MARCH

REDBOOK
MAGAZINE

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Complete Book-Length Novel

By AGATHA CHRISTIE

PEARL S. BUCK · RUFUS KING · HELEN HULL

AVERAGE PAID CIRCULATION MORE THAN 1,250,000

"RIDE IT —AND YOU'LL BUY IT!"

DISCOVER WHY THOUSANDS SWITCH TO PLYMOUTH

❶ Plymouth's 117-inch wheelbase is longest of "All 3" low-priced cars. And what a difference this makes in the ride!

❷ You enjoy new mastery of the road with Plymouth's new High-Torque engine performance and new power-gearing.

❸ Plymouth brings you finer quality—wide choice of colors.

❹ You save money! Plymouth is actually lower-priced than the "other 2" on many models!

RIDE in a new Plymouth before you decide on *any* new car! That's the way to get most for your money in 1941!

The new Plymouth's 117-in. wheelbase provides luxurious roominess, greater smoothness. And you ride in the luxury of a new Fashion-Tone Interior.

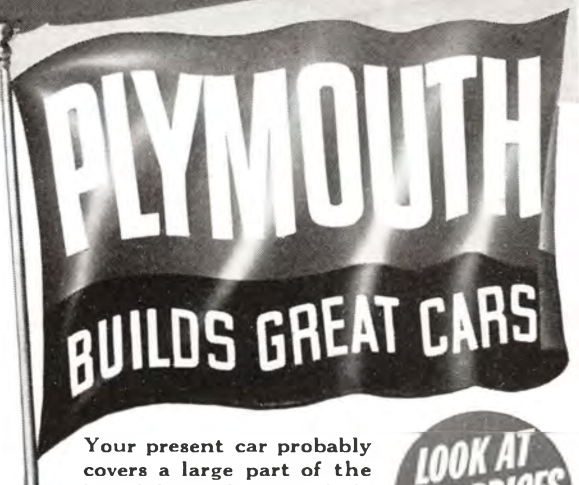
New High-Torque engine performance and new power-gearing give you a new sense of great power under perfect control—with less gear-shifting!

You get new Safety Rims on wheels, an Oil Bath Air Cleaner, High-Duty Engine Bearings, Coil Springs, 6-inch Tires, on even *lowest-priced* models!

See the 1941 Quality Chart at your nearby Plymouth dealer's—comparing "All 3" low-priced cars with high-priced cars. *Ride* in a new Plymouth and you'll *buy* it! Plymouth Division of Chrysler Corporation.

TUNE IN MAJOR BOWES' HOUR, C. B. S., THURSDAYS, 9 TO 10 P. M., E. S. T.

☛ SEE THE NEW LOW-PRICED 1941 PLYMOUTH COMMERCIAL CARS!



Your present car probably covers a large part of the low delivered price...balance in low monthly instalments. Prices subject to change without notice.

Q. Will he like my new coiffure?
A. He should adore it.

Q. Can it turn his heart to mine?
A. Yes, if your smile is bright and charming.

Q. How can a girl be sure of her smile?
A. She can help it by using Ipana and Massage!

WISE the girl who remembers that a stunning coiffure or an exciting costume can only help at the start...that it takes the spell of a lovely smile to keep romance alive!

For the attention you've won is so quickly lost... if you let your smile become drab and dingy... if you ignore the warning flash of "pink" on your tooth brush!

Never Ignore "Pink Tooth Brush"

See your dentist the minute you see "pink" on your tooth brush! It may not be serious. Very likely your dentist will merely say your gums, denied exercise by today's soft foods, have become weak and tender. And he may suggest "the healthful stimulation of Ipana and massage"!

For Ipana not only cleans teeth thoroughly but, with massage, it is specially designed to aid the gums to healthy firmness. So every time you brush your teeth, massage a little extra Ipana onto your gums.

Start now to let the healthful habit of Ipana and massage help give you the sparkling, radiant smile that wins romance. Get a tube of Ipana today.

HELP GUARD AGAINST "PINK TOOTH BRUSH" WITH IPANA AND MASSAGE

★ "He acts like Lincoln but frankly we're disappointed" ★

"My husband keeps saying, 'Mrs. Bott, Lincoln studied by the light of a flickering fire, so why should Winthrop always be getting poor grades?'"

We'll tell you, Mrs. Bott! That flickering light puts extra strain on young eyes . . . makes study harder. Every youngster needs plenty of good sight-saving light to help him see better and more easily. The right-size G-E MAZDA lamps will help protect his eyesight (and yours) . . . will probably improve his grades . . . may even improve his chances for success in life.

SEE HOW LITTLE THEY COST!

7½, 15, 25-watt 10¢

40, 50, 60-watt 13¢

75 and 100-watt 15¢

Made to Stay Brighter Longer

★ GENERAL ELECTRIC ★

MARCH 1941 VOL. 76 No. 5

REDBOOK MAGAZINE

EDWIN BALMER, *Editor*
Associate Editors, DONALD KENNICOTT *and* VOLDEMAR VETLUGUIN
SID L. HYDEMAN, *Art Editor*

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Cover: Natural-Color Photograph by Ruzzie Green

The short stories, serials, novel and novelette 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

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The Redbook Camp and School Directory will be found on pages 108 through 115

Look out for a COLD . . . watch your THROAT

—gargle Listerine Quick!

A careless sneeze, or an explosive cough, can shoot troublesome germs in your direction at mile-a-minute speed. In case they invade the tissues of your throat, you may be in for throat irritation, a cold—or worse.

If you have been thus exposed, better gargle with Listerine Antiseptic at your earliest opportunity. Listerine kills millions of the germs on mouth and throat surfaces known as "secondary invaders" ... often helps render them powerless to invade the tissue and aggravate infection. Used early and often, Listerine may head off a cold, or reduce the severity of one already started.

Amazing Germ Reductions in Tests

Tests have shown germ reductions ranging to 96.7% on mouth and throat surfaces fifteen minutes after a Listerine Antiseptic gargle. Even one hour after, reductions up to 80% in the number of surface germs associated with colds and sore throat were noted.

That is why, we believe, Listerine Antiseptic in the last nine years has built up such an impressive test record against colds . . . why thousands of people gargle with it at the first hint of a cold or simple sore throat.

Fewer and Milder Colds in Tests

These tests showed that those who gargled with Listerine Antiseptic twice a day had fewer colds, milder colds, and colds of shorter duration than those who did not gargle. And fewer sore throats, also.

So remember, if you have been exposed to others suffering from colds, if you feel a cold coming on, gargle Listerine Antiseptic—*quick!*

LAMBERT PHARMACAL CO., *St. Louis, Mo.*

Mothers!
GET THIS AMAZING
Listerine Throat Light

Du Pont "Lucite" shoots light around curve

75¢ LISTERINE THROAT LIGHT
75¢ LISTERINE ANTISEPTIC

BOTH FOR 98¢

$1.50 Value

DEPRESSES TONGUE—LIGHTS UP THROAT

CHECK CHILDREN'S THROAT DAILY

Offer good only in continental U. S. A.

The METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER'S LION'S ROAR

Published in this space every month

The greatest star of the screen!

This is a Winter's Tale. Not told by the Bard of Avon, but by the Bard of M-G-M.

★ ★ ★ ★

It is the story of things to come as the blustery season goes into the home stretch.

★ ★ ★ ★

Good things to come. Exhibits A, B, C, D.

