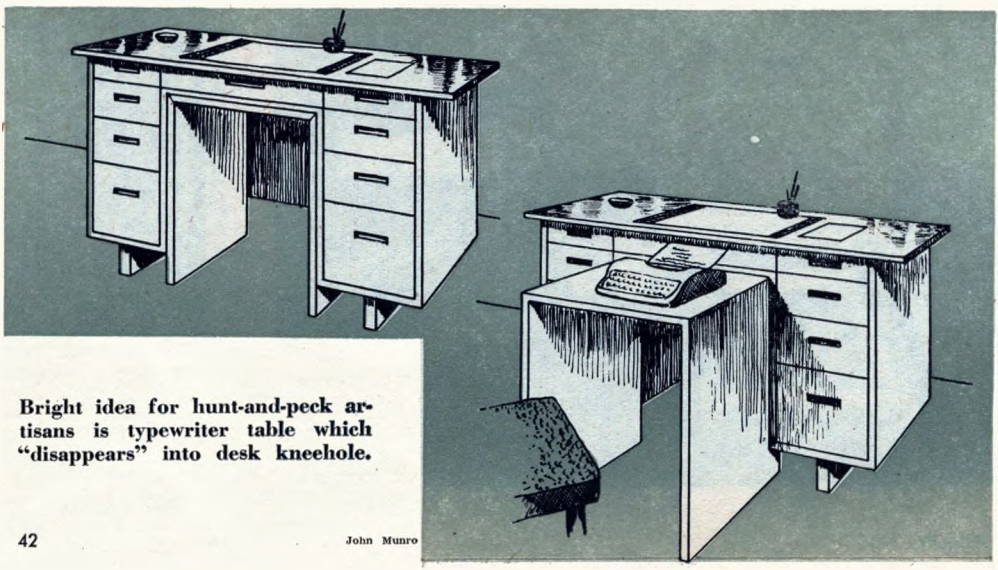
For an average-size house, the cost of the whole installation is apt to run somewhere in the neighborhood of $250—including the hoses, outlets and a large-size cleaner unit. No do-it-yourself project, the job is done by licensed dealers. (For the name of a dealer in your area, write to Precise Mfg. Co., 6633 Buist Ave., Philadelphia 42, Pa.)

This month's musical note is a scheme for broadcasting over your household heating system. If you've got a hot-air furnace or a central air-conditioning system, you install a single special speaker in the main duct and connect it to your hi-fi set, radio or TV. The speaker sends the sound through the ducts into every room, by way of the floor or wall registers. (For details on this "Registered Music System," write The Kodiak Corp., 3515 Prospect Ave., Cleveland 15, Ohio.)

DISAPPEARING TYPEWRITER TABLE: The words you're reading right now, like all those preceding them in this department, were produced under adverse domestic conditions—the same conditions you may be up against if you happen to do a lot of typewriter work at home. My desk, like any conventional desk, is too high for typing, and there's no room to spare for the luxury of a typewriter table.

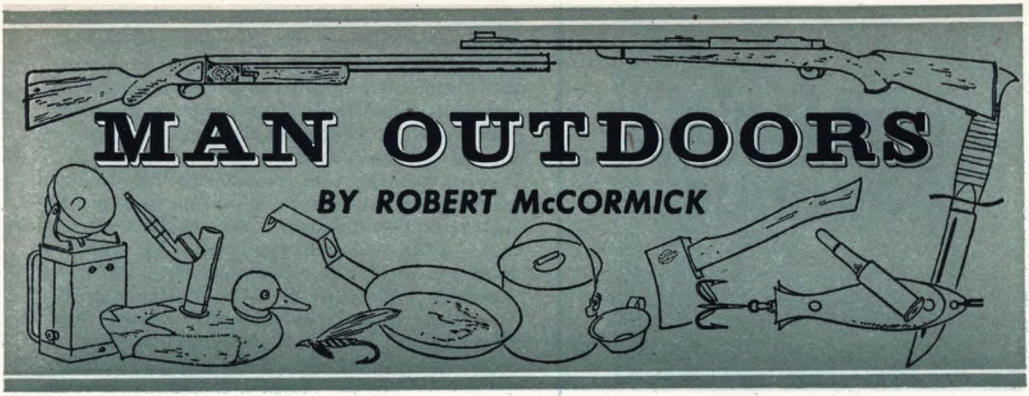
Well, a solution to our common problem has just come to hand—and from no less a source than the grand old man of architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright. His inspiration is one of those spectacularly simple things comparable to the safety pin: a typewriter table built to nest smoothly and inconspicuously into the kneehole of a full-sized desk. When not in use, it just slides into the recess, where it stands without interfering in any way with your use of the big desk. As you can judge from the accompanying drawing, the scheme is one you can easily adapt for your own use if you're at all handy with tools.

—By John Sharnik



Bright idea for hunt-and-peck artisans is typewriter table which "disappears" into desk kneehole.

John Munro



New cold-weather clothes are lighter and less bulky, yet warmer • A portable fog-horn for small boats

BIGGEST PROBLEM facing men outdoors during winter is keeping warm. And that goes whether your job keeps you in zero or sub-zero temperatures all day long or you're out there strictly from choice—hunting, trapping, ice-fishing or sliding downhill on Junior's new sled.

The rule to remember is, you don't need to keep the cold air out so much as to keep the body heat in. By the same token, it isn't the weight, or the bulk, of your clothing that keeps you warm—but rather the layers of air contained between garments and your own body-generated heat which garments hold close to you where it will do the most good.

Knowing this, designers of clothing for the military created some really serviceable outdoor attire—garments combining lightness, maneuverability and warmth in the exact proportions necessary to keep a man alive even in the coldest Korean winters. This clothing is just now beginning to reach the civilian outdoor market in quantities and of a quality worth waiting for.

Here, then, is a roundup of some of the best of the new clothing, starting with some practical hints on what to do to keep warm with little or no added expenditures:

For limited budgets. Create your own layers of air with outdoor clothing you already own. Start with Long Johns, either cotton, cotton-flannel, or all-wool. Then pull on that old pair of denim hobby-jeans you wore last summer, and over these wear your usual outdoor wool or flannel pants. Result: warmth with little extra bulk below the hips.

To cover your chest and arms, put on one lightweight wool or cotton-flannel shirt over the Long Johns, then add a heavyweight wool shirt over that. Top both with whatever outdoor jacket you already own. Two pairs of socks under your hunting boots should suffice for fairly long periods in most average cold temperatures, but if that doesn't work try wool socks, regular outdoor or work shoes and lined overshoes.

Finally, if it's rainy-cold weather you're going out in, your summertime fishing rainwear—rubberized parka and pants—will not only keep you dry but will also shut out all but the most violent of winter's icy winds. Especially if your raingear is made of compositions which won't harden in colder weather.

Winterized underwear. For even less bulk and weight, plus an added measure of warmth, you would do well to consider any of the new-style winterized undersuits now on the outdoor market. Wearing these, you'll need only a single wool shirt and jacket, plus regular trousers, to keep warm even on the coldest days.

One of the first on the market (and still one of the best) is the under-jacket and trousers introduced by the Insulated Clothing Division of the Brooks Uniform Company (75 West 45th St., New York 36) under the name "Under-alls." Employing the modern scientific principle of clothing insulation, "Under-alls" consist of millions of individual air cells which help seal in the body heat—and seal out the cold. Weighing only 38 ounces, the outfit sells for $39.93 the set.

Slightly less in price ($34.95), the two-piece "Winterseal Under-Suit" produced by the Refrigiwear Clothing Company (201 East 34th St., New York 16) also uses the air-cell principle and is made entirely of quilted nylon. And for still less money ($24.90) Timely Creations, Inc. (P.O. Box 56, Midtown Station, New York 18) is offering its "Polar Wear" quilted undersuit, with air-cell insulation, in flexible nylon shell. All three outfits are sold on

Bonefish Florida Bass

Good—**Ice-fishing is still the rage in frigid northland, but check local laws carefully for closing dates, legal fish. Lake trout should be hitting tip-ups in New Hampshire's Squam and Winnepesaukee lakes now. A world record pickerel (9 pounds, 5 ounces) fell to a lady ice-angler last February in Massachusetts' Pontoosuc Lake.**

Better—**Now's the time to stalk the wary bonefish with dry flies and trout rods along Florida Keys. Same state's ship canals, west of Miami, do land-office business this month—itinerant angler simply parks his car along canals any place urge to fish hits him. Good place to try, too, is state's new "Sunshine Skyway" across mouth of Tampa Bay.**

Best—**West Coast steelheading is still good in all winter-run streams, and Florida bassmen begin to get their best licks late in February, on through spring. Try inside Everglades for exciting sport on air-boats. All other southern waters should begin to get hot now, and your best bet is to try late-winter walleye runs in headwaters of most TVA dams. Both Center Hill and Dale Hollow lakes are outstanding.**

money-back guarantees—and in each instance, either the jacket or the pants may be purchased separately.

Outer garments. One of the best of the new wearables I've seen so far is the complete set of outer garments—pants, jacket and matching cold-weather hood—recently introduced by the Seal-Dri Sportswear Company of Rockford, Ill. Called the "Rugged Ranger Northerner," the outfit is lined with Ensolite for warmth and, most important, is so designed as to keep a man afloat for unlimited periods in case of water accidents. For further safety afield, the jacket comes in green nylon which reverses to red poplin. Cost: $39.95 each for jacket and pants; $4.95 for the hood.

This idea of a warm-weather outer jacket which doubles as a life-preserver in water also is incorporated in the newest product of the United States Rubber Company—the "InsulAir Vagabond." Of nylon twill, the Vagabond is lined with rayon satin and interlined with InsulAir insulating material similar to that used in the same company's "InsulAir Pac" hunting boots, socks and vests. The Vagabond comes in four colors —brown, blue, charcoal and red—and has a genuine mouton collar.

For footwear, U.S. Rubber's InsulAir Pac, first tested in wartime and an immediate favorite with postwar outdoorsmen, now comes in three different colors—black, red and grass-green. For insulated hunting shoes of leather construction, try the "Royal Worcester" (Worcester Shoe Co., 72 Hammond St., Worcester, Mass.); the "Knapp Insulated Boot" (Knapp Bros. Shoe Mfg. Corp., Brockton, Mass.) or the "Weather-Seal Leather Boot" (Norm Thompson, 1311 N. W. 21st St., Portland, Ore.). All are made of the finest leathers, waterproofed to last, and range in price between $20-$25 a pair.

FOR FOGGY BOATING: If you've ever been caught far from shore by a sudden fog bank, and your boat wasn't equipped with a fog horn, you don't need to be told what an uneasy feeling it is. A big help in a situation like that is the new self-powered portable fog horn put out by the Falcon Alarm Co., Inc. (243 Broad St., Summit, N.J.). Meeting U.S. Coast Guard standards for both sail and power boats, the horn uncorks a blast that can be heard more than a mile over open water.

It operates on harmless Freon gas, and can be recharged by any qualified refrigerator serviceman. There's enough of the stuff in one loading, moreover, to deliver some 450 two-second blasts before refilling is necessary. Stows easily aboard any small craft, too, as the accompanying photo shows.

J. Moynahan Assoc.

Portable fog-horn is designed for small craft.

POISON GAS IN THE HOUSE

Carbon Tet, which is used in home cleaning and in many fire extinguishers, produces a gas that can cause illness and even death.

BY FRITZ HOWARD

As the spray hit 18-year-old Johnny squarely in the face, his eyes snapped shut—doing little good, for the liquid quickly penetrated between his eyelids. His cry of protest never got past the stream that flooded his mouth. Johnny clapped a hand to his burning eyes, coughing and sputtering, while his lungs labored with the fume-laden air. In his pain and confusion he was not aware that some of the chemical had reached his stomach, but almost immediately he was retching and vomiting.

Laughter died on the lips of his companions. Sensing danger, they stopped pumping the fire extinguisher at him. Too late—the damage was done.

In a few hours Johnny was dead of carbon tetrachloride poisoning. He had received the fatal dose by all avenues the chemical takes in entering the body—swallowing, skin absorption and breathing in the fumes. It attacked his kidneys, liver, nervous system, and eyesight. Considering that as little as 3 cc.—less than a dozen drops—taken internally is usually fatal, Johnny didn't have a chance.

This California youth was a victim not of a teen-age prank, but of ignorance. The toxic properties of carbon monoxide, the killer in automobile exhaust and heating gas, are well-known and well-respected, if sometimes ill-used. Not nearly so well-known, however, are the deadly qualities of carbon tetrachloride. It is *four times as dangerous as carbon monoxide*, yet is handled as casually as a bar of soap.

Carbon "tet," as this poisoner is commonly named, comes into the home as the main ingredient of spot removers and dry cleaners, and as a fire-extinguisher fluid. It is marvelously versatile as a penetrating solvent, quick to evaporate and fireproof, giving an impression of efficiency and safety.

Carbon tet can cause death or serious organic damage as the result of one large exposure or from the accumulative effects of small exposures. The first toxic reaction, especially in severe exposure, is that of a narcotic. There's a feeling of fullness in the head and mental confusion, which may be followed by headache, dizziness, nausea, stupor and a possible loss of consciousness. Unless an unconscious victim is removed at once from the vapor, death may occur from respiratory failure. If revived, the patient may recover and have no further trouble unless further exposures occur.

Smaller repeated exposures accumulate and flare up after sufficient damage has been done to vital organs. Such a creeping attack waylaid an unsus-

pecting housewife recently after she had cleaned her upholstery. The cleaner, described as a soap in a solution of carbon tet, was applied from an open bowl. She cleaned with a rag after following instructions to open windows. The work took an hour or two on three different days.

Three days later, she suffered a dizzy lightheadedness with nausea and vomiting. As so often happens, the trouble was at first mistaken for intestinal flu. But she got steadily worse. Her kidneys ceased to function and there was extreme swelling of her body and head. After a month in the hospital the lady returned home fairly well-recovered physically, but suffering hallucinations and nightmares. A few days later she was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. She was there several months before gradual improvement allowed a return home.

The result of a single severe exposure is documented in the case of a doctor's wife in New York. Using a pint of carbon tet in an open pan, she scrubbed her living-room rug with only an open fireplace providing ventilation. Absorption was both through the skin and lungs. Six hours after completing the work, she experienced violent nausea and vomiting and was immediately hospitalized. Fortunately she recovered from jaundice and an enlarged liver after three weeks of intensive care.

In another instance, a man cleaned the cars of his model railway with rags dipped in carbon tet, using his lap as a workbench. On two successive evenings, he worked with a pint of the chemical in a room closed to confine the fumes from the rest of the house. The following day he returned early from work in a confused state, weak, vomiting, and unable to retain food or liquid. Diagnosis included jaundice, liver and kidney damage, and internal hemorrhage. Two months and many dollars later, he was released from the hospital.

Effects May Come Long After

Many carbon-tetrachloride poisoning cases, like Johnny, do not recover. Thirty-two fatalities have been reported in New York City alone in the past five years—a rate which is fairly representative of the population as a whole. No one knows how many more unreported attacks occur, since the symptoms are similar to influenza or kidney and liver ailments of an organic nature. Frequently the effects of exposure do not show up for months or even years—long after the unknowing victim would recall any prolonged connection with carbon tet.

As a fire extinguisher the chemical is tops, but can be most lethal. The non-combustible, heavier-than-air vapors excel in the ability to smother flames. Those same flames or any high degree of heat, however, cause carbon tetrachloride to break down, forming intensely poisonous phosgene, chlorine, and hydrochloric acid gases. Phosgene was the gas that caused 80 percent of the gassing fatalities in World War I. The other two are only slightly less dangerous—concentrations the nose cannot detect will kill. To avoid exposure to this deadly trio, fire areas should be evacuated and ventilated *immediately* after carbon tet is used.

A report from Oregon tells of a man who was severely poisoned and spent several days in a hospital when he used a carbon-tet extinguisher to put out a fire in a stove. Another records the death of a driver after he had doused a fire in his truck. Ignorance or disregard for simple precautions can be blamed in both cases.

Some people are found to be highly susceptible to the toxic effects of the chemical. Alcoholics, overweight or under-nourished persons, those with pulmonary ailments, ulcers, hypertension; diseases of the liver, kidney or heart; people with previous history of carbon-tet poisoning—all are likely to be injured by concentrations considered non-hazardous to normal, healthy individuals.

All carbon-tetrachloride containers offered for sale should bear the label recommended by the Manufacturing Chemists' Association and supported by many State Health Officials:

CARBON TETRACHLORIDE
DANGER! HAZARDOUS VAPOR AND LIQUID
MAY BE FATAL IF INHALED OR SWALLOWED

Use only with adequate ventilation.
Do not breathe vapor.
Avoid prolonged or repeated contact with skin.
Do not take internally.

Unhappily, some labels are incomplete or do not have these precautions listed at all.

Carbon tet deserves all the respect the chemists have recommended. Adequate ventilation means working outdoors. If that's impossible, then doors and windows should be opened and a low-placed fan employed to exhaust the fumes. Open containers should never be used. Rubber gloves should be worn to protect the hands. Any skin contacted should be washed thoroughly with soap and water followed by a lanolin lotion. Clothing that has taken up the chemical must be removed till dry.

Any householder who carefully observes these precautions can use carbon-tetrachloride products without fear of poisoning—provided, of course, that such products are kept beyond the reach of children. But, perhaps a better answer—and one adopted in industrial plants—is "why use the stuff at all?"

Many substitutes are available that serve the purposes as well—sometimes better. Extinguishers containing carbon dioxide, dry powder or chemicals such as monochloromonobromomethane (mercifully shortened to "CB") are on the market today. Trichloroethylene and perchlorocthylene are good noncombustible solvents now being offered. All these products, though not entirely safe, are *much less toxic* than poisonous carbon tetrachloride.

By using proper caution or a substitute, the depredations of this sneak-killer can be halted.

—BY FRITZ HOWARD

A Bluebook Short Novel

By ROBERT CRAIG

The Edge of the Knife

He was a peaceful man, a little afraid of people, when he blundered on the smugglers' base. Now suddenly he was a hunted man, pitting his woods-lore and brains against one of the keenest hunters in the state.

His boat nuzzled its way through the dead birds. Their great white bodies, with huge wings stretched as if they were trying to fly once more, floated dreamily away and the man stared at them, revolted and boiling with anger at the slaughter. Some men are born killers, and for them the creatures of the earth are but differently shaped targets. Some men on the other hand are born gentle, and for them life of any sort has a fine magic they need to understand, and a beauty they need to preserve. These men will never understand the killers.

Walt Holly had waited patiently throughout the college year, waited for spring and the Easter holidays to go back to the wild Florida country he knew so well and finish his work on herons. This had been the secret rookery where he had photographed and studied the great white American Herons as a boy. Now as his boat lumbered out of Lake Tohopekaliga and up the narrow waterway between the high hammock land on his left and the deep cypress swamp on his right, he watched the birds float by and he was consumed with bitterness against the killer. He knew some man had stood on the high bank and shot across at the egrets in the swamp killing them only for the pleasure of seeing them lose the dignity of their life, crumple and plummet wildly into the dark clear water.

He turned and searched the scrub not really expecting to see the man standing there with his rifle. But he did. It was only the quick movement of one particularly dark shadow among the dawn shadows. He hadn't actually recognized a man's shape but his eyes had, and Walter had learned to trust his eyes almost as if they had a separate mind of their own. From boyhood he had explored the wilderness of central Florida with them. Year by year they had practiced recording a picture and holding it until he could search it for details, and although it wasn't full daylight yet they now told him a man had been hiding behind the palmetto that grew like a thick screen on the hammock side.

Feeling deeply uneasy but still angry, he put the helm of his old launch to starboard to keep in the deeper, blacker water close to the cypress trees. His engine made a lazy song out of its slow work and the wind, coming in from the lake behind him, hummed softly in the wheelhouse, fluttered the legs of his well-worn jeans and cooled his long naked back. Besides his jeans he wore only his fishing knife at his belt and

The bow of his boat swung between him and the man on shore, the cabin giving him protection.

light, low-cut sneakers. He felt secure in the boat, but the picture of the skulking man and the sight of the dead birds had shattered his sense of peace.

He had wanted Marian to come with him on this trip and now suddenly he was glad she had elected to stay with his father. She would have hated the sight of the dead birds.

When he'd left, Marian had laughed at him softly. "What a postman's holiday!" she'd said. "Teach biology all year and plan every minute of your vacation in the field!" The thought of her warmed him and he smiled to himself. She knew just how to laugh at him so that he felt she was laughing with him. Thinking about her now, he missed her and for Walt that in itself was an experience. He'd never been sure marriage would bring him any particular happiness but after four years he knew it had. Marian had given him a sense of comfort and a habit of trust he had never known before, and her intimacy had rid him of the loneliness he had grown up with.

His boat followed the narrow waterway around an elbow and now Walt could see ahead to where it widened out into Shallow Lake, and he picked up his binoculars. With the tall cypress stand growing in the muck-bottom waters around half of its circumference, and with an almost impenetrable dry jungle of palmetto, briar, cabbage palm and dwarf oak fringing the remainder of its shore, Shallow Lake was marvelously hidden. It was as if it had been lovingly fashioned to protect the great white egrets Walt had come to see. He and Joey Wills had discovered the lake for themselves when they were 12, and they'd kept it a secret for as long as they had been boyhood friends. But now it seemed ravaged and dead.

"Hey! Where you goin'?"

The gravelly shout cut his nerves like a whip, and he almost dropped his binoculars. On the shore, not 50 feet away stood a man with a two-day growth of beard and a double-barrelled shotgun held tensely at high port. Walt knew the type well, and he even

As the engine roared into life, Walt turned and, putting both hands on the stern, vaulted over.

recognized this particular man but for a moment he couldn't place him. There were lots like him—boys from swamp families who grew up to wear straw hats, faded shirts, blue jeans and snake boots.

Walt forced himself to grin, taking his time to answer.

"Just looking around," he said.

"Come ovah heah, Walt!"

The drawling, nasal voice was sharp and Walt was surprised the man knew his name. The double muzzle of the shotgun was swinging toward him and Walt could see the man's arms trembling with excitement, or was it fear?

"Come ovah heah!" The man repeated, his voice tightening. Now Walt remembered him. He was a vicious back-swamp character the hunters and fishermen called "Japlo". He lived in a shack some 40 miles south where the Kissimmee River wandered from one marsh to another. Japlo was always somewhere on the far-flung waterways hunting, fishing or doodling in the sun. He'd been in jail once before for "moonshining", and he'd spent two years in the state prison at Raiford for attempted murder. Walt guessed that Japlo was "moonshining" again and the still must be just ahead.

"Git ovah heah afore I sink that boat out from under you!"

Walt swung his boat obediently toward the shore, and as it made its circle he knew the distance between him and Japlo was all there was left of his privacy and freedom. He remembered the dead birds in the water, and remembered Japlo's prison sentence. What Japlo would do to him Walt did not know, but every nerve in his body warned him it would be ugly.

There was going to be one second of advantage and he waited for it, sucking his breath in and out hard to give his lungs the extra air they would need. The bow was turning more and more toward the man, and Walt put his binoculars back on the shelf. His heart was banging in his chest with something next to

terror, and the sweat of his hands ran over the spokes of the helm.

The bow of his boat swung directly between him and the man, the forward cabin giving him his only protection. With one hand he jammed the throttle of the engine forward hoping that the extra noise would cover the sound of his own splash. As the old engine roared into life, Walt turned and putting both hands on the stern, he vaulted over, slipping into the canal almost noiselessly.

Underneath the rain-cooled, early spring water his mind steadied instantly, and he began to swim strongly downwards. At 29 a man was still young but he wondered if he had the breath to make the distance across the waterway and into the cypress. Only inches away from the bottom he watched the tea-colored muck slip under his body and he was glad for the blackness it gave the water. His own tanned back and blue jeans wouldn't show through too well.

Using a frog kick and all the power of his long arms in a wide, driving breast stroke he was making good time, but he couldn't be sure of his direction under water and he might be forced to surface before he reached the cypress trees. His lungs began to heave convulsively, raging against his closed mouth. His stroke was faltering and he was frantic when he hit the first cypress knee. His hands grabbed for it and yanked him ahead. Now he was among the cypress and his fingers found a root and then another knee, and he pulled himself swiftly into the watery forest.

He rolled over on his back and stared up trying to find the outline of one of the trees against the sky. The tannic acid of the swamp colored only the bottom; the water itself was clear enough for him to see the trees looming above him. One more pull put him behind a cypress to his right and in one last second of intense control he let himself surface slowly so that there could be no telltale ripple. Then as silently as a desperate man can, his chest pumped the sweet-tasting air in and out of his begging lungs.

2

"He must have gone out over the back. He sure ain't in it!"

Walt recognized the voice. He was too close yet to dare look, and after only enough air to partly satisfy his craving he took another long breath and slipped silently back under the water. He had watched alligators dip noiselessly out of sight so many times that although he'd never done it quite this way before, his imitation was almost perfect, and he was grateful to the clumsy reptiles for the lesson.

His underwater escape was easier now. He had no long distance to cover at one time. He had only to pull himself along between the cypress knees that stood up to the water level, making his careful way from one protecting trunk to another. He did not go much deeper into the swamp. If they were going to look for him they'd expect to find him hiding in the heart of it, but he could hide just as well nearer the waterway. He made his way toward the hidden lake until he found a deep-water spot where he could lift his head high enough to see and yet not be seen. He was perhaps too close to the point where the waterway joined Shallow Lake, but it was a good hiding place. He could see well into the lake as well as down the waterway, and the voices of the men on the hammock bank came to him like echoes down through the nave of a cathedral. Japlo was explaining Walt's escape to a hulking, thick-chested man with red hair.

"It's Walt Holly, I tell ye! The Bird Man! He's a teacher or somethin'!"

The big man turned toward the waterway and looked directly into the swamp below where Walt crouched waist-deep in the black water, his feet sinking slowly into the muck bottom.

"Walt! Hey, Walt!" The big man called, and the sound of his voice helped Walt to recognize him.

This was a prominent real-estate dealer named Jordan. Walt couldn't remember his first name but he knew quite a bit about the man.

Jordan was one of a group of sportsmen who traditionally hunted and fished that wild heart of wilderness but he was an entirely different kind of man than Japlo. He had good dogs, fine guns, fast boats, powerful cars and he handled a fly-rod well. He'd been on the sports page last autumn. Walt remembered the picture of the white-tailed buck hanging by its antlers from a rack, shorn of the grace which life gives to all animals, and Jordan was standing beside it with a smile of triumph. It was not strange that Walt should recognize the two men, but he could not understand what they were doing together. He and they knew one another because they had lived their entire lives in the same country, but Walt could not believe that both of these men were "moonshiners."

"Come over here, Walt!" Jordan's heavy voice was saying with scarcely concealed annoyance. "I just want to talk to you!"

Somewhere, not more than a hundred feet away, an alligator bellowed a hoarse rasping answer while Walt kept utter silence.

"Listen carefully, Walt," the big man yelled. "We're out here as a Sheriff's posse looking for escaped convicts. Come on back! Get your boat and go on your way. Did you hear me?"

Walt thought that over as the first sunlight of the day began to touch the tops of the cypress above him. Why hadn't Japlo told him about the convicts at first? After all, he had called Walt by name right away. He'd been recognized immediately and yet he'd been ordered at gun point to land. Walter thought about the dead birds floating in the water.

"Come on!" Jordan said in an obviously loud voice. "Let's get back to business and let Walt Holly get out of that swamp!"

Walt heard the false undertones and anger moved within him again. Ten minutes ago he'd been a bi-

ology professor studying birds. Now he was hiding in a swamp like a wild thing! . . . hiding from two what? Two moonshiners?

Jordan started along the path that lead to Shallow Lake on his own side of the waterway. He had the easy, alert step of the hunter. The way he walked and watched the jungle around him increased Walt's certainty that he was a woodsman of exceptional skill. His great strength and his air of leadership made a formidable figure of him and as Walt watched him disappear in the brush he suddenly remembered part of the story under that picture on the sports page. "Jordan is famous for his uncanny knowledge of where the buck will run."

Before he followed Jordan into the tangle of palmetto and briar, Japlo turned and yelled back at the swamp.

"Come git yor boat, boy! And look out for them convicts!" And he laughed shortly, leaving Walt certain that the idea of convicts on the loose was a ruse, and that his boat had been left there to bait him.

He watched the boat floating idly and apparently forsaken in the waterway. It made an excellent lure and it was hard to resist. His fine binoculars, Leica camera, and moving-picture camera with all his film was right there. His mosquito netting, food, fishing tackle, bed, drinking water and clothes were on board. Without them he was almost naked. His jeans and sneakers that all-told didn't cost him five dollars took on an outlandish value for him now, and then he thought of his knife.

He reached to his belt to make sure the hasp that held it in its scabbard was securely fastened, and he ran his fingers over the smooth, bone handle. It was no common knife. It was one of those hand-tempered knives made by Bo Randall in Orlando, and it was an exquisite tool for a woodsman. From tip to butt it was a foot long. The blade was an inch wide at the hilt and the razor-sharp cutting edge curved gracefully to meet the carefully beveled spine at the tip. It was the only present his father had ever given him he had really cherished. From the day of his 16th birthday when he had first held it in his hand it had been more than a knife. When it lay in the scabbard at his belt it was a reassurance, and when he was away from it he remembered it. For opening a can, scaling a fish, sharpening a stick, removing a thorn or repairing his tackle the knife was always there, and when he threw it for sport he'd always imagined that it flew straighter for him than for anyone else. It was with him now and the familiar feel of it gave him a sudden courage.

For an overly long time the two men had been lost completely to his view, and then as quietly as a stalking bear, Jordan reappeared directly across the waterway from Walt. He was carrying a heavy-caliber, bolt-action irfle, and he was carefully keeping the screen of jungle between him and the main part of the cypress swamp. It was immediately obvious that Jordan thought Walt was hiding in the heart of the swamp, considerably farther down than where he actually was. Walt would have grinned if he had not been so worried. As it was he let himself down another inch or two behind the cypress roots and watched Jordan through the screen of leaves of a dwarf oak.

Jordan motioned as if he were calling a dog, and from a shack behind him a strange looking man ran toward him. This man wasn't a Negro. His skin was coppery and tightly pulled over a sharp face, and his hair was soft, wavy black. He was stripped to the waist, and although he was short he was square with thick bones and long arms. He came up quickly and silently to where Jordan squatted in the brush.

"Man come," Jordan began in a pidgin English that carried softly but clearly to Walt on the quiet morning air. "Go down by lake edge with Japlo. I go in here. Savvy? Now quick!"

3

JORDAN PUT down his rifle carefully and took off his hat. He crouched low behind the brush and started to the waterway as if to cross it, but he stopped abruptly and listened. Walt heard the noise of the plane, too. It was a sleek hydroplane with a heavy, air-cooled engine, and as it circled for a landing he saw that its top was painted light blue with green splotches. Camouflage? The pilot cut the engine and the plane came down into the water like a mallard duck—its pontoons pitching spray into the air around it. Immediately the engine went into taxi speed and the plane sped over the water toward what looked like a fallen pine tree on the lake shore some 50 yards beyond and across the waterway.

The plane coasted up to the pine tree. The door of the cabin opened and a nattily dressed pilot stepped out. He saw Jordan who had moved back from the waterway, and acknowledged his beckoning motion with a wave of his hand. After mooring the plane with angry, quick jerks of the rope, he walked up the improvised dock and came over to Jordan. As he came up, Walt saw that he wore expensive slacks, two-tone shoes and a tailored, long-sleeved sport shirt. His blond crew-cut hair and pale mustache made him look young, but Walt saw the marks of daring in the overly handsome face.

"Nobody to even catch a rope! What gives?" The man's voice was hard and snappish.

"A damned bird lover just blundered in here," Jordan's voice was loaded with disgust. ". . . a thick-skulled cracker of mine put a gun on him before he got his hands on him! He slipped off into that swamp."

"Let him go. Get that stuff out of the plane. I got to gas up and get out of here! Where is my gas?"

He picked a cigarette out of his pocket and tapped it fiercely on the back of one hand.

"Your gas is over there under the trees," Jordan

said slowly, and Walt could see anger working in his face. "My men'll muscle those drums down to the dock and gas you up as soon as I get this bird lover, and not before."

The two men eyed one another for a long minute.

"If that professor gets out of here and starts talking we might get caught. This'll take ten minutes." Jordan said.

The pilot lifted the sleeve of his fine shirt and looked at his watch.

"Okay," he said. "I'll give you ten minutes. Let's go."

"You stay here," Jordan told him, and he picked up the rifle and handed it to him. "You can see the road through the bushes from here. I got a man up there and if anybody comes you'll hear a siren kind of whistle. The stuff's all right where it is for ten minutes. My boys are circling down around the edge of the swamp by the big lake. I'm goin' in right here and get that guy. If I miss him he may come out the top end of that cypress stand. Watch for him, shoot at him once for a signal, but don't hit him. If he goes fishin' and he's found drowned nobody'll ask questions."

"Okay! Okay! I get it!" the other said. "You've got ten minutes!"

Jordan glared then turned and went down the bank to the waterway. Crouching as low to the surface as he could, he slipped fully dressed into the water and using a breast stroke swam the short distance across the waterway almost directly toward Walt. Walt drew his breath and moved down under the surface.

Holding himself down with a grip on bottom roots Walt watched Jordan go by him some 20 feet away. Jordan was still using his breast stroke and from underneath the surface Walt could see all of the man but his head from his chin up. When his lungs could no longer hold the stale air, he lifted himself carefully to the surface. Jordan was gone among the trees but Walt could still see the little swirling wake that marked his passing.

So they were going to drown him! What was the "stuff" they were moving? It couldn't be just moonshine whiskey. An idea began to form in his mind now but he was too experienced to rely on guesses. What he positively knew was that he was in the greatest danger he had ever experienced and his one slim advantage was that he knew where they were but they didn't know where he was. When they closed their circle—perhaps in 10 minutes—they would look farther for him. And Jordan was an outstanding hunter.

He had to get out of the cypress swamp now, and his only escape lay in the direction opposite to Jordan's. He had to cross the waterway again just behind the pilot. Then he had to skirt the north shore of Shallow Lake, perhaps go right by the airplane. It terrified him even to think of it, but he couldn't go the other way into the swamp where they were looking for him. He didn't dare go back down the waterway where there was sure to be someone watching his boat. To strike out across Shallow Lake was the equivalent of suicide. Somehow he had to get across the waterway, maybe to hide close to their camp, and to make his escape in the night.

Again he turned to study the pilot. The man had sounded tough but he was nervous, too. He puffed fitfully at his cigarette now, and peered back constantly through the scrub where Jordan had said he could see the roadway. Walt decided it wouldn't be too hard to get behind him. Holding his breath again he pulled himself under the surface and around his cypress tree, and began to cross the waterway. When he came up for air he found himself well round the point of higher land and hidden from the man.

Ahead of him now he could see the plane moored to the pine-tree dock, and that pine gave him the only cover on the entire bank. There were no reeds or trees or grass growing between him and the dock, and he felt like an animal caught in the open. No men, however, were at the campsite and his chance of reaching the dock by keeping close to the bank seemed better and better as he pulled himself along, clutching at the sand with his fingers. With every heart beat he expected to hear a shout above him, but there was none. He reached the cover of the pine tree and slid under its trunk weak with his own fear.

Crowding himself under the tree where it bridged off the bank and into the water, he discovered that planks had been added to the branches to form a makeshift dock. It was better cover than he had expected, and he lay under it on his back with only his face and ears above the water, trembling and breathing heavily.

As a minute passed, his gasping receded and again self-assurance came to him with the knowledge that he was well hidden. He would hide right under their feet until nightfall, he decided. But one of the plywood pontoons of the plane was close enough to him to touch, and from where he lay he could see part of the plane's fuselage and the open cabin door. The plane rocked gently, the door swinging back and forth and he watched it with growing interest.

Jordan had said 10 minutes. They weren't going to find him in 10 minutes. Maybe they'd be gone longer, and he hadn't used up more than three minutes. By standing in the shallow water he would be able to see in that door. Maybe he would see what the pilot had called "the stuff." He decided it was too risky, but he could not take his eyes off the swaying cabin door.

Without making a decision, he simply edged his floating body closer to the pontoon and got up on his knees. The dock still protected him, and as far as he could see either way the shore line was utterly empty of men. A jeep and a light, panel delivery truck were parked by some gas drums under the trees near the shed. They were facing him and their license plates were on the rear, but there was a sign on the panel truck . . . Caribbean Cigar Company, Inc.

With one hand he reached up and opened the

door wider. When it was well ajar, he stood up and looked in. Immediately over the threshold were two gladstone bags and one of them was within reach. He could not stop his curiosity now. His long arm reached for it, and he snatched up the near bag. With a heave he pulled it into the water and under the dock.

Realizing too late that it would be missed and when it was they would look for him right under the dock, panic poured through him. He'd started, however, and he could not put the wet bag back in the plane. He might as well finish. He let it float on the water and tried the latch. Of course, it was locked, and he reached for his knife. The sharp blade pierced the pig-skin and slit it easily along the top. At first, there seemed to be only dirty shirts, underclothing and socks. He rummaged through the soiled clothing and his hand found something hard. It was an unopened cigar box which disappointed him. He almost put the cigar box back when he realized it was heavier than it should have been. His knife split the seals and snapped the top open, showing a neat row of expensive looking cigars. The cigars didn't account for the weight, however, and he scooped up two complete rows of cigars, picked out a covering piece of cardboard, and discovered six, squat square jars with screw-on plastic tops.

With an effort that made his hands ache he finally unscrewed the top of one jar. There was a white, soft powder packed to the lid of the jar. Walt had never seen heroin but he was sure now of what the men were doing.

Now he knew why he had to be drowned. There would be no hesitation . . . no mercy . . . only death for a naive, wandering professor of biology. They'd return to the plane in maybe three or five minutes now. They'd find the suitcase gone. They'd find him!

There was only one chance. Run now across the camp and try to escape into the woods on the far side. He'd been within 20 feet of them before and escaped. Maybe he could do it a second time. Then he looked at the plane again.

He could hide and run a dozen miles and the plane would still find him as easily as the red-tailed hawk sees a rabbit. If he found a boat and tried to escape by waterway or lake that plane would drop on him as surely as the osprey swoops on the fish.

He buried the jars each in a different place in the muddy bottom under the pine tree, and put only one in his pocket. Then with a good grip on his knife he pushed over to the pontoon of the plane again. Using his knife as an awl this time he began on the bottom of the pontoon twisting the tip hard and fast against the wood. His excitement was taking his breath as he worked. He felt his time slipping by him and discouragement seemed to suffocate him. It was just as he had decided to run and take his chance with the plane that his knife sank suddenly deeper in the bottom of the pontoon. He wrenched it back and forth viciously and felt the splintering of wood, and saw bubbles rise along the side. That was enough. The hole didn't have to be large.

So they were going to drown him! Holding himself below, Walt watched Jordan go by.

Still the pontoon didn't settle, however. The bubbles stopped and the plane floated as lightly as before. A hole at the top of the pontoon would let the air cushion out and the water in. He hacked furiously at the top side but the plywood was tough. Why didn't it work as easily as it had on the bottom? He thought twice and realized that although he could not hack through plywood easily the knife could drill it, and he began once more to drill, this time from the top. The sweat from his hands made the handle of the knife slippery. The muscles in his arms ached but he could think of nothing now but to finish the hole. There was a whispering sound of air from where the knife was working and, at last, he could feel and even see the pontoon begin to setle. It was time to go.

4

He slipped his knife back into its scabbard and crawled out into the sunlight. Looking cautiously over the edge of the bank he saw the pilot had started back to the plane. He was nervously looking back over his shoulder and carrying his rifle slack in his right hand. Walt's first advantage was going to be surprise, and his second was that the pilot had been ordered not to shoot him. Walt was to be drowned! The shed was only 50 feet away and a little beyond it the opening of a path that led off like a tiny canyon through the vertical walls of undergrowth. The roadway was to his right and he knew there would be a guard there. There was probably a guard at the end of that pathway, too, but he had to take that chance, and springing to the top of the bank he sprinted across the open ground toward the pathway.

He expected a shout of surprise and he heard it. Now he expected the rifle shot and it came but the bullet was far too close for a shot that was to be only a signal. What he didn't expect was the dog.

As he flashed around the side of the shed a large, red hound sprang from a sound sleep in the shade, his yellow teeth already bared. But the deep streak of friendliness toward men which is part of every hound's nature made the animal hesitate. Surprise, too, played its part, and in the long half-second in which the hound made up his mind to act, Walt passed him, and his hand dropped away from the handle of his knife. He heard the hound make its lunge and he heard the rattle of the chain. Half-turning in his flight he saw the hound hauled over on its back, sprawling in the dirt, the chain writhing in the dust like a wounded snake.

He was out of sight of the man and well beyond the dog now, but he heard two more shots, the bullets ripping ferociously through the bright green jungle around him. Within 200 feet the path passed by a latrine, then angled northwestward back to the shores of Tohopekaliga. He could count on a guard being on the lake. A guard who might have first seen him coming across the lake in the gray dawn-light, and he dared not follow the path too far. He had to keep with it, however, until he found a break in the jungle walls around him.

Pushing every step at his top speed he careened along the strange pathway until he came to the first opening where a shallow marsh pond reached through the scrub to the edge of the path. He turned and floundered off into the water, the mud clutching at his feet and ankles. On the far side of the pond he jumped up a bank, raced along high ground again and finally slid down another bank to lie gasping in cool muddy water.

He listened to the now distant barking of the hound, the sound of his own heavy breathing, the clicking of the palmetto fronds scratching against each other in a whispering breeze, and a new fear spread from his stomach out through his body. Of course, they'd put the dog on his trail. That was the easy way to do it.

To the north of him the land ran higher and higher to pasture lands and finally to ranch houses, but they were at least five miles away. A hound could overtake him that way in no time, and besides he had to hide, not sprint. He had to save his strength. Desperate flight at any time was his greatest danger. Jordan knew how to wait until the buck made his hopeless dash from the thicket. But Walt knew animals as well as Jordan, so he knew at least what not to do. The moment Walt ran without thinking, the moment he had used up his reserve strength, he could be sure that Jordan would get him.

Already Jordan must be thinking about those ranch houses. He'd guess that Walt would strike out for the nearest civilization. With the dog pushing

"You'd think the Billetons would know when they had proved a point!"

Walt from behind, and with a jeep to circle him quickly, Jordan would use those far away ranches as a trap. Maybe Jordan could tell which way the buck was going to run, but he wasn't a buck, and as he heard the hound break from his barking into his excited keening and crying, Walt got up and moved off quietly into the heart of the marshland to the east where he knew there'd be alligators.

When he got to knee-deep water he pushed out into it, half swimming, pulling with his hands and pushing his feet. It was easier and quieter to travel that way than to try wading. The sky above him was bright with full sun now, and the coolness of the night had not yet dissolved from the swamp. It was refreshing to him but he knew that would not last.

He kept alert for the roadway which the men had used to enter their camp, and long before he had to cross it he heard the spluttering of a small engine. Although he could not see it passing he heard the jeep churning through the woods somewhere ahead of him. It wouldn't go all the way to the ranch houses now. As soon as Jordan heard the hound circle back through the swamp he would turn and come back, but for the moment Walt was exultant that he had outwitted Jordan a second time.