A. James Stewart and Hedy Lamarr in Clarence Brown's production *Come Live With Me.* The screen play is by Patterson McNutt. It's a romantic comedy drama, the story of a circumstantial marriage in which the woman attempts to pay.

★ ★ ★ ★

B. Wallace Beery in *The Bad Man*, screen-ized by Wells Root from the famous Porter Emerson Browne play which was produced by William Harris, Jr., and directed by Richard Thorpe. It has action, great humor of a high order, and Lionel Barrymore, Laraine Day and Ronald Reagan.

★ ★ ★ ★

Do you like our Exhibits?

★ ★ ★ ★

Well, **C** is the long-awaited co-starring of Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney in *Men of Boys Town* by James Kevin McGuinness, directed by Norman Taurog. Those of you—meaning all of you—who enjoyed "Boys Town", will understand that this new Father Flanagan-inspired film promises to be a contribution of remarkable merit.

★ ★ ★ ★

And **D** is *The Ziegfeld Girl*, gay, glamorous, glittering, gorgeous. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard, it will present for the delight of those with eyes and ears a galaxy of stars which include Jimmy Stewart, Judy Garland, Hedy Lamarr, Lana Turner, Tony Martin, Charles Winninger and many, many others.

★ ★ ★ ★

That's A, B, C, and D.

★ ★ ★ ★

Your best alphaBET is

—Leo

Advertisement for *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures*

NEWS ABOUT REDBOOK

Presenting Susan Sommers, our cover girl of the month. A graduate of Duke University, Miss Sommers was crowned Queen of the May in her senior year. No, she's not a Southerner; she lives in New Jersey. The dress she is wearing on the cover comes from Bonwit Teller's and was designed by Germaine Monteil. Her topaz ring and bracelets are from Olga Tritt.

MEET Miss Andy Logan. We have never heard before of a girl whose first name is "Andy," but we suppose there must be a first time for all things. Miss Logan is twenty; she's a junior at Swarthmore College; and her story "The Visit," published elsewhere in this issue, was awarded REDBOOK'S prize for the best story written by an undergraduate and published in a college magazine during the year 1940. Unlike our cover girl of the month, Miss Sommers, who was born in the North and went to a Southern university, "Andy" was born in Candler, North Carolina, a very small town in the mountains near Asheville, but chose to be educated in the North. First she went to the Laurel School in Cleveland; then, without a moment's hesitation, she decided to cast her lot with Swarthmore. To quote her own words, she made that decision "as if there were no other college in the world." To continue quoting her: "After two and a half years at Swarthmore, I do not see how I can ever be convinced that the other colleges ever exist in any important sense." Our readers at Vassar, Smith, Barnard and Wellesley please note that our postman is not as young as he used to be, and should watch his strength.

ANDY LOGAN

Miss Logan wrote her prize-winning story during the spring of her freshman year, but according to her, "no one seemed to like it any too well," so she put it away until May, 1940, when the *Dodo* (Swarthmore's literary magazine) was coming out and needed material. She cannot recall how she came to write it, but she does remember it was fun doing it. She wrote it sitting on the stairs late one night when all the rest of the dormitory was asleep. As per the terms of our contest, Miss Logan receives five hundred dollars, and the *Dodo* was given two hundred and fifty dollars. We feel very much encouraged by the results of our first college contest, and an early issue of REDBOOK will carry the announcement of another contest which will be held under the same rules.

IN this issue we are publishing the last installment of "Fame Is the Spur." It appeared in book form two months ago, and is to be found now high in the list of national best-sellers.... Altogether, the year 1940 was an amazingly successful year for REDBOOK'S authors. "The Morning Is Near Us," by Susan Glaspell; "Portrait of Jennie," by Robert Nathan; Carl Sandburg's biography of Lincoln; "Whiteoak Heritage," by Mazo de la Roche; "The Fire and the Wood," by R. C. Hutchinson; "Claudia and David," by Rose Franken; "Dr. Dogbody's Leg," by James Norman Hall; and "Fame Is the Spur," by Howard Spring, made the list of national best-sellers. This is quite a record, considering that during the first eleven months of 1940 a grand total of 1646 fiction titles and 495 "general literature" titles were published in the United States. Of that number, not more than about fifty were recognized as national best-sellers.

TOMORROW'S EXCITING LITERARY EVENTS ARE IN TODAY'S REDBOOK

NEWS ABOUT REDBOOK *(Continued)*

THIS is the story of a luncheon that was responsible for—first, a score of REDBOOK stories; second, two books; third, a play.

Two years ago the editors of REDBOOK were invited to luncheon with Rose Franken, her husband William Brown Meloney, and her agent. As always happens at a luncheon given by a literary agent, the conversation began with Hitler and wound up with—"And now, gentlemen, I have an idea to offer." The gentlemen listened to the idea, thought it a good one, but were of the opinion that a still better idea could be offered. Would Rose Franken write a series of short stories dealing with the same young couple—their life, their joys, sorrows, and tribulations? Miss Franken liked the idea and said she would see what she could do about it.

A week later the first *Claudia* and *David* story was on the desk of the editor of REDBOOK. Two years passed. Some of the strangest things happened to *Claudia* and *David*, both in the pages of REDBOOK, and elsewhere. They have two children by now; *Claudia's* mother has died; *David* is making more money; recently they were able to take a trip to California. The nineteen *Claudia* and *David* stories published by us have appeared in book form—two books have been made of them. Both were published by Farrar and Rinehart, and both enjoyed considerable sales. John Golden, the producer, is about to introduce *Claudia* and *David* to Broadway in a play based on REDBOOK stories. The Hollywood tycoons are yet to be heard from, but there is small doubt that they will realize the screen value of those two tremendously popular fiction characters. Altogether, it would appear that both Rose Franken and the editors of REDBOOK had a most eventful luncheon two years ago.

•

A round-up of REDBOOK European authors as of January 1, 1941, produces the following results: Alec Waugh is a captain on the General Staff of the British Army. He claims that the continuous bombing of London doesn't disturb him much. "It is true," he says, "that what was a jeweler's shop the night before often turns out to be a heap of rubble the following morning; but then, we Londoners have always been accustomed to seeing our city pretty well scaffolded."

Howard Spring is also in England, from where he sends us a story about a German aviator and his mascot which will appear in our next issue. The same goes for Hugh Walpole, who will be represented by a complete book-length novel in our next issue. W. Somerset Maugham, whose articles in recent issues of REDBOOK created nation-wide comment, has been spending the holidays with the Eugene O'Neills in San Francisco. Pierre van Paassen has just concluded a lecture tour. He traveled from coast to coast; and he frankly confesses that he never believed there were so many people in the United States. His lecture in Kansas City was attended by ten thousand men and women. Franz Hoellering is living in New York, and is writing for us a new series of stories dealing with the German refugees in America. Watch for the first one of this series, in our next issue.

HUGH WALPOLE

•

LIKEWISE in our next issue: the first installment of "Miss Gray Eyes," a novel of this tremendous moment by Bristol S. D. Grosvenor; the concluding installment of "A Man's Daily Bread" by Pearl S. Buck; a novelette by Franken Meloney; and short stories, articles and special features by Vincent Sheean, Catharine Whitcomb, Rufus King, Elisabeth Sanxay Holding and many others; and an Encore of the Month by Ben Lucien Burman.