When he crossed the roadway itself he saw that it was partly under water, and where it wasn't it was deeply rutted. He plunged on deeper and deeper into the marshland beyond, knowing that he was in good 'gator water. He remembered the night he and Joey Wills had tried to sleep on a hammock island in Lake Hatchineha. They were just 17 then. The alligators had smelled or seen the hound they had had with them, and the two boys had spent the entire night driving the big reptiles away from the dog with burning sticks from their camp fire.

He remembered that Erlo Franklin had lost a fine hound in a swamp not unlike this one, and he'd heard stories of alligators which had even invaded barnyards to get the watchdog. Why were alligators so fond of dogs? He turned the question over in his mind. Maybe they weren't. Maybe it was only that they were fond of any smallish animal. Coon, possum, fox or pig might taste as good to a 'gator, but nobody kept count of them. Then, too, the wild creatures were cautious but dogs were brash. The hound behind him, for instance, could be heard for miles and he'd splash into 'gator water without hesitation.

There was something wrong, however, with that hound's cry and Walt stopped to listen. The belling wasn't a full-throated singing. It was hesitant and sporadic. He'd grown up with two or three generations of hounds and he understood them with great fondness. This was a good animal. He'd seen its strength and he'd recognized its fine voice, but it was a hunting dog. If it had been on the warm trail of a coon or wild cat it would have bayed its heart out, but now it was running a man's trail and it hardly knew whether to bay savagely or whine with friendliness.

He heard something else, too. There was a shouting of men well behind the dog. It sounded as if they'd set the hound loose on his trail. Jordan would have kept it in leash. The foppish pilot would let it run free. That reaffirmed his original idea. Jordan had gone ahead in the jeep. He was the kind of hunter who let his men drive the game for him.

He pushed on, more confident now. The water was deepening gradually. Once or twice he'd seen a swirl, but he hadn't heard a 'gator's hissing bellow since he'd left the first cypress dome. That was the usual perversity of fortune. When he needed an alligator to take the dog off his trail there were none. Yet he knew the swamp was alive with them.

The dog was swimming now and Walt knew his scent must be lying along the top of the water, and where he crossed a hammock the dog would find his odor in the thicket and on the ground. Walt had an abrupt, intimate knowledge of how the fox felt when the hound bayed.

5

PANIC WAS getting to be familiar and he was tasting it again now, like a bitter, highly intoxicating liquid. He would have to kill the dog by himself. He still had time to circle, to waylay the animal while it was swimming and while it was still so far ahead of the man. Drown it! Drown it as they would drown him!

He splashed by a large bald cypress, went beyond it, making a wide circle and came back to it. Standing on the knees of the cypress, those beautifully modeled, tower-like breathing roots the cypress sends up to the water surface, Walt watched his back trail. He had recovered his breath only partially when he saw the dog. The hound had jumped up on a log and with an eager whine it plunged into the water again. He could hear the men behind it but they were well behind, and he watched the dog with horror. It swam well, its fine head high and scenting the water surface. Even as it swam it whimpered with excitement.

Now it was 20 feet away—15—10—five! Walt stepped forward and fell on it, grabbing the head on both sides just behind the jowls. Walt drove the animal under the water, and felt the convulsions strain against his hands. The dog had little wind, however, when he went under water and its body relaxed in a surprisingly few seconds. Two more counts and the dog would be drowned for sure, but Walt was suddenly gripped with an agony of guilt.

He wasn't the kind of man who could kill with impunity, and to drown a good dog unexpectedly paralyzed his will. Although some distant part of his brain screamed at him that he was a simpleton, he yanked the dog to the surface. The big eyes rolled at him and one paw struck out, searching instinctively for a foothold. His breath racing through his throat with a kind of sobbing noise, Walt lugged the heavy animal to the nearest hammock bank and dropped it

heavily in the brush. He bent over it, patted its head quickly, and saw the foolish tail make an effort to wag.

The yell of recognition he heard from the man threw a new terror into him and he raced into the matted undergrowth of the hammock. The sharp voice of the rifle roared through the trees just as he jumped, and instantly there was a searing pain and a touch like the flick of a hand on his right side. He dove to the right, the stiff palmetto stalks and scrub oak tearing at his jeans and skin. Rolling back onto his feet he raced along the far side of the short ridge with the screen of jungle between him and the men. At the end of the ridge, he turned sharp left and swam off through the tea-colored water, and he heard the men shouting now like dogs barking at a treed possum.

For a moment he was lost to the hunters again, but they knew generally where he was, and his only chance for a complete getaway was to keep going away from them, not to hide there. He could move as fast through the swamp as they, maybe faster. He knew he could keep ahead of Japlo and the pilot. There would be others but the chances of them being better swamp men were small. He only worried about Jordan and the half-caste. Jordan probably wasn't with them, but the half-caste was and he promised himself not to forget that.

He was tired now, so tired he trembled even as he pushed ahead, so tired his thoughts were getting out of shape, but he drove himself nonetheless, the picture of his own dying well in mind. He thought of the half-drowned hound without guilt or fear any more. The animal would be useless for quite some time. Forcing his numb legs to walk and rowing himself along with aching arms, he kept to the east. The voices of the men dwindled behind him until he could hear only an occasional spot of sound. He guessed they were circling, thinking they had trapped him but he did not stop. The wound in his side burned at his nerves, and when it was out of water he could see the blood trickle down his wet skin, puddle at his belt line, spill over to drench the handle of his knife and fill its scabbard.

With fear magnifying every second and with fatigue over-estimating the number of his steps he would have thought he had traveled five miles by the time he saw the edge of the swamp, but he knew this country too well and he knew he was wrong. He and Joey Wills had known always that Shallow Lake was not more than two miles from the back road to Kenansville at this point. For all his agony he had not gone more than a mile and a half at most.

Beyond the edge of the cypress trees, still well ahead of him, the land rose into what must be cleared pasture land. Escape would be a different kind of problem there, and he did not want to leave the comparative security of the swamp until he had thought it out. He lay down where a sand bar loomed yellow in the dark water, his head resting in mud under the protection of a dwarf oak.

For what seemed too long a time he stayed there, treasuring the moments of rest. As his breath began to come more easily he began to rearrange his thoughts. Somewhere ahead of him, and probably very near, would be the back road from St. Cloud to Kenansville. It was a black-top south to Canoe Creek, but below Canoe Creek it was only two sand ruts running down through the rich, wild grazing lands of the Kissimmee prairie. Directly north of him, only three or four miles, was the town of St. Cloud. Telephones . . . police . . . doctors . . . everything he needed was in St. Cloud. Jordan would certainly expect him to try to get to St. Cloud.

To the east, beyond the road were scattered ranch houses. He thought about those ranch houses and he thought about Jordan. Jordan had underestimated Walt's ability to hide and run twice, but Walt must not under-estimate Jordan even once. Ranches could be easily watched. They were connected with police by party telephone lines. All Jordan had to do was have one listening post on the party line. Supposing a ranch family believed Walt's story and hid him? Jordan could find out, and as rugged as ranch people were they wouldn't be prepared on a moment's notice to protect themselves against a mind like Jordan's. Going to a ranch would not only endanger Walt but the rancher's family, too.

No one would be prepared to believe Walt's story. Smuggling was something that happened on the coasts, not here in cattle country and swamp land. That, of course, was exactly why Jordan was doing it here. He had the advantage of surprise at every turn. No. Walt decided he was safer by himself. He had to make his own escape. He had to keep ahead of Jordan with every step and every thought.

Walt's own home was at Yankee Junction, maybe 35 miles to the southwest. Between him and those few houses that seemed to sleep under the great oaks just off the highway there were miles of pasture with dome-shaped stands of cypress to break the view, and to model the land into weird, wild parks. The prairie was laced with waterways, creeks, drainage ditches, swamps and lakes where the great wading birds flocked and fed. It was an abundant garden where living things fattened each in his own way, the sleek Brahman cattle on the grass, the wild cat on the egret, the bear on nuts and berries, and above them all the bald eagle screamed and fished, and robbed the osprey.

It was a long way for a man to go wounded and half-naked in the strong sun. It would be far easier to try for St. Cloud. That was plain to him and when Jordan discovered that Walt had escaped from this swamp it would be plain to Jordan, too. Then again, Jordan probably knew by now that he'd been wounded although he wouldn't know how badly. He turned these facts over and over in his mind, and he could find no other answer except that Jordan would expect him to try for St. Cloud or a ranch house.

He looked up at the rays of sunlight slanting through the top branches of the cypress. Figuring the angles of light, he judged that it must be somewhere between seven and eight o'clock. It was time to move

on. Rising slowly and carefully he felt the new stiffness in his side and he knew he must not rest so long again. He must keep moving. He saw the gnats swarming around the gash and he scooped up a handful of partly drained mud to plaster the opened flesh with it.

After the miles of mud and water, however, he felt unexpectedly swift and light footed on the dry land, and he worked his way swiftly toward the Kenansville Road. He came upon it just where it forked north to St. Cloud, and he was more tempted than before to try and make those three straight miles in one desperate dash, but fear warned him against it. If Jordan wasn't already there waiting for him he would be. He had to be.

6

He came as close to the road as he dared. Directly across the road from him a wild shouting spiraled into the morning air and his heart thrashed at the sound of it. The animal in him wanted to turn and race for the protection of the swamp, but his mind held him. It told him he'd recognize the yelling if he'd study it, and he did. It was the singsong calling of cowhands rounding up cattle, as natural a call in this country as the croaking of the black crowned night heron.

Two men were bunching a herd of purebred Brahmans, and what interested him was that they were in a pasture which was bordered by the road to St. Cloud. He had an irrepressible desire to take that road now, to follow it only far enough for those men to see him. Jordan would come. He would ask if they'd seen a man—maybe he'd call him an escaped convict—and the men, eager to help, would say "Yes."

"Where was he going?"

"He was headin' fer St. Cloud in a high hurry."

Walt made up his mind in one reckless decision. He plunged out on the roadway, and running with a long easy stride he swung right at the fork and headed for St. Cloud. He could stand that pace only because he had no intention of holding it. He heard one of the men yell at the other, and out of the corner of his eye he saw the other man stop and turn. They whistled at him and one of them put his horse into a slow canter and started toward him. He was a youngster with a lean, tanned face under the big hat and he was curious, but he only came part way to pull his horse up and stare at Walt. This was lonely country and the sight of a man running along a highway was not part of the daily order of things. Walt kept at his running and let the now too familiar fear rise within him. If Jordan came now?

There was a movement on the path. Jordan was coming, his rifle held at the ready.

There was a drainage ditch cutting back across the pasture with a windrow of trees on either side of it some 50 yards ahead, and if he could make that . . . He listened for the sound of the jeep's motor but he heard only the squishing of his soaked sneakers and the flapping of wet jeans. When he got to the drainage ditch and the trees he ran a few yards beyond it to be sure he was hidden from the horsemen before he turned off the road, then he ducked in the roadside brush and thrashed his way back to the head of the ditch. The banks were some eight feet high, and the bottom was sandy with only a shallow flow of water. Knowing that he could still be seen from the road, he splashed along the sandy bottom at the top of his speed, eyeing the woods ahead in hopeful anguish.

Finally he was in the shade of the trees beyond the pasture and behind another screen of brush. Turning sharply, he walked, gasping, back to the break of the woods to see what he could. The two cowboys were back at their herding. Like immense, white commas two snowy egrets stepped daintily along the edge of a swampy pool in the pasture, frog hunting with their age-old skill. On two sides of the spreading meadow the road ran, and beyond the road to the northwest were the cypress trees and the swamp in which he had taken his wound and almost drowned the hound. Three crows were over there now talking in the tall trees, and over it all a blue heron pulled himself along high in the morning sky. The peace had a kind of enchantment about it, but there was the jar of heroin in his pocket to remind him that evil crouched in that green world.

Knowing that Jordan would discover sooner or later that he had not gone to St. Cloud, Walt turned back into the woods and began the long trip that would take him down through the Kissimmee prairie. He planned to travel on the east side of the Kenansville road, finally cross it to big lake Kissimmee, steal a fisherman's boat, cross the big lake in the dark, and then . . . then he would have to plan again.

As he jogged along over the leaf-carpeted floor of the forest, he worried back and forth over what he had done and what he had yet to do. Actually, simple luck had played into his hands at every important turn during the morning. His original escape from his boat wasn't entirely luck. It stemmed from his inborn timidity and his knowledge of the vicious Japlo character. His ability to hide in the woods was a long-practiced boyhood game, but finding the "stuff" unguarded for 10 minutes and being able to cross the deserted camp was pure luck. The hunters had let the dog off the leash on the chance they'd catch Walt immediately, but their poor judgment had turned into Walt's good fortune. Being only gashed by a rifle bullet was either good or bad luck, depending on how he looked at it. Beating Jordan to the St. Cloud road was luck in a way, too, but then he'd planned to do it and figured his chances carefully. Looking at that the other way, it would have been wretched luck if he hadn't. Now the question was how long would his luck hold. One mistake, one stroke of bad luck and there'd be a story in the paper like many of the ones he'd seen before. "Professor drowns on field trip." Jordan might yet get to write it.

The morning sun was hot now and his wound ached as it hadn't before but it wasn't bleeding. He ran with a loose, flat-footed pace, his lungs pulling deeply and easily at the sparkling air.

Suddenly, however, it seemed too natural for him to be running and hiding in fear like this, and, as he thought of it, the idea began to nag at him. As a boy he had fished, camped and studied alone. Joey Wills had been with him often and Joey had had his own reasons for hiding. Good reasons Walt didn't have. Walt was just plain shy, running away from people—always running! He had a good reason to run now, but just the same he was running.

Boy and man he was the same personality and it seemed that life had conspired to develop his shyness. He could only barely remember his mother and her gentle touch, but he could still feel her quiet as if he had inherited it as directly as he had her very flesh. Sometime, back on the edge of his memory, she had died and left him to his father's blusterings. Even now with the power of early maturity, Walt could not understand how she had loved so opposite a person as his father. She must have made some hidden adjustment that would have been possible for only a deep and steady mind.

He knew his father had tried to set him an example, but the boy had not been able to make the adjustment his mother had, and every action of his father's drove Walt farther and farther away from him. Although his father was reined back now by his age he was still marked by impetuous action. He was still the kind of man who made noise even when he fished. Every catch was an occasion for gay swearing and furious action that threatened the stability of even a flat-bottom row boat. He had rarely looked twice at any fish although he was a life-long fisherman. He didn't know that fish swim by the propulsion of their marvelously muscled tails alone. He knew nothing of the wonderful configuration within the gills that took from the water the life-supporting oxygen, and yet every flopping fish in the boat was still toasted with a long drink of whiskey. Walt's sobriety, diligence and quiet were negative impressions from the mold of his father.

7

When he got to the north shore of Lake Gentry it must have been 10 o'clock. The sweat ran down his face and chest. The mud had fallen away from his wound and the gnats were buzzing thickly around it again. At the first stand of cypress that bordered Lake Gentry as they border nearly every marshy shore, Walt stopped and lay down in the cool, dark water. The pumping of lungs finally slowed and

"Are we insured against setting fire to Mrs. Rhodes' hen house?"

Bluebook 7903

the perspiration stopped. He scooped handfuls of water into his mouth, not enough to fill his stomach and make his running awkward, but only enough to satisfy the minimum requirements of his hot body. His wound smarted sharply when he first submerged it, and when he sat up and plastered it with a fresh caking of mud he noticed that his entire side was sore. It was a fleshy ache, however, and he felt more certain than ever that the wound was shallow.

Lake Gentry was two miles long and something over a mile wide. If he swung to the west of it he would have to pass too close to the Kenansville Road, and that worried him. He tried to imagine what a man like his father would do in a case like this. He would have tried to stand and fight somewhere along the trail. He'd be dead by now. Walt pulled himself up out of the water and, threading his way among the trees, he began to circle Lake Gentry to the east.

His eyes caught the yellow flash of a small bird and he recognized the male prothonotary warbler. He saw the wild orchids growing on the cypress and live oaks. Twice he saw gaudy Florida galinules stepping along over water-soaked weeds like pompous chickens. Once he saw two swallow-tailed kites circling and plunging over a high piece of hammock land. They were feeding on something they had found on the bank and he could not resist his curiosity. Wading silently nearer and nearer, he was using up his precious time, but his sense of pursuit had left him. He saw one of the kites, his elegant, white, scissor tail flashing in the sun, dive over a small plot of short, light-green grass. When he rose, Walt could see the small snake writhing in the bird's bill. The kites had found a newly born family of cottonmouth moccasins, and each in turn dove over the spot feeding on the entire brood.

By the time Walt had reached East Creek that flowed across his path into Lake Gentry he had used up more than an hour, but his spirit was lifted. The beauty of that littoral marsh world had stirred him.

Before crossing the creek he studied it carefully. A boat was floating close to the shore and two bamboo poles stuck up from it like pointed fingers of the right and left hand. An older man and boy watched their separate bobbers with dark, dreaming faces, and the man puffed absently on a corncob pipe.

The sight of the fishermen brought back to him the sharp realization that he was being hunted, and with that knowledge there came the loneliness. He wanted to talk to them. He wanted to tell them what was happening. He wanted to ask them for tobacco, but he could not do it.

Jordan would be moving his men south through the brush looking for Walt's sign, maybe finding it, asking questions wherever he could. He had to get Walt and he'd stop at nothing. A fisherman's ignorance would be his only protection. Walt turned and went silently up stream to the nearest bend, and crossed out of sight of the men.

Along the south shore of Lake Gentry he found a path, and even while he felt the danger of a marked path, he felt he could afford the chance. He could travel at a steady trot there and then, too, he wasn't going to follow it far.

Canoe Creek spilled out of the south edge of Lake Gentry, and, freshened by spring rains, its dark, clear water ran swiftly to the south. He left the path and plunged into the cool current, letting it carry him. Perhaps 50 feet wide with good sand banks the creek floated him quickly through almost untouched forest, the green arms of the trees sometimes meeting over his head, and he remembered how he and Joey had treasured the memories and even the name of Canoe Creek. The last time he'd seen Joey—just before Joey had gone into the army—they had talked about Canoe Creek.

When the creek turned sharply back to the west, Walt swam to the south bank and scrambled out. He was only a mile now from where the creek ran under the Kenansville Road, and by now Jordan might well have posted a guard at that particular spot. Plastering his side with fresh mud from the creek bank he headed south again, and the road which now paralleled him only a mile to the west was on his mind. Jordan would be sure to scout along it for signs of Walt on the prairie. But by the same token, if Walt kept a careful watch on the road he'd know where Jordan was looking for him.

At the first break in the forest he came to a fence line, and saw herds of gray Brahman cattle grazing for miles ahead of him. He could see the road from where he stood and he was far closer to it than he expected to be. If he was going to keep to forest edge for cover, he was going to have to make a long weary circle eastward around the huge pasture. For a moment he eyed the stands of cypress here and there in the endless pasture where a marshy spot gave their roots the water they needed.

Fatigue lay in his stomach like a fever, and it was tempting to run across the open pasture from one piece of cover to another. It was the easy way to cover ground, but incalculably more dangerous. He turned away from the road and followed the edge of the woods.

Once he startled a herd of cattle and crashing through the brush they galloped into the pasture. Their movement and fright could have been seen for five miles and Walt promised himself not to let that happen again.

8

It must have been two o'clock when he was wading through a small pool that he scared a large frog from the mud. He watched the fat, green-backed amphibian slip under a submerged branch to hide, and, with his hand poised like the neck of a bittern, he snatched at it and pulled the wriggling, soft body out from under the branch. He killed it and skinned it with his knife. He had never eaten frogs' legs raw, but he found the meat was only a little oily. Otherwise it had a rich, clean taste and he chewed it methodically. Besides the nourishment, it gave his nerve-jabbed stomach something to do. When he finished eating the meat from both legs, he cut the heart from a yearling cabbage palm, and chewed the tenderest parts with the same deliberation.

While he ate, the faces of Jordan, Japlo, the half-caste and the pilot went around in his mind like postcards on a revolving rack. How did men get that way? Didn't they know what they were doing? He tried to remember who said evil was only ignorance. Was it possible a man like Jordan would smuggle heroin because he didn't know what it did to a nation? Maybe the half-caste didn't know. Maybe Japlo didn't. Maybe all the others didn't. But the pilot did and Jordan did. He didn't know the answer. He simply left the question in his mind and went on chewing at the heart of the cabbage palm. His side ached and he wondered what the heroin would do for the wound. Would it kill the pain?

He took the jar out of his pocket and felt the soreness on his leg where it had rubbed against him. The sight of the jar and the weight of it in his hand was terrible evidence that what he was living through was not a thing of his mind. It was really happening. He opened it and stared glumly at the white powder. It was absurd to even try it when he did not know what it would do to him. He screwed the top back on and, putting it in his left-hand pocket this time, he stood up to move on.

Even from where he'd been sitting he could see the Kenansville Road and not a car had passed. He had yet to see the first traffic on it. He could have walked across the pastures in the open and he wouldn't have been seen. He'd have been miles ahead of where he was, but how could he have known that?

He started along the edge of the woods again and he noticed his step was unsteady. He didn't have fear to drive him any more. There was only his mind and his muscles. He thought of Marian, spending these holidays with his father. She'd come down from the University with him to stay with his father while Walt went on his field trip. She was staying with the lonely old man out of pity for him, but maybe Walt shouldn't have left her alone with him. But, supposing he'd brought her with him! He shuddered with horror, and the shock of his idea cleared his mind.

When it was time to dare a crossing of the Kenansville Road, the sun was getting low in the western sky, but it still burned him. The legs of his blue jeans

were tattered and he could feel the blisters his sneakers had rubbed into his feet. He came to a pasture running even deeper to the east than the others, and he did not go around it. He rolled under the fence and stood up.

This was distilled danger and he watched the pasture and cattle for a long time. Nothing moved but the herd. The gray steers with the humped shoulders moved along step by step, feeding. To the west where towering thunderheads were piling up in the sky was Lake Kissimmee. Twelve miles long and five miles wide, the lake was both a wide barrier and long highway to him. He did not expect to find a rowboat easily on this eastern shore, but he was sure he could find one by nightfall. An owner would miss his boat for only a few days and for Walt the boat was a matter of survival that could be explained later.

He started across the pasture and stopped again. He should go around it, but it was simpler to cross. He had to save his strength, and then, they hadn't come down the Kenansville Road all day. Why not? Maybe Jordan thought he was still trying to make St. Cloud. Maybe they'd given up the hunt, deciding to make a run for it with what heroin they had. After all that load must be worth a fortune. Walt couldn't wait any longer, and yet he was sure they'd make at least one run along that road and check for signs of him. At last, however, fatigue and daring won over caution and he went on across the pasture watching the road for as far as he could see it in both directions.

He crossed the pasture with apparent safety, the cattle making way for him and watching him nervously. When he came to a windrow of pines he swung west and walked to the edge of the road. The sandy ruts were empty, and feeling more secure he hurried across and ducked under a fence on the far side. There was pasture ahead and another herd of Brahmans lifted their strange heads to watch him. This breed seemed quicker and more alert than other cattle. They left him strictly alone, but they circled restlessly, their heads high and their great soft eyes studying his every step.

He was almost to the break of the forest that stretched all the way west to Lake Kissimmee when he saw the car coming south on the road. The setting sun flashed redly through the towering clouds against the car, and Walt recognized the jeep instantly. Fear poured back into him like a hot stimulant, and, doubling over until his wound felt as if it would crack open, he ran for the woods.

This was what he expected, and he had planned every step so that even with the resurgence of fear he did not yet feel caught. He made the woods and dropped heavily into the first cover he could find. It was pygmy palmetto growing only a foot high, but he knew a man could hide in six inches of grass if he kept his head and his heels down. He watched the car rolling slowly down the road, lurching gently in the grip of the ruts.

If good luck had played into his hands before, it now deserted him. At first, Walt did not know what was happening. The jeep stopped and he saw the four men stare at the woods where he was hiding. Although they were a quarter of a mile away he recognized the big, square shape of Jordan sitting in the front with a country man who might have been Japlo. In the rear seat there was a blond man who must have been the pilot and beside him was the half-caste. Why had they stopped? Why were they looking at him? Had they seen him running? No. That was impossible. Then suddenly he understood—the cattle! At least 200 Brahman steers, cows, calves and an assortment of young bulls were looking straight at where he was lying in the covering of palmetto.

Even then the men were not too convinced. They must have known as well as Walt did that those cattle would have stared at a wild cat in the same way. Jordan pointed to the pasture gate some hundred yards below them and the jeep began to move down the road. They were going to open that gate, drive across the pasture and investigate. Walt wiggled around and, pulling his bare stomach over the sharp fronds and stems of the runt palmetto, he made his way deeper into the woods. When he was well screened he got to his feet and ran.

He was convinced they had not actually seen him, but Jordan would find his signs in the break of the woods where he had pulled himself along on his stomach, and he remembered that it was Jordan who knew where the buck would run. His mind was no longer clear and even with terror to goad him he was running clumsily, the lightness gone from his feet and legs. He did not see the pond in the woods until he was almost on it, and as he broke out of the brush a great blue heron pounded the air with frantic wings and rose up straight into the sky like a signal to Jordan that Walt was there.

He did not stop to think. There was nothing to think about now. There was only flight and he ran on numbly. Lightning streaked through the distant clouds in the west, which had already obscured the sun. The coolness of evening felt good on his burned skin, and he wondered if he could keep free of the men until dark. Trying to steady his mind and even out the rhythm of his running he began to plan on the darkness. But it seemed hopelessly distant.

His steps had shortened by half their length, and every lungful of air seared his throat, but in a fashion he was still trotting when he came down from the higher prairie land to the shore of the lake. His legs were bleeding now from ankles to knees, and his jeans were ripped into uselessness. He stumbled onto a path leading along the shore under the trees, and he knew they'd trap him here.

9

CERTAINLY JORDAN would cut ahead of him. The men would move in behind and flank him against the shore line. If he should find a boat now

and get out on the lake, they'd see him even in the early dusk that was deepened by the storm. They'd pick him off as if he were a sitting duck. If he could get out to one of the off-shore islands he might be able to hide until dark. And after that what? Swim across Lake Kissimmee? . . . five miles of open water? No. Maybe he could have done it 10 years ago, but not tonight.

Bird Island lay less than a mile from the shore, and as he lumbered into sight of it he studied it hopefully. He had to try to make it, but they'd surely see him swimming that distance and maybe catch him in the water and drown him as they'd planned in the beginning. He was running automatically. His mind was not on what he was doing. It was planning the desperate chance of a swim to Bird Island. The habits of a woodsman, however, were deeply ingrained and his eyes saw the danger. He stopped short on the path before he had realized why.

Directly ahead of him there was a windfall over the path. The long thick arm of a live oak had split from the main trunk and like an open hand it had fallen over the path. Only the middle finger jammed against the trunk of another oak prevented the heavy branch from dropping to the ground. It wasn't unusual. Windfalls like that one were something to be walked around, and Walt started around it.

His winded body had little energy left for thinking, but some part of his mind whispered to him twice. "If it's dangerous for you, it's dangerous for them."

Once back on the path he turned and looked at the windfall again. Its balance could be made even more precarious, and it would be triggered without too much work. A long green branch, sharpened and wedged under the middle finger that held up the hand-like limb could pry the windfall loose. There were too many leaves and twig-sized branches on the limb for it to completely crush a man but it might help. An overly eager hunter might not skirt the danger, and even it if trapped no one, but only gave a warning with its crash, it would serve a purpose.

Wiping the sweat out of his eyes as he worked, he cut a branch from the same limb, sharpened it and wedged it between the tip of the broken limb and the standing oak, and he let the leafy end of his branch spread across the path. A man going under the windfall would have to brush aside the green branch. That would lever the big branch clear of the standing oak, and allow it to drop free to the ground. He cut away at the bark of the supporting oak, and shaved down the point of the limb so that the drop would be cleaner and quicker, then he rubbed dirt over the fresh scars in the wood. He did not think much of the deadfall. Maybe it was time wasted, but he had to take advantage of everything the woods offered him. Slipping his knife back into its scabbard, he went on down the path. He was walking now. There was no point in running. He walked perhaps a mile until he was opposite the south point of Bird Island, and there he sat to wait.

He was waiting for the men or for nightfall, whichever came first. If night came first he'd take his chance on the swim to Bird Island. If the men came first . . . he stopped thinking.

There was no need to plan any further. He hid himself as well as possible where he could watch the trail and the lake, too. He saw the gray-black clouds piling across the lake and he felt the fresh, cold wind that snapped along ahead of them. He would have to swim against the wind and against the white caps it made unless the storm passed before dark. The lightning was dazzling now and it was followed quickly by thunder. Looking across the five miles of water that lay beyond the tip of Bird Island he could see the far shore turning gray with rain, and he knew it was raining on his home now, some six miles beyond the lake. Marian would be closing the windows and his father would be standing on the porch enjoying the sound and rush of rain. It was darkening around him but that was only because of the storm. If the storm blew over quickly there would be still an hour of light. Jordan must be figuring that hour as carefully as he was.

Walt took his knife out of the scabbard and held it in his hand. It was all he had and Jordan had a rifle. There was only one slight advantage here for Walt. He had no reason to believe that Jordan knew he carried a knife. When he had been spied upon first, back there in the waterway to Shallow Lake, the men had been on his left and the knife hung at his right. When he had sprinted across the open campsight the pilot had been on his left again. When he had been fired upon after trying to drown the hound, he had been waist deep in water, swimming, and diving through heavy brush. Jordan still thought of him contemptuously as a "bird lover" and a "professor." Neither of those idea-pictures suggested he would fight.

Then he remembered the plywood pontoons of the plane he'd drilled with his knife, but that was secondary evidence. They would not know how he had drilled the pontoons until they had somehow jacked the plane up out of the water and examined it. Even if Jordan guessed he had a knife it would not worry him any more than the teeth of the fox worry the hound. Anger at Jordan's invulnerability began to grow where fear had been, and like a small fire it grew until it was a bright, bitter fury.

Then he caught himself up short. Could he really fight? He'd never planned on a fight like this in his life. He wasn't prepared. He had no experience, and yet when he thought of Jordan he knew he was going to try it. They'd get him, but he'd try to take Jordan with him. He moved down closer to the trail, and hunkered down on his thighs so that he could wait and yet be ready. He was sure Jordan would have gone ahead, cut back to the lake shore, then moved north again to close the circle and to jump the quarry himself. He'd let his men follow the trail and do the flanking, but Jordan was the hunter.

Walt watched the storm sweeping majestically across the lake. He enjoyed the cool wind and

watched the trail. Time went by in one long, dragging second after another until maybe a half an hour had gone. His leg muscles were cramping, but he did not move them. He did not move even his head. He depended on his ears to tell him of the woods behind him, and only his eyeballs moved back and forth, his eyes seeing every detail of the trail in front of him.

There was a noiseless movement on the path. His breath stopped in his throat. Jordan was there! He was coming along the path from the south, his rifle at the ready. Walt saw the thick neck and the red, whiskered face. He saw the excitement of the hunter closing in for the kill. Jordan's lips were pulled back over his fine teeth in a tight grin, and Walt knew he was enjoying the greatest hunt of his life. He stood still for a moment in terrible silence. If he saw Walt now it would be the end. Walt was too far away from him to fight with a knife against a rifle. Jordan seemed to be sniffing the air. Then he came on again, one noiseless step at a time.

When he was 10 feet away, Walt did not even tense his muscles. Even that tiny movement would warn Jordan. Then he was nine feet away—eight—seven—six!—and Walt dove at him without a sound. Jordan groaned softly as the knife struck him low on the chest, and he fell over backwards, rolling with the weight of Walt's body. They thrashed together on the forest floor, neither of them calling out, each saving his breath for the fight. As Walt yanked his arm back for a second thrust, Jordan back-handed him across the face with a blow that shattered Walt's senses. Walt rolled over on the ground and saw the figure of the big man stumbling toward him. Walt buckled his body up to meet the rush, but Jordan hit him with his entire weight and they were rolling over and over again in the trail. Jordan had the experience, the weight and the strength, and before Walt knew how he did it Jordan had him on his back and he snatched at Walt's knife hand. He closed his fingers around Walt's wrist but the grip was taken too fast and in one desperate twitch Walt wrenched it free and slipped the knife into Jordan below his ribs. The big man roared with agony and before he could get his hands on the blade Walt drove it into him again and again. Jordan was doubling up trying to protect himself from the flashing blade and he rolled off to the side.

Walt got up on one knee and it seemed to him the forest was suddenly full of noise. Jordan was only groaning now, but Walt heard a man shouting somewhere in the trees, and he heard another sound of a man crashing through the brush close to him and behind him. He turned just as Japlo broke out of the thicket with a shotgun. Walt aimed his knife and threw with all his strength. Japlo tried to duck and Walt did not wait to see whether it struck or not. He raced back down the path, and he knew in one frantic second it was the wrong way to go. More certainly than anything else there'd be men on his trail pressing to meet Jordan and close the trap. But once he had

started he couldn't stop. Japlo was behind him and he probably wasn't hurt so badly that he couldn't shoot, and Walt ran on blindly.

From the trail ahead of him a yell of fright exploded and even above the whistling of the rising wind Walt heard the crash of the windfall. Maybe it had caught one but there were others. He kicked off his sneakers and with a running dive he hit the water and struck out for the south tip of Bird Island.

He held his head completely out of the water and turned once to look behind. Japlo was kneeling on the bank, holding his right shoulder with his left hand, and even with his one quick look Walt saw the large, dark stain spreading from under his hand. Japlo was screaming but apparently not in pain. Two strokes later Walt took another look and this time he heard Japlo distinctively.

"Get him! Get him! You can do it! Get him! Get him!" and his screaming dwindled off into a string of profane words.

Walt rolled enough with his next stroke to look well behind him and he saw the half-caste swimming after him with powerful even strokes and the man was not 10 yards behind him. Walt tried not to look again until he had steadied the rhythm of his stroking. He reached for each stroke, breathed in on every third, and went into a scissors kick for extra speed. If the wind and waves were against him they were against the half-caste too.

This was his racing best and he knew he could not hold it for long, but he kept at it until he was breathing spasmodically and then he changed to the crawl, breathing with every pair of strokes, and frog-kicking to save the strength of his legs. He turned enough with each breath now to see behind and he knew why they hadn't simply shot him from the bank. The half-caste had had orders to drown him, if possible, and he was sure of doing just that.

Time was not a thing to think of now. There was only space—ten yards of it, 30 feet—to be watched and measured, and with every lift of his head for breath Walt remeasured that distance. He could even see the eyes of the man following—dark, hard, self-confident eyes. He saw the brown muscles of the arms as they stroked and he knew the man was a powerful swimmer.

To even his stroking, Walt counted each one out and in the silence of his mind each order to stroke and breathe echoed like the shouting of a drill master. One! . . . two . . . ! One! . . . two! . . . One! . . . two! Breath out on one . . . breath in on two! One! . . . two! . . . One! . . . two! . . . still the man was behind him by ten yards. Once he looked ahead and to his surprise he was passing the point of Bird Island. There was no chance to hide there now. His only hope was the open water. One! . . . two! . . . One! . . . two! The white caps were higher now and he gulped water when he breathed. Coughing and choking it out he managed to keep his stroking. Was the man behind as desperate as he?

There was a nearby flash of lightning, the stunning crash of thunder and the curtain of wind-driven rain swept over him. Now he could not see for a dozen feet in any direction, and the torrent of falling rain made it impossible to breathe properly. He began gasping for breath, and the horrible feeling came to him that he was losing his lead. Somewhere out of that gray, rushing screen of water the half-caste would suddenly appear, and Walt could almost feel the man's grip on his ankle.

He turned sharply to his left. If the brown man couldn't see him turn, he'd swim on out into the lake and the distance between them would grow. It was better swimming across the wind, too. The rain was driving from his right side and he could breathe better on his left side in the slight shelter his own head made. The wind slackened from gusty confusion to a steady pushing, but the rain seemed to double its torrent. The world around him was an endless, rattling universe of water pouring into water.

He had only the wind to give him direction. The storm had come from the west, and swimming across the wind for too long a time would only drift him back to the rain-drenched forest where the men were still waiting. He had to turn back into the slanting rain, and when he did he slowed his stroke only a little and kept with it until his arms and chest were aching beyond pain, and his hope for survival was beyond despair. He was plugging blindly at the water when the wind cut back to a whisper, and the waves, no longer goaded by it, were flattened smooth by the pounding rain.

He rolled on his back, and, breathing from only one corner of his mouth, he let the rain beat against his face. With his arms stretched above his head for balance he floated and took what rest he could. Little by little the cloudburst let up until it was only

a drizzle and the air cleared so that he could see the far western shore of the lake, and then Bird Island emerged from the gloom to the northeast. He was perhaps a mile beyond it and a mile south, but he couldn't see the half-caste. The man must have gone back to Bird Island for refuge.

10

Turning on his side he started swimming again. This time he used a slow side stroke, and kept both arms under the water. He did not believe he could swim to the western shore, but he had to try. The storm was passing over Jordan's side of the lake and he could see the trees on the shore plainly where he had fought for the first time.

They'd get a boat after him now. That was sure. They could try finding him, but the lake and the coming darkness were vast. In a few minutes even a spotlight would be but a shining pin. While he was on the lake his problem was not the hunters. It was a question now of his own ability and his own will.

Swimming a little at a time and floating as long as he dared, he saw the evening turn into the utter dark of night. The night wind was steadier but lighter and swimming into it became a habit. Like a drunk, paddling in a half-sleep, he floated and swam.

His thinking drifted aimlessly from Marian and the sweet softness of her to his father. Without knowing how he arrived at the knowledge, he was sorry for the old man. In his own way his father had loved him and his tragedy was that Walt had grown away from him year by year. He had lost Walt little by little, and now in his old age he was alone even with his son beside him. Walt's secluded way of life seemed selfish now, and his quiet withdrawal from his father's life was reduced to arrogance.

Joey Wills went in and out of his mind time and again. Joey was home from the Army, an ex-infantry sergeant with a good record, and Walt had not seen him. Why? There were a dozen good reasons. Joey was married now and ran a bar. Walt didn't know his wife and bartenders were alien to him. Walt was away at the University nearly all the time. He and Joey had grown up and grown apart. They did different things. They were interested in different things. But he saw now there was only one valid reason why he had not seen Joey in four years. There was a community feeling that separated Joey from Walt. It was like a glass wall between them and it was there only because Walt thought it was. He was afraid of what other people might think if he demolished the wall with a thought.

Even the students at the University were part of his gentle delirium. He saw again the young men and women, earnest in their work, depending upon him. Looking to him for the encouragement he was too shy to give. Except when he lectured them as a group, he could not talk to them as they deserved. Wallowing along in the dark lake, Walt knew he was afraid of people. He wasn't afraid of anything in particular. He was just afraid. Marian called it shyness because she loved him, but there in the deepness of the night and the black water he knew it was fear. And now there didn't seem to be any reason for fear again. Now that he was going to drown he was not afraid!

Once when he rolled over to float he saw the stars had come out, and the sight of them awakened his mind and body. That he could see them meant he was alive, and they distracted him from the dark oblivion where the westerly breeze had seemed to be his only companion. He found the Great Dipper and checked the wind direction by Polaris. It had changed to blow from the southwest and he redirected his course to allow for it.

When he turned over to swim again, the people of his life came back to him and he wanted to see them. They were part of him. They were his values. It was through the need of his students that he had any importance among good men at all. His boyhood with Joey Wills was the friendly investment of a lifetime. He could draw on it now as surely as he could draw money from a bank account. His father had given him the knife. The knife was gone now, but it still stood for a way of life his father had given him, and he had never used it to its fullest until this day of horror.

His feet had been kicking in mud and his arms pulling at it for minutes before it got through to his mind that he was in shallow water. He tried to stand and he couldn't. He only floundered forward onto his hands and crawled forward on all fours like a sick animal. He could be on a sandbar and there was a flash of worry, but when he looked up at the skyline he saw the outlines of trees against the stars and he knew he was on the west shore. He crawled on until he came to the trees and the feel of the bark on the first tree was a dull sense of joy to his water-wrinkled fingers. Using the tree for support he worked his way to his feet, and fighting a new desire to lie down and sleep, he walked off unsteadily into the woods, woods he knew better than any he had yet been in.

His bare feet were numb at first to the briars, the sand-spurs and the sharp stubble of the fields he crossed. Finally, however, the burning from their lacerated soles became almost intolerable. Feeling his way along as best he could, sometimes walking into trees, tripping and falling like a blind man, he made his way through the black world until he saw the lights of his own home through the trees.

He stopped a hundred yards away. The lamp in the living room threw a golden square of light on the lawn. He guessed his father was still up reading one of the stories of violence he so dearly loved. There was only one light. Marian must be in the front bedroom asleep. He wanted to go on, knock at the door, be comforted and cared for. But then he knew he couldn't.

Turning just as Japlo broke out of a thicket, Walt threw with all his strength.

Jordan's men must certainly know by now that this was the burrow of the fox. If they'd missed him every foot of the last 35 miles, they'd get him here if he still lived. They wouldn't harm Marian or touch his father. That would only start the police investigation they feared most, but they would certainly use his home for bait just as they had tried to use his boat as a lure during the morning that seemed so long ago. There was no doubt in Walt's mind that each unsuspecting home in that tiny community must have its guard.

He stood for a long time, listening, watching and feeling the pain in his feet and the sickness in his side. At last there was a sound. It was the quavering call of the Florida screech owl, and he knew it was an imitation. It was a good imitation, but not good enough. Somebody else was there in the woods near him, watching and waiting. He turned and went off through the forest which had been the backyard of his boyhood.

He found the path he wanted. It was the path he had taken to Joey's maybe a thousand times. He could not judge time any longer, but he knew this walk used to take him about half an hour. That made it maybe two miles. He counted an hour for it tonight, but it seemed like three before he saw the lights of Joey's village, a village even smaller than his.

He did not go up the road when he came to it. Instead he kept to the backs of the houses until he came to Joey's Bar. He heard the high laughter of the

Negroes coming from the barroom, and the sound of it was like a jubilee. He was almost to the back door, hurrying as well as he could, eager and not alert, when a hound sprung at him from the darkness, barking furiously. The suddenness of the noise weakened him so seriously he had to lean against the wall of the tavern. The back door opened, and in the soft light of kerosene lamps burning from within stood a tall Negro in old Army suntans.

"Who's there?" he said.

Walt tried to answer but failed.

"Who is it?" the Negro's voice was sharper.

"Joey—Walt! . . . Walt Holly!" Walt's voice was a crackling whisper.

The Negro sprang off the top step toward Walt, and Walt let his head fall forward again on his arm.

"Holy Mother of Jesus!" Joey crooned softly. He wasn't swearing. It was as if he had been taken with a sudden prayer, and his arm went around Walt.

"Dope runners at Shallow Lake. They've . . ."

He was being carried like a child and he smelled the starch in Joey's shirt. Then he was in a room, and the sound of Negro laughter was closer, but on the other side of a door. He heard Joey talking and heard a soft woman's voice answering.