We will publish next month three pages of photographs dedicated to the presentation ceremonies of the Redbook Motion Picture Trophy of 1940. The Redbook cup was presented "To the People of Our Town." Speeches by Bette Davis, who received our award in 1939; Douglas W. Churchill; Martha Scott; and Sol Lesser, the producer.

TOMORROW'S EXCITING LITERARY EVENTS ARE IN TODAY'S REDBOOK

To People who want to write
but can't get started

Do you have that constant urge to write but the fear that a beginner hasn't a chance? Then listen to what Fulton Oursler, editor of Liberty, has to say on the subject:

> **"There is more room for newcomers in the writing field today—and especially in Liberty Magazine—than ever before. Some of the greatest of writing men and women have passed from the scene in recent years. Who will take their places? Who will be the new Robert W. Chambers, Edgar Wallace, Rudyard Kipling, and many others whose work we have published? It is also true that more people are trying to write than ever before, but talent is still rare and the writer still must learn his craft, as few of the newcomers nowadays seem willing to do. Fame, riches and the happiness of achievement await the new men and women of power."**

"Since finishing your course, I have sold articles to the N. Y. Times, Central Press Ass'n and various magazines. My writing netted me over $300 my first year and almost $700 the first six months this year. Writing as a career has always been my wish. Now, thanks to the N.I.A. Course, it is becoming a reality. Despite a serious physical handicap (I took sick with infantile paralysis in 1937), I am now making my living by writing." Andreas Dorpalen, 206 W. 95th St., New York City.

THE Newspaper Institute of America offers a free Writing Aptitude Test. Its object is to discover new recruits for the army of men and women who add to their income by fiction and article writing. The Writing Aptitude Test is a simple but expert analysis of your latent ability, your powers of imagination, logic, etc. Not all applicants pass this test. Those who do are qualified to take the famous N. I. A. course based on the *practical* training given by big metropolitan dailies.

This is the New York Copy Desk Method which teaches you to write by writing! You develop your *individual* style instead of trying to copy that of others.

You "cover" actual assignments such as metropolitan reporters get. Although you work at home, on your own time, you are constantly guided by experienced writers. It is really fascinating work. Each week you see new progress. In a matter of months you can acquire the coveted "professional" touch. Then you're ready for market with greatly improved chances of making sales.

Mail the Coupon Now

But the first step is to take the Writing Aptitude Test. It requires but a few minutes and costs nothing. So mail the coupon now. Make the first move towards the most enjoyable and profitable occupation—writing for publication! Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Avenue, New York.

NOTICE—
Men "21 to 35"
N.I.A. will refund in full the tuition of any student enrolled after October 16th, 1940 who is called for military service. Even though you are of conscription age, no need to hesitate if you want to test your writing ability.

Free

Newspaper Institute of America
One Park Avenue, New York

Send me, without cost or obligation, your Writing Aptitude Test and further information about writing for profit as promised in Redbook, March.

Miss
Mrs. ....
Mr.

Address..

All correspondence confidential. No salesman will call on you. 11C661

SEE! PRETTY WOOLS STAY SOFT WITH AMAZING NEW IVORY SNOW! 3-SECOND SUDS IN COOL WATER!

Easy now to give sweaters safe care! Goodbye hot-water shrinking!

A GREAT BIG CHEER for the new Ivory Snow! It's a wonderful cool-water soap that's safe for the downy softness of sweaters—safe for every woolen washable a girl ever loved!

WHAT A DIFFERENCE from pokey old-fashioned soaps! Ivory Snow sudses in 3 seconds in safe *cool water!* Remember: washing experts warn against hot water. Because hot water and rubbing tend to shrink woolens.

But just squeeze your pretty sweaters gently through those cool, pure suds of Ivory Snow and watch 'em come out soft and fleecy! You'll thank your stars for this wonderful cool-water soap—with the same gentle purity that makes Ivory Soap a favorite for bathing tiny babies. So try Ivory Snow today!

HAPPY DAYS FOR SWEATERS!

No fear of hot-water shrinking for woolens, with cool-water Ivory Snow! Cool suds in 3 seconds help sweaters stay fleecy!

TRADEMARK REG. U. S. PAT. OFF. PROCTER & GAMBLE

NOT A RUN IN SIGHT,

thanks to Ivory Snow's nightly care! No hot water and strong soap to weaken silk threads. Instead—plenty of cool suds pile up in just 3 seconds—*pure* suds that help stockings w-e-a-r!

LITTLE TOTS' WOOLENS

thrive on Ivory Snow's safe care! It's the new cool-water form of baby's own pure Ivory Soap!... What safety for woolens!

OUR READERS *Speak*

Two "Career Women" Answer a Housewife

Dear Sir:

I strongly suspect your letter "Housewives *vs.* Career Women" of being a gag, intended to make "career women" see red and immediately sit down and tell you what they think. So I shall. "Grubby hands to wash" goes with the twenties. How many able women, tops in their profession, are in their twenties?

Why do career women work? Hasn't your little woman from the Midwest read about economic necessity? Send her statistics from Government records.

I know probably one hundred career women, six intimately—all of them driven by stark, driving need. Widowed mothers, small children,—though beyond the grubby-hand stage,—no husbands, etc.

Intrigue? Marvelous! But when? The most famous cases of intrigue in history concern the dear, simple choir-singer, the village dressmaker, the storekeeper's wife.

Stark drama? Career women get it outside a closed hospital door, waiting alone only to learn that all is *not* well. Your letter from Illinois simply infuriates me. It is so far from today's struggle for existence.

G. S. W.,
Connecticut.

Dear Sir:

A retaliation (but quick!) to Mrs. Samelman's explosion is inevitable. She must have a grudge against the woiking goil to use such disparaging adjectives, and certainly she is woefully misinformed concerning "ruthless" career women.

Hard they may be, but it is essential for self-preservation, because it *is* a man's world, after all. Strangely enough, even we, "the great unpicked," must also eat, and to stand the gaff requires a hard shell. All of the "grasping, unfeminine" business girls I know would gladly exchange their careers for security, love in a cottage and grubby little hands to wash. Looking forward to getting gray alone isn't very consoling.

I haven't heard any unjustified cracks about sheltered housewives from "my sorority," so let's give the devil his due.

H. J. L.,
New York.

Thank You, Kind Sir!

Dear Sir:

May I commend you and the REDBOOK staff on the January issue of REDBOOK Magazine. Instead of "Christmas Issue," I think you might well have named it "Our Year's Best" Issue.

EACH month we will publish not less than ten letters from our readers, and will pay ten dollars for each one published. Address all letters to Editor of Letters, Redbook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. Keep your letters within one hundred words. No letters will be returned, and all of them will become property of McCall Corporation.

Usually in REDBOOK I find three or four stories or articles that appeal to me, and a number that fail to arouse my interest. However, in this particular instance everything from "Morals for a Strong Nation" to "Lamplight for the Dark" presented just the kind of stuff I like to read.

May we have more issues of the caliber of the January publication!

J. Thos. DeVane,
Fernandina, Florida.

How to Make Ten Dollars

Dear Sir:

Month after month I have sent you letters. I have criticized your stories. I have complimented you on your stories. I suggested new material to be included. I have commented on REDBOOK'S artists—on the authors. I have said that your magazine is good. I have said that it is no good. I have read every one of the letters published in order to see what angles seem to interest you the most. For heaven's sake—just what does one have to do to win that ten dollars?

E. P. Hodges,
New York, New York.

Paging Mr. John Kieran of "Information, Please"

Dear Sir:

How's your sense of humor?

In "Birds Flying South," (January REDBOOK) which incidentally is about birds who didn't fly south, *Pilkins* is such a fine nurse: but she brings in a little germ-carrier bird to a patient in a cast whose vitality is, of course, low—lets her hold it—and then the doctor comes in and approves! Another doctor would have died of high blood-pressure or a stroke!

REDBOOK is swell, and the author is fine, but that seemed so funny that I couldn't help sending it for your reader's page. It would be a drab world if one couldn't share a joke with the person on whom it reflected.

Mrs. W. C. Inglish,
Omaha, Nebraska.

"Bad News" for Glamour Girls

Dear Sir:

Congratulations to REDBOOK for discovering Georgia Ann Carroll way back in 1937 and starting her on her way to the title of America's Number One model. She surely deserves it. Even if I weren't a constant reader of your magazine, I would have bought the December issue anyway just to get a good look at her picture on the cover.

And now *(Please turn to page 94)*

Mrs. James L. Macwithey is a Camay bride—and about it she says: "Camay is so mild. It is just wonderful for delicate skin like mine. I really feel that Camay helps my skin to look smoother and lovelier."

His bride in his arms, Mr. Macwithey finds her blonde hair and creamy skin an exquisite picture. After the reception the bride and groom left for a honeymoon at Sea Island, Ga., with Camay in her luggage.

"Like every Bride I wanted a Lovelier Skin—and Camay helped me to have one"

—Says Mrs. James L. Macwithey, East Orange, N. J.

Photographs by David Berns

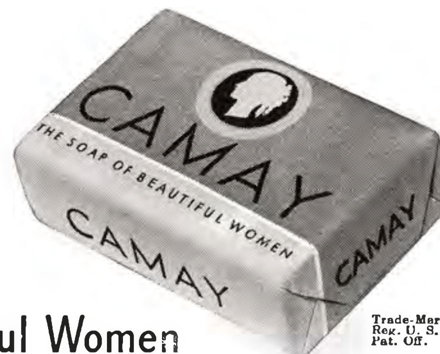
Camay's greater mildness is an important help to Every Woman—even to many with Dry and Delicate Skin.

MRS. MACWITHEY is lovely to look at, and she gains in loveliness because her skin is lovely, too. Her blonde hair and her brown eyes set off a skin of creamy perfection. Mrs. Macwithey is keen about Camay's mildness. "Camay is *so mild*," she says, "it is just wonderful for delicate skin like mine."

Many women feel that way about Camay, especially if they have a tendency toward a delicate or a dry skin.

For now a great new improvement makes Camay milder than six of the leading large-selling beauty soaps, as our tests prove. And skin specialists we asked say that regular cleansing with a fine, mild toilet soap will help your skin to look lovelier.

Let Camay's gentle cleansing help you in your search for loveliness.



The Soap of Beautiful Women

Trade-Mark Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Boys Clothes Parties Dates

You've got plenty on your mind besides musty old *history* dates and what x plus y equals! Your stockings are all shot. So's your budget. You're simply mad for a new "formal". Slippers, too! And you lie awake nights plotting how to wangle a permanent. (Just to mention a *few* of your problems.)

Frivolous—? *No!* They all add up to being attractive. And being attractive helps achieve success and happiness. So more power to you!

Only do remember this: To have friends, beaux, and good times (or hold a job and get ahead in the world) . . . you must be attractive and poised . . . regardless of what day of the month it is!

But that's not as difficult as it sounds. Being *comfortable* is half the battle. And Kotex sanitary napkins can help you be comfortable and carefree just as they help millions of other girls.

Yes—millions!

For it's an actual fact, more women use Kotex than all other brands put together! Surprised? You won't be when you try it!

You'll find Kotex more comfortable, because it's *less bulky*. (Girls declare you scarcely know you're wearing it!)

Then—Kotex has flat, pressed ends to prevent embarrassing, telltale bulges. And a moisture-resistant "safety shield" to give you extra protection . . .

So—considering these advantages—is it any wonder that Kotex is the most popular napkin made?

Have you read the much-talked-about booklet "As One Girl To Another"? It's new. It's *free!* And it tells just what you need to know! Discusses swimming, bathing, dancing, social contacts, mental attitude, good grooming, tampons.

Like to have a copy? Then send your name and address (a penny post-card will do) to Post Office Box 3434, Dept. RB-3, Chicago, Illinois. Send today! Before you forget.

So—be confident . . . comfortable . . . carefree . . . with Kotex*

Regular—Junior—Super—sell for the same low price!

*Trade Mark Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

The members of the cast of "Panama Hattie."

FAMILIAR FAVORITES SHINE

Youth must be served, the saws attest.
But who are they that serve the best?
Whose arts this year delight the fans?
None other than the Veterans.

Then bring champagne in sparkling stores
To toast the Moores and Barrymores—
The seasoned belles, the witty gents
That are the Stage's Ornaments.

—Phyllis McGinley

ETHEL BARRYMORE

Vandamm

IN TUNE WITH OUR TIMES

Photos by Lucas & Monroe and Vandamm

JOAN CARROLL AND ETHEL MERMAN

LOYALTY has never been an outstanding characteristic of Broadway. To quote a New York philosopher: "Broadway is a nice street when you go up; when you go down, take Sixth Avenue." Unlike London, where both the critics and the theater-going public insist on seeing the old favorites. New York gets tired of the old faces and flocks to see the new ones. In view of this, it is nothing short of astonishing that the six biggest Broadway hits of this winter should be the shows starring men and women who are not exactly newcomers on the Great White Way. "Panama Hattie," "Louisiana Purchase," "The Corn Is Green," "Boys and Girls Together," "Hold on to Your Hats" and "Cabin in the Sky" have one thing in common: each of these profitable theatrical ventures plays havoc with that venerable rule according to which "nothing fails like success in New York."

Ethel Barrymore, the star of "The Corn Is Green," was recognized as the first lady of the American theater in the days when at least thirty per cent of our readers had still to learn the mystery of the three R's.

(Please turn to page 12)

The members of the cast of "Louisiana Purchase."

Meet JOHN DOE

THREE great national occupations are gin-rummy, reducing, and holding forth on what's wrong with the movies. I tried the first, and lost; I tried the second, and didn't. And after seeing "Meet John Doe," Frank Capra's newest addition to a long line of distinguished photoplays, I would display a distorted perspective should I harp on what's wrong with the screen. What's right with it, is a more fitting topic.

As a motion picture, "Meet John Doe" is entertainment of the highest character. As a document of our times and manners, it is a contribution of more than passing significance. And the medium that sired it, though it has its faults, is a great medium.

In both "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" and "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," Capra displayed not only a realistic attitude toward life in these United States, but he revealed a courage that is not common in Hollywood. In "Meet John Doe" this courage assumes a profound stature and its product is daring.

Again Capra's theme is the triumph of the boob. This story he tells with the aid of Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward Arnold, Walter Brennan and as colorful a lot of rascals and paragons as you would care to meet.

But it is no surface portrait that he has painted. Without losing sight of his primary aim, that of creating entertainment, he has pried into the minds and motives of men and has created a startling picture. Capra and his writing associate, Robert Riskin, are gifted with a penetrative ability; and this, their first picture for Warner Brothers, discloses that their power of perception is no ordinary quality.