"Keep it goin' out there," Joey said. "Don't let nobody know anything's wrong."

"You're goin' to need help. He's just about gone." That was the woman talking. He was sitting down and there was a table in front of him.

"Don't phone the sheriff!" he said. "Party line . . . ! They could listen!"

"Let 'em," Joey said. "I've had me a desperate signal rigged up with a head man in Lake Wales for years."

Walt heard the crank of the telephone being spun furiously, and he heard Joey asking for a number. Walt was filled with a vague terror but he had to let Joey do it in his own way.

"This is Joey Wills callin', is Mr. John there?" There was a long pause. "Mr. John, this is Joey Wills. I'm callin' from my place of business. It looks like my wife is coming down with a sickness. It could be chicken-pox . . . then again it might be small pox. I think she need the best help I kin git." There was another pause. "Yes, sir. Thank you, sir."

Then Walt was being shaken, and he heard a man's sharp voice, not Joey's, saying "Keep at it. We got to wake him up!"

Walt opened his eyes and the table was still there. A kerosene lamp was close but to one side and a man sat there with a pad and pencil. Joey shook him gently again.

"Tell him about it, Walt. This is Mr. Pemberton, agent, FBI."

Walt was being directed to look at a second man who was sitting directly across the table from him, and he saw a man with a sun-tanned face and sharp gray eyes.

"Are you awake, Holly?" Walt nodded. "Try to get back on the beam and tell us. What's the trouble?"

Walt saw a Florida Highway Patrolman standing behind the man called Pemberton. There was still another man with them but Walt didn't know him.

"You've got to start talking, Professor," Pemberton said, and his voice was instant and demanding. "Where did you run into them?"

"Shallow Lake," Walt heard himself say.

The man shoved a road map in front of him.

"Where is it?" he demanded.

"Here!" Joey said quietly. "Is that right, Walt?"

Walt tried to focus on the brown finger and finally nodded.

"How do you know they're dope runners?"

Walt tried to get his hand into his pocket, but it only slipped and Joey caught him just as he started to topple sideways.

"Easy, fella."

"My—my pocket."

Joey was cutting his pocket away with something. His knife? No, that was gone. Maybe scissors. The man across the table was wrenching open the top of the jar. He was smelling the powder. Poking at it with his finger just as Walt had done, and he looked up at the policemen around him. When he turned back to Walt his voice was shrill with excitement and command. He reached across the table and grabbed Walt hard by the arm.

"For God's sake, Professor," he snapped. "Come to! Tell us! Fast!" He shook Walt ferociously, and Walt began to talk.

He was breathing hard just as he had so many times that day, only now it was total exertion to just talk. He began following the map better, and he talked methodically but jerkily. Sometimes he forgot what he was saying and then the men would remind him. The man with the pencil wrote down everything he said. Pemberton leaned over the table and followed his finger with a red pencil, making notes here and there.

He told about his flight along every inch of the map. He told them about his stand on the east shore of Lake Kissimmee, and about his fight. He went on telling them about his swim across the lake, and he was just telling them about the things he thought of during that swim—that a shy man is a selfish man, a cowardly man, and that the things a man feared in other people were the things in his own mind. It seemed strange to him that Pemberton who had listened so closely had stopped listening and was talking to the others.

"Hide him right here," Pemberton was saying. "I'll post a man in the back yard. Keep your business going just as you were doing. Let's go."

Joey had his arm around Walt's waist and he was talking to him quietly.

Walt's feet slipped around under him as if he were walking on grease, and he leaned heavily on Joey, then there was the feel of a bed under his stomach and the softness of a pillow at his head.

It seemed, however, that Joey let him sleep only a minute and he was being shaken again. Walt opened his eyes and saw the lamp was gone. The laughter from the other side of the wall was gone, and the room he slept in was flooded with sunlight. Joey was sitting on the side of his bed grinning.

"How does 10 hours sleep feel, Walt?"

"Okay," Walt said hoarsely. What's happening?"

"Mr. Pemberton just called. They're roundin' 'em up from all over. They'll be here in half an hour. He wants to talk to you, and he wondered how you were doin'."

"I'm doing all right."

He felt the burning pain of his side and stomach, and looked down at himself. There was a gauze dressing running down his chest, a corset of bandage around his waist and a poultice on his side. His legs from knees to ankles were covered with a white ointment and his feet were rolled in bandage.

"Did they hurt Marian? . . . my wife?"

"Nobody's told me but I don't guess they had much of a chance."

Walt focused on the lean, dark face. He saw the concern there and he held out his hand. Joey took it gently but Walt could feel the strength of his grip.

"Before Mr. Pemberton comes, I want to say something," Joey's voice was deep in his throat. "I'm proud you came to me for help when you needed it."

"To whom else would I go, Joey?"

Joey shrugged. He'd said what he wanted to.

"You certainly trussed me up," Walt told him.

Joey laughed, and slowly pulled him into a sitting position.

"I washed you up. I rolled you over. I bandaged you wherever I could fit one on, and you never know'd it! Hungry?"

"Just coffee now—and I want a cigarette."

Joey helped him into a fresh pair of suntans and hid his bandaging under a well starched shirt. He cut open the tops and the backs of his bedroom slippers so they'd fit Walt's bandaged feet, and then they sat in easy chairs and sipped coffee and smoked. Their talk went back to the woods as it always had. It was what they had in common, and Walt even remembered to tell him about the kites eating the young water moccasins.

The door opened and Pemberton came in. He was taller than Walt expected him to be and he was bald-headed, which Walt didn't remember. He looked tired, and the beard on his face was grayish, but his eyes were bright and his high-bridged nose made him look a little like a sharp-shinned hawk.

"How's our boy, Wills?" He talked snappily through a lopsided grin that warmed his words.

"Fair to middlin'," Joey said.

Pemberton walked right to Walt and looked at him closely.

"You remember me? Pemberton, Federal Bureau of Investigation."

"Yes. I remember all right," Walt said. "I was mighty glad to see you. How's my wife?"

"They didn't touch her. We picked up two men in your neighborhood. You didn't say there'd be two. I want you to see them later. Maybe you'll recognize them. I don't know."

"What about the others?"

"You hurt Jordan badly. They didn't dare move him. He was still there. We got him in the county hospital in an oxygen tent. He goes into surgery at eleven this morning. I want that guy to live."

"He was a fine hunter," Walt said, respectfully in spite of himself.

"He *was,* is right!" Pemberton commented. "We got Japlo and Keating with him. You nearly cut the biceps off Japlo's arm with that knife. Keating's got a busted shoulder."

"Who's Keating?"

"The pilot."

"Was it the deadfall?"

"It was."

"What about the half-caste?"

"They call him the Indian. He's from one of the islands where they run the heroin from. I think he's still in the lake. The sheriff has the crews dragging for him now. We got the jeep and we got the plane, too. We even found one of the jars still under the pine tree. I figure they must have found four of them. The panel truck is gone but I've got a 10-state watch set. I think we'll get it. We're going to have a look at every panel truck east of the Mississippi."

"You do a good job," Walt said.

"Huh!" Pemberton snorted. "Look who's talking! I'll never know how you did it, Professor. What can I do for you?"

"I want to see my wife and my father."

"I'll drive you around if you want me to," Pemberton said, then he cocked his head on one side. "I'd rather drive you by the hospital. You look like hell, you know? You might scare 'em."

"Yes, but I think they'll like me this way better."

"That's your problem. I'll drive you by," Pemberton said. "But one more thing. You're my star witness. If you think you're being followed for the next month or so it's because you are. My boys will be watching out for you."

Walt laughed, and it felt good to laugh along with a man like Pemberton.

"I'm accustomed to being followed," he said, and he stood up. Joey Wills was right along side of him, and Walt put his arm around Joey's shoulder.

"Thanks, Joey. Let's go fishing this summer?"

"You just say when!" Joey's eyes lighted up with the old excitement for a fishing trip. "I got us a new secret fishin' hole down on the Kissimmee River. Snap your fingers and they jump in the boat!"

It was an old joke and they all laughed again, and Walt went on out with Pemberton, trying not to limp.

—By Robert Craig

NEXT MONTH: "THE POWER," by F. M. Robinson. Two BLUEBOOK editors lost half a night's sleep because they couldn't put this novel down.

The Gold-Plated Gunboat

Continued from page 18

packages like a Malay diver looking for a pearl in a heap of oyster shells.

Nothing. Nothing but a lot of official tripe that'd have to be attended to some day. His stomach knotted. He went through the pile again, item by item. Still nothing. One hope left—personal letters were sometimes forwarded to ships under official cover. He started ripping open envelopes, flinging aside the contents after a glance at the weary lines of type—Bureau of Construction, Equipment & Repair—Coal Depot, Philadelphia, Pa.—Laws Relating to the Navy and Marine Corps Enacted by the 1st Session of the 37th Congress, to and including August 6, 1861—Changes in Ordnance Instructions—Navy Department General Orders—nothing—nothing—nothing.

So she wasn't even going to answer his letter—the letter that had been so hard for him to write, the letter over which he'd sweated and agonized until at last he'd mailed the 27th version in despair of ever finding better words to say what he wanted to say. Three weeks ago he'd mailed it in New York. Plenty of time. More than enough.

So Miss Terentia Seabright could damned well—

The door clicked open. Pettengill jerked his head round, mouth open to blast the intruder.

"I knocked twice," remarked Acting Chief Engineer Peter Hewitt with the easy freedom of an old shipmate. "Guess you were too busy to hear me. I'd like permission to haul fires under Number One boiler—those flues are still getting choked. I figure a couple extra rows of firebrick on the bridge—"

"No!" cut in Pettengill. "I want the engine room kept on short notice, Pete. This is no time for any damn tinkering."

Hewitt took off his battered steaming-cap and ran his fingers through his shock of red hair. His habitual grin didn't show up on his round freckled face.

"You better blow off some of that pressure, Captain," he advised. "You're as jumpy as a minister's daughter on her first hayride."

"Can't you say three words without dragging in women?" rasped Pettengill.

"Can't you stop fretting yourself into the looney house over that little rebel blonde?" retorted Hewitt, his eyes flickering toward the tattered mail. "Let her go South and be loved by Jeff Davis if she wants to. Get yourself another one—half a dozen other ones. You'll be no good to yourself or the ship until you get her out of your half-baked mind."

The words bit through the red mist of Pettengill's rising rage like a shaft of cold revealing light. So that was what Hewitt thought of him—unfit for command because he let a woman addle his brains. Well, it was true, wasn't it?

The fire of his fury was just cold ashes now. Cold and dead. He stood there staring at the angry little engineer.

"I'm sorry, Cal," said Hewitt. Since he'd been aboard the *Lycoming*, Hewitt had never used Pettengill's first name before. It was always "Captain" and "sir." Even when they were alone. That "Cal" was born of pity.

"I—I've got to get ashore. See about the convoy," Pettengill managed to say. He couldn't stomach pity.

Hewitt nodded. Then he turned and reached for the door knob, saying over his shoulder: "Very good, sir. Engine-room on short notice until further orders."

His eyes were twinkling as he went out. What was Hewitt so pleased for, all of a sudden, Pettengill wondered?

2

PETTENGILL PICKED UP HIS CAP and stepped out on the quarterdeck—the cabin was built into the after end of the superstructure, another Pettengill innovation which outraged the Navy's sacred tradition that the cabin had to be on the gundeck aft so the skipper always had to climb a ladder when any emergency arose.

"Gig's alongside, sir," reported the officer of the watch.

"I'll have a boat officer in her, Mr. Frye," Pettengill directed. The *Lycoming's* executive officer, Acting Master Casson, was hovering by the gangway to see the captain over the side. To him Pettengill said: "I won't be ashore long, Mr. Casson. I'd be pleased to have the ship ready to get under way immediately on my return."

"Aye, aye, sir." Casson's dark eyes lost some of their sparkle. He'd been counting on a night on the town, Pettengill guessed. Women again. These kids—Casson wasn't more than 21, almost three full years Pettengill's junior—thought of nothing much but women.

Pettengill swung himself down the ladder and dropped into the stern sheets of the waiting gig.

"Railroad dock," he grunted at the boat officer. He pushed Hewitt's nonsense out of his head and concentrated on what he had to do next as the oars propelled him shoreward. The Army had a big establishment here at Annapolis, which was the southernmost railhead in Union hands except for Washington itself, and consequently formed the base for expeditionary operations against the Confederate coast-line. His orders informed him that a Colonel Brean was representing Brigadier General T. W. Sherman, Army

commander for the Port Royal expedition: so Brean was the man he had to see.

He eyed the two ships at anchor—*Cassandra* and *Ezek Powell.* They appeared to be ready for sea. The bark alongside the dock would be the *Norwich City,* Sheldrake, master. Looking at her water line, Pettengill guessed she was about half laden. That wasn't so good. It was already after three o'clock in the afternoon: six bells had gone while he was wasting time listening to Pete Hewitt shoot off his mouth. Now the tide—

"Sir," said the boat officer in a low voice, breaking in on Pettengill's calculations. Pettengill looked around at him. He was one of the new volunteer officers who'd reported aboard just before commissioning—Pettengill hadn't had a chance to get to know much about any of them. This young fellow's name was—let's see. . . . Oh, yes, McAndrew—Master's Mate Ronald McAndrew. Pettengill could see only his profile—he wasn't neglecting his steering for conversation: his face looked a little too taut, something was worrying him.

"Well, Mr. McAndrew?"

"I—I've got to have 24 hours' leave, sir. To go to Washington. I've just *got* to, sir." He was still keeping his voice down, almost whispering, so the hand pulling the stroke oar couldn't overhear. But there was an intensity behind his plea that no whisper could disguise.

"That's impossible, Mr. McAndrew," Pettengill told him promptly. "The ship's under sailing orders. That means no liberty for the crew and no shore leave for officers beyond signal distance—maybe not even that, I don't know yet whether we'll be here another hour. Leave to go to Washington's out of the question."

McAndrew swallowed, flicked a quick look at Pettengill. In his deep-set eyes, something very near desperation glittered.

"This is an emergency, sir," he insisted. "I—it means a lot to me—I'll rejoin the ship at Hampton Roads at my own expense, sir—I've just got to get to Washington."

The dock was close ahead; McAndrew broke off to snap orders at the gig's crew: "Trail bow—way enough! Toss! Hook on, there, bowman."

The boat eased up to the foot of the landing steps, bumping gently alongside. Pettengill hopped ashore, conscious of McAndrew's despairing eyes. Ten to one it was another woman-problem.

"Just step up here on the dock a moment, Mr. McAndrew," he barked, furious at the delay but unable to walk off and leave the boy without another word. McAndrew came on the jump.

"Now then—just what's this emergency you speak of?" Pettengill demanded.

McAndrew hesitated, gulped—then words burst from him like a flood: "It's my wife, sir. She's a Washington girl—she lives there—works in a government office while I'm at sea—I've just had a letter from her in this mail—she says it's all over between us, she doesn't want to see me any more—I've heard she was running around with some Army officer, but I didn't believe it—now I don't know, all I know is I've got to see her, talk with her—I love her, Captain, I can't bear to let her go like this. Won't you please grant me leave, sir?"

Woman-problem was right. Every time Pettengill turned around, he stumbled over some confounded female. If this had been a dying mother, he might've risked—oh, cut the agony short.

"I'm sorry, Mr. McAndrew," he said. "The ship's on active service and your country's at war. Personal troubles can't be allowed to interfere with the performance of duty. I can't grant your request. You'll wait here with the gig till I return: keep the hands in the boat."

McAndrew took a step forward: for one instant Pettengill thought the lad was going to take a swing at him. Then he muttered something that might pass for "Aye, aye, sir," turned and half-stumbled down the steps to the landing. Pettengill turned sharply away and strode along the dock.

He wasn't pleased with himself. He knew he'd sounded off like a pompous ass. What was worse, he'd allowed his own bitterness to prejudice his decision. True, by strict regulation he hadn't the power to grant an officer leave, because here at Annapolis he was in telegraphic contact with the Navy Department. But he could chance it if he wanted to.

But damned if he would. Pettengill was certainly not going to remind the Navy Department of his presence at Annapolis—which they might not yet have heard of—by sending any silly telegrams.

Anyway McAndrew'd be better off—any sailor'd be better off—if he never saw another woman.

Pettengill's sole business here in Annapolis was to get that convoy moving down the Bay, not to worry about women.

He stared fiercely ahead of him along the dock—and the first person he saw was a woman. She was standing with her back toward him, near the end of a

string of box cars, talking to a thick-bodied man in Army uniform; straps glinted on his shoulders. He appeared to be arguing with her. Anyway he was waving his arms vigorously. She just stood there and listened.

Even with her back turned, there was something familiar about her tall slender figure and the mass of brown hair bundled on the nape of her neck—something about the way she held her head, chin up as though defying the world. The reddish dress she wore was full-skirted, but the upper part of it did nothing to disguise the lines of the body underneath. Those lines touched a chord in Pettengill's memory—he could recognize the cut of a ship's royals 20 miles away, if he'd seen them once before. But ships were different from women—more reliable.

Then he realized that something else was wrong—very wrong—here on this dock. The box cars stood on the spur track of the Annapolis & Elk Ridge Railroad—the track which Major General Ben Butler had built to the dock, right across the Naval Academy grounds. Beyond the cars, a small locomotive simmered. Nothing else was going on. Beside each of the cars was a small heap of stores: two gangways sloped up from the dock to the deck of the *Norwich City*. Tackle dangled idly from the bark's main yardarm; cargo nets lay limp underneath. Some 50 colored roustabouts sprawled on the planks of the dock or sat along the stringpieces, laughing and jabbering in idle glee. A man in a peaked cap and a dirty sweater paced nervously back and forth, slapping the back of one hand against the palm of the other.

The picture couldn't've been clearer—the lading of the *Norwich City* had been going ahead full blast when it had suddenly been interrupted. Pettengill quickened his step—whoever or whatever was holding up that job was going to have to reckon with Caleb Pettengill. He'd bet this woman had her oar in the business.

The Army officer's round pinkish face brightened as he took in the details of Pettengill's uniform: maybe a little Navy support was just what he needed. Pettengill lifted his cap to the silver eagles that adorned the man's shoulder straps.

"Lieutenant Commanding Pettengill, sir, in charge of convoy," he introduced himself. "I expect you're Colonel Brean?"

The Colonel nodded, but before he could say a word—"Why, Captain Pettengill!" murmured a well-remembered voice. "This is really unexpected."

She was looking at him over one rounded shoulder, her dark-blue eyes alight with amusement. She had found him amusing once before, Pettengill recalled bitterly. He gave her a jerky bow.

"Your servant, Miss Pryor," he rumbled. His guess had been right: this was the girl who was holding up the lading. Her name was Prudence Pryor, and she was an agent of the Treasury Department: her specialty was the detection of illegal trading with "the States now in insurrection against the central government," as the blockade regulations put it.

Resolution hardened in Pettengill's mind. She wasn't going to tangle this convoy up in her infernal red tape.

"My orders, sir," Pettengill whipped the document from his pocket. "You'll see they call for the utmost despatch in getting the convoy down to Hampton Roads. I'd be glad to be underway by sundown, if your ships are ready."

This was fairly strong meat for a Navy lieutenant to feed an Army colonel, but Pettengill had thrown half-measures overboard the minute he recognized Prudence Pryor.

"Two of them are ready now, Captain," said Brean. "Unhappily, Miss Pryor here—whom you seem to have met before—has some misgivings about the cargo that's going aboard the *Norwich City*. She's got an order from the Secretary of the Treasury to make a full inspection."

He paused, his eyes shifting from Prudence to Pettengill and back again. He wasn't sure just what the score was between the two of them.

Pettengill made that clear without delay.

"I met Miss Pryor this summer, down South when I was on the blockade," he explained. "She's only doing her duty as she sees it, I'm sure. But this is a matter of military necessity, as I see it—and I'd guess, Colonel, as you see it. I'm responsible to Flag Officer Dupont, who's no man to take excuses for delay. You're responsible to General Sherman. From what I know of him"—Pettengill had never laid eyes on the gentleman—"he's pretty tough with dawdlers, too."

"Hell, yes," put in Brean. "Uh—your pardon, Miss Pryor—"

"Neither of us," Pettengill plowed ahead, "are responsible to the Secretary of the Treasury. So why should we delay?"

"But—" began Brean.

"Excuse me, sir, is this a time for but's? Let's get that cargo moving. Miss Pryor and her Secretary can sort out the but's in Washington." Pettengill was riding high, wide and handsome.

"You're right, Captain!" cried Brean. "Captain Sheldrake! Get those roustabouts on their feet!"

"You gentlemen," said Prudence Pryor softly, "seem to think you've settled this whole business between you." The amusement was all gone from the blue eyes now: they were hard as the blued steel of a Navy pistol. She turned them full on Pettengill. "You're making a very serious mistake, Captain Pettengill," she told him. "I don't know what Colonel Brean's part in this matter is, but I do know the sort of cargo that's being put aboard that bark. The Colonel says I have misgivings. I have more than misgivings, now. I've seen the thing for myself. Look at those stores. Salt—tons of it—ten times as much as Sherman's little army can use in a year, but desperately needed by the rebel army to cure meat. Rolls of dress goods—Southern ladies are paying ten

prices for cotton prints like those over there, since the blockade's cut 'em off from New England. There's a crate full of brass fittings and valves. Coils of wire. Sheet iron." Her finger stabbed each item. "Are those military supplies for an army in the field, Captain Pettengill? Or do they add up to the stock of an illegal trader, a scoundrel raking in dirty dollars by supplying the enemy's needs while his countrymen are shedding their blood to put down this rebellion?"

Sparks snapped in the blue-steel eyes as they met Pettengill's grim gray stare.

Pettengill had to admit she had a point. There was certainly a fishy smell about that cargo. But if it stank to high heaven it wasn't going to keep him here in Annapolis a minute longer than necessary.

"That's not my problem," he grated. "I take my orders from Flag Officer Dupont. He wants that ship and the other two at Hampton Roads, and I mean to take 'em as soon as Colonel Brean gets this one laded."

He glared at Brean, who looked scared.

"You gonna argufy all night?"

It was the man in the peaked cap: how long he'd been standing there listening, Pettengill didn't know. He was a mean-looking character, with close-set bloodshot eyes, a tobacco-stained beard and bad teeth.

"No, no, of course not, Captain Sheldrake," Brean assured him. "Get on with the work." He seemed to be scared of Sheldrake too.

Sheldrake spat explosively on the planks.

"'Bout time," he snarled, with a venomous glance at Prudence. He swung away, bawling: "Hump yerselves! Git that cargo movin'!"

The roustabouts leaped to obey; on the *Norwich City's* deck a loud voice—her mate's, probably—began yelling orders.

"Very well, gentlemen," said Prudence Pryor. "You leave me no choice but to send a telegram to the Secretary of the Treasury, reporting that this ship is carrying illegal trade goods. And that you both have been warned of the fact. Good afternoon."

She spun on her heel and marched off down the dock, head high and slender back ramrod-straight.

Brean's face went white. "Maybe we'd better—" he began.

"Go ahead with the job," interrupted Pettengill. "I'll take care of Miss Pryor. I'll tell her I'll cover us all by making a full report in writing about this cargo to the Flag Officer the minute I get within hail of the old *Wabash*. That ought to satisfy her."

Brean managed a sickly grin. "You think she'll believe that?" he inquired.

"Believe it!" snapped Pettengill. "Of course she'll believe it. She knows my word's good."

Then the implication of what Brean had said hit him. Brean thought he meant to lie to Prudence: which meant that was what Brean would do in his place. Hot anger surged up in his throat—he throttled it. No time. At all costs he had to keep Prudence from sending that telegram, for it might mean the Navy Department would hear of the *Lycoming* being at Annapolis, and Lord only knew what wails had been coming over the wires from Brooklyn this past week— He wouldn't lie to her, but he'd keep her away from the telegraph office if he had to wring her lovely neck.

Brean was staring at him wide-eyed. "I've got to hurry, sir," Pettengill told him. "One favor—please ask my boat officer at the steps there—his name's McAndrew—to go back to the ship and say that I'll be off later in a shore boat. I'll see to Miss Pryor now—don't worry about her."

"Look!" squalled Brean, pointing past Pettengill's shoulder. The blast of a locomotive's exhaust told Pettengill what he'd see even before he turned—and as he turned he was already running.

3

THE LITTLE YARD ENGINE was starting to move, smoke belching from its bell-mouthed stack; in its gangway stood Prudence Pryor. She waved mockingly at Pettengill.

Damn the woman! Pettengill had forgotten about the engine. He'd thought only of a quick double-time to overtake a female's feeble steps. He ran as he'd never run in his life, in long bounding strides, his frock coat flapping about his thighs. The engine's exhaust quickened—he'd never catch it—no, the wheels were spinning on the slippery rails—he was closing the gap—10 yards now—eight—five—another couple of jumps and he'd be able to reach the hand-rail on the tender. The exhaust roared, the engine leaped forward—he could see the concern on Prudence's face dissolve in triumphant laughter—he'd never make it now.

He might have stopped if Prudence hadn't turned suddenly as though to say something to the engineer—Pettengill realized that the exhaust was slackening off to a slower beat. The blood hammered at his temples as he drove his long legs ahead in one final effort. The engine-wheels were clicking over a switch—that was what the slow-down was for—five yards again—three—two—he could hear Prudence screaming something above the clamor of the locomotive. His finger-tips touched the hand-rail. He flung himself ahead, his hand closed on the iron bar, and with a final bound he felt his feet hit the step.

He clung there, heaving in long breaths while the engine clattered over the switches and gathered speed again. Presently he clambered up the rungs on the rear of the tender and slid down over the load of firewood into the cab.

The colored fireman gaped at the sudden appearance of a naval officer in full uniform. Pettengill laughed at the anger that flew its scarlet flag on Prudence's cheeks.

There was anger in her eyes, too. But there was

something else, far back in the dark-blue depths—a queer sort of excitement that puzzled Pettengill even as it stirred some deep response within him. Once before he'd seen a glow like that in a woman's eyes. Where? When? The memory eluded him.

Across the cab, the engineer turned his head and yelled:

"Who are you, Mister?"

"Mind your business!" Pettengill rasped. He stood there looking at Prudence, trying to catch hold of that elusive thread of recollection. Somehow it seemed important.

"All right, here's West Street depot!" the engineer sang out. "Get on them brakes, you, Mose."

He slammed the throttle shut; the exhaust ceased. The fireman twisted at the tender's brake-wheel. Iron shrieked on iron; the engine slowed. The end of a rickety wooden structure slid past the cab. The fireman gave one final heave on the wheel, the engine shuddered panting to a stop.

"Here y'are, Miss," announced the engineer, coming across the narrow iron floor. Prudence was fumbling in her handbag: she produced something with a golden glint, passed it to the engineer, who said: "Thank y' kindly, ma'am," and looked hard at Pettengill, who was already on the platform, holding up a hand to Prudence. She let him help her down without protest. The engineer snorted and went back to his seat, steam hissed viciously from the cylinder cocks as the engine backed away.

From an open bay-window a few feet away down the platform, there came to Pettengill's ears the intermittent chatter of a telegraph sounder—as unwelcome a noise as he'd ever heard in his life. His hand tightened on Prudence's arm.

"Let's sit down a minute," he rumbled. Half-a-dozen depot loungers were staring with interested eyes at the unusual spectacle of a Navy lieutenant and a pretty girl arriving on a switch engine. Pettengill swept them with his best quarter-deck glare as he propelled Prudence toward a slatted bench.

"I must look a sight," said Prudence: the first words she'd spoken since Pettengill had come slithering down to her over the firewood. She produced a mirror from her handbag and began patting at her hair and adjusting her perky little bonnet.

Pettengill cleared his throat.

"Miss Pryor," he began, "I want to explain something—"

"There," interrupted Prudence, giving a final pat to her hair. She sat up a little straighter. "Now I must get along to—"

"Wait just a minute," begged Pettengill. "You needn't send that telegram—listen to me!"

The blue eyes went cold. "You're suggesting I compromise with my duty, Captain Pettengill?" Prudence Pryor inquired, ice dripping from every syllable.

"No!" he shot back at her. "I agree with you there's something wrong with the *Norwich City's* cargo. I don't trust Brean, and Sheldrake looks like

"Ha!! 'No experience,' she says, when J. B. hired her."

Bluebook 6810

a bilge-rat to me. But my Flag Officer's in no mood to listen to excuses—he'll keel-haul me if I don't bring him that convoy and do it fast. What's wrong with this idea: You write a letter to your boss instead of sending a wire; I take the convoy down tonight, get to the Roads tomorrow. On the way down the bay I'll write a full report to the Flag Officer about the *Norwich City's* cargo. I'll take it to him personally the minute I get within hail of the flagship."

He tried to sound confident and persuasive. Deliberately he trampled down the protest of his conscience, that he ought to warn her the Flag Officer might not be in the Roads when the convoy arrived, in which case Pettengill would have to take it all the way down to Port Royal by himself.

Prudence was looking at him with skeptical eyes.

"You've got just one idea in your head, and that's to get out of Annapolis as quick as you can," she said. "Suppose I go along with your suggestion"—his heart jumped—"how do I know your report won't be buried and forgotten until it's too late? Your Flag Officer has plenty to worry him besides illegal trading. Especially when it's really the Army's responsibility and not his."

"The General's quartered on the flagship—Dupont can pass it along," urged Pettengill. "I told Brean what I was going to do—he'll have to cover himself by reporting to the General, too."

"You told Brean!" cried Prudence, sitting up very straight. "I don't like that! If Brean's in this dirty business as deep as I think he is, he'll be worse scared of your report to Dupont than of mine to the Treasury, because he'll be right there to be put on

the griddle. He'll spend all his time between now and then figuring out how to undermine you."

"How's that again, he'll be right there?" inquired Pettengill.

"He's on Sherman's staff, he's going back to Washington tonight and on to Hampton Roads in a steamer tomorrow morning," Prudence Pryor told him.

Pettengill closed his teeth just in time to bite off profanity. This thing was getting messy, and another mess was just what young Captain Pettengill of the U.S.S. *Lycoming*, the gold-plated gunboat, didn't need right now. If women would only keep their meddling fingers out of his affairs, he'd be so happy.

"You needn't snarl at me like that," flashed Prudence. "All right, Captain Pettengill. Since it means so much to you, I'll—"

"Did you say Pe'ngill, ma'am?" inquired a plaintive voice. A Negro urchin stood beside the bench, clutching a sheet of yellow flimsy. Pettengill's stomach slowly turned over. So they'd caught up with him after all.

"I'm Captain Pettengill," he admitted.

"Message for you, suh. Done come on de Ahmy wiah f'om de base."

Pettengill grabbed the paper, ran his eye over the operator's neat penciling: *Captain Pettengill—Can you meet me at the Maryland Hotel in half an hour? Urgent and confidential. Brean.*

His sigh of relief shook the bench.

"Don't go," advised Prudence quickly—she was reading the message over his shoulder. The faint perfume of her hair disturbed him, a fact which he resented.

"Of course I'll go," he snapped. "I've got to. Something must've happened about the convoy."

"Op'ratuh says the ge'man's waitin' foh an answeh if'n we find you," the boy announced.

"Tell the operator to say Captain Pettengill will be there," Pettengill ordered.

"You're being plain pigheaded," cried Prudence as the boy scampered away. "Brean's laying a trap for you—I feel it in my bones!"

"Woman's intuition?" suggested Pettengill, getting up too. "Don't you worry. I'd like to see that fat boy catch Caleb Pettengill in any trap."

"So this is why you wouldn't give me leave," McAndrew grated. "I'm going to let her watch you die!"

"I ought to send that wire right now," Prudence told him. "You're such an idiot, I oughtn't to trust you."

Pettengill caught a glimpse of the station clock from the corner of his eye.

"It's after five," he pointed out. "So you're not likely to get much action in Washington any more tonight—not from the Treasury, anyway."

The blue eyes were shooting sparks. "So you kept me here with your fine promises and one eye on the clock!" she blazed at him. "You should be very proud of yourself, Captain Pettengill. Tricking a woman. Go meet your dear friend Colonel Brean. You're birds of a feather."

Then she was gone around the end of the station in a swirl of taffeta. Pettengill ran after her, reached the street side of the platform just in time to see her jump into a carriage and hear her cry "Custom House" to the driver.

He stopped short. Let her go. She couldn't send any wires from the Custom House. He glowered after the departing carriage. Tricking a woman, indeed. Wasn't that the female mind for you? All tough and self-sufficient as long as things went well for 'em—but if you outsmarted 'em anywhere, then you were tricking a woman. Clutching this bit of male illogic to his mental bosom, Pettengill climbed into a creaking carriage and bade the driver on the box to take him to the Maryland Hotel.

He wasn't worried about Brean. All he wanted from Brean was word that the *Norwich City* was ready to cast off her lines. He was even glad to see the *Norwich City's* hang-dog skipper, Sheldrake, lounging against a hitching rack in front of the hotel. That looked as though everything was moving along.

Sheldrake slouched along the brick sidewalk as Pettengill got out of the carriage.

"Colonel says go right up to Parlor Two," he announced. "Head o' the stairs."

"All right," nodded Pettengill. The man turned away before Pettengill could ask any questions about the ship. Well, Brean'd know.

He pushed his way through the crowded little lobby—crowded mostly with women and Army officers, Pettengill noted with a jaundiced eye—and went up the carpeted sairway to the wide hall on the next floor. A large metal figure 2 adorned a pair of double doors. Pettengill knocked. Somebody inside called "Come in." Didn't sound like Brean, sounded like—

Pettengill opened the door.

It *was* a woman: a young woman in a tight-fitting black bodice and a billowing hoop-skirt of black and silver. Her figure billowed, too; and the effect was not unpleasant. In fact, it was interesting. She beamed at Pettengill.

"Come in, come in," she invited hospitably.

"I was expecting to find Colonel Brean here," Pettengill told her.

"He'll be along pretty quick," she assured him. "Come on in and rest yo' feet—don't stand there with the doah open."

4

THERE WAS A TOUCH of Dixie in her husky voice, more than a touch of invitation in her smiling black eyes. She patted the cushion beside her on the fringed couch where she was sitting.

Pettengill closed the door and walked across the tawdry, over-furnished parlor, embarrassingly aware that he could see a broad-canopied bed through the open doorway of the next room. What was this girl to Brean, he wondered? No business of his, though.

"Pour yo'self a glass of wine before you sit down," she urged. "One for li'l ole me, too."

There was a silver bucket standing on a marble-topped table, bottles sticking out of it. Pettengill poured wine into two glasses, carried them over to the sofa and sat down beside the girl. She used a heady perfume, quite unlike the delicate hardly-to-be-noticed scent that Prudence Pryor affected. But why was he thinking about Prudence Pryor? At least this girl looked at him as though he were a male human being—

She laughed gently into his eyes and said: "Here's to fun and games."

They both drank to fun and games. It was good wine. Madeira, Pettengill thought, though he knew more about whiskey and Demerara rum than wine.

"May I ask your name, ma'am?" he ventured. "Mine's Pettengill—Captain Pettengill. Navy."

He was beginning to hope Brean wouldn't get there too soon.

"Pleased to know you, Captain," the girl said. "You just call me Susie."

"Here's to you, Susie," grinned Pettengill, lifting his glass.

He heard the door open—and saw all the color drain from Susie's face, leaving her great black eyes staring in horror from a dead-white mask.

He was on his feet automatically, swinging round.

Master's Mate Ronald McAndrew was in the act of kicking the door shut behind him. His eyes were fixed on Pettengill—twin points of flame glowed in their deep sockets. In his right hand, a double-barreled derringer pointed unwaveringly at Pettengill's stomach.

"So this is why you wouldn't give me leave," he grated.

"Ronnie! Oh, Ronnie!" bleated Susie from the sofa.

McAndrew had no attention for anybody but Pettengill. "I'm going to kill you," he announced. "And let her watch you die."

Pettengill gauged the distance. He'd never make it—there'd be one bullet in him, maybe two, before he could get across that parlor floor. McAndrew was sidling to the left—to get Susie out of the line of fire, Pettengill guessed. But he was coming no nearer to

Pettengill. Talk him out of it—that was the only hope.

"You're making a mistake, Mr. McAndrew," he said quietly.

"A mistake!" jeered McAndrew. "When I find you in a room with my wife—registered C. Pettengill and wife."

"What!" roared Pettengill. "That's a lie, McAndrew!"

"It's a lie you'll die for," McAndrew told him.

Pettengill shifted his feet slightly, muscles tensed for a leap. He'd try it anyway—better be dead than live to be known as the captain who denied leave to one of his officers so that he could have a guilty meeting with that officer's wife. Better dead a thousand times than that.

He could see McAndrew's knuckle whiten as his finger began to squeeze the trigger.

"What's wrong, Cal? What's this man doing here with a gun?" demanded Prudence Pryor. She was standing in the doorway of the bedroom, hatless, hair a little disordered, her eyes wide with anxiety—the picture of a lady aroused from a catnap by alarming sounds.

For once in his life, Pettengill picked up a fast cue without fumbling. "He's Mrs. McAndrew's husband, honey," he said. "I think he has a mistaken idea as to why Mrs. McAndrew is visiting us."

"My God!" gasped McAndrew. The derringer slid from his fingers and thudded on the carpet.

For an instant there was no sound in the room save Susie's sobs.

Then Prudence murmured, "Poor lamb," and went to sit by Susie, flicking a bright commanding glance at Pettengill as she passed him.

Pettengill took charge.

"I'll thank you not to drop loaded firearms on the deck in that careless fashion, Mr. McAndrew! Pick the thing up and put it on the table. Now then—I left you on duty in charge of my gig, at the railroad dock landing. I'd be glad to have some explanation of your presence here."

McAndrew squared his shoulders and faced the music like a man.

"A colored boy brought me a note, sir. Down at the landing. The note said if I wanted to see my wife I'd find her in Parlor 2 of the Maryland Hotel—with a Naval officer. I guess I just went crazy, Captain. I had to come—I couldn't think of anything else but getting here to see. Then when I asked who was registered in Parlor 2 and they told me—well, sir, I went across the street and bought this gun and came up here to kill you."

"How long ago did you get that note?" Pettengill demanded.

"Maybe twenty minutes or half an hour, sir. I came directly here."

"Hadn't Colonel Brean passed my order along to you to go back to the ship long before that?"

"Colonel Brean? You mean the Army officer on the dock, sir? No, he never said a word to me."

"The boat's still there, then?"

McAndrew flushed.

"No, sir. I ordered the cox'n to return to the ship."

"Cutting off my retreat, hey? Just in case."

McAndrew's flush deepened. "I—can I have a word with my wife, Captain? Before you order me under arrest?" he begged.

"Who said anything about arrest?" snapped Pettengill.

"I should think not," spoke up Prudence Pryor. "This poor child's been through enough without that. Go tell your husband what you just told me, dear."

"Oh, Ronnie!" Susie was on her feet, her tear-stained face all aquiver with emotion. "I heard Captain Pettengill was here—I came to ask him if you couldn't get off that awful ship and be stationed in Washington—where—where we could be together—"

Why, the little liar.

"Susie! Then you didn't mean what you wrote—"

They were in each other's arms and Susie was weeping her heart out on her husband's shoulder.

Or at least giving a tolerable imitation of so doing.

Pettengill was conscious of a couple of loose ends—like Irish pendants in the rigging. "Mr. McAndrew—did you keep that note?"

"No, sir," said McAndrew, his voice somewhat muffled by Susie's hair. "I tore it up and chucked it overboard."

Prudence Pryor coughed very delicately.

"I don't suppose we'll ever find out what busybody sent it, then," Pettengill went on. "No matter. Do you suppose you could find a shore boat to take you off to the ship—in an hour's time, Mr. McAndrew?"

McAndrew's face lit up like a West Indian sunrise. "Yes, sir!" he cried.

"Then perhaps you'd better employ that hour in seeing your wife—er—safely bestowed for the night," Pettengill suggested. "I'll expect to see you logged aboard in one hour from now, Mr. McAndrew."

"I'll be there, sir! And—thank you, Captain—thank you, Mrs. Pettengill!"

He was half-dragging Susie toward the door. Susie, eyes demurely on the carpet, murmured her farewells. The door clicked shut behind them.

Mrs. Pettengill. Not till he heard those words had Pettengill realized the position in which Prudence had put herself. For him. He couldn't look at her.

"You really need a guardian." She sounded half-angry, half-amused.

"I—had one. Just in time," he muttered.

"I couldn't leave you to your own devices, you great lummox," she told him. "I knew Brean was laying some sort of trap for you."

He managed to lift his eyes to meet hers—and saw in the dark-blue depths that same queer excite-

ment sparkling behind the laughter. An answering excitement began to simmer in his own veins.

"But how did you find me?" he asked.

"I can read hotel registers too," she informed him tartly. "C. Pettengill and wife, forsooth. I wanted to see just what that might mean. That's why I came in through the bedroom. Don't you ever lock a door when you're meeting a lady under such ticklish circumstances?"

"I wasn't meeting a lady!" protested Pettengill. "I never saw her before—I didn't know she was here till I opened that door! Sheldrake met me on the sidewalk—he said Brean was waiting for me in this room, for me to go right up. I never signed any register."

He was walking toward her, scarcely knowing what force impelled him. It was suddenly of vital importance that she should believe what he was saying.

"So that was it—and I'd warned you already!" she jeered. "The oldest snare since the serpent and the apple—the erring wife and the suddenly-appearing husband. The badger game. Oh, you booby!"

She was very lovely, standing there making fun of him. Lovely and maddening. The blood hammered at Pettengill's temples.

One long stride and he had her in his arms. He felt her body stiffen, her elbows dug into his chest: she buried her face in his blue shoulder, writhing and struggling to break the iron ring of his embrace. He slid one great hand up behind her head and turned her desperate face to his. His lips went down hard on hers.

Then her mouth was moving under his, her body flowing up against his.

Somehow they were on the sofa, side by side. He was kissing her mouth, her eyes, her neck—damn that high collar with its tangle of lace. He clawed at the stubborn buttons.

"Not that way," whispered Prudence Pryor. Her fingers pushed his aside. "It unhooks—like this."

He buried his face in the soft white fragrance of her throat. . . .

5

Into the Elysian darkness under the canopy, disturbing sound penetrated and would not be denied. Pettengill felt Prudence's bare shoulders lift a little from his outflung arm.

"Let 'em knock," he muttered. He'd locked the door—both doors.

He fumbled for her mouth with eager lips. In his veins, slaked fires rekindled.

"No, darling!" whispered Prudence against his ear. "See who it is first—maybe the convoy's ready."

The convoy! Pettengill sat bolt upright in the bed. How long had it been—an hour, two hours? Anyway it was dark outside.

Whoever was hammering on the door of Parlor 2 wasn't going to give up. Pettengill rolled out of bed, felt his way around the end of it, padded into the parlor, carefully closing the connecting door behind him. There had been matches on that marble-topped table—here they were—he lit one, applied the flame to a gas-jet in the overhead fixture.

"Be right with you," he sang out, sliding into shirt and pants. He stuck his feet into his shoes and turned the brass-tagged key in the hall door.

"Took you long enough," grumbled Pete Hewitt. "We got trouble, Skipper. Take a look."