Hollywood is pretty heavy-handed when it attempts to deal with realism. The various propaganda pictures that have emerged in the past two years indicate further that

On these pages are four scenes from "Meet John Doe," a new Frank Capra picture (Warner Brothers release) starring Gary Cooper and Barbara Stanwyck, and featuring Edward Arnold, Walter Brennan, James Gleason, Rod La Rocque, Spring Byington and many others. Judging by what Mr. Churchill has to say in his review, "Meet John Doe" will be worthy of such Capra *chef d'oeuvres* as "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" and "It Happened One Night."

when Hollywood thinks, it can be awfully dull.

Capra and Riskin appear to possess the secret of combining delightful entertainment with actuality. Always aware that the primary problem in which the customers are interested is whether boy gets girl, they have adhered to this theme the while showing how simple it would be for Fascism to take over America—and on the other hand, how easily any assault on the rights of man could be repulsed.

They dream of the ideal America. They offer the formula for a workable unity of the common man. And they show how, against conditions, he will jump from the roof of the city hall on Christmas Eve. Laconically at the end *Ann* adds: "If you ask us, the wrong people are jumping off buildings these days."

The letter brings a flood of offers of jobs for *John Doe,* and an army of hapless men who claim they wrote the note. Sensing its circulation possibilities, *Connell* retains *Ann* to carry on, and of the applicants she chooses *Long John Willoughby,* a farm boy, a ball-player and, because of economic conditions, a tramp, as a personification of all the John Does of America.

John Doe becomes a symbol. Under his name *Ann* writes a series of articles titled, "I Protest." He goes on the radio, and in a speech prepared by *Ann,* he gives a voice to democracy and to the inarticulate millions. He answers affirmatively the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" He propounds the philosophy of the common American, and argues for kindness and friendliness.

Realizing after the broadcast that he merely is a stooge in a circulation stunt, *John* escapes and returns to the open road. But his talk has taken hold. John Doe Clubs spring up around the country; and in a small town where his philosophy has been taken literally and the people's problems have been solved, he is recognized and hailed as a hero.

Norton sees in the movement a device to gratify his ambition. He finances a tour for *John Doe,* now a national figure. *Norton* plans at a convention of the clubs to have *John* launch a third party and sponsor *Norton* for President. When *John* learns of this, he learns also of *Norton's* motives and that the millionaire expects to manipulate these idealistic millions and employ the power they will give him to set up a Fascist state.

John goes before the convention to expose *Norton,* but before he can speak, *Norton's* brigade of private troopers and a gang of thugs arrive to break up the meeting. *John* is branded as a fake; and the mob, as it has always done, picks up the cry and turns on him; and the great, practical movement he has started is halted.

Disillusioned and disgraced, and believing that *Ann,* the girl he loves, has betrayed him, *John* slips into obscurity again. But the words of the letter that started everything keep recurring to him, and on Christmas Eve he goes to the city hall tower to jump. There he *(Please turn to page 115)*

through man's weakness and distrust, he defeats himself.

Besides being entertaining, "Meet John Doe" is a very important film.

Taking a story by Richard Connell and Robert Presnell, Capra and Riskin fashioned their document. Their *John Doe* is Cooper, who served them once as *Mr. Deeds;* their *Ann Mitchell* is Miss Stanwyck, whose first important picture was Capra's "Ladies of Leisure," back in 1930. Arnold as *D. B. Norton* expounds the Fascist philosophy, and Brennan as a tramp personifies the kind of an American who wants nothing except to be left alone.

This is the story: A decadent newspaper is acquired by *Norton,* a millionaire, to further his political ambitions; and *Connell* (James Gleason), a tough, hard-hitting editor, is dispatched to revivify the sheet. He fires nearly everyone, including *Ann Mitchell.* On her last day she inserts in her column a letter signed by *John Doe.* This mythical person says that as a protest

REDBOOK'S PICTURE *of the* MONTH

Selected by DOUGLAS W. CHURCHILL

Vandamm

FAMILIAR FAVORITES SHINE *(Continued)*

Victor Moore and William Gaxton (in "Louisiana Purchase") have a long series of successes behind them. More than nine years have passed since that memorable night when "Of Thee I Sing" opened in New York and offered Gaxton as *President Wintergreen* and Moore as *Vice-president Throttlebottom*. . . . The same goes for Ed Wynn ("Boys and Girls Together"), Al Jolson ("Hold on to Your Hats") and Ethel Waters ("Cabin in the Sky"). Ethel Merman is, to be sure, much younger than any of the other ladies and gentlemen mentioned so far; but even in her case it would require more than the fingers of both hands to enumerate her successes. Joan Carroll, (of "Panama Hattie") is the only *bona-fide* newcomer to be found in any of this winter's hits. Miss Carroll is eight, and has had no previous experience on the stage.

Bob Goldby

Above: Ed Wynn and the ensemble of "Boys and Girls Together."

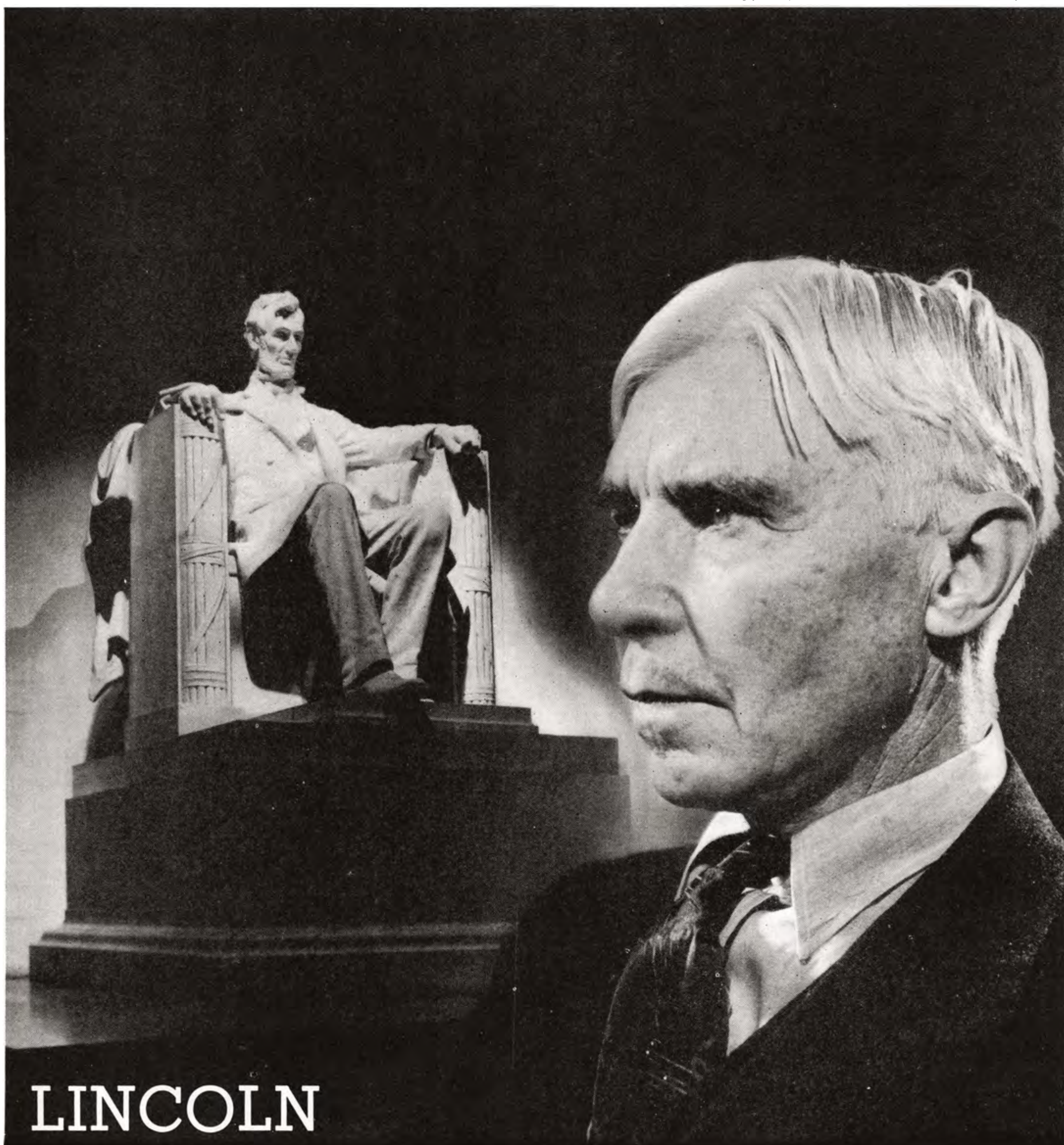
Right: Ethel Waters, the highly gifted star of "Cabin in the Sky."

Above: Al Jolson stages one of greatest triumphs of his career in "Hold on to Your Hats."

Lucas & Monroe

Right: William Gaxton, Zorina, Victor Moore and Irene Bordoni as seen in "Louisiana Purchase."

Carl Sandburg photo by Eric Schaal. Photomontage by Charles Phelps Cushing



LINCOLN AND THE MAN WHO KNOWS HIM BEST

IN these days when so many misguided people talk so glibly of "the passing of democracy," there is no more encouraging or inspiring book than Carl Sandburg's biography of Lincoln. A whole lifetime was spent by Mr. Sandburg on those six volumes that will be read and reread by generations of Americans to come. So great is the affinity between the subject of the biography and its author, that it is not an exaggeration to say that only one other man besides Sandburg could have written "Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years"—Lincoln himself. We of REDBOOK feel justly proud of our association with Mr. Sandburg, and of the fact that eight chapters of his great work appeared in our magazine previous to their publication in book form. When in despair over the present state of affairs in the world, when in grave doubt as to the future of this country, read Sandburg's biography of Lincoln. Read it from the beginning until the very end; there is not a single page in those six volumes which the people of our generation can afford to miss.

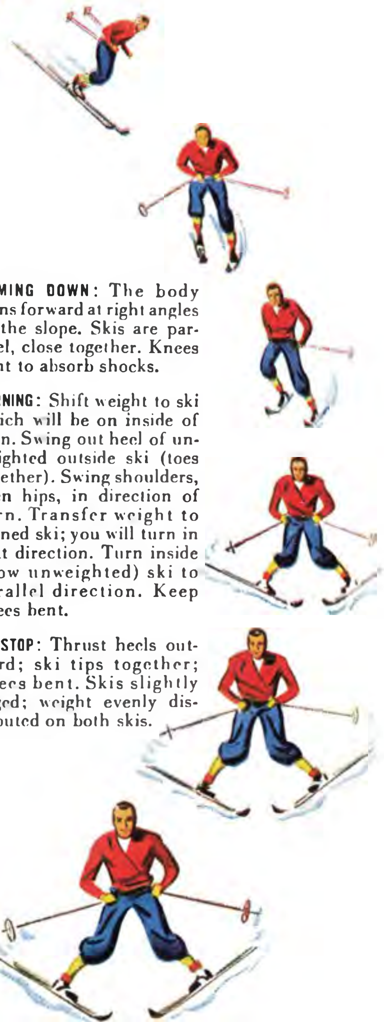
Here's how TO LEARN YOUR A B SKIS

BY SIG BUCHMAYR

FAMOUS INSTRUCTOR

TO CLIMB: Here are 2 methods. *At left*, the "Herring-bone". Skis pointed with tips outward, edge in toward the hill. The climbing ski is lifted across the heel of the standing ski. Poles thrust behind. *Shown at top* is the "Side Step"—for ascending steeper grades. Skis are kept at right angles to the grade, edged.

ON THE LEVEL: Learn to walk on level ground to become used to your equipment. Keep skis parallel, close together (weight on both feet). Slide skis forward; do not lift them. Use poles. When the left ski is sliding forward, the right arm is pushing, and vice versa. Keep poles close to body.



COMING DOWN: The body leans forward at right angles to the slope. Skis are parallel, close together. Knees bent to absorb shocks.

TURNING: Shift weight to ski which will be on inside of turn. Swing out heel of unweighted outside ski (toes together). Swing shoulders, then hips, in direction of turn. Transfer weight to turned ski; you will turn in that direction. Turn inside (now unweighted) ski to parallel direction. Keep knees bent.

TO STOP: Thrust heels outward; ski tips together; knees bent. Skis slightly edged; weight evenly distributed on both skis.

Waxed skis whizzing over white snow! Breathless moments! Zestful thrills! Now our fastest-growing sport, skiing each year takes more and more Americans—grandparents as well as youngsters—to snow-carpeted slopes.

With very little practice, anyone can ski well enough to get around and have fun. Here are a few capsule lessons that may help you to get started *right*.

Here's how TO LEARN YOUR WHISKEY A-B-C's

1. Sip Seagram's 5 Crown straight—savor the full-fledged flavor that's mild, *never* heavy.
2. Enjoy it in cocktail or highball—learn what a *marvelous difference* it makes in mixed drinks.
3. Consider the 83 years of Seagram fame behind it—the master blenders, the finest ingredients.
4. Compare Seagram's 5 Crown for value—it's the "more-for-your-money" whiskey *every time*.
5. Learn all about this popular-priced whiskey today. Wherever you buy, be sure to say...

Seagram's 5 Crown

THE BLENDED WHISKEY FOR EVERY DRINK

• Thank you, Sig Buchmayr—with those hints we'll heighten our skiing fun!

And after thrilling sport, we heighten our drinking pleasure—with that *better-tasting* whiskey...Seagram's 5 Crown! It's smooth as a ski run—light as a snow flake—and *priced right* for the budget, too.

Ask for it at bar or package store—today!

Here's how...

SAY SEAGRAM'S ... AND BE SURE

Seagram's 5 Crown Blended Whiskey. 72½% neutral spirits distilled from grain. 90 proof. Copyright 1941. Seagram-Distillers Corp., New York

OUR NEW ARMY—*Mass Production*

A clear and concise picture of military training, 1941 style.

By MORRIS MARKEY

IT was all so very different, the last time the boys went off to camp. War was an immediate reality then—our own war, which seemed a heady adventure, its outcome a matter of glorious certainty. The boys caught in the draft grinned about it and marched off to the shrill of factory whistles and the beat of drums—while the world sang "Johnny Get Your Gun" and "Keep the Home Fires Burning." And soon each boy was pupil to a snarling bayonet instructor, gathering his furious passion for the kill, writing home: "Don't worry. We'll get the Kaiser for you."

This time there isn't any war—not for us. No enemy to be personified. The boys can't yell, "Take that, you dirty Hun!" when they drive their long knives into the dummies. Which means, of course, that there is no exaltation, no gaudy lift in the training at the scores of camps. No thrill to victory, no dream of killing the swine who mutilated women and children and sank the *Lusitania*. No devotion to the high aim of making the world safe for democracy.