He pushed a blue official telegram at Pettengill. Pettengill carried it over under the gas-light and read it, his lips repeating what he read as though he were unsure of the meaning: *Senior Officer Present, Annapolis Harbor. Subject imperative military necessity, detain U.S.S. 'Lycoming, Lieutenant-Commanding Pettengill, at Annapolis until arrival Assistant Secretary Fox and party leaving Washington special train tonight. Faxon, Acting.*

Trouble was right. Trouble heaped up and running over.

The Honorable Gustavus Vasa Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, was just about the last individual in the world that Pettengill wanted to see aboard *Lycoming* right now. Fox had been responsible for the original double-ender design—it was his baby. Heaven help Pettengill when Fox saw what a mere acting lieutenant had done to his pet brainchild—Pettengill could see himself relieved of command and waiting trial by a general court-martial with a list of charges and specifications that'd keep 10 clerks busy for 10 days to write out. He had to get away.

He re-read the telegram. Faxon, who had signed it, was Chief Clerk of the Navy Department—he frequently acted for Fox or Secretary Welles in routine matters when his superiors weren't handy. But like most chief clerks, he was a cautious and precise character: his caution might save Pettengill now, he'd put in those words "subject imperative military necessity" to cover himself in case Flag Officer Dupont didn't take kindly to the Department giving direct orders to a ship under his command. In that case the buck would be passed to some unknown "Senior Officer Present"—which in this case happened to be Pettengill himself, since the *Lycoming* was the only Naval vessel then at Annapolis.

Pettengill decided that "imperative military necessity" required the immediate departure of the U.S.S. *Lycoming* and convoy from Annapolis Harbor. By the time that decision came to be questioned, a lot of things might've happened. But he'd have to be quick about it.

"When did this come?" Pettengill demanded.

"Shore boat brought it off to the ship just after young McAndrew reported aboard," Hewitt told him. "McAndrew told us where to find you, and I persuaded Casson he'd better let me bring it to you instead of sending one of the volunteer officers."

Pettengill looked again at the blue flimsy. "Sent from Washington 7:25 P.M.," he noted. He grabbed his vest from a chair-back, pulled out his watch. "It's 8:40 now. High water an hour ago. Where's the wind?"

"Hauled northerly and freshening," Hewitt reported.

"Then we've got a chance—if we can get the convoy under way before that damned train gets here. No telling what time it left Washington." Pettengill was thrusting his arms into the sleeves of his frock coat as he talked; his mind was clicking at high speed, sorting out all the elements of his immediate problem.

"That's the spirit, Captain!" applauded Hewitt. "That's the old Pettengill spirit!" He jerked his head toward the closed bedroom door, grinning. "Took my advice, eh? Just what you needed—I can tell you've got that blonde rebel firecracker clear out of your noggin—"

"Shut up, dammit!" cut in Pettengill. "How'd you come ashore?"

"Boat's waiting at the railroad dock," said Hewitt, still grinning.

"Has *Norwich City* cast off yet?"

"No. She's fast to the dock. Casson took the liberty of sending orders to her and the other two to be ready to get under way, but she hadn't moved when I came ashore."

Pettengill had all the facts he needed. "Right," he snapped. "Wait for me downstairs. I won't be two minutes. Have a carriage standing by."

"Aye, aye, Captain," chuckled Hewitt. "Love 'em and leave 'em—that's for sailors."

Pettengill cursed his chief engineer's departing back, strode to the connecting door and flung it open.

He'd left the room in complete darkness: now a faint blue flame showed at a wall-bracket—showed him a rumpled bed—empty. Prudence was gone.

He jumped for the door that led to the hall: it was locked.

Wait—something on the pillow—a note: *Brean went to Washington evening train—be careful. P.* Underneath, in very evident haste, she had scrawled something else: *Luck with the blonde rebel.*

Women! All they ever did was misunderstand.

Pettengill ran back through the parlor and out into the hall. Nobody in sight. He raced down the stairs—plenty of people in the lobby, plenty of women—but no Prudence. She must've gotten into her clothes faster than a midshipman turning out for the 12-to-4 watch on 30 seconds' leeway.

Anyway, there was Pete Hewitt in the vestibule, and there wasn't any time to worry about women. "Come on, Pete. Naval Academy gatehouse, driver. Scott Street."

Now he could sit still for a couple of minutes and think. He had plenty to think about. There were two main problems. Number One, to get away from Annapolis with the convoy before the Assistant Secretary arrived—or some further message was delivered to him that had no loopholes in it. Number Two was this miserable business of the *Norwich City's* cargo—now that he knew of it, a serious responsibility attached to him until he'd passed on the information to his superior.

Prudence was right—Brean and probably Sheldrake must be up to their necks in the dirty business of trading with the enemy. On the blockade, it would have been Pettengill's duty to sink any ship which was so engaged and refused to heave to on demand. But breaking the blockade under cover of the Army's supply system was something else again—might be politics in it somewhere, some "man higher up" who could make or break acting lieutenants. The quicker Pettengill could hand this hot potato along to somebody better able to cope with such people, the happier he'd be.

His thoughts came back to Brean.

Brean had gone to Washington tonight. Could Brean have stirred up this sudden excursion of Assistant Secretary Fox to Annapolis? Ridiculous. He knew nothing whatever about Pettengill's alterations to the *Lycoming*.

But it was Brean who'd asked him to come to the Maryland Hotel. It was Brean's message, through Sheldrake, which had sent him up to Parlor 2, to find Susie McAndrew waiting there. And it was also Brean who'd neglected to pass on his order to McAndrew to go back to the ship. Then wasn't it pretty nearly certain that Brean had sent the note to McAndrew that brought the youngster to Parlor 2 to find Pettengill with his wife? Words McAndrew had spoken flashed back into Pettengill's mind: "I heard she was running around with some Army officer"—Brean, of course. Pieces of that puzzle began falling into place one by one.

Pettengill recalled he'd mentioned McAndrew's name when he'd asked Brean to pass his order to him. Brean had heard that name before—from Susie. The whole scheme must've clicked in Brean's mind right then and there. He'd just about had time to get hold of Susie and induce her to go up to Parlor 2 on some lying pretext—"I'm expecting a friend, my dear, make him comfortable till I arrive." Then he'd forged Pettengill's name on the register, or induced Sheldrake to do it—Brean was a lad who got other people to do his dirty work, even poor young McAndrew. Probably Brean hadn't expected any gunplay, he just wanted to discredit Pettengill. Pettengill seemed to hear Prudence saying: "He'll be more scared of your report to Dupont than of mine to the Treasury—he'll do anything to undermine you."

So what was Brean doing in Washington now? Did he know his scheme to trap and ruin Pettengill had failed? If he did know—directly, or by a report from Sheldrake—what would he do next?

"Halt—who goes there?"

It was the sentry at the gatehouse—a rawboned volunteer who didn't even ask to see a pass; uniforms

with gold lace on them were all he needed. Pettengill, striding with the silent Hewitt through the darkness along the rutted road the Army had built across the Naval Academy grounds, forced the thought of what Brean might be doing from his mind. He had to get out of Annapolis tonight. Brean could wait.

Planks underfoot, and the tracery of spars and rigging against the night sky: the *Norwich City,* still alongside the dock, no sign of life on her dark deck save a single glowing cigar-end.

"Anchor watch, there!" roared Pettengill. "Rouse out your captain!"

"I'm the captain," answered Sheldrake's surly voice.

"Then why the hell haven't you cast off your lines and warped out to your anchorage, ready to get under way?" Pettengill demanded.

"Colonel Brean's orders—I ain't to move this here ship till he tells me," Sheldrake announced in a tone of complete finality.

Pettengill was fed right up to the teeth with Colonel Brean.

"Boat's at the landing?" he asked Hewitt.

"Right. Frye's boat officer."

"Mr. Frye!" bellowed Pettengill.

"Aye, aye, sir!" came a prompt answer.

"Lay ashore here with your boat's crew! Lively does it!"

He could hear Frye giving orders, hear the thump of feet on the landing-steps. He could also hear other footsteps, coming down the gangplank on the run—Sheldrake?

"What y' figgerin' on?" panted Sheldrake's voice at his elbow.

"Since you won't do your duty," Pettengill informed him, "I'll put my own people aboard your ship and take her out of here myself."

"You wouldn't dast—she's an Army ship!" sputtered Sheldrake.

"On the double, lads—follow me!" called Frye's voice. The planks rumbled under the oncoming feet.

Sheldrake turned and ran up the gangplank bellowing orders:

"All hands! All hands loose sail! Mister Engle! Bo's'n! Turn up all hands! Single them lines!"

"Thought so," muttered Pettengill.

However high the regard Sheldrake might have for Colonel Brean's orders, the last thing he wanted was a Navy crew aboard his vessel. Pettengill had been sure of that.

Men were boiling out on the *Norwich City's* deck. "Jib 'n' fore topmast stays'l, Mr. Engle!" howled Sheldrake. "Stand by to cast off for for'd!"

"Captain Sheldrake!" shouted Pettengill. "You'll follow *Cassandra* out of the harbor. Order of sailing's *Ezek Powell, Cassandra, Norwich City, Lycoming!"*

"Aye, aye, Cap'n."

"You sure made a true believer out o' that feller in a hurry," commented Peter Hewitt.

"I'll make something else out of him when I get him down to the Roads," Pettengill promised.

The gangplank, cast off from the bark's deck, crashed down on the stringpiece of the dock: the gray triangles of the headsails rose in her fore-rigging, her bow began to pay off from the dock as the wind took hold.

"Lantern moving over there, sir," said Frye suddenly. "Coming this way."

A lantern might mean a messenger. "Get your men back in the boat, Mr. Frye." Pettengill wanted no part of any messengers.

As the boat shoved off from the landing, he could see the *Lycoming's* riding lights out across the dark surface of the harbor. The *Lycoming*—his ship. Suddenly he desired, more than anything else in the world, to stand on her deck again.

"Put your backs into it, bullies!" he barked. The beat of the oars quickened. The dark mass of *Cassandra's* hull loomed up ahead. Pettengill hailed her: *"Cassandra* ahoy! Under way in five minutes!"

"Aye, aye," somebody answered.

From the *Ezek Powell* came equally ready assurance.

"Boat ahoyyyy!" That was his own quartermaster, hailing from the gunboat's gangway.

"Lycoming!" yelled Frye in answer.

Pettengill's heart swelled with joyful pride. Never before had his presence in a boat been announced in the Navy's time-honored fashion for a captain coming aboard.

They'd not take that pride away from him till he'd had his chance in battle to prove his right to it.

He went up the ladder two steps at a time. The executive officer was waiting for him. "Is the signal for getting under way bent on, Mr. Casson?"

"Yes, sir. One red lantern at the peak is what I told 'em."

"Okay—who put up the adhesive tape for a finish line?"

"Hoist it. Call all hands. I'd be glad to see how quick we can get that hook out of the mud."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"You can give me steam, Chief?"

"Yes, sir," chuckled Hewitt. "All you can use—now you've blown off your own."

He trotted off toward the engine-room hatch.

The pipes were shrilling through the ship: "All-l-l hands! All hands up anchor!" A rush of seamen, lashed by hoarse commands, came charging past Pettengill to man the falls and get Frye's boat out of the water. All about him swirled the orderly confusion of a man-o'-war preparing to leave her anchorage: "Rig in that ladder, afterguard! Jump to it!"—"Steam on the windlass, sir!" Loving it all, Pettengill went for'd over the hurricane deck to stand beside the pilothouse. He'd let Casson take her out.

On the fo'c's'le, steam hissed at the windlass. Pettengill took nightglasses from the rack, raked the shore line with anxious eyes. The *Norwich City* was well away from the dock: they were shaking out her fore-tops'l, he could see it against the sky. Here came *Ezek Powell*, under jib, tops'ls and spanker, standing bravely down the channel. *Cassandra* was moving too. The convoy was on its way.

But there was something else—a dim light, low down on the water, over toward Fort Severn. It could be a boat lantern.

A bell clanged in the engine room: the paddles thrashed as Casson brought *Lycoming* up over her anchor. Pettengill tried to remember how much chain had been veered out, but he couldn't. An unforgivable lapse for a captain—he vaguely recalled that something else had been occupying his mind when they'd dropped anchor that afternoon, but he couldn't remember what it was. His mind was clear as a bell now, that was sure.

"Heave round!" came Casson's voice, right at Pettengill's shoulder.

Steam hissed again. *Ker-lunk, ker-lunk*—the links of the chain cable began revolving around the wildcat and paying below into the cable tier. A steam windlass was certainly a lot handier than the old-fashioned capstan.

"Up and down, sir!" came a hail from the fo'c's'le.

Pettengill's glasses were on that dim light again—it was certainly moving, moving toward *Lycoming*. And closer than he'd thought.

He held his breath, listening. All he needed now was a foul anchor or a parted cable. *Ker-lunk—ker-lunk.*

"Anchor's aweigh, sir!"

Bright scarlet flashed in Pettengill's eyes—a seaman was lifting the port running light into place. Automatically Pettengill's head jerked round in time to see the green starboard lantern settle behind its screen. Smartly done, Navy fashion.

Only just in time. Just barely in time. Across the water came a distant high-pitched hail: "Ahoy-y-y! *Ly-co-ming*—ahoy-y-y!"

"Bridge there!" squalled an after lookout. "Boat's hailing!"

Cassandra was slipping past, foam boiling at her cutwater, and *Norwich City* was coming along behind her.

"Half-speed, Mr. Casson, if you please," said Pettengill. "Course sou'-east a half east. And you might send a hand aft with a speaking trumpet—tell that lubber in the boat that we're under way with a convoy and can't wait for him."

The paddles churned water—the *Lycoming's* long sharp prow came round under the pressure of the rudder. Forward, they were catting the anchor; aft, Pettengill caught an echo of a voice that bellowed his message, and a faraway wail of protest.

Let 'em wail. Nobody could blame a captain for not heaving to when he was responsible for the safety of a convoy of windjammers and was already under way, following his charges out of harbor at night.

After all, there was a war on.

Pettengill patted the rail in front of him: Good old *Lycoming*. She hadn't failed him in this: she wouldn't fail him in the trials that were yet to come. The trembling of her deck beneath his feet, the whisper of the wind in her scanty rigging were as intoxicating to his senses as the caresses of any woman in the world.

6

"By the mark, three!" intoned the leadsman in the chains.

That meant there were still eight good feet of water under *Lycoming's* keel—better than Pettengill had hoped for in this treacherous green-hung channel. He swept the gnats out of his eyes and glared at the sketch pinned to the chart-board. A hell of a

thing to navigate a ship by, but there weren't enough reliable charts of these tangled South Carolina inlets to go around. According to the sketch, he should open up a broad reach on the port hand very soon, a reach that would bring him right up to the wharf at Burrell's plantation, where he was supposed to find the Army detachment he'd been sent to support.

He cursed the Army, the gnats, the idiot with three thumbs on each hand who had drawn that sketch, the war, and Flag Officer Samuel Francis Dupont.

The last words Dupont had spoken to him in the great cabin of the *Wabash* still echoed in his ears: "I'm not pleased with you, Captain Pettengill. Not pleased at all. If I had anyone else to put in command of your ship, I'd send you North. As it is, you'll do well so to conduct yourself that the next time I hear of you it'll be in a fashion to alter my present opinion of your worth."

The rank injustice of it made Pettengill grind his teeth as he peered ahead along the sun-dappled water. What if he *had* parted company with one of his convoy? *Cassandra* had come in safely, hadn't she? And Pettengill had put a towline aboard *Ezek Powell* and brought her in too, after she'd lost her foremast and main topmast in one of the worst gales Pettengill had ever encountered. That wasn't bad seamanship in Pettengill's book—not with a slim-waisted paddle-wheel gunboat reeling so hard that one paddle wheel was buried deep half the time, while the other beat the air. It wasn't his fault that he'd lost sight of *Norwich City* while he was taking the *Powell* in tow, and that nothing had been heard of her since. No captain could have done better in that storm.

The worst part of it was, that Dupont had received a bitter complaint from the commanding general, Thomas W. Sherman, to the effect that *Norwich City* was carrying the most vitally needed stores of ammunition for his troops and a full half of his field artillery. The general seemed to take her non-arrival as a prime grievance against the Navy. What Dupont might have said to the general on that head, Pettengill could only guess: Dupont wasn't the man to let any one-star general walk over him. But it hadn't made him feel any kindlier toward the officer whom he held responsible for his embarrassment.

He mightn't have been so tough with Pettengill, even so, if it hadn't been for the report about *Norwich City's* illegal cargo which Pettengill had sent aboard the flagship along with his report of the voyage down from Hampton Roads. Dupont took this to be a faked-up excuse—"a tissue of miserable insinuations unsupported by a shred of evidence," were his exact words. Just a weaselly attempt by Pettengill to get out from under the responsibility of losing an invaluable ship entrusted to his care.

In the face of what General Sherman had said, Pettengill knew he ought hardly to blame the Flag Officer for jumping to this conclusion—and it was true he had no evidence that would stand up against the flat assertion of a general officer. Whatever Sherman might suppose, or had been told, Pettengill knew good and well what a good part of *Norwich City's* cargo consisted of—there couldn't be much if any room left in her for ammunition and field artillery. But he couldn't prove it. The proof was probably settling into the ooze of the ocean bottom by this time, along with that rat Sheldrake.

If only Pettengill had gotten away from Annapolis a couple of hours earlier—if he had, he'd've reached Hampton Roads in time to join the tail of the squadron as it put out to sea, and he might've been able to make his report to the Flag Officer about the *Norwich City* while she was still afloat to prove his statements. As it was, he'd had to go ahead on his own, he'd taken his convoy well out to sea when the wind began to rise to keep clear of Cape Hatteras and Frying Pan Shoal, then the storm had hit him—and the net result was that he'd arrived to find the battle over, Dupont and Sherman in full possession of Port Royal Harbor, and a basketful of trouble for Acting Lieutenant Pettengill.

His stomach crinkled as he thought of what might happen to him when the first mail-steamer arrived from the North. The Lord only knew what they'd heard from Brooklyn by this time, or why Assistant Secretary Fox had made that vain dash to Annapolis, but it spelled more trouble—and trouble that Dupont would be in no mood to shield him against. In addition to whatever extra trouble Brean might have cooked up for him in Washington. Too bad Brean wasn't down in the ooze along with his friend Sheldrake.

"Eight bells, sir," said a cheerful voice. "Pipe to dinner, sir?"

It was young McAndrew, officer of the forenoon watch.

"Make it so," growled Pettengill. The youngster looked as though he hadn't a care in the world. "One watch at a time, Mr. McAndrew," Pettengill added quickly.

This was enemy country. At any moment, this greenery might explode with flame and iron. Pettengill looked down at the gun's crew of the 100-pounder rifle on the forecastle, skylarking half-naked in the baking heat. In 10 seconds they might be pivoting that gun around to fire *Lycoming's* first shot in deadly earnest.

Pettengill's heart stirred at the thought. For an instant he forgot his load of worries. His *Lycoming* was the best-constructed gunboat in the world for river fighting; she could take it and survive. They might court-martial Pettengill for making her so, but some of those men down for'd there, others below in the engine room, would live through that first fight—when it came—who otherwise might be torn to bloody shreds or die miserably in the scalding steam of a broken boiler.

"Seems to me there's open water ahead to port, sir," said Acting Master Casson, sticking his head out of the pilothouse window.

He was right. This might be the reach shown on the sketch: Frye, who had just relieved McAndrew, was looking inquiringly at Pettengill.

"Slow," said Pettengill.

"And a half two," announced the leadsman.

Shoaling a little—it'd never do to get hung up on a mudbank and then have the Johnnies come along with a field battery. If the Johnnies could move field guns through that brush . . .

Here was the reach. "Con her around handsomely, Mr. Frye. No telling where the channel is."

Pettengill wished he could've brought the Negro pilot along who'd come aboard the flagship while he was there. Anyway, the man had sworn you could carry 12 feet right up to Burrell's wharf, which left *Lycoming* two feet to spare. Not enough for comfort, but enough maybe to scrape by.

"Smoke ho!"

Pettengill didn't need the lookout's hail—he'd seen the smoke already, a smudge of drifting gray maybe a mile ahead, to starboard, where there seemed to be open ground. Up came his glasses. Looked like a burning house—no, more like smoke still-rising from the embers of a house that had already burned down. Other smoke rose a little farther inland: this was a thick column, climbing up into the sky.

At least nobody'd set fire to the wharf. There it was for what it might be worth, a rickety-looking thing—made of palmetto logs, likely. This place must be Burrell's plantation, even though it wasn't where the sketch said it ought to be. There were people on the wharf—Pettengill focused his glasses more carefully, took another look—were they wearing blue uniforms? Blue something, anyway, and the sun glinted on steel. So for once the Army had turned up where the Navy'd been told to look for it. That was something. Now if General Wright were only near the wharf instead of off on some wild-goose chase, Pettengill could find out what the score was and get on with his work while he still had six hours of daylight.

He could recall the exact wording of his official orders: *You will proceed with the U.S.S. Lycoming to Burrell's plantation on the Manasto River and cooperate with Army forces commanded by Brigadier General Wright, for the purpose of clearing away enemy obstructions to navigation and reducing works protecting the same. The destruction or capture of enemy gunboats reported operating in this vicinity will be your first consideration if any such vessels are encountered.*

That was just the sort of work *Lycoming* had been built to do.

"There ought to be deep water leading up to that wharf, Mr. Frye," Pettengill said. His glasses were at his eyes again. Yes, those were certainly Army people on the wharf: he could see an officer or two moving about. There were a couple of wagons coming along past the smoldering ruins of the house—piled high with something—cotton bales—quite a heap of other bales near the wharf, too. Seemed to be a lot of Negroes around the place. There went a horseman, leaving the wagons and galloping hell-for-leather back along the road.

A far-off spatter of sound came to his ears. Musketry. He swept the open ground beyond the house with his glasses. There were a few blue dots moving across the field, and a clump of blue in one spot. Half a regiment of infantry, Pettengill guessed, with one company deployed as skirmishers, advancing toward the woods way over there where that other smoke column was rising.

An officer on the wharf was waving his arms. Why hadn't the idiots in Washington worked out a simple system of signals for joint operations? If there was a fight going on it was silly to waste time bringing *Lycoming* in to the wharf to be told verbally what a single flag message might have conveyed.

"Keep her under way, Mr. Frye." Pettengill picked up a speaking trumpet, hailed as the *Lycoming* eased inshore.

"Is General Wright there?" he demanded.

The Army officer—he was a youngish man with long silky sideburns—pointed off toward the distant troops. He cupped his hands over his mouth—his words came clearly enough as the beat of *Lycoming's* paddles died: "The general's compliments, sir. He's driving the enemy back toward their entrenchments—he'd be glad of the support of your guns—first turn on your right brings you up to their fort."

First turn on your right, indeed. Wasn't that the Army for you?

"Any sign of rebel gunboats?" called Pettengill.

"No. But the woods are full—"

Thump. That was a heavy gun—heavier than a field piece anyway—over beyond the woods somewhere. Wright's troops must've come within range of the Johnnies' fort. No time for more talk.

"Tell the general we're on our way," shouted Pettengill.

The engine-room bell clanged, the paddles went to work again, the *Lycoming's* prow nosed into the sluggish current.

The blue dots were out of sight now: So was the galloping horseman. The larger patch of blue that was the supporting column was at the edge of the woods. Funny about those cotton wagons—why would the Army be collecting cotton when a fight was going on? Anyway there were men in blue helping the Negroes to unload the wagons, as well as a couple of white men who were not in uniform. Seemed to be an officer directing the work—he turned toward the *Lycoming* as she gathered speed, and into the field of Pettengill's glasses leaped the round pink face of Colonel Brean.

That was crazy—Brean was in Washington. He couldn't've gotten here ahead of Pettengill—or could he, if he'd get aboard a fast steamer and gone down the Potomac to Hampton Roads that same night? It was just possible. . . . Smoke swirled in between; Pettengill couldn't see the man any longer.

In his mind a tiny alarm bell was ringing. He told himself not to listen—what harm could Brean do him now? Let him gather his damned cotton . . . *Thump.* The gun again.

Time enough to worry about Brean later.

First channel on the starboard hand, the Army fellow had said.

Pettengill examined the sketch which was supposed to serve him as a chart. As far as he could make out, there should be a channel leading from the Manasto River over toward the Coosaw, connecting with St. Helena Sound and deep water. It made sense for the Johnnies to try to block that channel; the Union troops couldn't operate without Naval support and water transportation, but once the Union grip was firm on all this network of inland waterways, both Charleston and Savannah would be wide open to attack. The Southern commanders must be desperately trying to gain time in order to bring more troops for the defense of their great seaports.

There was the opening of the channel, just about where Pettengill expected to find it. It was narrow, but there seemed a good volume of water swirling out of it into the broad reach—it might be fairly deep.

Thump. Thump. The gunfire was nearer, though he couldn't hear so much musketry now.

"Beat to quarters, Mr. Casson."

The *Lycoming* was already partially cleared for action. The guns were provided, boats prepared for hoisting out, ground tackle ready for instant use, shell-whips rigged and ammunition-scuttles open, small arms distributed. Now, as the spring rattle roared, the guns were cast loose—the 100-pounder for'd, the big 11-inch Dahlgren shell-gun aft, the two 24-pounder howitzers on each broadside. Here came Master's Mate McAndrew, officer of the powder division, to get the magazine keys from Casson. The quick glance he gave Pettengill seemed to say: "Try me now, Captain—let me prove what I'm ready to do for you." The master-at-arms was reporting the galley fire out. An assistant engineer was directing some of the black gang in connecting fire-hoses and leading them along the deck; another came up to stand by the engine-room bell, a duty which in action apparently required engineering ability in the view of whoever had written that particular regulation.

"Cleared for action, sir," reported Casson, who had automatically taken over the deck.

Pettengill hardly heard him. His attention was completely absorbed in watching the water ahead of the *Lycoming.* The chant of the leadsman echoed in his ears every couple of minutes—there was still plenty of water under *Lycoming's* keel as she breasted the quick-flowing channel, but what bothered Pettengill was the way the channel turned and twisted its way amid sand-spits and patches of thicket so that he could never see clear water ahead for more than a couple of hundred yards. There were other channels leading into this one, both sides. If he'd made a mistake—if he'd picked the wrong channel—it'd be his last mistake in the Navy. Dupont would never take another "explanation" from Acting Lieutenant Pettengill—especially about another complaint from the Army.

Thump. That gunshot was certainly farther away than the last one.

The *Lycoming* sloshed along the channel, her wake washing up against the swampy banks on either hand. Another bend—the channel was shadowed by over-arching trees—in the deep greenery, nothing stirred save a flight of birds and the eternal gnats and mosquitoes. Still another bend, right ahead, Pettengill couldn't see around it for the foliage.

Without an instant's warning, the green barrier before him erupted in flame and thunder.

7

THE LYCOMING REELED under a blow that shook her slender frame—Pettengill heard the rush of a heavy shot just overhead at the same instant that he heard the sharp voice of Frye at the 100-pounder: "Point-blank—ready—fire!"

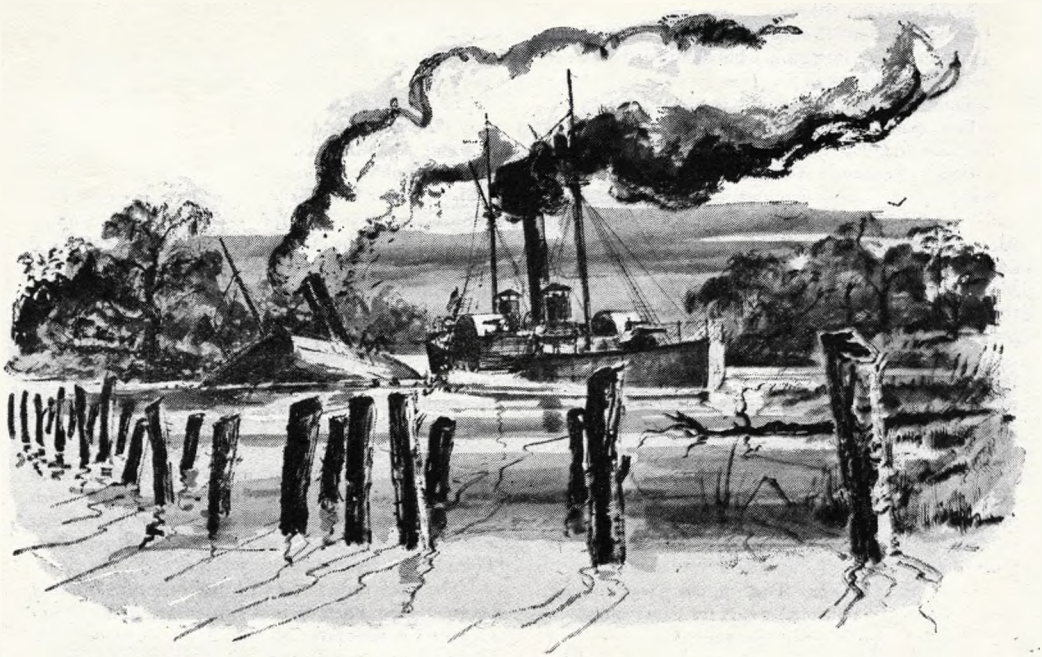
The deck shuddered with the roar and recoil of the great gun. Each division officer was under orders to return fire instantly—all guns had been loaded with shell and five-second fuses. The double crash of the forward pair of 24-pounders, fired almost together, smacked on Pettengill's eardrums as he yelled: "Slow astern, Mr. Casson!"

Once more twin lances of flame leaped out from the masked battery. Once more he felt and heard the splintering crash of a hit somewhere below. Those were 32-pounders, firing solid shot—no shells were exploding. They were trying to rake him, puncture his boilers. How would they know about those two-inch iron-plated bulkheads, fore and aft, that guarded *Lycoming's* machinery space?

The *Lycoming* heeled over as the 11-inch shell-gun on her poop let go. Pettengill whirled. The big gun was pivoted to port, smoke swirled from its muzzle. He realized that there was smoke along the bank of the channel too—hidden riflemen. A bullet hit the pilothouse, whined away viciously just clear of Pettengill's shoulder. He ran aft to the break of the hurricane deck, shouting: "Howitzer crews, sweep those bushes with canister!" There were three men down and bleeding on the quarterdeck.

The 100-pounder on the fo'c's'le crashed again. This time only one enemy gun answered, and that one missed. Pettengill saw the shot ricochet from the water and disappear in the thicket. But the infantry fire from ashore was increasing. Better get out of here—it'd be safer to run past the hidden battery now that its fire had been beaten down a little, than to stay here and slug it out while that damned musketry decimated his guns' crews. So far, Pettengill hadn't seen a single enemy soldier.

The hammering of bullets on the for'd pilot-



She had rolled far over to port and was down by the head. She was sinking fast.

house, as Pettengill came back to it, sounded like a gang of Navy Yard riveters hard at work. The iron sheathing and shutters were starred with lead—bullet-proof protection for helmsman and watch officer had been another thing Pettengill had insisted on, he'd seen too many such men picked off in his days in the Potomac Flotilla.

"Stop! Ahead slow!" he shouted above the brazen clamor of the howitzers. He wanted to bring the 11-inch to bear on what might be left of that rebel battery. The 100-pounder rifle was all right for long range, but its rate of fire left a lot to be desired for this close work. "Ahead half!" The *Lycoming* was forging toward the bend. No damage to engine or boilers so far—bless the stout foundrymen who'd turned out those iron plates.

"Captain! Get inside here!" Casson shouted. But Pettengill waved the plea away—his eye was on the channel as the *Lycoming* came around the sandspit.

"Full astern!" he yelled suddenly. The channel was blocked by a double row of thick piles, deep-driven all the way across it.

At that instant, the blast of the 11-incher, fired at its maximum forward train, almost knocked Pettengill off his feet. This time he saw the thicket swept away as by a giant scythe. Gray figures, two or three of them, bounded through the smoke like marionettes, past an up-ended gun-muzzle. There was no answering fire. The masked battery was out of business.

But the riflemen weren't—and there was no getting through those piles. "Shift the conn aft!" Pettengill shouted.

The *Lycoming,* like all double-enders, had rudders and steering positions both fore and aft. One of Pettengill's innovations had been to carry the heads of both rudder posts through on deck, so that a tiller could be shipped. This enabled the inactive rudder to be more firmly and quickly secured in shifting from one end to the other, and also provided an emergency steering position which was far handier than relieving tackles, at least in smooth water.

In repeated drills, Pettengill had succeeded in shifting the conn in just under three minutes. Now the hours spent at drill paid off. The double blast of the whistle which signaled the shift had hardly sounded when Casson and the quartermaster were racing aft, followed by the helmsman as soon as the quartermaster reached the after pilothouse, while down on the quarterdeck the "old rudder" was being lashed fast. Two and a half minutes, Pettengill guessed, trotting aft heedless of whining bullets. Any ordinary gunboat, trying to go astern in a narrow channel like this, stood an excellent chance of getting aground. A double-ender was different.

Lycoming was back-tracking away from the barrier, her howitzers blazing as fast as they could be

served. Now the musketry fire was slackening; canister at that range was no nursery nonsense. The 11-inch let go another blast. Acting Master Stevens, in charge on the quarterdeck, knew his business, more'n likely that was canister too, enough of it to sweep away a whole company with a single round.

Respite now for a minute—time to check on damage and casualties, decide what to do next.

Through the smoke that drifted along the surface of the water Pettengill saw a dark shape shove out into the stream from one of the side channels, right across *Lycoming's* course and not more than 200 yards away.

The next instant he was flung to the deck by a blast that knocked the breath from his body for an instant. His eyes were blinded by a wicked flash of fire—iron fragments clattered all around him—the faint sound of somebody screaming filtered through the roar of the exploding shell to his deafened ears.

He found himself on his feet, clinging to the rail above the quarterdeck. Somebody was giving orders: "Load with shell, Mr. Stevens! Fire at her water-line 'midships!" Pettengill hardly recognized his own voice.

He blinked his eyes fast, trying to focus them on the Confederate gunboat that had leaped so suddenly from that side-channel to cut off *Lycoming's* withdrawal. She was a small black steamer; no paddles; a screw-steamer, then; low in the water; one big gun for'd.

"Howitzers! Use grape on that gun's crew! Dead slow on the engine—" *Lycoming* wasn't built for ramming.

Fire stabbed at him from the enemy deck. This shell burst low, close alongside the *Lycoming* and just for'd of the port paddle-box. They were trying for his wheels, were they? The 11-inch let go. Its crew leaped to reload, their naked torsos swaying and bending in the smoke like devils dancing in hell. Pettengill knew the terrible loneliness of a captain in action; having given his orders he could only wait on the results. He braced himself for the next enemy shell.

Brrrroomm! His own 11-incher had beaten the Johnnies to the punch. Smoke hid the enemy ship again—smoke and something else—a vast white cloud of steam. That last shell had burst in her boiler.

Through the fiendish howl of the outrushing steam came the thin shrieks of scalded men. "Cease firing!" bellowed Pettengill. "Stop her! Away both quarter-boats, Mr. Casson—pick up as many as you can."

The breeze was pushing back the clouds of gray smoke and white steam that veiled the shattered Confederate gunboat. She had rolled far over to port and was down by the head, the current was taking her round. That was lucky, her bow'd be clear of the channel before she hit the bottom. She was going down fast. A burst boiler couldn't have done all that damage, some of it was due to shell fire. Men were still jumping from her into the water. Pettengill could see a dozen heads bobbing about on the dark surface, and one stripped white corpse floating belly-up.

But there were live enemies to think of. He ran back to the other end of the hurricane deck. "Any more firing from those bushes, Mr. Frye?"

"Not for the past few minutes, sir." Frye's face was black with powder and the thick grease that was used to coat the rifle shells, but he was grinning happily. The gun's crew were waving their arms. Their mouths were open—Pettengill realized that they were cheering. The howitzer crews were also, and the fire parties—the whole ship's company took up the chorus.

"Hur—rayyy! Hurray for the old *Lycoming!* Hurray for Cap'n Pettengill!"

The cheers of his crew after a hard-fought action are a heady wine for a young captain—Pettengill savored it, then thrust the cup from his lips. "Belay that noise!" he roared. "Mr. Casson, I'll thank you for a report of damages. Get the decks cleared up and strike those wounded men below. Tell the surgeon he'll have his hands full presently."

He could see his boats pulling men out of the water—some who were able to help themselves over the gunwales, others who weren't.

Pete Hewitt came out of the engine-room hatch and along the gangway of the hurricane deck. He lifted his cap formally.

"No casualties in the black gang, sir," he reported. His eyes were shining. "Damage minor—condenser tubes leaking, bracing of Number One boiler'll need some going over—a solid shot started the armored bulkhead behind it, but it didn't come through. Bilge pumps are choking up—that's because they rushed us off from Brooklyn without the strainers—I'll have 'em cleared in an hour, and we'll make our own strainers first chance I get. That's about it, Captain. Congratulations, sir. From the heart."

"Thanks, Pete." Pettengill knew what Hewitt was thinking about. *Lycoming* had taken her beating and walked away with it.

Assistant Surgeon Mawley was climbing the ladder.

"Two men killed, sir. Eight wounded—one fatally. One officer wounded—not serious. Master's Mate McAndrew—splinter in deltoid muscle."

Eleven casualties—only three fatal—out of 130-odd officers and men. That wasn't too bad.

"McAndrew refuses to go off duty, sir. I told him—"

"Never mind what you told him, Doctor. Get below and see what you can do for those wounded Johnnies." The first boat with the survivors of the Southern gunboat was coming alongside. The gunboat herself was on the bottom now, lying over on her side, with steam and smoke still rising from her broken hull.

Thump. Thump. Those distant guns again. The troops must be assaulting the Confederate fort—and the *Lycoming* wasn't there to support the Army. The sunken gunboat had come out of a very narrow chan-

nel, but a screw steamer of her size would certainly draw as much water as *Lycoming*. Maybe that channel might offer a way around the obstruction. It looked so on the sketch. If not he could always back up.

"Bear a hand with those survivors!" he sang out. "Mr. Stevens, as soon as your boat's clear of casualties, see if there's enough water so I can get past that wreck into the side channel. Mr. Casson, I'll want the ship ready to go into action again immediately."

There was water enough—just enough—to let the *Lycoming* scrape past her sunken foe. She was still going stern first—no room to turn her around—but that didn't really matter. This channel was even narrower than the one Pettengill had been following when he was fired on, and had just as many bends. Sharper ones, too; twice the *Lycoming's* paddles beat up thick mud as Pettengill conned her around a hairpin turn. The trees were thicker; the afternoon sun filtered through them only fitfully.

"By the deep, four," chanted the leadsman.

Four fathoms in this ditch? Pettengill couldn't believe it. But the channel was widening right beyond the next bend.

"And a quarter, four," the leadsman announced.

Pettengill remembered the connection with the Coosaw River and St. Helena Sound. Maybe he was coming into the Coosaw.

He couldn't hear the far-off guns any longer. If it wasn't for these trees and their tangle of underbrush, he might see something of the lay of the land. He shaded his eyes against the trickling sunbeams, tried to peer through the tangle of green.

"Slow!" he said sharply. He'd seen something that certainly was no tree—unless a tree had shrouds and ratlines attached to it.

"I'll have all hands at quarters, Mr. Casson," he ordered. "Pass the word quietly. No rattle, no pipes."

Another bend. The *Lycoming* crept slowly around it. Just ahead, the channel divided. The left branch was the wider, and had fewer trees on its farther bank. The right-hand branch seemed to lose itself immediately in a mass of foliage.

A mass of foliage traced up around the masts of a ship and intertwined with her rigging. If Pettengill hadn't spotted those shrouds by sheer accident, he'd have steamed right by and never noticed anything out of line. His heart was beating a little faster as he edged the *Lycoming* into that narrow channel—now he could make out the shape of the hidden vessel's stern—something familiar about it.

All at once he knew: she was the bark *Norwich City*.

"Arm and away—!" he began.

The deck smacked upward beneath his feet as though some huge submarine monster had suddenly risen under *Lycoming's* keel. He felt the jar of a muffled explosion, water leaped skyward in a foaming column close alongside—just abreast the engine room. They'd run onto a mine.

"Stop her!" barked Pettengill. He pushed past Casson into the pilothouse, blew into the engine-room voice tube.

"Engine room," said Hewitt's voice, not a trace of excitement in it.

"What's the score, Pete?"

"Can't tell," said Hewitt. "There's water coming over the foot-plates already. Oiler's dead, two men hurt—I need more hands. Those damn' bilge pumps. Better beach her." The tube snapped shut.

"Send twenty hands to report to Mr. Hewitt," Pettengill ordered. "More if he needs 'em."

Water over the foot-plates—if it got into the firerooms there mightn't be steam on the engine much longer.

Pettengill turned away from the white, strained faces of Casson and the quartermaster—looking to him to save the ship from this peril as he'd saved her in the hour of battle. He closed his ears to the shouts of alarm, the feet that hammered along the decks, the sound of inrushing water down below. He focused his mind on the sandbar where the channel divided. If he could beach her there, stern first, at least she wouldn't sink. The tide was running out, the rise and fall here would be about seven feet. At slack water he might be able to get at the hole in her bottom.

Of course moving her at all meant he might run smack on to another mine. But letting her drift meant the same thing.

"Slow ahead," he ordered. Since the *Lycoming* was steering by the stern, this amounted to backing away, out of the narrow channel toward the wider reach. The paddles responded to the bell. Leaning over the rail, Pettengill conned her. No time to shift to the other rudder, he'd have to do it the harder way. The list was getting worse—that wouldn't help when it came to getting at the damage.

"Stop. Astern slow. Starboard two points." Now her stern was moving toward the sandbar. Pettengill tried to calculate the best angles of fire for his guns in case the Johnnies found her and attacked before he was through with his repairs. "Starboard a point."

The list hadn't increased the last few minutes.

Pettengill heard the squealer of the voice tube. He checked his next order instinctively, half-turned.

"Captain!" yelled Casson. "The chief says the pump's holding its own—he thinks it's starting to gain on the water."

"Stop. Slow ahead." Hope rose in Pettengill's heart as the *Lycoming* drew off a little from the sandbar into deeper water. "Stop."

He wanted to be within easy reach of that bar until he was sure.

"Take her a minute, Mr. Casson."

The engine room was full of steam and coal-gas as he clattered down the long iron ladder past the inclined frame on which the crosshead worked. It was full of sound, too—the hiss of water on hot coals, thudding of hammers, and the steady *throb-throb-*

throb of a steam pump. As he hit the foot-plate the water sloshed around his ankles.

Hewitt grabbed his arm. "You beach her yet?"

"No."

"You won't have to now. I just cut in the other pump—they're both sucking. It's your water-tight bulkheads that did the trick—and McAndrew here."

McAndrew leaned against a stanchion, looking like a drowned rat. He was covered with bilge-slime from head to foot: one arm was in a sling, the other hung limply at his side.

But his eyes were on his captain's face: they seemed to beg for approval.

"This kid," said Hewitt, "got down in the water up to his neck and kept the pump intake clear of weeds and dirt with his one good hand till I could spare a man to spell him. Now I've got two men at it, working quarter-hour shifts. But if it hadn't been for McAndrew you'd've had to stick her ashore to keep the water out of the fires, bulkheads or no bulkheads. It's in the ash-pans as it is, but we're getting rid of it fast."