In short, no romance, no mighty crusade to whip the clerks and the truckmen and the farm lads as they finger their unfamiliar and very deadly-looking rifles, as they slog across the fields or get lessons on the blackboard from tank men or signal men. You perceive the anomaly at once. This draft is the sort of thing for which our habits of feeling and thinking are not prepared. And so we hear many glib words upon the subject.

The old-timers, with their memories of 1918 always brightly polished, are saying: "The guys of this generation can't take it like we could, and the officers are even afraid to see whether they can. They are all being coddled. Fine lot of doughboys we'll get out of these sissy camps! Now in my time—"

And worried parents are shaking their heads: "I'm patriotic, all right. But it seems a shame to brutalize my boy and teach him a lot of killing when there isn't even a war on. I don't want him turned into a Nazi storm trooper. I want him to be just a decent man, with consideration for other people. This thing might knock all that out of him."

As usual, the truth lies somewhere in between. I have been to the camps, talked to officers and men. And I should like to tell you just what military training, 1941 style, is like. We shall take Fort Dix in New Jersey for our example, because it is a big encampment, quite typical of all the rest: an old, virtually abandoned 1918 cantonment—refurbished and enlarged in a hurry to take care of the new army—situated on twenty-six thousand acres of rolling, lightly wooded ground.

As in the other camps, the core of the force of eighteen thousand men is the soldiers and officers of the National Guard. You know what the National Guard is. It used to be called State Militia. For generations, we have had these highly local, part-time military organizations, their training consisting of Friday nights in uniform at the armory or drill-hall, and perhaps a two weeks' encampment during the summer. The National Guard, which men joined as much for amusement and social frolics as for the deadly occupations of the soldier, was made a part of the United States Army in 1917.

When the war was done, they were turned back to the several States—and to their Friday-night drills. But there was a difference. Nearly all of their officers, the men who still are their officers, had actual experience of war.

Last autumn these troops were again called into active service by the President, for a period of active training. At Fort Dix, our example, certain regiments from New York and New Jersey were combined to form the 44th Federal Division. And thus it was that men who had at least the basic military training, and officers who had experience of fighting, began to prepare the camp for the conscripts and volunteers who were soon to join them. These last are not being formed into separate units. They are being filtered into the existing regiments and companies.

Into such a scene move the wide-eyed and rather awkward young men who have been drafted to learn the business of soldiering.

HOW do they live? What of the housekeeping? The first thing in the making of an army is to be sure that its men are well-housed and well-clothed, well-fed, healthy and in good spirits. You can't do much on a drill-ground or rifle-range with a recruit who is hungry or sick or sorry for himself.

The housing got off to a slow start, because nobody was prepared for the swiftness of events. Wooden barracks were, in some cases, on order. And so the men were put into tents. It was cold, and there was ample mud and some genuine discomfort. But within a very brief time the tents were winterized—put upon wooden platform-floors, their walls boarded up to a height of five feet. These shelters, heated by small coal-burning stoves, were comfortable enough, and the mud was defeated by duckboards or cinder-paths.

But that is history. By the time this article appears, virtually all the men of Fort Dix, (and of all the Northern encampments) will be in tight wooden barracks. There are 852 *(Please turn to page 56)*

Photographs by Acme, International and Wide World

BRIGH

They met in an air-raid shelter, and they fell in love while listening to the ever-increasing roar of explosions that sounded as if Ravel's "Bolero" were being played by the Devil's own symphony orchestra.

LONDON Bolero

BY
GORDON PHILLIPS-EDWARDS

Illustrated by MORTIMER WILSON Jr.

HEATHWAY sat down in a place where the sun was shining. For a time, he just looked, moving his light blue eyes from object to object, from fragment to fragment, with a disciplined effort that did not show on his face. The A.R.P. wardens, knowing that he had something to do with this new fantasy of wreckage, allowed him to stay where he was, although they kept the others behind ropes.

Voices came to Heathway like sounds under water; they disturbed him, but it was a minute before their meaning registered in his conscious mind:

"That'd be one of the h'electric stations!"

"Gor! Ye're right! A bloomin' power-plant!"

"A' think not. A' think 'sa secre' weapon they wurr makin' tha'."

Heathway turned toward the Scot and spoke with a mixture of gentle reproof and proud identification. "It was a laboratory. A high-tension laboratory. Physics, you know."

The Scot nodded and fiddled with the strap on his gas-mask. Finally he said: "Ah'm sorra." He added: "It moost ha' been worrth a grreat deal."

"More than a million pounds."

"Ye dinna say!"

The phrase, "a million pounds," ran through the knot of people. They looked with greater awe at the gleaming jumble.

Heathway looked again too, in studied continuation of his inventory. The bomb had caught the lab squarely, all right. Nothing left worth salvaging. Ten—fifteen—life-works scattered there. Scattered in masses of metal, in titans' toys, in the paradoxes of size and delicacy which imaginative writers used formerly to attribute to men from Mars and which became the workaday props of earth men in the 1930's. There was Wiggan's electrostatic generator, like a crushed mushroom, silver-bright, two stories high. The new cyclotron. The big transformers and condensers they had used for Farsen's experiments with beryllium. And the framed letter from Michael Faraday, hanging on a remnant of wall! Heathway was sitting on the electromagnet they'd used with the first Wilson chamber; the chamber itself, cleverly handmade, was lying at his feet. He moved, out of deference, to a perch on a mound of spewed books.

"Would ye mind sayin', governor, what ye were doin' tha'?"

Heathway smiled up at the growing audience. It wasn't his custom to discuss nuclear physics—or anything else—with clerks and costermongers. That is, it hadn't been, until the long rain of bombs blasted a deeper hole in the dike of British reserve than it had carved in the buildings of London. But now Heathway felt like talking. He cleared his throat, the way he always had before starting a lecture to the graduates, and he wondered how he was going to say anything they would understand about research: Research for a method of quantity production of a uranium isotope.

"Why—our Scottish friend is nearly right. We were looking for a secret weapon, in a sense. A thing we called U-235—a thing that would blow up a mountain—if you used only a single bomb of it."

"Gor!" said a woman.

"Ye didna find it?" the Scot asked anxiously.

Heathway shook his head. "Not—yet. And it looks as if we wouldn't be able to hunt for it—here, any more. . . . What?"

The A.R.P. man came along. "Step lively," he said. "And no souvenirs, remember!"

The little crowd dispersed. Some went on bicycles, as Heathway had come; but most went on foot—down the street, through a lane between the rubble-heaps, and past a façade that had no interior behind it, where firemen with eyes like embers in ashpits shot streams of water on hot stones.

Heathway took off his bowler and wiped the slick perspiration from its leather band. He was alone for a little while: nobody had been killed in the lab, and the wreck looked too intricate for the ordinary clearance-squads. So Heathway was able to give in, a little, to his feelings. He would not have done that, either, in the years before the bombings. The tears that filled his eyes were cruel as acid, but he did not let them fall. The lump in his throat was like a hard wound, but he whistled so that no one could discover he was unable to speak.