Pettengill laid a hand on McAndrew's shoulder. "Thank you, Mr. McAndrew," he said. "Not many wounded men would've done that. I won't forget it in my report to the Flag Officer."

Stuffy, inadequate words. But it was wonderful to see McAndrew lift his head and try to grin.

"It's nothing, sir," he said, "to what I owe you."

Pettengill just managed not to look startled. Then he realized McAndrew must be thinking about Susie and that extra hour of shore leave—he put a higher valuation on such trifles than Pettengill did, of course.

Still, in a manner of speaking, Susie had saved the *Lycoming*. Pettengill didn't like to admit it, even to himself. He was hardly able to keep his resentment out of his voice: "Turn in at once, Mr. McAndrew," he growled. "I'll see the surgeon serves you out something to warm your innards."

"Thank you, sir."

Pettengill was already running up the ladder. He had time now to attend to the *Norwich City*.

"Mr. Casson!"

"Sir!"

"As I was about to say when that damned rebel mine interrupted me so rudely," Pettengill told his executive, "I'd be glad if you'll arm the first cutter and send Mr. Stevens to take possession of that ship in there under the leaves. She's our missing friend from the convoy, the *Norwich City*. We'll give her back to the Army with our compliments."

8

THE BRIGHT RIM of the morning sun lifted itself above the sandhills behind Fort Beauregard—its first rays gleamed on the quiet waters of Port Royal harbor. To Acting Lieutenant Caleb Pettengill, the dawn of the new day held no promise as he leaned on the *Lycoming's* taffrail.

"Those sick friends that I was sitting up with, boy are they sick."

Bluebook 8113

He wasn't feeling nearly as cocky as he had when he'd sent his boat's crew to take the *Norwich City*. A lot of the starch had melted out of him in the course of writing his report to the Flag Officer on yesterday's proceedings. It didn't look so good, set down on paper, to admit that he'd run his ship on a mine and damaged her so badly that he'd had to abandon his mission and come limping back to Port Royal with a thrummed sail hauled taut under his bottom, like a baby with its backside in a sling. Probably the Army'd suffered a bloody repulse which the general would be only too happy to blame on Pettengill not being there to support him. Sinking a rebel gunboat and bringing in the *Norwich City* wouldn't offset that.

He looked miserably across the harbor at the *Wabash*, lying off Hilton Head with Dupont's square blue flag fluttering at her mizzen. If the Old Man had finished his breakfast, he might be reading Pettengill's report by this time—Pettengill had been up most of the night writing it, it had gone over to the flagship at 3 A.M. Pettengill could picture the stern mouth tightening under those magnificent whiskers. He could hear the leonine roar: "Pettengill again! This time, by God—!"

There'd been a mail steamer in last night, too: the first mail from the North since the taking of Port Royal. Probably it had brought the Flag Officer news of some other crimes of the said Pettengill—such as rebuilding the U.S.S. *Lycoming* to his own design and running out of Annapolis in violation of a direct order from the Department to await the arrival of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy—maybe even collaborating with illegal traders.

Too bad he hadn't at least caught Sheldrake to offer up as a burnt sacrifice—there hadn't been a soul

aboard *Norwich City* when Steven's men had boarded her. The bark lay now a cable's length away, in the same state he'd found her—topmasts housed, rigging all tangled with withering tree-branches. An Army boat was alongside; the Army people had been coming and going all during the morning watch, but none of 'em had come near the *Lycoming*.

He returned his attention to the *Wabash*. Any minute now, a string of flags would go climbing up the big frigate's to'gallant yardarm—*Lycoming's* number, followed by the ominous order: "Commanding officer report aboard flagship immediately."

It wouldn't be long now. No use standing out here like a schoolboy waiting for a flogging. He could at least be in his cabin when the blow fell, and he might as well be decently dressed. He was still wearing the crumpled service whites he'd been in all day yesterday and all night too, picking his way through those damned channels dragging the deadweight of the *Norwich City* astern or sweating over the interminable pages of his report.

As he went into the cabin his steward popped through the pantry door with a tray. The odor of steaming coffee was grateful. Pettengill could still be glad of small comforts: coffee—a shave—a clean shirt and his summer-weight frock coat. Of course the coat didn't look much better on him than the things he'd worn all night, but then no tailor could ever make uniforms hang properly on Pettengill's awkward frame.

Well, what did that matter. He wouldn't be wearing uniforms much longer. He turned his eyes away from the shoulder straps with their silver foul anchor, the single gold sleeve stripe of which he was so proud. . . .

He gulped his coffee and poured another cup, sitting slumped in the chair before his desk. He sat there a long time, looking straight ahead. The coffee grew cold in the cup. Around him were all the familiar sounds of the ship's routine—he heard six bells strike, then seven. The hands were piped to breakfast. The officer of the watch reported eight bells. Pettengill muttered: "Make it so." He sat on. . . .

Rat-tat again on the cabin door. Instinct warned, *Now I'll have it.*

"Come in."

"Mr. Frye's respects, sir," said the quartermaster. "Boat's standing this way from the flagship. Flag Officer's barge. Flag in her bows."

Pettengill was up and out of the cabin as though propelled from his own 11-inch Dahlgren. He snatched the quartermaster's telescope, put it to his eye. That was the barge, all right—and the square blue flag that fluttered from the little staff at hew bow indicated that the Flag Officer himself was aboard her. Coming to swing the axe in person. He must be really boiling to take all that trouble.

Nevertheless, he'd be properly received.

"Damn and blast it, Mr. Frye! What are you lolly-gagging there for? You've got five minutes to get every officer on deck in dress uniform—six side boys, well scrubbed—I want the ship's drum on the quarterdeck, and a guard of twenty men with muskets and cutlasses."

No marines aboard—too bad, they were a lot smarter than seamen for this kind of thing. Frye was squalling panicky orders, he ought to've had all these things in train already. But the barge wasn't coming too fast—he'd just about make it.

Beyond the barge, Pettengill's eye noted something that wasn't quite as it should be. What was it?

The flag had disappeared from the mizzen-truck of the *Wabash*, which meant the *Lycoming* was supposed to hoist it at her own mizzen and salute it as the Old Man came over the side. Funny. That was the sort of compliment a Flag Officer on a disciplinary mission would ordinarily omit.

"Have a blue flag ready for bending on, Mr. Frye. Saluting guns' crews to quarters. Here, Mr. Casson, get the keys to the magazine and pass 'em to the gunner's mate—quick's the play, he's almost alongside!"

He only hoped there was a blue flag of the proper size somewhere in the signal locker and that it could be found in time. He dashed back into his cabin, buckled on his sword belt, dragged his cocked hat out of its tin case and clapped it on his head. He'd only worn the thing once before, the day *Lycoming* was commissioned.

Out again into the sunshine of the quarterdeck, just in time to hear the barge's coxwain crying: "Way enough! Toss!" One quick look around. Everything was ready—not bad for a surprise visit.

A cocked hat so resplendent in gold lace as to show barely a patch of black here and there was just rising above the starboard hammock netting. Under it, the famous Dupont whiskers came into view. Pettengill moved toward the gangway: his heart was sick, but he set his jaw firmly, facing the wrath to come.

9

THE PIPES SQUEALED, the drum beat two ruffles, somebody barked "Present—arms!", the sideboys tugged at their hat brims.

Pettengill lifted his own hat and stepped forward to receive the Commander of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron just as though this were an ordinary visit of ceremony.

"Bang!" went the first gun of the salute.

Dupont towered in the gangway, a man of majestic presence. Taller even than Pettengill, he seemed to dwarf every other figure on the crowded quarterdeck. His eyes were stern, and they were looking straight into Pettengill's. He lifted his hat to the colors, took a step forward, and held out his hand.

"Good morning, Captain Pettengill!" he rum-

bled. "I'll be glad if you'll present your officers, after which I'll make an inspection of your ship."

Oh-oh. So he *had* heard from Washington about those alterations.

Pettengill made the presentation in a daze of misery. Casson first, then the four watch officers, the doctor, the paymaster, and the engineers. Dupont found a kindly word for each. He reduced McAndrew to stuttering confusion by asking about his wounded arm and saying he'd be mentioned in dispatches for what he'd done down in the flooded compartment. He stood with bared head before the four flag-draped bodies that lay on the quarterdeck under guard, and announced his intention of being present when they were buried over on Hilton Head that afternoon.

Then he glanced at Pettengill.

"You may dismiss from quarters, Captain. Let the hands go about their morning duties during the inspection."

Worse and worse. He wanted Pettengill all to himself for what was coming. It was going to be that bad.

But as the inspection proceeded, Pettengill's astonishment increased at every step. Dupont asked questions—he wanted to know something about every detail—but he offered no criticism, no scathing remarks.

He examined with interest the dented plates of the for'd engine-room bulkhead where the enemy ball had hit; the splintered holes in the bows, with the carpenter's gang hard at work on them; the iron coaming that slanted inboard all around the engine-room hatch, scarred now with bullets and shell-fragments; the low-hung guards on the paddle-wheels, iron-plated too, one of them bent so badly as almost to touch the paddles; then he was going down the ladder into the engine room, and nothing would do but he must be on his knees peering into the water-logged bilges where the torpedo had opened a hole in *Lycoming's* bottom. He continued to look dignified even in that position.

"This is where young McAndrew distinguished himself, I take it?"

"Yes, sir."

"M-mm. Don't see how your ship stays afloat with all this water in her, Captain."

"It's only between those two bulkheads, sir. We've pumped out the other compartments."

"Compartments?" said Dupont sharply, looking up.

"Yes, sir. The whole—"

"Later," cut in Dupont, getting to his feet. He looked around the engine room. "That's a good-sized condenser for a ship like this, Chief," he said to Peter Hewitt.

"Yes, sir," agreed Hewitt.

"And these are your forced-draft blowers?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hmm. I've got smaller ones on the *Wabash,*" was all Dupont had to say on that point.

Back on deck, he looked over the pilot houses, the battery, the masts and rigging, the boats and the rest of the gear with equal interest and those same curt comments:

"Iron plates and shutters on both pilothouses—hmm." He fingered a bright bullet-splash. "Foremast stepped pretty well aft, Captain? Better field of fire for your forward pivot gun, of course. Hmm. I see you've an 11-inch Dahlgren for a stern-chaser—seems to me I was told these double-enders would have nine-inch stern guns. Hmm. Very well, Captain. I've seen all I desire. Now a word with you in your cabin, if you please?"

So now it was coming.

Pettengill ushered the Flag Officer through his cabin door. He wasn't reassured by Dupont's order to the flag lieutenant to remain outside. Dupont took off his cocked hat, mopped his high forehead with an enormous silk handkerchief, and looked around the cabin.

"I hope you'll find this chair comfortable, sir?" Pettengill begged. "Would you care for a cup of coffee, sir?"

Dupont sat down, still mopping. It had been hot in that engine room. "I should enjoy some coffee very much, thank you," he announced.

Pettengill couldn't've been more astonished if the old boy'd offered him a cigar. Flag officers didn't drink coffee with captains they were about to break. His offer had been purely mechanical.

He just managed to get a word to his hovering steward out of his dry throat.

Dupont was still surveying the cabin. "Very pleasant quarters, Captain," he said. "But isn't it a trifle unusual for the cabin to be up under the break of the superstructure, opening directly on the quarterdeck?"

"Yes, sir," Pettengill agreed. "But it's handy. I've got rooms for my executive officer and chief engineer on the port side of this one. That way, Mr. Casson and I are both practically on the quarterdeck all the time, and Mr. Hewitt's only two jumps from the engine-room ladder."

"Hmm." Dupont sipped his coffee. "And your other officers?"

"I put 'em all in the regular cabin space aft on the gun deck, sir," Pettengill told him. "Only one ladder for 'em to climb if they're wanted, and they get far more light and air than they would on the berth deck."

Dupont took another sip of coffee.

"I suppose you know, Captain," he remarked severely, "that there is no more sacred tradition in the Navy than that which regulates the position of officers' quarters aboard ship? How on earth did you induce the Department to allow such a wholesale heresy?"

Pettengill looked straight into those stern demanding eyes.

"I didn't, sir," he said. "I did the whole thing myself."

He waited for the crash of doom.

"Just how did you contrive to do that?" was all Dupont asked.

"The Brooklyn Navy Yard was in some confusion when this ship was under construction, sir, what with building three sloops-of-war and four of the 90-day gunboats all at once, and refitting a dozen or more merchant ships for Navy duties. So there wasn't much supervision—everything was pretty well left to the master workmen." He could read absolutely nothing in Dupont's expression. He took the plunge. "I had some back pay coming, sir—and I expect you'd never guess what a civilian master in a Navy Yard'll do for a keg of Kentucky whiskey or a bolt of fancy silk for his wife."

Dupont set down his coffee cup.

"And those armored bulkheads? The iron coaming on the engine-room hatch? The plates on the pilothouses? The armored guards on your paddle wheels? The water-tight compartments? The 11-inch gun? The big condenser and the frigate-size blowers? All these were obtained by you in this same highly irregular fashion, is that right, Captain Pettengill?"

"Yes, sir," said Pettengill stonily.

The splendid whiskers twitched. They wriggled.

Then Flag Officer Samuel Francis Dupont leaned back in Pettengill's chair and allowed the explosion of his mighty laughter to shake the cabin.

"I've never—haw-haw!—heard the beat of this one," he gasped between bellows. "When I was a lieutenant—haw-haw!—Frank Dupont was counted a damn' clever navy-yard thief—haw-haw-haw!—but by God I never aspired to such magnificent audacity as this! Oh, it'll be the death of me!"

He wiped the tears from his eyes at last, and ran a finger round inside his collar. "You realize what you've done, I hope?" he inquired. "You've virtually thumbed your nose at the august authors of the double-ender design. Including the Assistant Secretary of the Navy. I'm going to have one devil of a time to save you from their wrath."

"To—to save me, did you say, sir?" said Pettengill.

"What else?" roared Dupont. "D'you suppose I'd let the land sharks get their teeth in any captain of mine who can fight his ship as you did yesterday?"

He slammed a fist down hard on Pettengill's desk.

"The rebels thought they had you in a trap!" *Slam.* "The whole rebel army was gloating over the Yankee gunboat they were going to sink!" *Slam!* "They surprise you with raking fire from a hidden battery—your armored bulkheads surprise *them,* damn them, and you give back better'n you take." *Slam.* "Their riflemen in the bushes can't pick off your helmsman—iron on your pilothouses takes care of that. D'you know the Army found more than seventy dead rebels in those bushes, Captain?" *Slam.* "They have the channel blocked, and a gunboat pops out to cut off your retreat—you cut her down instead, she can't win against an ironclad." *Slam.* "Captain Pettengill, you took that enemy trap apart piece by piece and threw the pieces back in the enemy's face! A fact which"—*slam*—"I'll take the greatest pleasure in throwing in the Department's face in reply to their whimpering complaints about your irregularities in the Brooklyn Navy Yard!" *Slam.* "Irregularities indeed! I wish I had more captains who could produce such irregularities! If there was anything irregular about what you did to this ship, yesterday you proved you were right in every detail of it—even to walking off with a torpedo hit in your bottom that'd have sunk the *Wabash!" Slam.*

"Er, hello! I'll give you 50 bucks to let me pretend that I'm with you!"

Bluebook 7903

Pettengill finally got a stammering word in edgewise.

"But—but, sir—a trap, you say? I didn't realize—"

"Of course it was a trap, Captain!" thundered Dupont. "A well-laid trap, baited by a damned traitor who betrayed your coming to the enemy as soon as he saw you steaming up to Burrell's wharf!"

"Brean! Colonel Brean!" exclaimed Pettengill. He remembered the galloping horseman.

"That's his name," confirmed Dupont. "He was behind this dirty affair of the *Norwich City*—stood to make a cool quarter of a million by trading her cargo for cotton that he could sell in Boston at eighty cents a pound. Oh, he had the wool pulled over General Sherman's eyes in fine fashion, I can tell you. Just before I left the flagship, I had a most handsome apology from the general for his attitude when he thought you'd lost his precious supply ship."

Which was one reason why the Flag Officer was being so genial and jolly.

"I hope Brean didn't get away," Pettengill remarked.

"He's over at Hilton Head in close arrest," Dupont told him. "General Wright caught him trying to desert to the rebel lines right after the Army took that fort up the river—for which, by the way, you'll be glad to know General Wright gives you full credit: says you blasted all the fight out of the rebels, they just fired a few shots and quit. Haw. Good thing I didn't catch Brean first—I'd've had him at the yardarm in five minutes' time. But I make no doubt he'll hang anyway, in due course."

His eyes narrowed a trifle.

"I've read the scoundrel's confession," he went on. "He seems very bitter against you—you and some young lady he says was working for the Treasury." There was a question in his voice.

"That'd be Miss Prudence Pryor, sir," said Pettengill carefully. "She had her suspicions about the *Norwich City's* cargo. I begged her not to delay the convoy, promised I'd report the circumstances to you for proper action. She seemed satisfied, but I guess it didn't suit Brean."

Dupont chuckled. "That's not quite the way Brean tells it," he informed Pettengill. "No matter. You must have a way with young ladies, Captain, to be able to satisfy a Treasury agent so easily. A dangerous gift for a sailor, that. The sea's a jealous mistress, you know."

Pettengill felt the hot blood rising to his ears. Dupont was getting to his feet; Pettengill got up too. "There's no chance of putting you in dock here," Dupont said—and now his tone was again that of the commander-in-chief speaking to a junior officer. "How soon can you make your ship ready for service?"

"By tomorrow morning, sir," Pettengill told him. "It'll be a patchwork job, but she'll answer. If I can get—"

"Let me know what you need," cut in Dupont. "Yesterday's fight opened up further possibilities for the Army that must be exploited before the enemy recovers from the shock. I'll give you another gunboat besides this one, and you'll act as senior Naval officer in the Manasto River, supporting General Wright's operations. Keep me fully informed: I'll expect written reports at each opportunity."

Pettengill stood there with his mouth open. Senior Naval officer! An independent command! There were commanders grown gray in the service who'd give their eye-teeth for an assignment like that.

It was just more than he could take in all at once.

Rat-tat at the door. It was the flag lieutenant. "Flagship's signaling, sir. Urgent message for you from General Sherman."

"Back to the treadmill," grumbled Dupont. He held out his hand. "Good luck to you, Captain Pettengill. I'll send you over your written orders within the hour."

Pettengill was still too dazed for coherent words. He managed to mumble something that could pass for thanks. He followed the Flag Officer out to the sun-scorched quarterdeck.

"That's a wonderful place for a cabin," Dupont murmured. "I remember when I was in the old *Ohio* they stowed me down in the orlop to make room for the Commodore's wife up above. Haw. No air. Three ladders to climb when they beat to quarters. Rats. Haw. Women are the curse of the Navy, Captain Pettengill. At times. But they also have their points. At other times. Haw."

The drum rolled, the guard presented arms, the pipes shrilled and the Flag Officer went down the ladder to his waiting barge, still chuckling.

10

PETTENGILL STOOD THERE at attention until the barge was clear of the side. Then he walked slowly into his cabin, still moving like a man in a dream. A wonderful dream from which he was afraid he'd wake up . . .

There was a pile of mail on his desk. Somebody must've brought it in the barge—the flag lieutenant, doubtless. He spread it out, stared at it. Official stuff, as usual. Mostly. But there was a white envelope addressed in a sprawling hand that he knew well. Terry Seabright had answered his letter after all. And there was another—a small square thing with the initials P. P. on the back.

"Morning quarters at three bells as usual, sir?" It was Casson, hovering in the cabin doorway.

Pettengill snapped out of his daze as though the words had been an electric shock. "Good Lord, no, Mr. Casson! Keep every man at work to get the ship ready for service by daybreak tomorrow! You've got the carpenter's report there? What does he need in the way of planks and timber? Send the list over to the flagship at once. The boat officer might tell the fleet surgeon, with my respects, that I'd be glad to be relieved of the care of those wounded prisoners at his early convenience. Messenger! Ask Mr. Hewitt if he'll kindly step up here."

He was out on the quarterdeck by this time, leaving his mail unopened and forgotten. His ship—his *Lycoming*—his gold-plated gunboat—occupied all his thoughts and absorbed all his love. She had not failed him at Annapolis in his hour of trial. She had not failed him in battle. She would not fail him, he knew as he stood there, in the trials and battles that were yet to come.

A sudden thought darted into his mind.

"Mr. Casson!"

"Sir!"

"Have the sailmaker's mate make up a senior-officer's command pennant. We'll be needing one tomorrow morning."

He would have an ornament to bedeck his love when next they sailed together.

—BY GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT.

An Atomic Furnace to Heat/Cool Your House

Continued from page 7

by more than 200 engineers and executives representing 60 manufacturers of heating and air-conditioning equipment. Robert E. Ferry, general manager of the Institute, informed the delegates that a year-round heating-cooling system powered by a "baby nuclear reactor" was a "practical reality possibly within a few years."

A group of this sort is not characterized by gullibility and they don't go in for science fiction—at least on the job. What they were told was that an atomic plant would heat the house in winter, cool it in summer, provide "virtually unlimited" domestic hot water, and melt snow from walks and driveways. Every six years or so a factory-sealed reactor core perhaps twice the size of an automobile battery would be inserted in place of the worn-out core—at a cost estimated at $300! The entire system—except for piping and radiators—could conceivably cost no more than $1,500. Since it wouldn't require venting $300-500 could be saved on a chimney in new construction. Present steam or hot-water systems could be converted.

Atomic furnaces would make a far cleaner house: with combustion a thing of the past and air conditioning all year round, your wife would have trouble finding enough dust to bother about. At $300 every six years your costs would be $50 a year instead of maybe $150 for space heating, $100 for cooling, and $50 for hot water: total $300—and snow melting thrown in free.

What's the Holdup?

What are we waiting for, then? "The chief problem holding up the A-boiler system is the need for adequate supplies of fissionable material at economic cost," Mr. Ferry said. How far away is this? Well, that depends: If international tensions were reduced to a point where the great powers no longer felt it necessary to tie up large quantities of fissionable materials in their stockpiles of bombs, it would be possible to distribute these materials for household atomic reactors. Or improved methods of extraction and processing of fissionable materials could bring increase in the supply; some such promising techniques were discussed at the Geneva conference last August, and there may be others which have not yet been publicized.

Admittedly Mr. Ferry's statement contained some figures that were based more on conjecture than dependable fact. But even if the operating costs should turn out to be double those suggested, the savings in home heating and cooling would forecast a technological revolution which could hardly be exaggerated. While it would upset a number of applecarts in the immediate future, the long-run benefits would be enormous.

The diagrams hereabouts are purely schematic and any resemblance to actual construction is coincidental. One diagram shows the general set-up. The household reactor is broadly similar to the bigger reactors which are used in power-plants and submarines, but is comparatively easy to shield, control, and service because radioactivity, temperature, and power are so much lower. The reactor core is self-shielded so that it can be shipped, installed, and replaced with no more than reasonable care in handling. It has been said that it could generate temperatures as high as 3000°F, but that's far too high for present-day power plants, let alone homes, so operation is contemplated at about 300°F, or about 90 degrees higher than the boiling point of water at sea level.

Triple-Pass Play

Combined with the reactor there is a heat exchanger—a device in which heat is transferred from one fluid to another. It is assumed that the first body of water to be heated, W_1, will acquire radioactivity, so instead of being allowed to circulate it is used to heat W_2, which in turn heats the water (W_3) in a standard boiler. It is this water which circulates through the radiators to heat the house. This part of the system—the boiler and pipes and radiators—is like any other hot-water system or steam heating system fueled by coal, oil, or gas. (Possibly the boiler could be eliminated and its job taken over by the heat exchanger.)

The other diagram shows the cooling, hot-water supply, and snow-melting circuits in very sketchy fashion. The cooling unit would be a refrigerator of the absorption type—much like an ordinary gas-burning refrigerator. Wherever you have a source of heat you can use it for cooling—which sounds ridiculous, but works anyway.

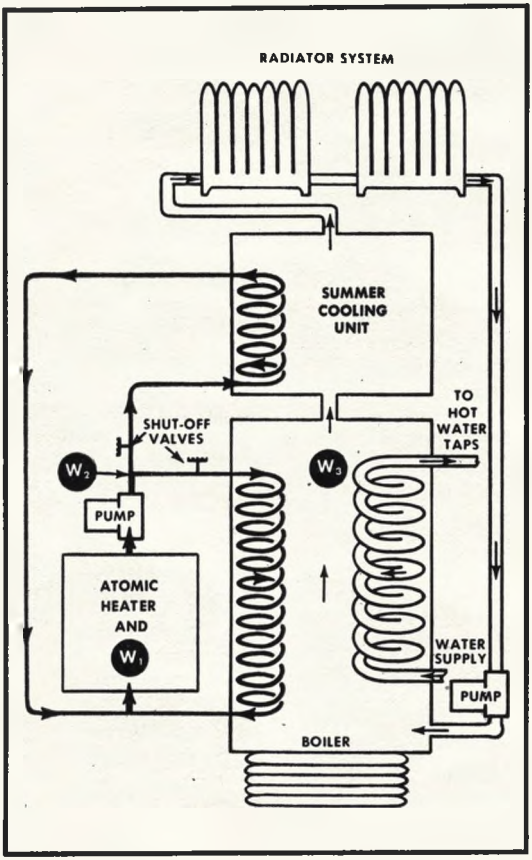
Water chilled to 40°F by the refrigerating unit, would then be circulated through the same radiators that heat the house in winter. A fan would probably be required in back of each radiator to circulate the cool air.

Hot-water supply would be substantially the same as it is now. The snow-melting setup, from an energy standpoint, merely amounts to additional radiation surface. The reactor might have to supply 30 or 40 percent more energy and the boiler would have to be proportionately larger—or operate at a higher temperature—to handle the extra load. Also, another heat exchanger must be incorporated into the system since the hot water or steam from the boiler can't be used directly in the grids under the walk and driveway—it would freeze when the system wasn't being used. Instead, the water or steam from the boiler transfers

heat to an anti-freeze mixture, such as you now use in your car radiator.

Transition

Since by all indications atomic heating-cooling is on its way into the home, should you wait for it? The question is academic in most cases, since if you're building or buying now you need heat now. But actually there's no danger of violent depreciation of existing plants. The only radical change, after all, is in the energy source. Thus when the equipment becomes available any existing plant will be convertible from coal, gas, or oil to atomic energy, as coal burners have been converted to oil for years.



Such a conversion will cost about $1,000, according to the I-B-R estimates. Although that's no more than an educated guess at this stage.

Very soon, however, the designers of new heating plants should take into consideration the probability that they will be called on to work from nuclear reactors. The question of the type of heating plant will probably be secondary. The I-B-R release was naturally slanted to give the wet-heat interests (steam and hot water) the jump on the warm-air heating manufacturers, who are organized in an efficient and articulate trade association of their own. Wet heat and warm air have been competing for many years in the home-heating field, with first one, then the other, forging ahead. All experience shows that any improvements in one are soon emulated by the other.

What should never be forgotten, also, is that any heating-cooling plant must be designed and installed with skill and foresight to give maximum comfort in a particular house, and with atomic energy you'll still need a heating contractor who measures up to those standards. In fact, it looks as if heating contractors are in for a technological up-grading like that of radio technicians with the advent of television.

The heaviest demand for the A-boiler will come from the colder sections of the country and from those areas where coal and oil are expensive; the least from the Middle West and other areas within a few hundred miles of natural gas fields. In these fortunate regions you can heat a house of 1,200 square feet, provide domestic hot water, and cook with gas, all for about $100 a year. At the other extreme there are many houses in New England which eat up $300-500 in oil for space heating alone.

Quite aside from the expense to the owners, this waste is technologically immoral. Since petroleum is relatively scarce, it should be reserved for automobiles, aircraft, and other uses where there is no early prospect of utilizing atomic energy.

Will It Explode?

No.

Nobody is going to put enough fissionable material into a household reactor to make an explosion, and you couldn't afford the stuff if anybody were that crazy. A gas heating plant can explode with enough violence to wreck a house and kill everybody in it; an electric or gas water heater can likewise kill you if it raises steam and the safety valve isn't working. A secondary explosion, not of fissionable material but of steam, could occur in an A-boiler, but it would be even rarer than in the boilers we now have. You can bet that an atomic heating plant will be equipped with all the controls the automation boys can think up. There'll be controls controlling the controls. They'll do everything but give you a shower and rub-down.

People are always afraid of the unknown, and they always get over their fear—quickly. When the first steam railroads were being built, conservative Britishers predicted that persons near the tracks would be swept to their deaths by the suction in the wake of trains traveling at the insane speed of 30 miles an hour.

Continued on next page

Dependability

There's only one thing wrong with the atomic heating system as outlined—and that has nothing to do with atomic energy. It's the circulating pumps at the bottom of the boiler, and between the boiler and the heat exchanger. Those are driven by electric motors, and if you have a forced hot-water heating plant, you have one in operation right now. But these motors need power and when the electricity goes off, water circulation stops and the system becomes inoperative.

This is no worry in cities, where the power supply is practically invulnerable. (In New York City, for instance, the last power failure of serious proportions was in the late 1930s.) But it's a serious matter in the suburbs and out in the country. While dependability of service has improved materially in recent years, the improvement has been largely in the reduction of outages—the power companies' $6 word for no lights—caused by lightning. High winds, high water and icing up of the distribution network can still take out the power for days at a time. The utilities work like beavers to restore service when trouble comes, but doing the impossible takes a little time, even for them. Meanwhile, you're cold.

The A-boiler opens up several possible ways out of this situation: For example, instead of water circulating between the nuclear reactor and the boiler and beween the boiler and the radiators, low-pressure steam could be used. Steam circulates by itself, so you don't need electric pumps. From the boiler up this would be a conventional steam heating system. Steam makes a perfectly good heating system if it is sensitively controlled, and on the average it's as inexpensive as warm air.

If you prefer hot water or air, it might be feasible to revert to gravity circulation when the electric power goes off, with, to be sure, much reduced efficiency. Or a small turbine could be rigged up in place of electric drive for the circulators.

However it's done, the heating plant should be made independent of external electric power supply. This would be an improvement quite as desirable as the reduction in the cost of fuel, and atomic energy brings it within reach because the reactor produces heat spontaneously, without the necessity of mechanical or electric power.

How About Atomic Electricity?

But if this is feasible, isn't there an even farther ranging possibility? Couldn't the atomic reactor not only heat and cool, but also produce the electrical requirements of the suburban and farm household? It's bad when the power goes off in the winter and with it the heat and hot water, but that's only the beginning. Instantly you go back to the pre-gaslight era and try to read by candlelight. If you have an all-electric kitchen you can't cook either. You probably have a few hundred dollars' worth of food in the freezer. If you rely on a sump pump to keep your cellar from flooding, that too goes out, often just when you need it most. Worst of all, since modern drilled wells can't be pumped without electricity (nor can you get water from them by bailing) thousands of residences are without water for drinking, cooking, and toilet flushing. Life becomes a series of harassments and makeshifts, and the more you electrify, the more dependent you become on something which sometimes isn't there.

As far as energy goes, the nuclear reactor can do the job. The electrical requirements of a residence are only a fraction of its heating requirements. The reactor would need hardly more output for electricity than for snow-melting; by all indications it could supply enough power for all three.

Some Flies in the Ointment

Although you couldn't generate electricity anywhere near as efficiently in a small individual plant as the utilities can in their power stations, you wouldn't have to. You pay 3c per kilowatt hour for juice which costs ½-¾c to generate. The difference is largely accounted for by the capital cost and maintenance of the distribution lines. Since you wouldn't have any lines to maintain, you could spend the whole 3c producing a kilowatt hour of juice, without going in the red.

Of course there are some big, buzzy flies in this private-plan ointment, too. The utilities enjoy the immense advantages of serving a lot of customers and generating their product wholesale while selling it at retail. Thus they can afford to keep as much power as you need on tap at all times, and charge you (beyond a monthly minimum) only for the amount you use at any given time, even if it's only one lamp. But if you have your own plant, to burn one lamp you must run the whole plant, or invest in some auxiliary source for the small loads.

Another objection to the do-it-yourself power station is that you must generate by the same clumsy method as the utilities—a boiler followed by a steam turbine followed by a generator. You start with heat, convert it into mechanical energy, and finally convert it into electricity. The efficiency of even the most modern central stations isn't much over 30%, and your efficiency isn't going to be even 20%. Consequently for the 10 or 20 kilowatts you need, you have to clutter up the place with some pretty heavy and expensive machinery.

Of course if we could circumvent this roundabout process and turn heat directly into electricity, the outlook for the small electric plant would be much better. The British, the Germans, at least one great corporation and several universities in the United States all are working on this. The British seem to be in the lead at the moment. Their fuel-cells are reported to have achieved an efficiency of 65%, which is certainly impressive. But the cells are expensive, you need many of them to get 115 volts, and the present life is only about 1,000 hours. Still, it's early in the

game, and the steam engine didn't look so hot in 1770.

But even if small atomic electric plants fail to make the grade, there is an intermediate application of atomic power which by all indications will. A real-estate development of any size could have its own electric power plant, as some already have their own water supply and sewage-disposal facilities. Since the distances are relatively small, underground distribution would be feasible, and power failures due to fallen lines would be eliminated. At the same time the stations would not be too small for efficiency. Another possibility, and a promising one for lowering rates, is making the plant large enough to permit surplus steam to be piped around the development to heat the houses.

The plants would be automatic and several could be serviced by one man who would be summoned automatically by radio in the event of equipment trouble. A lot of answers to a lot of problems may lie in this scheme and atomic plants of 200-5,000 kw. capacity should be developed for this and similar markets. It would be a mistake to put all our eggs into the big-plant basket, or to go on the premise that only backward countries will buy small and medium reactors.

If all this should come to pass, no one need wring his hands for the utilities. They will retain their most profitable markets—the great metropolitan centers and the major part of the industrial load. They would be sorry to lose the inner suburbs and country towns with their relatively concentrated loads, but the fringe and distant suburbs which they would be in real danger of losing are also the least rewarding financially.

Troubles That Never Arrive

It's a tired old crack that the generals are always fighting the last war instead of the next one, but it's true of a good many generals and also of a good many engineers. The most advanced countries are the most likely to fall into this trap. They have such an investment in traditional plant and know-how that their industrialists and engineers find it hard to think in any other terms, or even to see the objectives which make sense and are bound to prevail.

Only a few decades ago mechanical refrigeration in the home was declared to be impractical, and indeed the not unresourceful General Electric Company, when it began building refrigerators, was almost overwhelmed by difficulties. But by the late 1920s these trials were already forgotten. Again, viewing the complexities of military radar in World War II, this reporter foresaw immense headaches in servicing civilian television equipment after the war. The headaches came, sure enough, but they were never really serious.

Engineering pessimism has always been proved wrong by engineering progress. It will be that way again, and on a far greater scale than ever before.

—By Carl Dreher

wordly wise

To Smell a Rat

Civilized man has had few enemies so cunning and persistent as the common rat. Able to adapt itself to almost any climate and diet, the rodent has been a household nuisance since the Stone Age. Crowded cities of medieval Europe provided an especially fine haven, and rats multiplied until they outnumbered humans.

No house was free of the pests, so it was common practice to give terriers and other rat-hunting dogs free run of palaces as well as huts. In the course of a quiet evening, it was not unusual for the family dog to spring into sudden action. Whining, barking, and scratching at floor or wall, the animal would show all signs of excitement. If no more obvious cause could be found, the dog's behavior would be shrugged aside as caused by his having whiffed a rodent. This occurred so frequently that any person showing signs of suspicion was compared with the dog and said to *smell a rat.*

—Webb B. Garrison

NIGHT CALL

Continued from page 9

studying. So you tell me about the alleys of life, Whitey."

The car went carefully around a corner. Whitey was doing nothing to merit police attention. "Lay offa me, Doc. I just couldn't think of anything else. Yeah, it's a shot guy, pal of mine, an' maybe—I just found out, he's a lammister."

"Lammister?"

"Jumped bail in one of those states out west. Otherwise, I'd just dumped him at a hospital, let him take his chances. . . . The ole guy shot us never saw his face, just mine." He shook his head seriously, his eyes on the street. "You can see I been doing good, Doc. Five years, and this is my first rumble."

Peter Rennick said: "Your idea of good and mine might not be the same. The throat ever give you any trouble, Whitey?"

"Naw. You done a good job."

The car was slowing now. Peter Rennick could read the house numbers in the light; he knew what street he was on. He said: "You're making a couple of bad mistakes now, Whitey. In the first place, I'm going to report this: it's my duty to report all gunshot cases."

"We'll take our chances, Doc. You saved my life; I know it. Busy hospital like that, sick as I was, who but you woulda put all that time in on a cheap hood?"

Who, indeed, Peter Rennick thought. A hospital does what it can do, not what it ought to; the theory that one life is sacred goes against the reality of necessity; put your manpower and your funds and your brains on the cases that can be saved, and let the statistics speak for you at the end of the year. Eastside did as well, or better, than most.

THE car was parked, the lights turned out, the keys were back in Whitey's pocket. He came around the car, opened the door for Peter Rennick, lifted the bag out of the back seat. Whitey stood a moment, looking down at the unwashed pavement. "Yeah, I guess nobody ever gave a damn for me before you or after, Doc. You said I was making two mistakes."

"The other one is, I'm a physician, not a surgeon. You want a good operator to get a bullet out."

"Yeah, well," Whitey said. He waved a hand at the door. "We better be getting in there. You think I'm dumb, but I know about you bein' a medicine Doc instead of, like, a cutter. But I figure, since I knew you, you been in the Army and all, you musta done some cutting, taken out some bullets."

Peter Rennick laughed, following his bag down steps to the basement apartment. "The Army had me stationed at Camp Lee," he said. "Training base for the Wacs." He chuckled again, catching the stereotyped, gaudy picture in Whitey's mind: a doctor, under fire, heroically amputating legs and stitching up wounds while privates with fixed bayonets kept the enemy off, and a white charger pawed the bloody ground. "You don't seem to know much about the Army, Whitey."

Whitey straightened from unlocking the apartment door. There was a certain lonely dignity to him that he'd lacked five years ago. "I been turned down for two wars, now," he said. "Maybe I didn't get the right things to eat when I was a kid. In here, Doc. This is my apartment."

Peter Rennick went in. White walls showed off modern furniture; there were plants in pots and a pretty fair copy of a Van Gogh on the wall. It hardly spelled Whitey, and Peter Rennick turned, surprised. His ex-patient was smiling. "I got a girl, Doc." He snapped the wall switch off again, and led the way to a back door.

This opened into a bedroom, plain, spacious. Oatmeal curtains closed off the backyard, two plain flower paintings ornamented the rough wallpaper. The woodwork was maroon, and spotlessly gleaming. A door showed a tiled bath, but Peter Rennick was concentrating, now, on the man in the bed.

HE'D been swarthy, a gleaming, plausible greasehead not long before. Now the hair was rumpled and matted, and dull where the grease had rubbed off on the pillow slip; the dark skin was pale; the shining black eyes were rolled up, showing much too much white. There was the smell of fever in the air.

A girl said: "I had to bandage him up, stop the bleeding. I hope I did right."

Peter Rennick said: "Yes, sure. Get me a clean soup plate, or something like it."

The girl looked startled, let her breath out. Peter Rennick, reaching for his bandage scissors, took a full second look at her. Short, very slight. Hair cropped almost like a boy's, big dark blue eyes, a sensitive mouth. Cutting the bandage away, he said: "You're Whitey's girl?"

She said: "Yes, Doctor. I—I live with Whitey. He's talked about you."

He laid the bandage back, stared at the wound. The lips were white and angry looking; there was a large red-and-yellow streaked area around them. He said: "That soup plate."

"My name's Rena, Doctor. I—I have the tea kettle boiling."

"Then rinse the plate before you bring it."

She was back almost at once, standing squarely across the bed from him. The man in the bed moaned deliriously and somewhere in the background Whitey paced nervously. Peter Rennick selected instruments, each in its sealed bottle of alcohol; probe, forceps, scalpel, speculum, protractors. He said: "Big-city

trick to save time. Carry sterile instruments with you." He pulled the corks and spilled instruments and alcohol into the dish.

Behind him Whitey let out a slight whimpering noise at the sight of the sharp blades, but the girl's hands on the dish never wavered. Peter Rennick said: "All right. Put the dish down—there—and come around. There's a packet with sterile gloves in it. Hold them open, pour some of that powder in." He smiled. "You've seen them do it in the movies."

She said nothing this time. Her fingers as she held the gloves were short and well-shaped. He said: "Now, you go scrub your hands—just like in the movies again—while I give him a shot. Otherwise he'll come to when we're half done."

The needle went home, the man sighed and was still. "Give it a minute to take hold. Whitey, that's quite a girl you got there."

Whitey said: "Don't I know it. . . . You know what? She goes to art school."

"Well, good for her," said Peter Rennick unenthusiastically.

The girl returned to the room.

"What does she think of the way you make your living?"

Whitey's eyes were narrowed. "Doc, you better get that bullet out. It'd be a lot of too bad for all of us if he croaked."

"Not for me, Whitey. I came here at a gun's mouth." He pulled the thread on a packet of sterile sponges, laid them, in their cellophane, on the bookcase that was the bed's headboard. The titles of the books trickled through to his consciousness. Art books: History of art, techniques of the masters.

He pointed a gloved finger at each of the instruments, called its name. "If you can remember those, Rena, hand me the one I ask for. If you get mixed up, he'll probably die. He got a name, Whitey?"

Whitey had turned back into a frightened slum child. "We call him Barb. He usta be a barber."

THE speculum separated the lips of the wound, the probe went in, and explored the area of the bullet. Then the forceps—and the bullet tumbled into the alcohol with the instruments. But it had glanced off the clavicle; there was broken bone there.

Sweat stung his eyes, and he alternately sponged and probed, extracted and, once, tied off a small artery. . . .

The girl, Rena, was no surgical nurse, but she was no quaking aspen, either. He broke the capsule with the ready-threaded needle in it, took four stitches and started bandaging. Then he straightened, and stripped off the gloves, threw them in the bag, wiped the alcohol—now red-streaked—from the instruments with the last of the sponges, and put them in the pocket of his bag he reserved for the sterilizer.

He moved away from the bed, fumbling cigarettes out of his pocket. Whitey struck a match, but he ignored it, lit his own. Some impulse made him offer the pack to the girl, but she shook her head.

Whitey said: "I got a bottle here, Doc. If you'd—"

"We'll skip the bottle and go right to the phone," Peter Rennick said. "Where is it?" He was speaking to Whitey, but he kept his eyes on the girl.

Whitey said, idiotically: "Phone?"

"Spring 7-3100," Peter Rennick said. "Police headquarters. I want an ambulance to take your friend the barber to the prison ward, Bellevue."

"He gonna croak, Doc?"

"He's going to have a stiff shoulder for a week," Peter Rennick said. "You could be a little stiffer than that, when the boys in the basement get through with you, Whitey." He still watched the girl.

She swallowed, but her eyes didn't lower. "Of course, Whitey. You can't expect the doctor to break the law for you. Why, he could lose everything he's worked for."

Whitey said, stubbornly: "He's a right guy, Rena. You shoulda seen what he done for me when I was sick."

Rena said: "Maybe your idea of a right guy and the doctor's aren't the same. You could lose your chance to practice for not reporting this, couldn't you, Doctor?"

Peter Rennick nodded.

"She said: "Then report it."

PETER RENNICK relaxed by the open window a moment, looking at the dying flowers. "Change the bandages tomorrow evening," he said. "I'll leave you some, and some powder to sprinkle on the wound. Start giving him strong soup tomorrow noon, he can have solid food the next day. And Whitey, phone for a cab for me."

Whitey said: "I'll drive you back, Doc."

"I'll take a cab. And pay for it." He reached for his prescription pad and wrote on it angrily. "Be at this address at nine tomorrow, Whitey. A friend of mine, surgical supply house. You're going to begin doing honest work for a living. You'll start by pushing a supply cart. You'll push it till your back hurts worse than the Barber's there."

Whitey bleated: "Yes, Doc," and dived for the phone.

Peter Rennick still stood staring at the girl named Rena. "Whitey was my first patient," he said.

She said: "I see."

"Don't you ever blink those eyes?" he asked. "You copied that Van Gogh in the other room," he said. "Stop copying. Start doing something of your own."

She said: "Yes, Doctor."

"A man feels an obligation to his first patient," he said. Then he banged his bag shut, snatched it up. "Not that I owe you an explanation. I don't owe you anything," Peter Rennick said, "and if Whitey isn't there at nine, I call the cops."

The girl said: "Yes, Doctor." And Peter Rennick left, slamming the apartment door.

—By RICHARD WORMSER

You Can Lose Your Shirt in Uranium

Continued from page 12

brazen assurance, these rat-hole salesmen of phony securities can't be beaten."

They lie glibly, spin the most fantastic claims and then they vanish, like Frosty the Snowman. One crew, Mr. Funston relates, actually walked into the board room of a brokerage branch in Miami and began mingling with the clients, talking up their uranium promotion. "They actually were able to persuade a client to enter an order, through the member firm, for the worthless security they were touting," Mr. Funston says. The Stock Exchange president is especially bitter about some Canadian promoters whom he calls "shoddy shysters who are picking the pockets of the American public" by selling shares in "dreamboats."

The boiler room, streamlined and brought up-to-date, is still the chief sales weapon of the phony promoters. It works as follows:

After the corporation is set up, the promoters rent a set of offices whose main equipment is a battery of telephones. Sucker lists are obtained, and then two types of phone salesmen go to work.

The first type is called the "opener." He's just a beginner in the swindle field and it's his job to call name after name on his list and try to obtain a flicker of a response. When he gets one, the opener turns his prospect over to the "reloader," a past master in the art of persuasion. This fellow can sell you an icy plateau in the wilderness where the foot of man has never trod. In fact he has, often.

The SEC has in its files some tape recordings of a reloader at work on a prospect, and for sheer charlatanism, larded with creamy layers of gall, there's never been anything like it. The salesman, brisk, confident and silky-voiced, introduces himself, chats about stocks in general and then casually drops the venture he's promoting into the conversation. Big doings are afoot, he hints, but be can't reveal what's happening just yet. He hangs up with a promise to let the prospect—by now termed a "live one"—know. The hook has been baited. It may take three or even a half dozen calls, but the salesmen are persistent and their stories get more lurid each time, and finally the fish is pulled in.

The sheer brass of the reloader passeth all understanding. One salesman called a Boston widow three times in one week and on the fourth call, he spoke breathlessly:

"Madam! I've just come from the uranium field and do you know what? The Geiger counters are working!"

"Oh, how wonderful," the woman exclaimed. "Then that means . . ."

"It certainly does, madam," the salesman interrupted, "and if I were you, I wouldn't wait another moment."

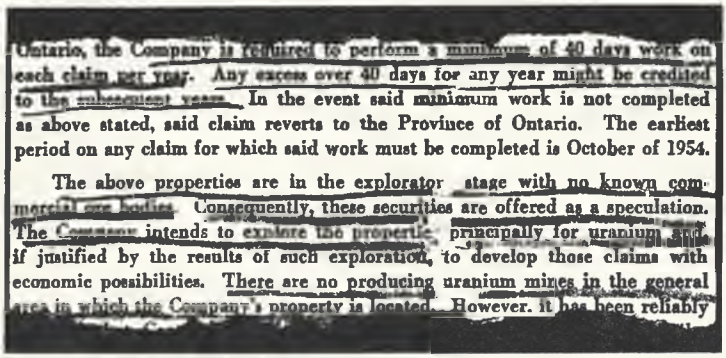
She didn't. Convinced that Geiger counters which work meant immediate profits in uranium, she wrote a $12,500 check for 20,000 shares of worthless stock.

Not long ago, after a hearing, the SEC stopped one operation by revoking the broker-dealer registration of the Securities National Corp. The outfit had been selling shares in a venture called Utah-Wyoming Atomic Corp. Some revelations of how reloaders operate came first-hand from the hearing, to wit:

George Steelman, an Atlantic City, N. J., laundry manager, got taken for a nice bite. A dulcet-voiced salesman, he testified, had convinced him by saying that (a) a U.S. Congressman had just bought 250,000 shares, (b) the Du Pont interests were casting sharp eyes toward the company with a view to buying in, and (c) the Atomic Energy Commission itself had invested to the tune of 60,000 shares. Well, what's good enough for the AEC is good enough for Steelman. He bought $10,000 worth of stock. He lost $10,000.

Joseph Bongard, a photoengraver of Maplewood, N. J., said a salesman, apparently with a straight face, told him he had just refused to sell a huge quantity

Interest in uranium is so great around North Salt Lake, Utah, that one gas company gives away uranium maps. Here, Denton Jones hands one out.



Ontario, the Company is required to perform a minimum of 40 days work on each claim per year. Any excess over 40 days for any year might be credited to the subsequent years. In the event said minimum work is not completed as above stated, said claim reverts to the Province of Ontario. The earliest period on any claim for which said work must be completed is October of 1954.

The above properties are in the explorator stage with no known commercial ore bodies. Consequently, these securities are offered as a speculation. The Company intends to explore the properties principally for uranium and if justified by the results of such exploration, to develop those claims with economic possibilities. There are no producing uranium mines in the general area in which the Company's property is located. However, it has been reliably

Excerpt from full-page newspaper ad in which company admits—because law requires it—that there are no producing uranium mines in area near company's land.

of stock to the brokerage firm of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Beane. "We prefer to sell it in small lots to small fellows and let them make the profits," he quoted the reloader. Bongard was terribly grateful and bought. He wishes he hadn't.

And that's the story of just one promotion. The list of those doing the taking is long and the list of individuals being taken is longer still. Hear some painful case histories from all over and bear in mind that there are many, many others like them:

From New England: A Montreal operator convinced a farmer to sink $2,700 into a uranium speculative venture. A short time later, the salesman was back with another story and got $6,400 more. This time, however, the farmer became suspicious and stopped payment on his check. The salesman thereupon proved his mettle. He called and was so persuasive he not only convinced the farmer to let the check go but sold him another $3,000 worth of the same stock!

From St. Louis: A mechanic bought a good-sized block of stock after a promoter whipped out a map and convinced him that part of the uranium-bearing vein of rock which got Charlie Steen his fortune extended into his holdings. "It's the same ore and it's on our land," said the fast-talking stock salesman. "We can't miss. Charlie didn't." Then the investor learned, long after his check cleared the bank, that the company's land was half a continent away from Steen's.

From New York: You wouldn't believe this one and neither would I if anyone less than James T. Glavin, head of the SEC in the New York area, had told it to me. One salesmen excitedly phoned a prospect and said his company had discovered a vast deposit of uranium on its property and had already completed mining operations. "All we need now," he said, "is money to buy trucks so that we can haul the uranium off to the Atomic Energy Commission and sell it." The pitch was successful.

Of course, not all investors are as gullible as these, but it's unquestionably true that most persons now "in the market" are actually financial babes-in-the-wood and pretty easy pickings for the sophisticated lads who know the angles.

One wise old investment counselor, in the business a half century, told me that most amateurs in the market reason this way:

"Things," they tell themselves, "are not as they were before the '29 market crash, when any crook could open a bucket shop and peddle stock in the Brooklyn Bridge or the crown jewels if anyone wanted to buy. Now we have the Securities and Exchange Commission to protect the investor. The good old SEC is right in there, flailing right and left at crooks with a great big club. All stocks, bonds, securities and what-have-you that are offered these days must get by the sharp eyes and keen legal minds of SEC men. So if the SEC approves, how can I get gypped?"

Famous last words. "Believe me," the old investment man asserted, "I am not overstating the case. The average market unsophisticate does reason that way and while he's partly right, he's wrong enough to lose his shirt. . . ."

The SEC and the government *have* made things tougher for crooked stock promoters through generally tighter regulations all down the line. The SEC does require that any offering to sell stock be accompanied by a prospectus setting forth the material facts about the company and what it is offering to the public.

But—this is important—"The fact that a company has filed a prospectus with the SEC does not mean the commission considers the offering a good investment or even a good speculation," the National Better Business Bureau declares in a special warning it was forced to send recently to its affiliates. *"The SEC has no authority to assess the value of an offering."*

In addition, there is an SEC rule—Regulation A—which states that stock offerings under $300,000 are exempt from filing detailed financial reports which customarily are required of larger corporations. Needless to say, the shady uranium company ventures manage to squeeze themselves under the famous "Reg. A."

In other words, then, the SEC can only demand that the facts be disclosed in a prospectus, and organi-

zations such as the BBB can only urge folks for heaven's sake to read the fine print. The rest is up to the investor's common sense and gambling instinct.

And, moans Emmett Dean, manager of the financial and commercial division of the New York BBB. so many persons neither read nor have the slightest interest in knowing just what's in the fine print. "If they only did," said Mr. Dean, handing me a sheaf of circulars—each a prospectus for a uranium offering.

"These have been filed with the SEC; they are all in good order as far as that goes," said Mr. Dean. "But read what it says in the fine print."

I did. There, plain as day and twice as clear, were phrases such as these:

- "The company has not yet commenced actual operations."
- "The above properties are in the exploratory stage with no known commercial ore bodies. Consequently, these securities are offered as a speculation."
- "There are no producing uranium mines in the general area in which the company's property is located."
- "To date, the company has completed only preliminary exploratory and geological work consisting of a Geiger counter reconnaissance of claims and a limited amount of sampling."
- "There is no assurance sufficient funds can be raised to permit exploratory work of any material nature on presently held leasehold interests. If insufficient funds are raised pursuant to the present offerings to carry out the purposes of the financing, the amounts paid in by the investors will not be returned to them."
- "The company invites attention to the fact that its proposed program of operations involves a considerable amount of risk and no assurance can be given that it will result in discovery or development of commercially valuable minerals."

Well, would you wager a worn-out sou on any stock which bluntly told you the above cheerful facts? Naturally not—I hope. These phrases get by the SEC all right because they are, after all, the truth. Unhappily, however, they also get by the investor who, in the manner typical of Americans, rarely reads the little print and hears only the version given him by the nice salesman who goes off on imaginary toots of his own creation.

You add it all up and the greater part of $100 million goes down the drain every blessed year. And did you say that you can recover your money if you discover a fraud, that all you have to do is complain to the SEC and the dough is gotten back for you? Sorry, friend, but look up the Securities Act. It says that there's a statute of limitations—a very brief one, at that. If you wait as little as one year after discovery of a fraud before bringing suit, you've had it. You can't do a thing to get your investment back. "In most cases," points out Mr. Glavin of the SEC, "an investor has no inkling of strange goings-on until much more than a year has elapsed."

Meanwhile, you worked hard for your dough, so safeguard it by heeding these rules about penny stocks, rules which are a distillation of advice offered by outstanding investment authorities:

1. DON'T have a darned thing to do with people who try to sell you stocks by telephone.

2. DON'T have anything to do with a stock salesman you haven't met personally or who comes to you totally unrecommended.

3. DON'T pay the slightest attention to a whispered promise that a particular stock is slated for a quick run-up. When it comes to uranium issues, this is crystal-ball gazing, pure and simple.

4. DON'T put your hopes or your money on oral statements made to you by a stock salesman. These assertions, if not included in the document, are not binding.

5. DO study the prospectus carefully. Consider the company's financial structure and condition, the equipment it owns, to what extent its property has been explored and developed and how the proceeds from the sale of stock are to be used. Remember that the money investors put into a company can be largely gobbled up by sales commissions, underwriting expenses of the company and dealers, loans, legal and administrative expenses. A company which has no intention of producing uranium ore can just take all of the invested money, unless or until caught at it.

6. DO make sure the company is a going concern, that a good engineering report on the property has been made and that the presence of commercial grade ore has been proved. The lowest grade the AEC will buy contains two pounds of uranium oxide a ton; the oxide brings about $1.50 a pound. As the grade rises above four pounds a ton, the base price rises to $3.50 a pound. There is a complex schedule of premium payments for richer ore, development allowances and even bonuses. Learn what they are by writing to your local office of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, or addressing the commission at Washington 25, D.C.

7. DO take the engineer's report to your own engineering consultant for an evaluation, if you plan to invest a substantial sum. He'll charge you a fee, of course, but it could be money saved.

8. DO ask your banker or broker this vital question: Suppose you've a mind to sell the security at any time after you've acquired it. Is there a ready market for it? If not, prepare to zip up your wallet.

In short, look carefully, read thoroughly and know where you are going. Nobody's stopping you from speculating—it's a great American game, always was, always will be—just so long as you know the score. There's a whale of a difference between reasonable speculation and throwing your money down a deep, dark hole.

Just remember that a few hundred plunked down today doesn't necessarily buy you a Jaguar and cabin cruiser tomorrow. As Rep. Klein put it as I was leaving his office: "Tell your readers they can get richer by winning the $64,000 question."

—By Lester David

A PERFECT EVENING ON THE HOUSE

by Loyd Rosenfield

THE DINNER

A rib roast, rare, will be just right
To serve this husband who is starving,
And just before you bring it in
Be good enough to do the carving.

THE CHORES

Please scrape the plates with paper spoons
And keep the back screen-door from flapping,
For while you do the dishes, dear,
I won't waste time—I'll spend it napping.

THE TELEVISION

Feel free to watch Old Teeth-and-Candles
Or Sweet Magnolia Time in Natchez
Before, or during the commercials
On Dragnet and the boxing matches.

THE CONVERSATION

Let's talk of anything you wish,
As long as it is light and funny,
Which automatically excludes
Relations, politics and money.

THE READING MATTER

To give me reading relaxation
When I have done my daily labors,
Hand me the paper, still unfolded,
And don't loan BLUEBOOK to the neighbors.

THE RETIRING

I'd like the icebox primed at twelve
So I can do some extra eating,
But please, dear, don't wait up for me—
Go climb in bed and warm the sheeting.

PTG: Hidden Killer

Continued from page 19

New Mexican state safety officials had become alarmed at the growing number of car crashes along a well-paved ribbon of flat, clean federal highway between the Arizona border and Albuquerque. The road, part of nationwide route 66, was claiming 18.5 fatal accidents for every 100 million vehicle miles, almost twice the national average for open highways. Reviewing sheafs of accident and death reports for this particular section, the officials found a curious fact—the great majority of victims were driving eastbound and, further, these victims were with few exceptions Southern California residents. So the officials sounded an urgent call for California safety experts to come and have a look.

After months of interviews, research, and talks with traffic experts, highway patrolmen, and, in some cases, victims who had survived, California's scientists —the team from UCLA—were able to recreate the killer conditions.

Much Later Than He Thought

As a typical example, they pointed to a Los Angeles industrialist who had started cross-country for a business convention in the Midwest. Leaving L.A. the industrialist chose U.S. 66 because it was wide, clean, and in good repair all the way. Despite some mountain driving, he made good time during the day and almost before he expected it he arrived at Flagstaff, Ariz., his planned stopping spot for the night.

Elated over the fact that 450 miles were behind him, and that it was just a few minutes after three in the afternoon, the industrialist decided to push on. The next stop, Albuquerque, 350 miles farther, seemed not too far.

But his elation was temporary, and he became more and more tired, both physically and mentally. Too far out of Flagstaff to turn back, he pushed the speedometer needle up and up as his personal stamina went down and down. The car was more than halfway into a sharp curve before his dulled reflexes came to life and his foot skittered onto the brake pedal. By that time it was too late. The car skidded across the white line, bounced head-on into a curve warning sign, and tumbled over the road shoulder into a muddy irrigation ditch. Police said the man died of a broken neck long before the water swirled in through the shattered windows. Investigators listed the accident cause as speeding, but the real cause, says Dr. Haber, head of the UCLA research group, was that "the man became victim of his own misplaced self-confidence."

He explains, "Naturally, to the highway patrol, all these accidents looked like cases of speeding, reckless driving or, sometimes, pure physical fatigue. Actually, the causes were psychological.

"The condition of the road, the thickness of traffic, the destination for the day, and even the behavior of the kids in the back seat of the car can all combine to become a destructive force," adds Dr. Haber. "These factors, and others, affect the driver."

Out of their early research, the scientists learned that drivers completely ignore the fact that driving today's automobile is different from driving yesterday's. In older cars, drivers could push on all day, and the slower, comfortable cruising speeds and the need for more stops kept the day's driving strain within sensible limits. But today's cars, with their higher cruising speeds and longer ranges between stops, can easily carry a man beyond his physical or mental tolerances. "The weakest point in today's cars," say the scientists, "is the driver."

Unaware of this, many drivers set impossible tasks for themselves. Researcher Robert Brenner cites the case of a Southern California textile salesman whose territory covered an area from Los Angeles to Bakersfield, some 125 miles away. The salesman made that trip, and return, three times a week. He knew every curve and bump in the winding and treacherous Grapevine route over California's Tehachapi mountain range between those two cities. He even knew the waitress who was on duty every morning at a coffee stop near the crest of the Grapevine.

One day, the salesman was in a bad mood when he arrived at the Grapevine restaurant. He had, the waitress told researchers later, been held up by road construction several miles down the highway and his "schedule" was running 15 minutes late. He gulped down a cup of coffee, crammed one doughnut into his mouth and another into his pocket and, on his way out the door, yelled back at the waitress, "See you Friday. Got to make up that 15 minutes."

Four and a half miles later, he pushed his car into a winding mountain curve too fast, careened off the retaining wall and into a passing truck. He was carried away in critical condition from a skull fracture and internal injuries.

Investigating further, the researchers found that the salesman had no appointment at a definite time in Bakersfield. But, talking to his friends, they learned that he had been quite proud of his driving ability and had constantly bragged that he could arrive in Bakersfield, within three minutes of his estimated driving time on every trip.

When a Driver Goes to Pieces

"By setting himself an impossible driving task on this particular day," says gray-haired Dr. Haber, "this driver created his own accident. The accident was set in motion the moment the driver encountered the detour which held him up."

Quiet-spoken Slade Hulbert, the psychologist of the investigating team, concurred, saying, "This case

is common. The great majority of drivers schedule their driving times from one point to another and never consider delays that might crop up. If the schedule goes to pieces for some reason, the driver does too."

The scientists refer to this driver failing as "the ETA habit," a phrase borrowed from the military term meaning "estimated time of arrival." Bomber crews, during combat days, plotted ETA over target areas in order to assure bombardment accuracy and correct scheduling of operations. For them, it was necessary. But most drivers create an ETA for their destination as a diversion from the monotony of driving. "After a while," says researcher Brenner, "they forget that it's a game and their 'target' time becomes a very real and dangerous part of their driving behavior."

Another important factor in the new theory is the psychological letdown experienced by many drivers when the destination is in sight. This factor alone may

Accident mysteries solved by PTG

Why was it that almost all the victims of accidents on one state's highways were people from two states away?

Why are so many returning vacationists killed in their own home towns?

Why do straight, level highways often have the highest accident rates?

Why do cars go mysteriously out of control in mountain country?

Why do drivers go erratic and wild after sitting a long time behind the wheel?

be the main clue to the paradox of the many returning vacationists who are killed in their own home towns.

The only survivor of a crash, just inside the Chicago city limits on Pulaski Road, was a young girl who had been seated in the back seat of a new car which swerved into heavy rush-hour traffic, causing a major multiple collision. Questioned later she said, "One minute my father was laughing and joking with us and the next when we hit the city limits, he got very quiet and sort of slumped down in his seat. He said he was glad the trip was over."

The Chicago police found no apparent reason for the accident. But the UCLA researchers found the solution simple: Although more than eight miles of hard traffic driving still remained before this family was actually at their doorsteps, psychology had tricked the driver into believing that he was *home* and home represented security. "After a 1,500-mile trip, he had let down just eight miles too soon," the scientists explain.

Fatal Indecision

Another psychological factor that causes accidents, the research team has discovered, is fatigue and nervous pressure due to a lack of flexibility. Coming into a strange town, without reservations, drivers cruise the streets looking for a suitable motel or hotel in which to stop for the night. As the car rolls slowly down the main street, the driver, or other car occupants, pick faults with one stopping place or another and, eventually, wind up on their way out of town without having stopped. By this time, the driver is accelerating the car and the town is rapidly disappearing behind. "It is a rare driver," states researcher Slade Hulbert, "who can be flexible enough to turn around and go back to the motels or hotels which were available. The average driver, unfortunately, keeps his foot on the gas and lets himself in for another 50 to 100 miles of extra driving."

"The most important factor here," adds Haber, "is that if the driver is already looking for a place to stop, he should stop—right now!"

Their research has led the UCLA team to the conclusion that many accidents could be avoided but for the vanity of the driver. "Many capable, excellent drivers, with good knowledge of the route and of their car, make one primary mistake," explains Dr. Haber. "They think the car will be out of control if they aren't at the wheel. They consider all other drivers inferior."

Although other drivers in the car *may* be inferior, the scientists believe that the passenger with limited driving experience is safer than the very experienced driver who has been behind the wheel too long. "No matter how good a driver you are," explains Hulbert, "your wife is better if you're tired and she's fresh."

In addition to the psychological dangers hidden within the driver's mind, the actual geography of the trip contains many external factors which can affect driver attitudes and reactions. Until now, these outside influences have received short shrift as highway dangers. In their proper perspective, under the PTG theory, they take on new, and important, meanings.

One of the most commonly overlooked, but most important, is what the scientists call "road hypnosis." Every cross-country vacationist has experienced a form of road hypnosis, particularly after a long day's driving. He finds it hard to concentrate his vision on nearby objects and has a "staring" look for several hours after the day's trip is over.

Road hypnosis is the product of flat, level roads, constant engine hum, steady car vibrations, and the seating position which is generally the same hour after hour.

On a straight, flat stretch of highway in Fairfax County, Virginia, a highway patrolman noticed a new

No matter how good a driver you are, your wife is better if you're tired and she's fresh.

car traveling at a little over the legal speed limit. As he watched, the car began to drift slowly across the three-lane road. When the driver gave no indication of straightening the car, the patrolman gave chase. As he pulled alongside, the trooper hit the horn button on his radio car, but the driver continued to stare straight ahead. With the car still drifting sideways toward the police car, the patrolman slowed up a little, and cracked the siren on his right front fender just as it lined up with the driver's closed window. The driver suddenly sat bolt upright, looked around wild-eyed and finally followed the trooper's pointed finger to the shoulder of the road.

The Dangers of Altitude

In addition to road hypnosis, Dr. Haber and his staff found another major influence on driver behavior to be the effects of high altitudes. Medical men call this hypoxia. With most of our national parks and monuments, and many vacation spots, located high in the eastern and western mountain ranges of the United States, millions of Americans let themselves in for the effects of hypoxia every summer.

In a cross section of average individuals, studied by a group of Air Force scientists, many showed an increase in pulse rate, a lessening of visual accuracy, and slightly slower responses at an altitude of 7,300 feet, or about the altitude of the Continental Divide. At altitudes around 10,000 feet these individuals began to develop hand tremors, nervousness, sleepiness, dizziness, headaches and lassitude. Several became sick at the stomach, some had trouble with blurred vision, and 30 percent lost some portion of their touch and pain sense. The lack of oxygen at high altitudes was affecting the normal mental processes—those processes needed for safe driving.

Fortunately, there are only a few mountain passes in the U.S. over 10,000 feet: Independence (12,095 feet), Iceberg (11,800 feet), and Milner (10,759 feet). Even so, the Air Force research showed that many Americans are affected by altitudes *as low as 5,000 feet.* Several major cross-country routes go through passes this high or higher and a number of our leading tourist attractions are located at an altitude above 5,000 feet.

Although the Air Force requires oxygen masks on all aircrewmen only above 10,000 feet, this fact is somewhat misleading. Fliers are, of necessity, young and in fine physical condition. The same can't be said about all drivers. The effect of high altitude driving on older motorists or on drivers who suffer from heart trouble, anemia, or respiratory diseases, has long been recognized as dangerous by the medical profession. One of the police officers who patrols the Donner Pass area in California (7,135 feet) told the UCLA research team that he has often stopped out-of-state cars which were weaving on the highway. The drivers, not familiar with this type of air, had become altitude dizzy.

One of the worst accidents in the history of that region took place when one such victim, driving a pick-up truck with an attached house trailer, became dizzy and lost control of the truck. Approximately five tons of steel left the road and rolled down a snowy slope into a group of vacationing skiers. Toll: three dead, four injured. The passenger in the truck admitted later that his partner had complained of feeling "faint."

The most intangible physical aspect of the UCLA theory is constructed around the driver's skin sensitivity. In the old days, barnstorming pilots called this, "Flying by the seat of your pants." Today, subconsciously, drivers and pilots alike depend upon that skin sensitivity to tell the brain if the plane or car is balanced and handling properly.

An earlier researcher in this subject, H. A. Witkin, pointed out that riders with eyes closed can tell every stop, start and curve during a ride. He explained, "These sensations are received through the tactile surface of the skin at all those places in contact with the auto seat and there can be little doubt that [in driving] we make use of these kinesthetic cues."

For average drivers on long-distance trips, that seat-of-the-pants feeling is important, Dr. Haber maintains, for it automatically helps the driver to steer and handle his car correctly on grades, curves and in other road situations where the car is not level.

Cows, Camels and Cliffs

By sitting in one position for hours, drivers begin to lose this seat-of-the-pants feeling with the car. The blood circulation through the body becomes impaired and, as a consequence, the oxygen supply to the brain is affected. A good driver, under these circumstances, can easily become erratic and wild, can oversteer or understeer his car on bad curves or tricky roads.

Another dangerous way in which the mind can fool the driver, the UCLA researchers point out, is through hypnogogic or road hallucination. Case histories of accidents throughout the nation claim that victims have "seen" dogs, cows, children and other cars on highways which were actually deserted except for the victim's car. One driver, who makes a living caravaning cars from Detroit to the West Coast, swears to this day that he spotted three camels on an Arizona highway. Another driver, a tourist who had driven his family over 250 miles from the North Rim of the Grand Canyon to the South Rim—in one day

—continued to see sheer cliffs blocking the road ahead of his car. This came long after he had hit the flatland roads.

"One psychological theory about hallucinations," explains researcher Hulbert, "is that the driver is tired but part of his mind wants to push on. The other part of his mind creates the hallucination in order to make the driver stop." (This phenomenon was explained in full detail in "Road Mirages Can Kill You," in June 1955 BLUEBOOK.)

What can a driver do to avoid the dangers of PTG? Although the UCLA group recognizes that their theory is but in its infancy and that a great deal more research must be done before any radical rules or conclusions can be drawn, they offer several suggestions and methods by which vacationists, traveling businessmen and tourists can avoid accidents:

Make like the fly boys. Dr. Haber, who also is an expert in aviation medicine, points out that no careful pilot, be he amateur or professional, would consider a cross-country flight without first making a "flight plan," then sticking to it. A junket by car is many times more dangerous than an air trip, yet not two out of every 10 motorists adequately plan their trips. In making his "trip plan" the driver should study the territory ahead, looking for high altitude passes, interminable stretches of long, flat roads, dangerous distances between accommodations. Auto clubs, oil companies and other trip-planning services offer free information about routes and overnight accommodations. If long stretches of desert driving or high-altitude passes are included on the route, drivers should try to hit these dangerous sections early in the morning while fresh and rested, the scientists advise.

Go by time, not by distance. The average driver is well aware that eight hours of work can wear him out. Yet, 500 miles can easily be 10 hours' work. Drivers forget that when they drive this far they're taxing their everyday threshold of fatigue by two, and often more, hours.

Allow for a two-way stretch. The first and last days of any trip are the most dangerous. On the first day, drivers try to cover a lot of ground and often push themselves beyond physical endurance. The last day of the trip they may take even greater chances because of the strong desire to "get home" and sleep in their own beds. Home, itself, may be an impossible distance for one day's drive but too many motorists try to make it and fail. "Drivers should always allow one extra day to get home," advises researcher Brenner. "Vacations, especially in the sun, are very wearing and drivers are often more tired after the vacation than before."

Give the wife a chance. Even the novice is better behind the wheel than an experienced, but tired, driver. So rotate drivers regularly. "The more weary a driver becomes," Dr. Haber warns, "the more easily he can fall prey to any or all of the PTG killers." When there's no one to spell him, the driver should stop every two hours and get out of the car for a few deep breathing and leg-limbering exercises. The lack of skin sensitivity never makes itself known. It is the *lack* that is dangerous.

Avoid "schedulitis." A day's destination should never be "firm" if the driver is beginning to tire. Drivers should never try to "average 60" from point A to point B, or set rigid driving schedules which *must* be adhered to. This, regardless of how well the driver knows the road.

Don't make molehills out of mountains. If the driver has anemia, heart trouble, or a weakness for respiratory diseases, he should drive slowly through high-altitude country, resting frequently. Better still, another driver should take the car through these areas. At extremely high altitudes, all drivers should exercise extreme care.

In addition to these precautions the motorist can take, state safety authorities can help by erecting warning signs near "accident focal points," like that stretch of U.S. 66 in New Mexico which killed so many Californians. Also recommended is a special station, manned by highway patrolmen, which would serve to slow down and warn tourists that a certain stretch of highway is dangerous, and why. All mountain passes and roads leading into high altitudes should be adequately posted at levels above 4,500 feet, and, to make it complete, the UCLA researchers suggest signs warning drivers about road hypnosis, loss of skin sensitivity, and the danger of keeping a rigid timetable.

"These verbal and posted warnings would keep drivers aware of the hidden dangers on the highway," concludes Dr. Haber. "The danger of speeding always makes itself known by a mechanical indicator. Reckless drivers are often warned by the irate horns of surrounding traffic. But psychology is silent, it points no guilty fingers, blows no horns.

"If every driver is aware that the psychology of his own mind and the geography of the road can combine to kill him, we may be able to disarm this major killer, completely." —BY TERRY GALANOY

Native Wit...

DURING A RECENT bus strike in St. Louis, I drove my car to work each day. On my way downtown I picked up people who were stranded because of the strike.

One morning I pulled up to a corner where a smartly dressed girl was standing and asked how far she was going.

She smiled and said: "Not *that* far, thank you!"

—ERNEST BLEVINS
Kirkwood, Mo.

Fear Is a Brassy Taste

Continued from page 20

looked at her steadily. "Tell me about it. I know it all, but only in black and white, with no life to the words."

So she repeated it to him, how her sister and his brother Jack had died on a highway the day before their tenth wedding anniversary, how the orphaned Pat had gone to live with her because his only other blood kin was running a guest house in East Africa. Her voice did not falter, the accident was half a year in the past, but the brown eyes were a little wet and even finer for it. Shards of topaz under water, he thought inanely. He said, "I'm sorry you've had such a bother."

"Pat isn't a bother. He's my nephew as well as yours, and as well-behaved as you can ask a small boy to be. I teach college history, Will. My hours in school don't coincide with Pat's. A seven-year-old shouldn't spend hours alone in an apartment, and can't roam the streets till supper. My salary isn't quite princely—"

"I sent money," Boko said. "I'd have sent more, regularly."

"I'm not whining, Will Muir, I'm trying to explain that a boy needs more than half a mother, and a foster-mother at that!"

"Wasn't bragging, honest," Boko told her mildly. "Didn't mean to begin on the wrong hoof."

The screened door opened and Big January came out with the boy. Big January weighed 280 and was the best Swahili cook north of Nairobi. He rumbled peevishly at Boko. "This *mtoto* ask for a peg, *Bwana*. I say him too little, too too!"

"Give him a peg," said Boko solemnly. "Orange juice peg with a couple of cherries in it."

"*Ndio*," said Big January, showing a great many large teeth. "Come, Little *Bwana*, I fix a peg." They retired again.

"Let's get you settled, Jane," said Boko, gathering up her luggage. "We've lots of time to thresh this over. Wash up and change into something rugged, and I'll show you the village." He ushered her to her room, somewhat relieved of his apprehension, for this was to all appearances a good woman; and Pat was Boko's brother in miniature, which was as first-rate as they come.

He took them to the river. The half-dozen other guests were just beginning to move sluggishly about, to sip hot coffee and light cigarettes and pry open their eyes; they wouldn't require their host's attention for hours yet. "Look there," said Boko, leading Jane and Pat out on a wide shelf of shale. "That's the village." He pointed to the papyrus reeds.

The reeds were tall this year, for the season had been wetter than usual. They grew thick and luxuriant all over the swampy section which began at the river and came up within a quarter-mile of the guest house. To the north the rocky ground stopped them, and southward they thinned to sparse patches as the banks rose high and steep. But for many thousands of square yards they formed a dense green mass, almost impenetrable and twice as tall as a man.

"All through those reeds," said Boko, "there are tunnels. In the boggiest part they're beaten down four feet below ground level, and they're full of stagnant, muddy water. The others are entrenched only a little, and sometimes their floors are very hard, almost like concrete because the broken vegetation has been smashed down so violently into the soil. The tunnels wind and cross and straggle, and if a fellow went into them, he'd most likely never come out again."

"Why wouldn't he, Boko?" asked the boy.

"Ah," smiled Boko, "that's because of who made the tunnels. You look down to the river and you'll see."

Pat and the girl turned their heads. The boy crowed loud with excitement. Jane Cochran said, "Hippos?"

Some of them were out of the water, lying on a sandbank in an uneven row, basking and dozing in the sun. Many others floated in the shallows, some with wet backs showing, most submerged but for bulging eyes and snouts. Now a two-ton mother burst from the stream, her fat pink calf riding on her neck; she stood a moment and then plunged back and out of sight, the water lapping over the placid infant without disturbing him in the least.

"See the baby!" exclaimed Pat, dancing. "Is he as old as me?"

"When he's that old, he'll be taller than you are now. He'll go 14 feet from stem to stern, and have tusks a couple of feet long. He won't be pink, but very dark brown; and he'll weigh eight thousand pounds."

"Gosh!" said Pat in a small voice.

" 'Hippo village' is a native term for the reed patch," said Boko to Jane. "There aren't many spots in Africa where such congregations of hippo still remain. It was blind luck that it hadn't been shot out before I found it in '46. Built my guest house here, and pestered the British government into making the area a sanctuary."

"Do you have many visitors?"

"As many as I can handle. They come from all over, and even safaris stop, after they've killed enough, to relax and maybe soak up a little peace. Very calming sight, the fat chaps here, unless they start a brawl, and that's roarin' fun." He turned toward the river, and his long-set affection for the brutes quickened again as he saw them lolling, water-sleeked, in the brown shallows. "The most neglected of the great

beasts," he said quietly. "When you think of a hippo, you imagine a vast insensitive lump, and he's not that, not that at all. If he's let alone, he's tranquil and happy, doesn't harm a soul; he has strength without cruelty, grotesqueness without, in my opinion, real ugliness. . . . But I mustn't bore you," he said, looking at Jane, and from a fresh girl to share enthusiasm with him she abruptly became a problem again. "I ride my hobby hard," he said. "Let's go see if Big January has a snack for us."

"You weren't boring me," said Jane, and left the river as reluctantly, it seemed, as did the boy Pat.

In the evening an exhausted Pat was abed, and Jane sat with Boko on the veranda, no lights. "I like your Africa," she said, softly—for other guests were close—but with a warmth in her voice. "So does the boy."

"I wish he could stay," said Boko, and meant it. "Wish I knew what to do. But there's no school nearer than Nairobi. My college was lopped off by the war and never resumed. What could I teach the boy but animal lore and how to manage a rest house for weary sportsmen?"

"You could make better arrangements than an orphanage, at least. Will," she said, leaning toward him and whispering with a kind of despairing urgency, "I love that child. He's potentially a real man, there's not a mean or a weak place in him. Can I give him to confusion and fear and bitterness now? Can you?"

"No," he said. "No. We'll work it out. And look, Jane," he said, "could you manage 'Boko'? I hardly know who Will Muir is any more."

"What *is* that absurd name?" She controlled herself, sheering as he did from a question that was thornily awkward because they were still strangers to one another. "You promised to tell us."

"Swahili. Means *hippo*."

Native Wit...

A BACHELOR, ignorant in the intricacies of married life, was puzzled by the comments of a happily wedded friend. "Why do you think it's such an advantage to have a secret compartment in your billfold?" he demanded. "I've never seen you carry any money in it."

"Of course not!" replied the husband. "But it's the handiest place I know of to put notes I want my wife to be sure and read."

—HAL CHADWICK
Noel, Mo.

Bluebook will pay $25 for each story of "Native Wit" that is published. Each must be previously unpublished and none can be acknowledged or returned.

"Bwana Hippo. Scarcely appropriate." A light chuckle in the gloom, an amused, friendly sound.

"By which you mean that Bwana Giraffe would suit a scrag like me better." Something sighed, a deep, penetrating wheeze that came, apparently, from the other end of the veranda, and he heard her start and gasp. "Who was that?"

"Hippo blowing in the river. In a few minutes you'll hear them thumping along their ancient paths, over north there a little, on the way to feed. It's a companionable sound, especially when you feel lonesome." And why, he wondered, had he said that? For he had not known that solitary emotion in a long while. He ran his tongue along his teeth and discovered there a dry, shriveling taste like almonds in his mouth. Fear was brassy and loneliness was bitter almond, the old hunters used to say. He tried to assure himself he didn't know why he should feel lonely, but that was mere driveling. He knew quite well.

Days passed, and then it was more than two weeks since they'd come. The morning stroll to the river, the late evening with Jane on the gallery—these had become habit, delightful rituals not to be lost.

The first night Boko had suspected he was falling in love with Jane. He put this down to the natural susceptibility of a bachelor, pushing 35 and seeing so few unmarried women back here in the wilds. Later he'd admitted to himself that he liked her, admired her, wanted her for a friend; also that she was attractive enough to set any man on his ear. These facts were pleasant, but not conclusive evidence of a lasting love. Boko had always been cautious, deliberate about romance, he reminded himself; and wryly added that better words might be faint-hearted and fearful.

He'd gone along for the first week, thinking hard about this unaccustomed business, till he remembered with a real shock the problem of Pat. Things grew hectic then, a couple of safaris tramped in for a long rest and for Big January's cooking, and Boko was too busy for reverie. By the time he could sit down on a warm rock and ponder, the two issues had become one.

"Why didn't that occur to me?" he said, startled; and went in search of Jane Cochran, whom he found on the veranda. And this was the sixteenth day of her visit.

He had not thought it out, so he botched it. Properly messed it up, being unskilled with subtleties, besides feeling as overwrought and feverish as a cat in a lit oven. His first mistake was in not waiting at least till evening, only a few hours off; his second, and worst, was to talk about Pat first. Then he slid into what the boy needed that he, Boko, couldn't give him —proper teaching, of course, but principally a mother —and crashed, heavy-footed, into as maladroit a proposal of marriage as possible. Jane Cochran looked at him steadily and said in a low, clear voice, "Go to hell!"

"No, wait, look, Jane, I didn't mean quite—"

"Boko," she told him, "you're a good man, and

kind, and I know you'd do anything to help Pat; but I'm neither a charity case nor a handy tool."

Boko knew there were words to soothe her, but he couldn't find them. The fact that she had started to cry threw him even farther off balance.

"I've thought of marrying," she said. "There was a m-man back home I liked. But how fair would it be to treat him as a convenient solution? How fair would it b-be to me, and to Pat?"

He almost said *I love you,* but the words struck hollowly and without meaning in his head, after what had gone before; so he tried others, and they were wrong as wrong could be. "Pat will have to go back to America, then. Unless, if you won't marry me, you stay on as tutor. There's no one else to do it."

"I'm leaving tonight," she cried at him, and broke down utterly. He turned his eyes with despair, in time to see a small white face vanish from behind the screen of the door.

"Oh, Lord," he said. He dashed into the hall and the boy was not there. He wasted minutes searching the wrong rooms, till Big January found him and growled, *"Bwana* Pat run out t' back, fast, too!"

"Let's find him," snapped Boko, and fled, as anxious to escape the wretched woman as to look for the child.

No small boy in the truck garden, behind the low wooden fence, nor hiding in any of the sheds, nor visible on the skyline. I suppose he's hating me pretty fierce, thought Boko, and, really disturbed now, said to Big January, "Call him, see if he'll come." Pat adored the huge cook, who kept trying to fatten him up "like healthy *mtoto"* with extra sweets.

There was no answer to the full-throated bawling. They went together to the high ground, both shouting at intervals, and peered round at the country, and nothing moved but a tiny herd of gazelle in the north. They came back to the house.

JANE waited in the parlor. "What is it, Will?" "Pat heard us," he said, his mind awhirl with misgivings. "He's run off." He told her where they'd looked.

She watched him for a long instant, growing pale, and she said, "The reeds. The tunnels."

"He wouldn't go there, I've warned him the hippos are dangerous."

"He's only seven, and he remembers what you said about going into the tunnels and never coming out. He asked me about it twice, why wouldn't you come out, and I didn't tell him, because I hate him to be afraid of anything."

"There are healthy fears you must have in Africa! I'll go look." He ran out, and at once returned, to touch her on the shoulder and make an attempt at a grin, which came out lopsided but fairly good. "But it's all right, Jane—he's likely under a bed somewhere."

"Don't go into the reeds, just call him."

"Never mind. Don't worry." He left her, plucked down the heavy rifle from its brackets just beside the front door, and met Big January on the veranda steps. "I think he might be in the reeds." They raced down the slope, sick with fear.

At the edge of the great thicket, they sought and found prints of small shoes, which led into a tunnel. "No use to call, he's lost his way by now in that maze." If only the safaris with their pro hunters hadn't left that morning. "I'll have to go in after him."

"I will go in too," said Big January. Boko shook his head, *"Hatori,* dangerous." Big January said indignantly, *"Bwana,* before I was a cook, I was a man," and Boko said, "Okay," feeling embarrassed. They crawled into the hippo tunnel.

A few yards inside and Pat's trail vanished, the path too hard to take impressions. When the searchers came to a fork, they were forced to separate. They spoke together for a moment.

"If you find him, wait till you're clear of the reeds, then yell. I'll do the same. Don't shout in here. Might stampede the brutes. Luck," Boko said, and crept off through the southward gallery.

It was stuffy and hot in the reeds. There was a stink of dead growth, of mud and decay and stagnant water; a thick green smell of lush plant life, laced now and again with evanescent whiffs of hippo. In places the tunnels were roofed low by the reeds and the shiny-leaved thorn vines. Elsewhere they were simple lanes, open to the hot, ice-blue sky.

Not many of them were hard underfoot. Within a minute Boko was wading ankle-deep through opaque, mud-thick water, floundering into small bog-holes and falling to his hands and knees with irritating regularity. What portions of his lean body were not splashed by muck rapidly grew soaked with sweat. When he had traveled the tunnels for five minutes, his shirt and pants were clinging to him like sodden mummy-wrapping. After a time he peeled off the shirt and hung it over his back. It was even more uncomfortable there, and at last he wadded it up angrily and threw it away.

There could be no method to his searching. He tried to begin at the south and work down through the swamp to the rocky ground; but the hippos had created such a labyrinth by their almless wanderings that he soon became lost. The reeds were nowhere less than 10 feet high, so no landmarks were visible. Even an occasional glimpse of the declining sun did

make it easy

HAVE TROUBLE keeping your nice wastebaskets from rusting in the bottom? When the basket is new, melt some paraffin and pour in enough to cover the bottom, then stop worrying.

—*Mrs. Andrew Fudge, Athens, W. Va.*

not help much. Once or twice he stopped and got his bearings, as to compass points; but, realizing that he still did not know where he was in the acres and acres of papyrus, he gave it up, and went blundering down the lanes by guess and by what he hoped was instinct.

All the while he was creeping and stumbling and pushing his way forward, he listened to the noises of the hippos. They were never quiet, two or three were always blowing spray as they surfaced, then grunting with a reverberation like distant thunder, and now and then a bull would roar in a fair imitation of an irate lion. These were all normal sounds. From the moment he entered the reeds, Boko waited for an uproar that would indicate real disturbance. It did not come, and his belly remained tight and cold with fear for the boy, as he hurried on through the tortuous network of passages.

He came to a fork which he was certain he had seen before. He sat down in four inches of water, suddenly more tired than he had been in years. When he drew a deep breath, it shuddered in his chest. Muscle of leg and back cried out against the constant bending and slogging. With the rifle across his lap he sat bolt upright, to ease the aches; thumbed mud from the face of his watch and discovered that he had been hunting for almost an hour.

"Oh, God," he whispered, beseeching; and rose to get on with his quest. Where *was* Pat? He ought to be crying or shouting by now. An hour is a child's eternity.

He could not yell himself, or loose off a shot to bring the boy, on account of the hippos. He stared at the rifle and questioned his sense in bringing it. The vast herd remained here at their "village" because they had never heard a shot fired. They were mysterious beasts, they had not objected in the least to Boko's settling nearby and bringing in hordes of people to gape, but the sound of a gun might waken ancient memories and send them all migrating for quieter streams. He could not afford to lose his main attractions. He had a living to make.

And what was his income, weighed against Pat? He raised the rifle and aimed it skyward, and caught himself as he laid finger to the trigger. This was panicky and stupid. Pat couldn't find him anyway, even if he were in the next tunnel, and a hippo stampede would mean terrible danger. Boko got a grip on his nerves and shuffled ahead through knee-high water and sucking bog. There was nothing to do but move as quickly and silently as possible, to range the reeds if it took all night, and to pray.

EIGHTY-FOUR minutes after he went into the papyrus fen, he saw the boy Pat.

Boko was in an area he had not covered before; he knew this because the trails were very deep and he could hear the hippos growling and puffing close by. He turned into a last tunnel. He had just fallen into a hole and was spitting out muck as he shuffled around the bend. He saw the river, brown and smooth between the banks of reed. And crouched on its rim was a small, dirty figure, rigidly attentive to something Boko could not see.

He sloshed forward, quivering with a dubious relief. "Pat," he said quietly, not to startle the boy too much. "Hey, Pat."

A surprised young face jerked around to face him. "Hello, Boko," said Pat loudly; then in an exaggerated whisper, as he saw the finger on the man's lips, "You ought to see this baby. He's eating!"

BOKO knelt beside the runaway, genuinely afraid to touch him lest his own fatigue and agitation infect Pat with fright. They were about a hundred feet upriver from the sandbank, and a number of hippo were in sight. The mother was suckling her pink calf in the shallows.

"A beautiful sight," Boko agreed, trying to calm himself. "Generally she feeds him under water. I think we'd best go now, Pat."

"Not yet. What will he do when he's grown up?"

"You come back with me and I'll tell you. Aunt Jane's worried."

"Okay," said the boy, standing and stretching. "I wanted to watch 'em awhile," he said matter-of-factly. Apparently he had forgotten that he'd fled to the reeds to escape banishment from Africa. "What'll he do, Boko?"

There was an old bull staring their way; the bulging, wide-apart eyes did not blink, and slowly he began to rise out of the water, his enormous jowl trickling crystal drops that glittered as they fell in the beams of the setting sun. The fearful urgency to get out of the reeds overcame Boko. He snatched up the boy and plunged headlong from the dangerous bank.

"Gee, I can walk!" said Pat indignantly.

"Pretty deep holes coming up," said Boko. He fought himself, beat panic from him, then spoke again and heard it as a good, normal sound. "When he's grown, he'll lounge around with his nose and eyes out of water, like the fellows you saw just now. He'll wiggle his ears and gaze at butterflies, and look like a horse in the river."

"You mean a pig," said Pat gravely.

"The Greeks thought he looked like a horse." They were raising hell back there, bellowing and gargling between themselves. Boko tried to jump a hole he remembered, miscalculated and went to his knees, the stale filth of the water splashing his naked chest. "Hippopotamus means river horse," he said.

"Are they mad at us for leaving?" The hullabaloo was awful. No animal makes angrier sounds than a hippo.

"No, they're only talking." This is a very small boy, Boko thought. Don't let him get scared, talk to him as if you were on the veranda with a peg in your fist. He's a rare one, but he's just a child. "Did I ever tell you that your baby'll be able to run on the bottom of the stream for five minutes at a time, when he's big?"

"No," said Pat, wriggling. "Tell me."

Boko, lugging the boy and the rifle, fought his way through the morass, sometimes oriented by the sun, oftener unsure of his direction. He talked, panting, quietly telling the boy about hippos: how they could bite crocodiles in half, how even lions couldn't hurt them; how they were peaceful souls who wanted only to be lazy and to eat, oh, eat all night and every night.

Dead stalks of reed poked him sharply in the face, earth turned to mire and bogged his shambling feet. He penetrated the heart of the marsh; the open lanes crushed in upon him, the papyrus shut gradually down to blot out the dusking sky. These dark green living walls, this low roof of vegetation, became a trap, a maze to oppress and confuse him further. He was on hands and knees now, shepherding the boy ahead of him. He did not want to talk, only to hurry away from the hippos. Night was coming, horror setting in.

Over the scrambling noise of their movements he thought he heard the shuffling thumps of another, far heavier body. He wiped thick drops of sweat from his eyelids and glared back over his shoulder. This was the hour when the hippos would begin to move out from the river, to saunter through their village, heading ultimately to the feeding grounds beyond the guest house. He blinked and peered and saw nothing but the multitude of reeds. He hastened forward, caught up with Pat, had another look behind and this time, at the far turning of the long straight tunnel, he saw a broad dark bulk.

A swift glance showed him no side aisle ahead. He halted and sat back on his heels, turning the rifle in his hands so that the butt pointed up. It was for this contingency that he had carried the lead-heavy thing so long. He jammed the muzzle as hard as he could into the softness of the wet earth, bent and leaned all his weight on it to sink it deep. Two feet of stock thrust upward in the center of the path. He shoved it experimentally. It held firm. Without looking at the advancing animal, he scuttled fast until he overtook Pat. There was a curious snort behind, as the hippo came to the thin barrier.

"What's that, Boko?"

"Keep going, Pat." Thorn cuts and insect bites, ache of bone and fiber, black fear made him babble and he could not help it. "Did I tell you what hippos eat? Grass and plant shoots and mealies, that's African corn. They'd like to chew up my gardens but I have a good little fence and they won't pass that, they never push or step over anything that they see a man has put there." Hope that goes for the rifle, prayed Boko. "Turn left, Pat, we're nearly home now."

"I came an easier way," said the boy, who was tiring and irritable at the prolonged crawl. "No old mud holes."

There was a widened place here, a great wallow of ooze where three snaking trails braided under a deep blue sky. The reeds crowded around the hole, and several chunks of earth carrying papyrus and slough grass had floated out on the thick water like tiny islands bearing tall, weird trees. Boko held the boy and said, "Listen!"

A hippo was trudging in their direction, down which aisle he could not tell. Boko moved almost without thought; picked up the boy and stepped into the wallow, sinking deep, shoving against the glutinous liquid till he had pressed himself into the far wall of reeds.

"Trust me?" he asked.

Pat nodded.

"Hold your breath, close your eyes tight, fingers in ears! Ready?" He took a breath and ducked below the roiled surface, the child in his arms. When he came up, they were covered with a viscid layer of muck. "Don't move, not a finger," he murmured, and still as rock they waited.

The hippo came, a young cow, and halted and gazed at them, sniffs of inquiry hissing in her nostrils. The small suspicious eyes pierced him, Boko cursed himself for an idiot, and then she plunged in and passed slowly through the wallow, three feet from Pat's face, to grunt her way out and disappear. The muck had killed their alien scent. She had accepted them as part of the swamp.

Pat said in a small voice, "Boko?"

"Yes, Son?"

"I got mud in my eye."

Boko began to shake, not with nerves or terror this time, but with laughter. There was no hysteria, but wholly joy. "Pat," he said, "you're a man, you're a real old campaigner." He shoved the boy out of the wallow and crawled after him. There was an open trail that led due west. He gave Pat a handkerchief, somewhat sodden, for his eye; and put him up to ride shoulders. In two minutes he saw the dry, clean, blessed land. He broke his own rule, and gave a howl of thanksgiving; so that Big January trotted out of the terrible fen only a moment after Boko and Pat had come forth.

"Well," said Jane, sitting on a rock with her feet tucked up. "Well, you three really should have a bath." Which was, thought Boko, a brave reaction from a girl whose face was so chalky in the twilight.

He gave the weary child to the Swahili. "Bath and dinner," he said to Big January, and the cook accepted Pat, seeing his deep thanks in Boko's eyes. When they had gone, Boko took hold of Jane Cochran's waist. "As I was saying—"

She kissed him and never noticed the dirt on her lips.

"I can take care of Pat," went on Boko unsteadily, "no fear of that. Pat, though I love him—well, he's incidental. I'm asking you, Jane Cochran, on my own merits. I'm no wonderful catch—but I love you. Would you—"

She kissed him again. She said she would. And she did.

—By Robert W. Krepps

Girls Who "Get Caught," Want to

Continued from page 23

on illegitimacy. "On the contrary, everything points to the purposive nature of the act. Obviously, the girl wouldn't plan consciously and deliberately to bear an out-of-wedlock child. But she does act in such a way that this becomes the almost inevitable result."

Isn't it possible that some of these girls are carried away by the urgency of their sexual desires?

This is one of the many popular fallacies to be dispelled by a glance at the girls' case histories. "Contrary to the layman's notion," says Dr. Viola W. Bernard of Columbia University's Department of Psychiatry, "few of these girls experience full sexual enjoyment and most of them find sex relations unpleasant."

Out of a hundred unmarried mothers recently studied by Catherine Donnell and Selma Glick of the Jewish Board of Guardians, most said it was their first sex experience and 52 described it as "horrible," "disgusting," "very painful," and "nothing at all." Only five of the girls said they enjoyed it. The remaining 43 said they couldn't remember clearly or couldn't bear to discuss it.

"Most of the girls we see are sexually frigid," says Elizabeth Anderson, case supervisor of the Youth Consultation Service of the Episcopal Archdiocese of New York. "If there were any other way of having a baby, these girls would use it."

Far from being promiscuous, the typical unwed mother is not only conventional but prudish about sex. Instead of being boy crazy, she's more apt to be the kind who's never cared much for boys. She's been less interested than most girls in primping, flirting, dating and making herself attractive to men.

"In sex relations she shows a kind of rag-doll limpness," said a doctor who has served for 20 years as medical consultant to a home for unwed mothers. "Her sex needs are like a baby's—she wants to be cuddled and cared for without any responsibility of her own. She has absolutely no concept of an adult sex relationship with its give and take between equals."

Aren't these girls often forced into sexual relations against their will?

"Unless the girl is very young and the man much older or a psychotic, the likelihood of rape can be ruled out almost entirely," says Esther G. Levitt of the Louise Wise Services for Unwed Mothers in New York.

The usual unwed mother feels so guilty about sex that the only way she can deal with it is to convince herself that she was forced into it, or that she didn't know what was happening.

"He forced me," Alice, a hefty 26-year-old drill-press operator, told the police matron. She claimed that a man she met for the first time at a party had seduced her on a roof top, and wanted him arrested. When the policewoman investigated she found that in order to reach this secluded spot, the couple had been obliged to crawl through a window, climb four flights of stairs on an open fire escape, and leap across a three-foot gap between two roof tops.

The girls have little inventiveness and their stories are much the same as in grandmother's day. "It was dark when I got out of my last class," said Amy, a sophomore at a state university. "I took a short cut across a vacant lot and suddenly a man jumped out and dragged me behind some bushes." The vacant lot was bordered on two sides by fraternity houses, but when Amy was asked why she didn't cry out for help she seemed genuinely shocked. "I couldn't let anyone see me in that position!"

Another girl maintained that she was raped in the family living room—while her parents were asleep upstairs. Why didn't she call out? "Mother would have been so upset," she explained. "And I didn't want the neighbors to know."

If the girls don't say they were forced, they generally say they didn't know what they were doing.

"I just blacked out," is a common way of putting it. Some blame it on alcohol—when they had no more than a glass or two of beer. Many others say the man must have slipped them "knock-out drops."

"These girls are not liars," says Miss Anderson. "Their purpose is not to deceive others but only to deceive themselves. They just can't face the realities and responsibilities of mature womanhood."

The Strange Case of Susan

The more deeply disturbed the girl, the harder it is for her to acknowledge that she had sexual relations. Dr. Viola Bernard tells of one girl who denied she was pregnant, even as she was being wheeled into the delivery room.

A more common form of amnesia is illustrated by the case of Susan. After high school she left home to attend a secretarial school in a nearby city. It was the first time she'd lived apart from her recently widowed mother. Her first day in a small hotel, she talked with an older man in the lobby and had a coke with him. That is all she remembered till she woke up next morning alone in the man's room. She did not know his name, and she never saw him again. When her periods stopped, she simply paid no attention. When she returned home five months later her mother noticed her gain in weight and suggested she start dieting. After six months, when her girth kept on growing, Susan consulted a doctor, seemed genuinely surprised when the doctor said she was pregnant. She visited two more doctors because she was sure the diagnosis must be wrong.

Very frequently the unwed mother says she would

never have submitted to sexual relations if the man hadn't deceived her about his intentions to marry her. But when she explains the basis of her expectations, it's obvious she is doing the deceiving—of herself.

Esther, for example, said she expected a 17-year-old boy who had never held a job in his life to get a high-paying job in time to marry her and provide a home for their child.

Nora said she expected an older married man to divorce a rich wife who for 20 years had supported him in luxury.

Florence had relations with a merchant seaman she had known for a total of five hours and said she believed his promise to come back and marry her after

Strange as it may seem, few unmarried girls who become pregnant actually enjoy sex.

his next voyage—even though he had never asked her name or address.

Does having an out-of-wedlock baby mean that the girl is neurotic?

Not always. There are still a few isolated or depressed communities where a girl may get in a family way to prod a reluctant swain to make up his mind, or because the social code is not very strict. And of course there are men and women who establish homes and raise families outside of wedlock, usually because of some legal obstacle to marriage. These women may suffer from poor judgment or low moral standards, but at least they know what they're doing. Most unwed mothers, however, are definitely neurotic. They have established no abiding love relationship with the men involved and they fully share society's attitude that they are "bad." The fact that they are driven to do something for which they feel so guilty can only mean that they are seriously mixed up.

If Dr. Kinsey's sample is representative of the population, every other American girl has sex relations more or less experimentally at least once before marriage—and accidents are bound to happen. The vast majority of these truly accidental pregnancies end in abortion. But judging by hospital and adoption service records and the experience of doctors and midwives, about 300,000 girls each year go ahead with their pregnancies and give birth to out-of-wedlock babies.

Why don't these girls have abortions? Religious scruples and the high costs of illegal operations are undoubtedly factors. But regardless of religion or finances, the average unwed mother is unwilling to accept abortion. When the man acknowledges his responsibility and offers to pay for the operation, the girl almost invariably turns down the offer with horror.

Ruth's reaction was a little different. Shortly after winning a promising position in an advertising firm she became pregnant by a married man who made arrangements and provided the money for a legal abortion in Cuba. Ruth flew to Cuba, wrote him that the operation was a success—and went ahead and had her child without any further interest in its father, or in her career.

Usually the girl fails to tell anyone of her condition till well after the third month, when abortion becomes risky. Even a threat to life will not make some girls give up their pregnancies voluntarily. Doctors tell of cases where serious illness made childbirth dangerous and abortion legal. Yet knowing of the danger, some girls deliberately refused the legal abortion urged by the doctor.

In the unwed mother's unconscious drive to conceive and deliver, nature is strikingly and mysteriously cooperative. An astonishing number conceive after sleeping with a man only once or twice. "The unmarried mother seems to have some sort of emotional control over the act of ovulation," says Dr. Nils Littner, Chicago psychiatrist. Recent research indicates that emotional stress may cause the ovaries to release the egg at any time during the menstrual cycle, instead of at only one time—as was previously thought.

Out of wedlock motherhood occurs at all age levels but the most susceptible years are 17 and 18 and again 22 and 23. On the average, the reputed father is eight to 10 years older than the girl.

The popular impression is that unwed motherhood is strictly a lower-class phenomenon. In reality unmarried mothers represent a cross section of the population. One out of 20 unwed mothers comes from an upper-income family. Five out of 20 are from middle-income families. And the rest are from lower-middle or marginal-income families.

"They feel full and satisfied, some for the first time in their lives," the director of one shelter told me. "Having a baby is their way of trying to fill up an emotional emptiness inside them."

What kind of problems drive girls into unwed motherhood? In every case the trouble seems to trace back to the girl's parents. Girls who grow up in happy homes and get their full share of love and respect from a happily mated father and mother seldom have illegitimate babies.

Many unwed mothers come from broken homes.

---

make it easy

NEXT time that some jester thinks it's smart to mix raw eggs with a bowl of hard-boiled eggs, don't flip your lid, just start spinning the eggs on a table top. The raw eggs will make a slow turn or two, but the hard-boiled eggs will spin like a top.

—*Mrs. S. H. Olson, Oakridge, Ore.*

BLUEBOOK *will pay $5 for each "Make It Easy" published, but none can be acknowledged or returned.*

Some grow up in institutions or a succession of foster homes and have never learned to form deep attachments to anyone. The majority come from homes dominated by one parent — usually the aggressive, long-suffering, matriarchal-martyr type of mother who wears the pants, belittles or puts up with her husband, and is in fact the "man of the house."

The effect on the girl in every case is the same. She's never quite grown up, detached herself from her mother and become a distinct individual capable of making her own decisions and leading her own life.

"After all I've done for her, how can she do this to *me!*" That's the typical response of the overprotective mother who learns that her daughter is pregnant.

The daughter, in turn, is still childishly dependent on her mother and at the same time guiltily resentful of her mother for making her so helpless. The baby she bears out of wedlock is both a gift of love for her mother and a kick in the teeth. "If Mother knew, it would kill her," she says—and in her subconscious mind she half hopes, half fears it will.

"Who's having this baby anyhow?" social workers sometimes wonder as they watch the girl's mother take over.

Men who get girls in trouble are apt to do it mostly because they need to prove their virility—to themselves.

"In some cases we find that the girl's mother has developed an unconscious desire to have another child," says Dr. Littner. "It's amazing how accurately the daughter has read her mother's subconscious mind. Often the girl acts as if she had to produce a baby to keep her mother's love."

How does a mother push her daughter into unwed pregnancy? Mrs. K. did it by telling 16-year-old Martha in excessive detail what not to do — and eagerly expecting the worst. She kept track of Martha's menstrual periods and snooped for signs of menstruation each month. Before Martha went out on a date, Mrs. K. would warn her in vivid terms just what boys wanted from girls. "He'll try to get you alone. . . . He'll want to get his hands on you. . . ." Twice after Martha returned from a date, her mother inspected her underclothes. Under this kind of pressure, Martha eventually did what her mother demanded.

"One thing I have to be thankful for," she told a case worker in a curiously revealing remark, "is the way this thing has brought mother and me together again."

Fathers, too, sometimes create the emotional snarls which drive a daughter into conceiving out of wedlock. All through childhood, Alice idealized her actor father and tried to win his love to compensate for her mother's neglect and resentment. He paid little attention to her until she became a pretty adolescent. Then he started playing up to her cherished image of him—bringing her flowers, choosing her clothes, taking her out on "dates" and, as he put it, "coaching her in the facts of life." The only time he became cross with her was when she went out with boys her age. Couldn't she see what oafs they were?

Girls who grow up in happy homes with loving parents seldom have illegitimate babies.

One afternoon when Alice was 16 he surprised her necking on the divan with Freddie—a boy friend who had become her steady. In a rage, he pushed Freddie out of the house and then slapped Alice till her mouth bled. That same evening, Alice, dressed in one of her mother's evening gowns, made a round of Greenwich Village bars and spent the night with a drunken East Indian stevedore. Said the psychoanalyst who treated her later: "It was both a defense against her father's seductiveness and a substitute fulfillment. She chose a man of another race, as these girls so often do, in order to avoid too close identification with her father."

A few of the girls who become unwed mothers come from successful, well-established families and seem to have been happy right up to the time of becoming pregnant. They have parents who genuinely love them. Yet in every case, psychiatrists find, the girl was driven into this act by the need to untangle some snarl in her relationship with her parents.

In Jane's case it was a matter of being pushed too hard. Her parents were both hard-working professional people who set extremely high standards for themselves and their three children. Jane was sent to a girl's school where it was taken for granted she would follow the lead of her older sister, Mary, the senior-class president and top honor-student. The same day that Mary announced her engagement just before graduation, Jane dated one of the town playboys and had sex relations with him in the back seat of his car. All through childhood, Jane had felt overshadowed in her parents' love by her brilliant older sister. Pregnancy was her blind and unreasoning way of catching up with her sister, expressing her hidden bitterness and anger against her parents' neglect and testing their love.

Instead of turning against her, both her parents faced their own mistakes, gave to Jane the loving support and understanding that helped her bring her childhood fears out into the open—and control them instead of being controlled by them. Jane voluntarily surrendered the child for adoption—a painful first step in facing the realities of adult life.

What about the out-of-wedlock father?

Continued on next page

In all sex relationships, except with prostitutes, it is considered the man's responsibility to protect the girl from pregnancy. Most of the men who sire illegitimate children are older than the girls and experienced in the use of protective devices. Yet case histories show that with rare exceptions, the out-of-wedlock father takes no precautions at all. What kind of man knowingly exposes a girl to the consequences of unwed motherhood?

"He is frequently the counterpart of the unmarried mother," says Dr. Littner. Because he is seen less often by authorities on illegitimacy, much less is known about him than about the unwed mother. But from all the studies that have been made he emerges as a man who is anxious about his masculinity, is highly dependent on women, has an underlying hostility to them, and uses the sex act as a way of getting even.

There are few communities which don't offer an example of a successful, even outstanding, citizen who invited disaster by failing to take the simplest precautions and who, in the eyes of the townsfolk, "ruined a decent young girl." Any married man in a responsible position knows that by impregnating a girl he is putting himself completely at her mercy—and more dangerous, at the mercy of her mother. What impels him to do it?

Again and again the picture is the same: A mother-dominated man married a dominating wife with whom he experienced a steady decline of potency. He found a girl with whom he was not impotent—a girl to whom he could also pour out his troubles. The girl, too, had troubles—strangely similar to his. She wanted to prove her femininity as he wanted to prove his masculinity. Each feared and distrusted members of the opposite sex, and used the other as a means of self-vindication or self-punishment.

The strongest motive of the unwed father is undoubtedly the need to prove his virility. For some reason his need for definite proof can be satisfied by impregnating an unmarried woman and escaping all responsibility. He makes her a kind of willing sacrifice. It is much as if he could only get pleasure out of driving by becoming a hit-and-run driver.

"It is typical of him to feel that there is something special about him," says Dr. Norman Reider of San Francisco's Mt. Zion Hospital. "He seems to feel that he is fulfilling an appointed mission."

This feeling exempts him from the ordinary rules of human, as well as sexual, relations. He may hide this feeling of specialness behind the meek exterior of the misunderstood husband. Or he may flaunt it in the role of the Don Juan who just can't help being irresistible to women. The latter often feels that women should be grateful to him. Sometimes he affects a kind of sexual connoisseurship and rationalizes his failure to use precautionary measures by saying that it interferes with his pleasure.

"The kind we see are mainly mother's boys," the head of a large service organization told me. "They dump their problems in the girl's lap as they used to dump them in their mother's lap. Like the girls, they're the type that just let things happen to them, and then say, 'I didn't realize what I was doing.' "

Happily, through the work of service organizations for unwed mothers, many girls have gained insight into why they behaved as they did. It certainly makes more sense to help a girl find herself than to condemn her as bad or stupid.

The only way to prevent illegitimacy is, of course, to bring up happy children. Helping them gradually to win their independence and giving them a healthy, relaxed acceptance of their sex feelings—this is how parents can guard against the kind of personality problems which produce girls who want to get caught and men who want to accommodate them.

Meanwhile there is hardly a normal, healthy male who won't at some time in his life meet up unexpectedly with a pregnancy-prone girl and who cannot benefit from an understanding of her psychology. Whenever a girl throws herself at a man, the best thing he can do is to ask himself: Is it my virile charm which has brought this to pass, or is there something wrong with the girl?

In our American culture, at least, there is usually something wrong with the girl. She is unhappy. What she needs is not a lover but a psychiatrist.

—By John Kord Lagemann

Native Wit...

Driving along a narrow road through a mountain valley in eastern Tennessee, I came up behind an unhurried old man whose mules were pulling a big cultivator. There was no room to pass, so I made a virtue of necessity and dropped back to dawdle politely in low gear till the road should change. But to my surprise a little farther on he tilted his rig right over almost onto its side in the broad shallow ditch and motioned me to come on by. He couldn't let go of the reins but he lifted his chin at me so his long white beard waved in the breeze in response to my gesture of thanks as I passed him.

Some hours later I recognized the long beard and his great height on the street in Sevierville and I stopped to say I hadn't wanted to rush him but appreciated his courtesy. Leaning paternally down to me, he made me the gift of his philosophy:

"No trouble a-tall, ma'am. I allus was eager t'help folks forward with what they thinks they got t'do in the world. *We'm all in life together, and h'it not easy.*"

—Mrs. Henry Cowell
New York City

Return of the Wolf

Continued from page 25

his mate, and keeping her silence the way wild dogs do.

Killane had shot the wolf with a hand-gun, just before Jack Appleby, the other partner in the sheep business, had come up the hill with his son, Johnny. One bullet in the heart, one in the brain. Now they took her out of the trap and flung her under an oak blow-down. Somebody said it was quite a rich hide to leave rot. "Wolf pelts are no good at all. Can't do anything with them." It was Johnny's father who said that, and he was something of a trapper, especially in the beaver houses. It was he and Dan Killane that got the hunt up because of their sheep.

Johnny stood off a bit. He was just turned 14, and was yellow-haired like his daddy, and almost as tall. A funny thing about the two of them, father and son: they had the same rich fleck of freckles over their long noses, and the freckles never faded, winter or summer. Johnny was a skilled tracker in the woods, too. The game warden had brought him along, teaching him this and that since he was a kid.

They started for the Appleby farm to finish the job off properly with a glass of cider. "Come on," said Appleby with a laugh, "I'll show you my cellar—as they say up in Maine. You coming, Johnny?"

"No, Daddy. I think maybe a fox might come down to see what all this is."

So they left him there, very thoughtful. He was thoughtful because he knew she was no wolf. And how did he know? He knew more than the others because he had taken the trouble once to go to the animal farm up the Hudson—a kind of zoo—and study a wolf in its cage. He had spent hours there, and he could now understand why some people might think this one in the trap was a wolf. Her head was wolfish and her brush, too. And she had the gray wolf colors, except for a slight reddishness in certain places.

But two things, he knew for sure, weren't wolfish: the legs, which were fine and long, and the eyes, which were those of a dog. A dog that had gone wrong, no doubt. Kicked away from many a door and living off rabbits.

"Some wolf in her maybe. But more dog." That's what he said bending over her.

He began a wide circling around the stained place. He started off, came back and pried her jaws open. "I thought so." He found rabbit fur between her teeth, and not a sign of wool. He straightened up and he took it easy because he had subtly learned that something was watching him from the thickets. "Good old dog," he said to the dead one, "were you all alone?"

He trudged back into his circling, climbed a piece toward the ridge, turned into the quiet cedars. Three grouse that were budding there took off, thrumming hard. He hit into the snow again, found a fox track on a grouse stalk, and then—no doubt of it—the big, splashy dog marks she had made. These turned back on themselves. He followed until the tracks stopped near another blow-down. When the big tracks turned out again, another track showed in the snow. This was smaller and it was following hers.

Johnny didn't follow. He completed his circle around the trap. Nothing had gone out, except the fox, dragging something, and three or four deer—these last in a big hurry. He sat down between two rocks and under a cover of sumach, keeping his eyes on the dead one. Some big flakes shifted down. Pretty soon he heard the voice he expected: a little voice complaining. He heard a whimper.

Half-hidden in the swirling snow, something half the size of a fox appeared, creeping onward, belly down ears up. On it came, showing much skill from cover to cover, until in a barking rush it jumped to the dead one's side. One thrust of the tiny nose was enough to smell out the truth: what had been alive and rich with milk was now dead and cold. The newcomer lifted its muzzle and began to cry.

"Hey, Pup!" Johnny just sat still and smiled and waved his hand. The mourner never looked around. He kept on crying. That was a good sign to Johnny because it was doggy. He walked over and knelt in the snow by the puppy. Never looked at him.

You'd have thought Johnny himself was mourning. Well, that was the general idea.

After a while, Johnny sat down in the snow and took out a sandwich. He began munching; also he kept saying things in a low voice. Just anything at all, with a side-glance now and then. The puppy was a beauty: strong, thick-coated, big-footed. He hadn't the gray color of his dam. He was a reddish brown.

The puppy couldn't really figure it out, couldn't believe there was no milk for him. He began nudging her to wake her up. At last, he drew away. Johnny gave him a bit of bread. He snapped it up and let it go. He looked shrewdly at Johnny's mouth—busy on meat and bread—and tried again to figure things out. He set his paws on Johnny's knee and lifted his head for a better view of Johnny's eyes. The puppy wasn't used to such eyes; just the same, he knew enough to give them attention. Other eyes—hers—had looked at him in this kindly, loving way.

Johnny scratched the pup behind the ear. Just a little. He thrust his little finger into the ear and tickled him. The pup began licking Johnny's hand. "How about your brothers? Lose them, too?" The puppy wagged his tail. Johnny said: "What you need, Stranger, is hot milk, and I'm just the boy that can bring you to it. The best." He opened his jacket, thrust the pup into shelter there, and went off toward the farm.

In the main barn, now warm with the breath of staring Herefords, the end of the hay-bay had been boarded off, and a fine doghouse of baled hay had been built there.

"You in there, Bess?"

The sheep dog—that's what they called her, anyway—answered that she was at home all right, but very busy. Johnny came up close and looked into her house. There she lay, her three pups taking supper. "I've another customer for you, Bess. How about it, old girl?"

Bess had already snuffed in the good news. She thumped her tail.

"Ah!" said Johnny, "you can tell a dog from a wolf, can you? Here—wash him down a bit." He put the pup half-way into her bed. She called him all the way, gave him a few licks along his back, and invited him to supper. The other diners gave the new one only the briefest glances, they were so busy.

Johnny sat there a while to see if Bess would change her mind. He knew she had one. Not that she was a great herder of sheep. No, there wasn't much call for that sort of work—tending them in the fields and so on. She just had it in her to drive them well enough when she was asked to do it.

ABOUT six months later, Johnny's father was in the harness room looking over their trout rods and dressing the lines. He was fixing up a brace of wet flies for opening day when Johnny came in with a box of earthworms, very fat and grumpy. "That's the boy," he said, picking out a worm to watch it wriggle, "they'll take no nonsense from the trout, eh?"

"Where are you planning to fish, Daddy?"

"I thought we'd hit the Saw Kill first and see if the fish are working." He put the worm back into the box and, with a sudden change of tone to sternness, asked: "I thought you said Bess had only three pups? I took her up to the Notch to take a look at the sheep and there was four pups come along with her. If you can call them pups now."

"How are the sheep, Daddy?"

"They wintered right well. Dan Killane and I counted six hundred. Lambing's over, and I don't think we lost more than two or three ewes all winter long. Killed or not—I don't know. We took fifty down."

"Who's we?"

"Well—Bess, of course. Say, she gave that big pup an awful thrashing when he ran the lambs too hard."

"Can he count sheep like she can?"

"No, but I seen him trying. Johnny, I hope and pray that this sheep business will pay off again. It's got to. Got to." He darkened up as usual when he thought of the money he had risked on the sheep. It was a big venture for a man who didn't know much about them. He put on a good smile for his son. "Now, did you answer me about those pups?"

"I didn't, Daddy, but I will now: That big one called Seeker—he's no dog, Daddy. He's a wolf." He smiled quickly to show that he was just fooling.

HIS father put down a reel very carefully. "I won't ask you to say it over, Johnny, because I heard you plain enough. So he isn't Bess's?"

"Not exactly." He told him how he had saved the puppy and why he had kept it secret. "I put him under cover now and then. When I saw you scratching your head over them in the barn. And when Dan Killane was around. 'Specially then." He hesitated and added: "I told you before, Daddy, I can't like that Dan Killane. Never did. And worse since he shot that mother dog."

"He's hard to like, Johnny, I know that. I wish he'd waited until you come up before he shot her. But we've got to get along with him. Got to. He's a neighbor and his money is in with mine. It's business, Johnny, and I couldn't have done it without him." To change the subject, he asked: "She had only one pup?"

"I made sure. She did well enough to keep even one. I figured she lost the others to the wildcats. Or foxes."

"No den to hide them. They say those wild dogs don't den up, even when they mate with wolves." He picked up the reel and tried its click.

"He's your dog. Not your wolf. Your dog." He couldn't help frowning at his own thought. "Dogs have been on our side an awful long time now, and we must stand by them. This one—Seeker, you say?—he has some sheep sense in him. Old Bess has figured

that out by herself. She's along in years—twelve's a long time for a dog—and she's looking for a helper in the fall drive maybe, although I don't think I'll risk her there this time. Well, lock the others up, Johnny, when there's sheep around and let Bess teach him what she can?"

"All right, Daddy. Why did she thrash Seeker?"

"Well, it was my fault, Johnny. He was for taking them down the lumber road, the way I said. But she wanted them on Sheep Trail—the old one—same as last year. Easier going. So she taught him to obey her—not me." He laughed at this recollection of her bossing the job. "One other thing, Johnny—we'll keep this to ourselves. Tell your mother. Nobody else. There's an awful lot of wolf experts in this valley. Used to be one myself, in fact."

On opening day of the trout season, Johnny and his father came up from Saw Kill with two limits of trout, most of them small, but one, a brown, that went over 14 inches. Coming through the main orchard, they saw Bess and Seeker in the meadow below the sheep shed. Seeker wasn't quite a year old, but he had caught up to her in size. He didn't look much like her, except for his reddish color which had deepened. His jaws were longer than hers. He had something else she lacked: the peculiar, shuffling gait of the true sheep dog.

The father was saying Seeker walked like a bear, when they saw somebody humping through the orchard at a great rate. He was calling. "Dan Killane," said Johnny, "and fit to be tied."

"What's he harping about, I wonder?" Johnny's father took a few steps toward the orchard. He was close enough then to see Killane's wedgy face better. "We've made some money, Johnny. I can tell the money look on him a mile away."

Even so, Killane had his eyes to serve him. He had one foot in the orchard and the other in the lane when he saw the sheep doing what they were told to do by Seeker, who shuffled about muttering and shaking his big head. Bess had walked the sheep out to the far corner of the meadow, had told them to stay there, and had called Seeker to the job. He had taken over in solemn style and she sat down to watch him.

The sheep wanted to get back to the shed in the worst way. Now and then a ewe would break away, her lambs trotting by her. Sometimes Seeker would head off the ewe. While Killane was looking on, full of wonder at something, Seeker chose a lamb and drove it back. Soon as the lamb bawled, the ewe got back into company again.

Killane couldn't keep back his good news. "You want to sell everything in the Notch come winter? C.O.D.?" Seeing the answering smile, he added: "Martin will take them before snowfall." He grinned, too. "So we made out all right, after all."

"So we did."

"The market price—whatever it is then—and three cents over. Cash the day we deliver. O.K. with you, is it?"

"It's O.K. with me, Dan, if it's O.K. with you. And I don't mind telling you—it takes me out of a hole." This notion always cheered Jack Appleby up, and he began to talk—very lively and yet strained—about the Notch and the way he had studied it out because he had heard about the old days when 2,000 sheep had been kept in the Notch, a great bowl in the hills with four fine springs, so clear that watercress grew thick, and a good Scottish grass planted by a shepherd generations ago. "How about a trout supper to celebrate, Dan? Johnny and I did well for the opener."

"Just a minute." Killane turned a keen look at his boots, just as if they had something big to tell him. He then put on an empty air, a signal that he was up to something. "What dog's that tending them sheep so smart?"

"Johnny's."

"Well, so it is." This was quick and mean and empty. By it, he hinted: *I know you're hiding something from me. More, I'll know what it is presently.* He asked: "What's old Bess doing—looking at him like that?"

"Teaching him, I guess. Didn't you see her thrash him up in the Notch? Same dog."

"Why, so I did. Indeed, yes." Killane glanced in sudden intentness at the tin roof of the sheep shed. You'd think surely he was going to say it could stand a lick of paint, which was true. Instead, he spoke in a very low tone to Johnny: "That's an awful lot of dog you got there. Bigger'n old Bess, isn't he?"

This was to force Johnny into speech that wouldn't hide anything. Johnny's father took over.

make it easy

Expert woodsmen can start a fire in a pouring rain without kindling. The secret? Pitch. Look for broken limbs or damaged tree trunks where the sap has congealed to seal an injury. The stuff really burns. It's a good idea to carry some in your fishing bag or tackle box for a quick warm-up ashore.

—W. S. Kals, Longeueil, Q., Can.

"Bess nursed that one for us along with the others. Looked him over and adopted him nice as pie. Now you want to know who gave us that pup in the first place?"

"What?" Killane seemed astonished. "Why, no, Jack. What business is it of mine who gave you a pup?" He glanced at them in such a show of innocence that they knew he meant: *I know damn well you've got the son of that wolf there and I'm going to see him killed before long.*

About 10 o'clock that night—the moon so new it was just a sliver—Killane went home and Johnny and his father stood in the yard waiting for the pump to start in the house well. Mrs. Appleby had said it sounded odd and maybe needed some greasing again. Well, the pump started and stopped in good tune, and they were still there, talking about trout, when all of a sudden there came hollering down the mountainside a wolfish howling worse than the howling they had heard the winter before. Its fierceness turned the spring night cold.

"Johnny, what do you make that howling out to be?"

"Never heard it before. It's awful, isn't it, Daddy? It's worse than the noise she made." He meant the dead dog in last winter's snow. A second call came, all in one piece, a long howl echoing harsh under the bluestone ledges by Ram Kill, which flowed out of the Notch springs. Johnny said: "It must be a wolf this time, Daddy. A real one, drifting down from the North country."

This new anxiety silenced them. They went into the house and to bed.

Near the main barn, a pair of eyes caught the scanty moonlight and gleamed. This was Seeker, roused off his watch by that creature calling and threatening. He snuffed the wind. The strange scent in it made him tremble with fury. His thick ruff rose. When the call came again, he growled. His big teeth glittered in a snarl. When the howl pealed stronger than ever, he ran into the meadow. There he let loose a challenging note he had never sounded before, the ancient challenge of the true dog to the true wolf. At the fiercer answer, he ran into the orchard, sprang to the ridge and faced the Notch. Out of it the wind flowed rank with an immemorial scent that stirred his instinctive love for man and for man's herds.

When Johnny came home from school the next day, he left his books on the porch, took down his rod, and tramped off for another whack at the trout. When he came back, this time with only two fish, there were loud voices and lights in the harness room. He pushed open the door. His father and Killane were there with the game warden, a gray-haired man, a little on the plump side, but with lots of power to get over the ridges, which he did fast enough when trouble called for it.

On a pair of grain sacks, flung on the floor, were two torn lambs and a fawn, a nice one, too. "Killed in the Notch today, Johnny," said his daddy. "Our lambs. And the fawn—just this side of the lower spring."

"Nobody knows what done it," said Killane, "and nobody's saying."

"Aren't you saying?" Johnny spoke to the warden at once because he saw anxiety in those kindly eyes.

"That's how wolves kill. For the fun of it. When the kill is handy," said the warden. "I've seen that in Canada—fawns ripped the same way. And I heard that howling last night—same as you did, Johnny—and I agree with you. It's like the wolf talk I heard in Ontario long ago. Two more lambs were eaten. No clear tracks that I could find."

Killane made his play cleverly. He grinned all around and said: "One thing sure, Jack—now you listen to me, Warden, because it's a lot of money we got coming to us—we ought to set a man and a tough

dog over them sheep. It'll cost a few dollars maybe, but the old cabin in the Notch is in good shape for living. And we've got to deliver them sheep before snowfall. What do you say to that, Johnny?"

"I'll do it myself," said Johnny's father. "Johnny, bring Seeker in and we'll let the warden size him up. Seeker's the boy for this. Bess—she's too old now. And he's got the jaws for it."

Johnny went out to the hay bay and called Seeker. Bess was lying there with the other three, her children. She got up stiffly. Johnny went out the door at the silo. He whistled a strict signal for Seeker to come to heel. He walked as far as the sheep shed fence and whistled again. He came back to the harness room and said: "Seeker's gone."

"How gone?" His father asked the question roughly, a sign of quick anxiety.

"Don't you let him run now and then, Johnny?" asked the warden. "Maybe he's in the orchard or—"

"No, sir. He doesn't want to run alone and he'd never go off the place without me. He's gone for good."

His father said: "It was a wolf howling last night and that's what took him off. Why?"

Killane shook his head in mock sorrow over this loss. He spoke in a whisper like a shy boy. "Well, Jack—well, Johnny—maybe you'd better tell the warden who it was gave you poor Seeker." He sent a pitying glance down to the lambs. "Could be—couldn't it—Seeker's just gone home? For a visit with the old folks?" He meant them to understand he had figured it all out the moment he had seen Seeker shuffling around the sheep. He put a lot of poison into that crack about a visit to the old folks, by which he meant wolves.

Johnny's father tried to tell the story of the trapped dam. Johnny began it first and laid it out evenly, despite the tremble he couldn't keep off his lips. The warden said: "Don't take on so, Johnny. We can figure it out." He considered it a while. "If a wolf bitch has drifted down from the north—from the Adirondacks—it don't necessarily mean Seeker's going to run with her. There's sheep dog in him and they don't stand for wolves."

"I've already figured it out," said Killane, finishing his play. "I seen that Seeker at noon today. After you two had gone down. He was drinking from the top spring in the Notch. All bloodied up he was—from eating lambs."

This trick made Johnny sag.

"I aim," said Killane, "to trap that wolf with the same scent his mother came to. Then I'll hang him."

JOHNNY'S father stayed in the Notch three days. Once or twice in the night, he'd get up, sing out to the sheep, and fire a shot. Three times Killane fired in broad daylight at something skulking along the ledges.

When school closed, Johnny took over the watch and stayed most of the summer in the Notch, tending the sheep and hoping for a sign of Seeker. Sometimes he whistled the old call or climbed the ridge and called Seeker, but he had been told to fire shots at night and, at last, he decided that Seeker wouldn't stand for the shooting, even if he was nearby. Soon the ewes were kicking their lambs away—weaning them in their own fashion.

Only once, in September, did something happen. Johnny was tossing a fly into a pool, and taking a brook trout now and then for his supper, when there came an awful roaring and snarling from near Sheep Trail. The first thing he knew a bunch of sheep scampered out of the sumach and one ewe just sailed out in a crazy jump and broke her neck on the edge of the pool. The snarling and screeching in the thicket kept up for a while. Johnny rushed there breathlessly—to find a lamb killed, the mossy earth torn up, and blood on the sumach.

When he went out of the Notch to see his mother, he took Sheep Trail, which started above the pools and passed through a big stand of pines—more than a mile—and then under the shelter of overhanging ledges for over three miles. There it struck into another big stand of pine and ran well-sheltered all the way to the valley. He found nothing on the trail, except three places where rabbits had been killed and eaten. He studied these places, looked in vain for clear tracks, and again called for Seeker.

ON the day after the first snowfall—this was a Saturday—he joined his father who was with the sheep, getting ready for the drive out in a day or two. On the way home, they came across the tracks of men. These turned out to be Killane and two of his friends who had been at the first trapping. When Johnny's father said there were no tracks in the snow and no sheep missing, Killane answered sourly: "Covered up. Gobbled up."

These fellows turned the trick a day later. There came four rifle shots, then four more, very quick, from the edge of the forest. The warden came up from his farm, and Johnny and his father fell in behind him. They could hear Killane yapping in glee when they came to the clearing where the set had been made, this time with the secret scent and a snowshoe rabbit for good measure. He had padded the teeth of the trap-jaws.

Within 10 feet of that very blow-down where Seeker had hidden on the distant day of his mother's death, Seeker now stood at bay, his throat rattling with fury, his teeth and muzzle bloody. His right forepaw had been caught in the trap. He was a sight to behold, a real savage, glaring at Killane. For a moment, Johnny couldn't believe his own eyes—Seeker had grown so much in a summer and a fall. He was bigger than his dam had been. His jaws were the jaws of a wild animal, a fighter and a tearer of game. His sleekness was gone. The thick fur at his throat and on his broadened shoulders was matted and slashed.

Killane said: "A wolf by the name of Seeker. Lamb-killer. Hasn't his dam's wolf color, but he has her spirit, all right."

Even in the taunting voice, the word "Seeker" had a meaning to the savage in the trap. The snarling died in his jaws. Johnny took a step forward. The warden said. "This yours, Johnny?"

"Yes, sir. He's mine. This is Seeker, all right. Sure it's Seeker, Warden." At the sound of Johnny's voice, rich in its gentleness, Seeker sank down. He stretched his muzzle in the snow and gazed directly at Johnny.

Johnny handed his rifle to his father.

"Going to hang him right here and now, Warden," said Killane. "We'll hang him just to make some people a little more careful about harboring wolves and such."

Seeker lifted his head. His eyes had become yellow with anger. He began gathering his muscles for the rise. Johnny took another step forward. "Well, Seeker, old boy—it's so long now. So long, Seeker!" Seeker thumped his tail.

"Keep off him, Johnny." The warden then held up his hand in warning to Killane, who had taken out a thick cord. "Not so fast, Dan. Haven't I told you? We don't know yet why he ran away."

Johnny saw drops of blood seeping out of the matted fur at Seeker's throat. Johnny inched forward a little distance. There he bent down to make sure there was a wound.

Killane whirled the noose he had made. This brought Seeker up with a roar. In that instant, Johnny plunged forward, right up against the gaping jaws. He tripped and fell headlong across the trap. The savage in the trap swerved from him and struggled forward to reach Killane.

Johnny put his arm gently around that battered, grimy head. "Seeker, old boy, he's not going to hang you or lay a hand on you! Quiet!" At this, Seeker fell over with a groan and began licking the hand that lay along his forepaw. Johnny parted the matted fur at the throat. Seeker groaned again. Johnny ran his hand along the shoulder, felt the scars and the half-healed rips. He turned angrily to the men.

"Did the lambs bite him?" He parted the fur over a whitish welt. "And the ewes?" He waited until they were quiet. "I'll—I'll have the law on anybody that lays a hand on this dog now or any other time. You hear that, Dan Killane?"

Killane had nothing to say. He struck the snowflakes from his eyes. The warden said: "There's more in this than meets the eye."

Johnny said: "A dog that kills sheep is killed by the man who sees him doing it. A dog that runs deer is killed by the warden—on proof. My dog doesn't kill sheep and he doesn't run deer." He took the iron stake of the trap and pried its jaws open. Gently he lifted Seeker's paw. "Not broken." He stood up. "Heel, Seeker!"

Seeker limped forward until his head touched Johnny's knee. "Stand aside, everybody."

They fell back, and in the next instant, their eyes wide in quick alarm, they shouted. "Hey! Hey! Look out, Johnny!" Killane laughed shrilly until anger changed his laughter to a curse.

Johnny turned in his stride. His happiness became dismay. He had just one flashing glimpse of Seeker before he glided away in a three-legged gait into the swirling snow back toward the Notch.

Killane was the only one mean enough to say something. "Now that's downright inconsiderate of Seeker. Well, I should have put poison in that rabbit, but I couldn't. It being against the law." They knew well enough he'd do it next time.

THAT flurry of snow in the woods—well, it became "the Big Fall." Somehow or other, people managed to give it the capital "F" when they spoke about it. A lot of people thought it really couldn't snow in the Catskills the way it used to. They found out. The big flakes came down so thick that the warden said it couldn't last. It lasted until sunset; then a finer fall came down and the whole valley fell quiet. You couldn't hear a dog or a cow. The snow clung to window panes, climbed them, and fell so thick you couldn't see a light in the houses below.

It was the hush that woke Johnny out of a poor sleep. No wind, no sounds at all, nothing but the shifting slide of snow. He fell asleep again. Voices

woke him up. He heard his father talking over the telephone. "I'm sorry to hear that. It looks bad, eh? No, we get our money when we deliver the sheep." His mother was downstairs, too. Johnny heard her low voice, comforting his daddy.

At noon the next day, snow was still falling. At nightfall, six deer showed up in the main orchard. They had come off the ridges. They began hoofing up windfalls, full of frozen cider. An hour after supper, the snow-plow got through and pushed all the way up to Killane's farm at the edge of the Notch forest. Johnny's mother put on the coffee, and Johnny stopped the plow when it came down. He brought the men in for supper. They looked pretty serious.

MIDNIGHT again, and again the quiet of the snow-bound house made any little noise a peal. Johnny sat up in bed and listened.

He heard his parents' voices, his mother imploring softly, his father saying: "There's just no way out of it. I can make it." She begged him, and he replied: "I won't lose everything I gave you without a fight. No!" And: "Sheep can live under snow. They're built for it. I'll have that money from Martin yet."

Johnny put on two suits of winter underwear, two woolen shirts, and two pairs of dungarees. He took his rifle and went downstairs. His father looked up at him, not in surprise at all, and finished lacing his boots.

"Both of you?" His mother turned from the window, where the snow whispered. Johnny could tell she was frightened. She had brushed back her pretty red curls, had touched up her lips with lipstick, and had a fresh apron over her robe. That's how she always kept her courage up in times like these. She said: "There's somebody in the orchard. A light coming."

This was Killane. He shook off a hood of snow and came into the kitchen. He looked poorly. "You think we can make it, Jack?"

"On snowshoes—yes, Dan."

"Even so—what good will it do?"

"I don't know much about sheep, Dan. But I know this much: it's best to be with them now."

Johnny took the knapsack, packed with food, and brought the snowshoes round to the porch. They started in brisk style, swung up past Killane's place, and reached the lumber road into the Notch.

Johnny said: "How about Sheep Trail? It'll be easier going. Not much drifting there. No blow-downs, either."

His father shook his head. "No. Easier—yes—but it's longer. Too long."

They started again. What they used to do in an hour, it took them three. The drifts were tough for greenhorn snow-shoers, the blow-downs worse. In the end, they decided to wait in the shelter of the pines for the sun. They went ahead in the dim break of day, stopping every now and then to listen. A wind was rising and that's all they could hear. Even when they were stumbling along the creek, they heard nothing else.

Killane stopped. He was gasping. "You hear anything, Jack?" At the shake of the other's head, Killane said: "Give them a yell, Johnny, will you? If they're under this—we're done for."

Johnny cupped his gloved hands and shouted. They ran, side by side, and floundered into the clear space, the wide hollow of the Notch. Glittering spouts of flakes blew into the sunlight. Killane plunged in a head-long dash to the first fold, a long shed of logs tucked under the ledges. "Empty!" He threw off his snowshoes and stuck his hands into a drift. "Hey, sheep! Hey, sheep!" He was half out of his head.

Johnny jumped the creek, and fought his way into the main shelter, a great cave in the bluestone, to which wings of logs and an outer roof had been added in the old days. The sheep had been in there not long since. A day, perhaps. Now they were gone, except for a ram, an old-timer, that lay dead in a dark corner.

His father came to the door, his eyes empty, his hands trembling. "Seeker! I've found him, Johnny. He's dead this time." He didn't seem to care much. "Sheep are fools. They panic. Up the ridge and right over the cliff when he came—that's the story. That's where we'll find them come spring."

Killane was standing by something huddled deep under snow and frost. The first thing Johnny saw was

Native Wit...

A FEW YEARS AGO I was detailed on National Guard instruction duty in New England, being responsible for several units in widely separated towns. While making my first visit to two companies about 60 miles apart, I found I had to make pretty good speed on the road to see both units the same day. The road was unfamiliar to me, so on rounding a gentle turn at 50 miles an hour I found myself driving through a small village at a speed of about 40.

Just as I was leaving the village behind me, the chief of police popped out into the road and whistled me down. Realizing that I was at fault and that I would have to use that route for the next four years, I stopped and backed up. I explained the circumstances to the chief and threw myself on his mercy.

The chief was obviously torn between his sense of duty and his appreciation of my predicament. Finally in a fretful, nasal tone he blurted out, "Well, what the Sam Hill did you stop for? Nobody else does."

—COL. T. F. MCCARTHY
Berkeley, Calif.

a half-eaten lamb, then the open jaw of its killer, ghastly with gobs of flesh and crystal blood.

Killane was all right about it. He just said: "Well, he didn't kill them all, Johnny. But they're gone."

Johnny scooped the snow away. He kicked off a coat of ice until he saw the strange, grayish hide. He thrust his hands into the frozen fur and hauled hard. The carcass came up an inch, its hair tearing in the blood-darkened ice. He hauled again until the ice broke and the carcass slid up from the drift. He heard them gasp. Its throat was torn up.

"There's your real wolf," he said. "Know one next time, will you? Know now why Seeker ran away from me? To kill wolves—that's why!" He turned from the wolf, cupped his hand and shouted into the storm: "Seeker! Seeker, where are you?" After that: "He's afraid we'll shoot him."

The men said nothing. They were too far gone in exhaustion. For an hour longer, they ranged hopelessly through the drifts. They gave up for a while and came into the cabin to save themselves from the cold.

Johnny lit the lamps, made a fire, and put the kettle on for tea. They rested until noontime. The snow still falling, they climbed as far as they could up the ridge, looking for sheep sign. They failed, pushed back to the cabin, rested an hour, and started the homeward journey the way they had come up. The snow stopped while they were in the first stand of pine. Yet the drifts slowed them up again, and night caught them at the edge of the woods. Soon the half-moon shone clear.

Johnny's father wouldn't let Killane go to his house, where he lived alone. "Come along, Dan. Stay the night. We'll be needing company. Both of us." His voice broke. "If only we had figured out that snow. . . ."

They came up through the orchard. The warden's truck was near the barn, its motor running. He was in the cab, keeping warm. He said: "Tell your mother you're back safe, Johnny. That's something. She's been worried."

JOHNNY took off his snowshoes and turned toward the house. He saw the deer in the orchard. The moonlight made their eyes shine bright. Suddenly, clear as could be, he heard a dog bark there. The deer whopped away. A wide heave of snow rolled forward under the farther trees.

Next thing he saw was another kind of eyes, right down in the snow, and gleaming under the bare, glistening boughs. His heart stood still a moment and then it began to thump hard and sweet with hope and joy.

He ran into the drifts. He heard a crazy clamor of bleats and bawls. A hundred more eyes glittered. Then, in a wide rush, the whole Notch herd swarmed into the lanes of the orchard, each sheep a jumping bush of snow, each one crying and springing toward the lights of the barns.

He ran toward his daddy, crying his name. The three men, heads turned in the same stiff, staring way, couldn't even take a step off. The sheep flowed around them and past them. Johnny ran to the main door of the sheepshed and pushed it open.

"Hey, sheep! Hey, sheep!"

The leaders trotted in. Rams and ewes and lambs, they pushed into the warmth and the mellow light of the shed, pressed into the corners, huddled, and began to settle down. Behind the last one, a young ram whose horns glittered like icicles when he capered, came Seeker, shuffling along like a little brown bear.

The ram was all for a romp in the moonlight. Seeker wanted none of that. He came up to the ram and began muttering. The ram obediently trotted into the shed. Johnny closed the door.

Seeker sat down in the snow, his tail thumping. Johnny went down on his knees before him, took the scarred head between his hands, and looked into the eyes gazing the way a dog always gazes. Right at you.

"Drove them on Sheep Trail, Seeker? The way old Bess taught you? When the snow got too bad for them?"

Seeker whined happily.

"Caught that wolf with his mouth full of lamb, did you? That why you left me?"

Seeker whined again and limped a little nearer.

"And now what do you want, my dog?"

Seeker thrust forward into Johnny's arms.

—By Edmund Gilligan

"I just discovered something—
I don't know what I'm doing!"

Bluebook 8304

Unsung Hoosier Humorist

Continued from page 15

he scorned the confining customs of well-regulated society. That led to a running war with game wardens. The old poacher never lost a skirmish.

Once a warden pounced when Bunk had an out-of-season bass on his stringer.

"Why, I'm not going to keep that feller," said Bunk innocently. "I caught him six times. If I don't detain him temporarily, he'll steal all my bait." He got away with it.

Another day, needing a bit of change, Bunk entered the town bank and approached the president, a man he'd known since boyhood.

"I just caught 29 nice bass. Figured you might like a few," propositioned Bunk.

A nearby stranger promptly tapped Bunk's shoulder.

"Did I hear you say you caught 29 bass?" the stranger inquired.

"Sure did," said Bunk.

"The bass season isn't open—and that's way over the limit. Do you know who I am?"

"No."

"I'm the new game warden."

"Do you know who *I* am?" countered Bunk blandly.

"No."

"I'm the biggest damned liar in Starke County."

For Bunk, that was a perfect defense. He could produce 100 witnesses who would swear he had no peer as a teller of tall tales. There was, for example, his straight-faced saga of the big pike which went like this:

In a certain deep river-pool lurked a monstrous pike. Dozens of anglers had hooked him, only to lose lines and lures. Bunk prowled the swamps until he found a bullfrog "as big as a goose." He rigged a block-and-tackle, put the bullfrog on a shark hook—and caught the pike.

"He had so many spoons in his mouth that he jingled like a sleigh at Christmas," Bunk would conclude. "Those spoons were all I wanted. I took 'em out, filled my tackle box and threw the pike back. Heck, he was only a minnow, anyway!"

"A minnow!" someone was certain to exclaim.

"Sure," Bunk would go on. "I caught one lots bigger one day. Hadda let him go."

"Why?"

"Well, when I'd hauled four feet of his nose outta water without coming to the eyes, I figured he was too much for me. So I whipped out a knife and cut the line."

If that didn't satisfy his hearers, Bunk would recite the tale of the dog that cost him a bull. Bunk (as he told it) once wearied of slow hook-and-line fishing, so he acquired some dynamite and trained a dog to fetch fish.

Bunk's method was simple. He'd float a long-fused stick of dynamite over a likely hole. After the boom, the dog would retrieve the stunned fish.

"Worked fine, too," Bunk would finish, "until the crazy dog got playful one day and fetched me the stick of dynamite with the fuse still sputtering.

"I ran—but a mean bull chased me up a tree. The bull was stomping around below when the dog trotted up. Blooey! Knocked me outta the tree, killed the bull and blew the dog to smithereens. Took all the money I'd made selling fish to pay for the bull."

As he meandered through middle age, Bunk's binges multiplied. But if Phoebe Ann, now widowed, aging and lonely, needed help, he'd take a job. Sober, Bunk was industrious and dependable.

After Phoebe Ann died, Bunk's last bit of self-imposed responsibility vanished. But not his humor. No situation, no matter how dismal, could quench his effervescent wit.

Like the day he faced the town judge for the steenth time for over-imbibing. Out of patience, the judge lowered the boom. "Six months on the penal farm—and a hundred dollars fine!"

Bunk was jolted but didn't show it. Cupping a hand behind one ear, his watery eyes wistful, he said: "I seem to be getting a little deaf, Judge. What did you say?"

The judge roared it louder. Sadly, Bunk shook his head. "Judge," he said, "you just broke my other eardrum."

After a similar enforced absence, Bunk's cronies asked where he'd been.

"In jail," he said.

"What the heck were you doing in jail?"

"Trying to get out!"

One morning, Bunk and a pal, hungry and hung over, knocked at the back door of a Knox home to beg breakfast. When a kindly housewife appeared, Bunk's pal sign-talked with his hands, indicating they were mute and famished.

"You poor man," murmured the sympathetic housewife. "You're deaf and dumb." She turned to Bunk. "Are you deaf and dumb too?"

Although his empty belly winced, Bunk couldn't resist. "Totally, ma'am, totally!" he said clearly.

The woman had a sense of humor, so they got fed anyway. But as he slid downhill, Bunk found cadging harder. His dignity and good humor didn't suffer, though.

Knox's most famous citizen, Henry Schricker, only two-time governor of Indiana, recalls many an

encounter with Bunk when he, Schricker, was a bank cashier.

Bunk would wave a solemn finger at Schricker and say: "I've come to negotiate a loan of fifty cents."

"What do you need fifty cents for?" Schricker would ask.

"Oh, if we've got to go into all that we might as well forget it. You bankers are all alike!"

Despite his errant ways, Knox loved the irresponsible Bunk—sometimes to what Bunk considered a fault. Townsfolk conspired to shut off his drinks.

Once, word got around that one liquor dealer was refusing to go along with a no-booze-for-Bunk plan. Townsfolk gave him hell and he, in turn, confronted Bunk, complaining: "I do you a favor—and you blab!"

Bunk merely blinked once and commenced talking: "No, sir. 'Twasn't me that talked. It was that damned rabbit."

"Rabbit?"

"Yep. I snared one the other day and put him in my pocket, plumb forgetting I had an uncorked bottle of your whiskey there. By the time I got to town, that rabbit had a fine snootful. He jumped outta my pocket and ran down the street, shouting, 'Mr. X sold me and Bunk whiskey! Mr. X sold me and Bunk whiskey!' "

Another time, failing to find a leak in the town's considerate conspiracy, Bunk made the rounds of old friends, saying:

"I'm taking up a collection so I can go away and take the cure."

He went away, all right—but only for a dandy bender elsewhere. Tolerant townsfolk forgave him, partly because time was at last catching up with Bunk.

Bunk was well into his 70's before he surrendered his independence. A kindly family took him in.

In 1946, past 80, Bunk fell and broke his hip. The old Spanish War veteran who had been "where the bullets were thickest" was taken to a VA hospital at Danville, Ill., where he died December 31, 1946.

Bunk found final rest in a small, obscure grave in Knox's Oak Park cemetery, and there were a few who murmured, "What a wasted life!"

But Bunk Seagraves left his town such a legacy of laughter that he's becoming legend. Historian Stella Bonner is assiduously collecting Seagrave's lore—his quips, anecdotes and tall tales. Thus preserved, they'll bring chuckles to generations yet unborn.

Wasted life? Not in my book; the old gaffer got a lot more fun out of life than most people I know!

—By Al Spiers

TWIST OF FATE

The Goats Got a Break

When we fume about the price we pay for coffee, if we want to trace the subject back far enough we can blame the whole situation on a flock of third century Abyssinian goats.

Fleeing persecution, a small band of monks had made their way to the Abyssinian highlands. There they supported themselves by raising flocks of sheep and goats.

One evening the friar who had been tending the herds stumbled breathless through the monastery door. "Our goats!" he stammered. "They've had a visitation from Satan himself! They're acting like spring lambs, gamboling about in sheer madness! A pair of them are even trying to butt down a stone pillar!"

"My son, my son," said the prior soothingly, "be calm. I shall myself attend the fold—you have been dreaming, I am sure."

But he, too, found the animals cavorting about as goats are not supposed to cavort when the sun has gone down and they are customarily asleep. And they went through the same routine night after night. Finally the prior noticed that the flock was stripping a certain weed of its ripe, cherry-like fruit. He hesitantly tried chewing a few of these seeds. Feeling no ill effect other than a bitter taste, he took a mouthful. And when he noticed a strange feeling of exhilaration, followed by a sleepless night, the monk knew he had solved the riddle of the gamboling goats.

It became the custom of the good fathers to chew the seeds whenever they wished to work far into the night. Then some of the native Abyssinians carried the idea a step farther by brewing the dried cherry-like beans into a sort of tea.

Across the Red Sea lay Arabia, where the shrub also grew profusely. And the Arabs, following the teachings of Mohammed, could not take alcohol in any form. It was they who, having adopted the Abyssinian custom, eventually tried roasting the dried beans and drinking the infusion. The brew was a mild stimulant, it seemed to relieve fatigue, and its flavor was delicious.

The custom of the coffee break was on its way.

—By Mary Alkus

The Mail Must Go Through

Continued from page 28

Road, remembering when San Mateo had been the end of the pavement. Old School Road was an "old" street now; things got out of date fast in California. Jim could remember when these fine trees had been spindling saplings; things grew fast here, too.

Bill Beatty came down the front walk, carrying a letter in his hand. Bill was yawning, and he smelled of shaving lotion. Bill was night city-editor of the newspaper and once had done a feature story on Jim.

"I hate to let this one go, Jim," he said, "but I told Milly I'd see that it got in the mail."

Jim took the letter and glanced at its APO address. Milly's husband was a serviceman in Alaska.

"Why, Bill? Anything wrong between Milly and Bernie?"

"I think this is one of those 'Dear John' letters. I think she's telling him they made a mistake and ought to do the big thing and write it off to experience."

"Meet some other guy?"

"No, she says she has just fallen out of love."

"Girls go through stages, seems like," Jim said. "I handled lots of these letters. They meet some raunchy young buck in a uniform, from Ford Crank, Iowa, on his way to some fool foreign place, and all she knows to do for him is haul off and marry him. Then he goes overseas, and a month later she even forgets what he looks like. That's what happens, Bill—they forget what he looks like."

"They do?"

"Yes. Why should your kid be any better than other girls?"

BILL winced. As a younger man, Jim imagined, Bill had been a real live-wire. He had been in town only a few years. Newspapermen drifted a lot, but after working New York and Chicago and St. Louis and Los Angeles, Bill seemed ready to settle down here. Milly was only one of his five kids. Bill Beatty was head of a big, noisy house that got a lot of mail.

"Not better—just smarter," he said wearily. "I thought I was teaching her responsibility. A newspaperman sees everything. He's supposed to know all there is to know. I guess I've handled a thousand divorce stories in my time. The only conclusion I've ever reached from them is that while many a marriage is a mistake, so are most divorces. Being in a hurry twice is no cure for having been in a hurry once."

"They all do it, Bill."

"That," said Bill, "is the part I don't like."

Who would Bill talk to, if Rudy put a stranger on this route? Bill didn't want the help or advice of a friend. All he wanted was someone who came down the street at a certain time each day, as regular as the clock. Something he could count on. Jim had built up this route on regularity. Once he had heard a woman yell to a neighbor out back, "My rolls must be brown—I hear the mailman on the front porch."

Step by step, house by house, his load lightened—not much, because he picked up so much outgoing mail. When folks reached a certain age, they wrote more letters. These folks were middle-aged and they wrote a lot of letters. They were recalling aged aunts in Vermont, cousins in Texas that they had played with as kids. Blood ties unimportant a few years ago were beginning to count again.

THERE was no one home at the Holdredges', at Old School Road and Consuela Drive, but he had two letters for them, both with typewritten addresses. He had been leaving quite a few such letters here lately. People were probably working on Art, trying to get him to run for Superior Judge.

Art was pretty old, and he had been badly beaten 12 years ago in his only try for office. They had dug up an old story on him, a client who had killed herself in his office. They not only beat him, but they ruined his practice for several years. For a while, he dreaded to get the mail.

But over the years people had learned to know him, and now he got far more mail than the average. He was wise and tolerant and incorruptible, and would make a good judge if he could nerve himself to run. *I'd take a hand in it myself, if the fool Federal law didn't prohibit political activity,* Jim thought wistfully. He had never had an important official on his route. He had had everything else—couple of writers, president of the gas company, radio announcer, champion rodeo rider—but no big political officials.

He turned up Consuelo, and the McKenzie dog ran out and bit at his leg. Jim kicked at its head, missing. Mrs. McKenzie, waiting on the porch, did not comment.

"Looks like you might have a judge for a neighbor, doesn't it?" said Jim.

"Really?" Mrs. McKenzie cried. "Is he really going to run? Oh, wouldn't that be wonderful? I know Art would get the women's vote. You ought to hear what they were saying down at the women's club yesterday."

"Why don't you tell him that?" said Jim. "If his own neighbors don't think enough of him to give him a little push, you can't blame him if he doesn't run."

This, he felt, could hardly be construed as political activity. As he started across the lawn to the next house, the dog took another nip at his leg. Jim remembered to kick back. The dog was 13 years old, very stiff and feeble. He didn't get much fun out of life any more, and he was entitled to this little daily

revival of brute ferocity. But try to tell Rudy Smith that! Try to tell Rudy anything.

The Andersons got one of those tiny square envelopes that postal clerks hate. Jim held it up to the sun, but the envelope was too thick to tell whether it was a grandson or granddaughter. The Webbs had a letter from Dr. Shaw, the specialist. Mrs. Webb was well, then, because Shaw never sent a bill until he had discharged a patient. Doc Shaw had once lived on Jim's route. He had done Gracie's hysterectomy. He was expensive, but good.

The Everetts had an airmail letter with a Canadian stamp; their kid was at McGill University. *And he's broke again,* Jim thought. They also had a letter from the insurance company, the premium-due kind. Jim decided to keep this one until tomorrow. Let them send the boy the money first. Old Everett was closer than the lid on your eye, and if he got both demands on the same day he'd blow his top.

Jim looked around very carefully. No one was watching. He slipped the premium-due notice into the inside pocket of his coat, along with several other items that would have shocked Rudy silly. It would be no use telling Rudy the Everetts had 30 days, and then 30 days more, in which to pay their insurance. No use telling Rudy anything.

He plodded on, paced by the rhythmic squeak of his arch support. Where people were at home, he found some excuse for bringing up Art Holdredge's name. He told Mrs. Harrison what he thought of people who let lantana grow over the mailbox to scratch the postman's hands, and he bummed a cigarette from Mr. French. Jim didn't smoke, as a rule, but French was a heart case and an illicit puff or two with Jim was all he allowed himself. Like the McKenzie dog's, Mr. Franch's pleasures were few and far between.

"I wouldn't mind it so much," said Mr. French, "if I didn't feel so useless! I could live forever by taking care of myself—but why?"

"Why don't you get on the phone and call a few people and tell them to write to Art Holdredge and make him run for judge?" said Jim. "That would give you something to do."

Mr. French brightened. "Art would be a good man for it. I think maybe I will. I used to know a lot of people."

"Don't mention my name!" Jim warned. "I don't want to break any laws."

At the corner of El Arbolito and Westminster, he sat down by the public mailbox for his noon rest. The truck was late, but it came along in a few minutes, bringing not only the mail for his afternoon route, but his lunch as well. Jim had an awful time every time they put a new man on the truck. The P.L. & R. said no lunches in the truck, and so did Rudy.

The driver loaded in the mail Jim had accumulated on his morning route, while Jim sat down on the curb and opened his lunch. The driver got back in his truck.

"Say, there's a kid playing in your car down on San Mateo," he said. "Kid with a fire helmet on."

Jim nodded. "And a brace on his leg?" he said, around a hard-boiled egg. "That's the Seyfer boy. Had polio. He stretches those muscles a lot, climbing around in that car. Got to use those muscles or they never come back."

"Just so you know about it," said the driver.

"I know about it. I know about everything on my route."

The truck left. As Jim ate, he read the cards he had not had time to read while sorting mail this morning. Mrs. Diamond's grandpa in Minnesota was 80 and almost illiterate, but Jim had learned to read his writing so well that he often read it to Mrs. Diamond. The old man was having trouble with his Spanish War rupture, but his potatoes were up and he had five hens setting. The Goffs had an overdue book at the library—the Kinsey Report, if Jim knew the Goffs. Mrs. Knox's Italian sister-in-law had used a postal to send along a veal *scallopini* recipe she had forgotten to put in her letter.

Jim put the recipe in his pocket, to be delivered tomorrow. There wasn't much Gracie could do with veal, yet when a man's teeth started failing, its tenderness appealed. This recipe sounded pretty good.

He shouldered his pouch and started up Westminster. Mrs. Deems' car was in the drive, which meant she was home from Palm Springs. The Deems were pretty well-to-do, but last year their 10-year-old boy had died and neither money nor the things it bought seemed to do them any good. Mrs. Deems had tried everything to make life interesting—music, uplift clubs, travel. The neighbors didn't see much of her any more. Neither did Harry Deems.

Jim left their mail and started away. Hearing the door open, he stopped. Mrs. Deems had never struck him as a very pretty woman. He had assumed it was her money that made that dark young piano-teacher hang around. But today she looked—well, just beautiful. Maybe sorrow had done something to her. She didn't look quite so stuck up. She looked almost human, and—well, kind of beautiful.

"Are you sure this is all for me?" she said.

"That's all," he said. "Expecting something else?"

"Why, yes—yes I was, rather."

Jim scratched his neck. "Something from your music teacher, maybe? I haven't seen his car around here all week."

Mrs. Deems stared at him, her color rising, her lips blanching. But she did not say anything; so Jim went on, "I see Harry's car every evening, though. The kids are playing ball on that lot where they tore down the old lodge hall, and he stops there on his way home from the office to watch. It doesn't seem to help him none, though. What Harry needs is to talk this thing out with somebody."

"Why don't you talk to him?" Mrs. Deems said icily, breathing hard. "You're quite a talker."

"What he needs is a listener, after being your listener all year," said Jim. "He held everything in to let you cry it out. Look—you two had a mighty fine kid once. The kind of a kid I was proud to have on my route. You could have another one just as good if you got at it, but you'll never do it with you down there in Palm Springs and Harry watching them kids play ball."

"Mr. Endicott, you have all the answers, don't you?" she said.

"Mrs. Deems, your mailman knows things you wouldn't tell your doctor or your lawyer or even your husband."

She studied him a moment. She was a dead-game woman, not smart-alecky or full of phony indignation, stuff like that. "You're an insolent old man," she said softly. "You're sure it's a ball game that Harry is watching every evening?"

"Dead sure. I see him every night."

"Might it not be that chubby little stenographer in his office—the one with the tight skirt?"

"You're all mixed up, Mrs. Deems. You ought to talk to Harry and get straightened out. I don't like the look you got in your eyes. You could go into a screaming fit without half trying. Look, I just remembered something."

He dipped into his coat-pocket cache and brought out one that he had been carrying for almost two weeks. Its stamp was uncanceled, and it had been addressed in Mrs. Deems' own hand to a music studio downtown. And if she had been wondering why somebody failed to meet her in Palm Springs, this was her answer.

"Is this what you were expecting, Mrs. Deems?"

Her face was fiery red for a moment. Her eyes glittered with that old haughty, rich look. She took the letter.

Then, slowly and deliberately, she tore it in pieces and put them all in her pocket.

"Yes, thank you, that was the one," she said gravely. "Where was it they tore down the old lodge hall?"

"Fourth and Chico," he said. "You can't miss it."

Now how could you make an examination-passer, a Civil-Service shark like Rudy, understand a thing like that? Only the man who built up the route could have handled this situation. Jim had been waiting for this chance for a year. The Deemses sent and received a lot of mail. They were just about his best customers.

On Terra Bella he turned back toward San Mateo. A police car stopped beside him, and old Buff Hanson leaned out.

"Jim," he said, "what kind of car does Rudy Smith drive?"

"I don't know. He just got a new one. Why?"

"A new car has been following you all day, and it looks like the postmaster. Are you in some kind of a jam? He's ringing every doorbell on your route."

Jim felt sick at his stomach suddenly. He took off his cap and wiped out the sweatband. "Not that I know of, Buff," he said.

"Well, watch yourself. You did me a good turn once. This car, whoever he is, is staying only a block or two behind you."

Buff drove on. *My goose is cooked,* Jim thought. He felt cold all over at thought of facing the postal inspectors, of hearing them say, "Now Mr. Endicott, we should like to search your person." If they found that stuff in his pocket, some of it two weeks old. . . .

His impulse was to return immediately to the post office and quit cold. Let them try getting along without him! Then he thought of Gracie, and changed his mind quickly. Muffling the beating of his heart as best he could, he plodded on, keeping a sharp eye out for that new car.

He saw it several times, a block or two away. He was pretty sure it was Rudy driving, but he wasn't going to dignify Rudy by finding out. It was his bad luck that the car should be crossing the intersection just a block away when Milly Beatty came running up the walk toward him.

Running? She was practically crying. She was so breathless she could hardly talk.

"Mr. Endicott," she panted, "how do you get a letter back, once it's in the mail?"

"You don't usually," said Jim. "Why?"

Her adorable face fell. Milly was 18, but Jim thought she knew more and had more built-in common sense than most people of 50. And talk about looks! Nice figure. Nice brownish-red hair and honest hazel eyes and a direct, honest way of talking.

"I've done it," she said bleakly. "If he comes back and kills me, I deserve it. I'm just a tramp. Mr. Endicott, I couldn't even remember his face—the

Native Wit...

Recently I spent four days at a small resort hotel in the Northwest. The rate for my third-floor room, plus meals, was $10 per day, and since I had not made a phone call or requested room service at any time, I was prepared to pay $40 for my stay. But the bill handed me came to $43.15.

"Why the extra $3.15?" I asked the old proprietor.

"Well, business is kind of quiet right now, Mister," he said, "so the only way I can break even is to add the room number to each bill."

—Clarence Roeser
Saginaw, Mich.

man I married. I fell out of love. I didn't remember what it was like to be with him, or his voice, or his teeth when he smiled, or anything. Then suddenly I remembered, and here I am back in love and it's too late."

"How come you to change your mind?" said Jim.

"Something touched Dad off, and he told me a few things. He always let us kids work things out for ourselves. This time, I think, I needed his help and didn't get it. Until today. I don't know what made him blow up, but somehow he made me remember my guy. That soldier I married."

A NEW car whisked across the intersection a block away, but Jim owed too much to his customers to back down now. This wasn't the first time he had run into this problem twice in a single day. The houses on his route were old enough to be filling up again with young people, and this new crop made the same mistakes their parents had always made. People were always writing letters and then wishing they had them back.

"Here it is, Milly," he said, handing her the letter from his inside pocket. "No—no—don't tear it up and throw evidence around here! Do you want me to go to McNeil's Island? Go home and burn it—and if anybody in a new car tries to talk to you, holler for a cop."

"You're an angel, Mr. Endicott. You're almost as smart as my dad. Smarter, maybe," she said incoherently. "He said I couldn't get the letter back but I knew I could because I had to. I had to!"

She went dancing off down the street, and Jim's arch support started squeaking off in the other direction. Watching back over his shoulder for that new car got him rattled. He hadn't been kidding Mrs. Hessel—get him rattled and he made mistakes. In the last three houses, those big new ones where they had subdivided the old Mendoza property, he got everybody's mail mixed up. The Jeromes' mail went to the Webers and the Webers' mail went to the Chidesters and the Chidesters' mail went to the Jeromes.

Those three families, living to themselves on a dead-end street, were having a hard time getting acquainted with the old-timers and with each other. By the time they got their mail straightened out today, they'd know each other pretty well. *And it's Rudy's fault for getting me rattled,* Jim thought. *It's my route anyway. Mine.*

He saw nothing more of the new car on his route, but it was parked behind the post office when he returned that afternoon. Rudy was one of those postmasters who opened up in the morning and locked up at night. He had said today was the day, and there wasn't going to be any way of getting out of it.

Jim went boldly inside. Most of the boys had gone home. The last mail had gone, and the place had that musty smell that only post offices have, and then only in the late shank of the day.

Rudy was sitting back in his chair with his feet up on his desk, his shoes untied, his face sweaty and dusty. Behind his rimless glasses, his eyes were grim. In his hand he held a copy of the P.L. & R.

"I've been expecting you, Jim," he said. "Sit down."

Jim sat down. "You were out following me around on my route all day, weren't you?"

Rudy marked his place in the P.L. & R. "Yes," he said. "I talked to a lot of people, making the survey that's required of postmasters as a part of their duties. I can't be sure, but I think your score today is about 31 violations. And as I understand it, that's about par for the course."

"Violations of what?" Jim said.

Rudy held up the P.L. & R. "This."

Jim waved his hand. "Oh, that thing! You don't want to pay any attention to that, Rudy. You'd never get any mail delivered if you did everything it says in that book."

"But Jim—"

"Rudy, that book was wrote by some of them smart young lawyers back in Washington. They don't know any more about getting the mail delivered than the Fourth Assistant Postmaster General, and if you listen to them you'll go crazy. What you've got to do, Rudy, is figure that you're a kind of a wholesaler, and the letter-carriers are the retailers. Think of it that way, and you'll be all right. You run your business and I'll run mine and we'll get along just fine."

"Your business?" Rudy cried, in a strangled voice.

"My business!" Jim said stubbornly. "I built that route up practically from plowed ground."

RUDY got up abruptly and went over, with his untied shoes slopping noisily, and stared at that clammy spot on the wall again. He was silent for about the length of time it would take him to count to 50.

Then he turned around. "Yes, Jim, I guess it *is* yours," he said hopelessly. "I could prefer charges, but I couldn't prove anything. And if I tried to put another man on that route, I'd be lynched. I'm not a bad loser, Jim. I'm just a tired, confused bureaucrat who is only doing the best he can. My feet ache. I got bitten by a dog and told off by three irate women, and threatened with a lawsuit by a man who says he has a heart condition and mustn't be upset. I don't see how you stand the grind."

This wasn't the first postmaster who had learned his business from Jim Endicott. The P.L. & R. was just sort of a loose guide—real loose. The post office belonged to the people who got the mail, and they were the ones to say how they wanted it delivered. Jim felt no particular triumph—only relief that one more postmaster had learned not to come between Jim Endicott and his customers.

"Grind?" he said. "Heck, Rudy, this was just a routine day."

—By JOHN REESE

Crisis

By LYDEL SIMS

Pay-Off

THE FIRE STARTED on a Saturday afternoon. By the time they got it out, only the walls were still standing. The little leather-repair shop had gone up in smoke.

Steve Glode, a stocky, powerful man with a touch of gray in his blond hair, looked at the charred remains of his business that autumn day in New Haven and wondered what would hit him next.

Bad luck had fathered the shop. A fall on a step had left him with a trick back, and made his long hours of driving as a traveling salesman a misery beyond endurance. So he had given up the job and launched this venture. And now!

His blue eyes grim behind the horn-rimmed glasses, Steve figured up his losses. Leaving out what the insurance would cover, there had been $8,000 worth of customers' merchandise—saddles, luggage, expensive belts—in the shop before the fire. Now it was all beyond salvage. Steve had assets of about $500—and four children at home, the youngest just a few months old.

He knew the law. Sure, he could go into bankruptcy, and who would blame him?

Steve knew the answer to that: *he* would. He never had thought much of anybody who paid off less than 100 cents on the dollar. No, sir, he would pay off that $8,000, every last penny of it, if it took him the rest of his life. But for a man just past 40 it would be rough. He'd better get busy with plans for a reopening. . . .

Steve's nose was still hopelessly to the grindstone when he walked into the New Haven post office that morning five months later. It had been hard enough to make a living for his family out of the shop. Paying off the debt made it impossible. Deep in his problem, he walked smack into a man standing in the long line at the FIRM DELIVERY window—and suddenly came to life.

All these people, from stores and offices and factories all over New Haven, coming down here every day, several times a day, to get mail addressed to their post-office boxes or to post it! He had noticed them before and wondered vaguely if there wasn't a germ of an idea there. Now, with that debt hanging onto him like the Old Man of the Sea, he began thinking in earnest.

The little circular went out a few days later to 500 executives. Steve Glode was opening a Mail Delivery Service. Why waste time and man-hours on runs to the post office? Mail Delivery Service would do it for you. How about it?

The idea caught on from the start.

That was in the spring of 1953. As word got around, more and more companies signed up for the service. Steve leased a station wagon, and a second, and a third, and still the business grew.

By last spring, Steve had paid off the last penny of the fire debt and was hot on a plan to expand. Mail Delivery Service, Inc., blossomed out with a cooperative franchise system. Smart, aggressive men who knew a surefire venture when they saw one began beating a path to Steve's door. In an unbelievably short time, Mail Delivery Service was operating in twenty of the nation's largest cities on a cooperative franchise basis, with several others scheduled to open in the near future.

Recently in his hotel room in Boston, where he had gone to set up a service, Steve Glode relaxed, took off his glasses, and let go with a big grin.

"It's going coast-to-coast, and into Canada," he said. "That fire? Best thing that ever happened to me! Losing that money is what put me in business!"

This Century's Greatest Scientific Wonder

As fantastic as flying saucers, yet as real as a railroad engine . . .

Made possible by American super-science, it is not something far in the future—it may begin operations next year.

It will start bringing a science-fiction world into reality on earth, and will change your daily life immensely for the better.

The elimination of disease . . . the control of climate . . . peace and plenty throughout the world . . . all this is in actual prospect because of this marvel of present-day science.

Read about it for the first time anywhere, in next month's special issue of BLUEBOOK—the most important we've ever published.

ON SALE AT YOUR NEWSSTAND FEB. 28