He wanted to curse, the way the wardens did when they uncovered children. Or to shake his fist at the skies, the way the cockneys did. He wanted, suddenly, to do all the things that other people did—things that he had never allowed himself to do: to rage and weep—go to a pub to sing about England, with a mug of 'arf-and-'arf in his hand. He'd been wanting to do that for quite a while. Ever since the letter about his mother, and the windows in his Club; ever since he'd begun that silly whisper to the statue of Richard the Lion-Hearted. Richard's sword was bent now, and that had started him off. Started him saying, whenever he passed: "Hello there, Dick! Hold it high! That bend will only make an uglier wound!"

He was becoming primitive, Heathway thought. Ellinson, over in the anthropology department, would have a laugh over that! Old Heathway, chinning with statuary! Retrogression of civilized man in the face of primordial environment. Englishman, bachelor, income of his own, post as assistant to the director of the lab, author of some rather telling monographs on the insides of atoms—scientist, ascetic, gentleman—shaking his fist and bellowing his head off for Albion! Ellinson would be hilarious! . . . Then Heathway remembered that Ellinson was in a hospital in Kent. Slate had caught him in the shoulder when he ran out of his house behind the last of his youngsters. Heathway kicked at the wreckage of a geiger counter and sat down again.

VELBLEIN, he knew, would be hard hit by this. He wouldn't like to see the fruit of twenty-odd years of effort kicked apart by a few hundredweight of T.N.T. Velblein was the best in London, and the last ten or a dozen days of experiment had put them all on the track of something new. Now—that was gone: track, notes and apparatus. Velblein would probably bawl like a kid, for all his size and assurance. Sentimental, in a way. Part German. That was the crazy aspect of it: There was Velblein, one of the finest physicists in the world, straining every cell of his brain to beat back the monstrous idea that had maddened his countrymen.

Heathway spotted the instruments they had been using, and thought maybe they could set things up the same way again—in Cambridge, or even in Scotland. Then he drew a sharp breath.

Into his mind flashed a new set-up. A potentially better set-up!

"More!" he said. "Please!" Faces turned toward him, smiling a little. No wonder the toff liked it!

A brand-new technique for the isolation of the valuable and horrendous atoms. The idea invaded every branch of his mind, and he checked it against other techniques. He began scuffing in the dust, and soon he found a book with a clean page. He took a pencil from his pocket. He drew an elaborate diagram. Then he folded the paper and waited for Velblein.

Velblein did not come, however. He sent a note, which failed to reach the scene until well along toward noon: *"You chaps will have to carry on without me today. Some friends of mine were in an Anderson shelter down the road from me last night—"*

It was the usual thing. Most of Heathway's associates had put in an appearance, by then, but he decided not to discuss his new scheme until he could see the chief.

"It looks," said one of the men, "as if we were getting a holiday."

Heathway nodded his agreement. He pushed his bicycle down the crooked path in the center of the street, and lifted it over a puddle of broken glass. He mounted and pedaled away.

"Get inside!" a warden bellowed. Heathway shook his head.

THE men at his club were quiet, for the most part—quiet, and amused. Having all the windows out, made the dining-room a sort of terrace. Like a French restaurant: You could look up and down the row and hear the talk of pedestrians and the rattle of traffic. The napery blew a bit in the wind, and the sunshine was a novelty. It relieved the heaviness of the place—the umbrage of oak and black leather, of African heads and of dingy drapes that had hung across the shutters like portcullises.

They started out to tease him when he sat down at his table. "The Empire saved yet, Heathway?"

"Not yet. Next week, say Tuesday. The lab caught it, you know."

They flushed red, all of them, in sympathy for the man who had made the *faux pas.* "Sorry. Bad?"

Heathway nodded. "It's gone, rather. We'll move on, no doubt."

There was a long silence. Soup was spooned. Glasses of wine were swallowed. A tall man with a face like Cromwell's tried to grin out of existence the burn in his brown eyes. It was Ormsby. Tobacco. "Old Velblein will need funds, eh?"

Heathway stared at his gin and bitters. "Right."

"Tell him to drop in at my office. My new office. Across from the Banners."

"Thanks. I shall."

Sir Thomas Wordell inadvertently knocked a fork from his table and bent to pick it up. The effort made him grunt his words. "I'll speak to Winnie this evening. Can't let down on U-235, can we? Anything new, Heathway?"

He thought of the paper folded in his pocket. "Can't say. We might be ten years from it—or ten days. Or a century. We might get it—and not be able to use it in bombs."

"Keep trying," Sir Thomas said, replacing his fork and speaking not as if he were giving a command, but as if he were reminding them that they must all—keep trying.

Heathway walked over to his snuggery. The afternoon shadows were sloping across the park, and white clouds were swelling in the sky. One of the swans was chasing another in the lake—paddling hard, and shooting its neck out. Nursemaids held their prams still to watch. The old flower-lady left her basket, and an urchin snatched up a nosegay—which started a second chase. Heathway looked at his watch and walked more slowly, because he did not know how much time he would have to waste. Today, and perhaps tomorrow, and maybe a week. Holiday. He'd never had a holiday. Didn't like them. If you were a nuclear physicist, you could use all your time; you would generally need more than the clock gave you.

There wasn't any wreckage around the park. Not anywhere, as far as you could see. It looked just the same as it had when they'd pushed Heathway in his pram around that lake. Forty-odd years ago. Just the same—except for the big lorry behind the trees from which cables reached to a fat balloon; and except for the little bumps, the little slaps, that jarred through the atmosphere with a rolling noise from over in East London. Catching it there. *Ack-ack.* The invisible glove, the padded glove, of a weak but quick boxer; it kept striking softly, like bags of feathers. . . .

Heathway's flat had two rooms, one for sitting and one for sleeping. He was a little ashamed of both of them because of the contradiction they represented. His bedroom was filled with things his mother had sent down for him—Victorian things, carved and curleycue, gimcrack and dimly sparkling, all dust-infested, haunted with memories; hand-worked mahogany, horrid, magnificent, comfortable; and china animals, pictures in frames as ostentatious as their ancestral subjects, striped upholstery, horsehair, artificial flowers under glass. But his sitting-room was as modern as a Mayfair perfume shop. He'd picked up that idea during the four years he'd spent as a visiting professor in a university in California.

Heathway fixed a whisky-soda for himself at the hidden niche and sat down with a copy of old Eric Bigwell's "Principles of Radiation." He checked his own equations against those in the book and felt pleased with his idea. But afterward he grew dissatisfied with the hours in prospect. His mind, without his knowledge, cast about for some excuse to get outside again. Could use some new cravats, he thought.

He took a stick along. Wearing a stick always helped him in the matter of seeing tailors and so on. He walked briskly. The invisible featherbeds were thicker, but the sirens hadn't yowled all men into the earth. The shadows were longer, but the shops would still be open. And if they closed before he reached them —what matter?

His blood stirred restlessly. For him, this was a considerable adventure. He would have been working—all afternoon, all evening, with steel shutters blacking out the laboratory windows. But now he was without any purpose except the vague impulse to forage in the besieged city. To share its convulsions intimately, to see it in action, to use the small excuse of a cravat for the larger purpose of experience.

The sirens caught him about halfway over to Bond Street. The diminished chord, with sluicing overtones—the devil's note—set people walking faster, and he walked faster with them.

"A bit early," someone said.

"I've got credentials for being where I choose—when I choose."

"This way!" an A.R.P. man shouted, clapping his battle bowler on his head and trying to shake from his hand the string with which he had been tying up a customer's bundle. On the rooftop of a row of flats another man, insectile against the sunlit sky, bawled through a megaphone: "Planes in sight! Hurry, all!"

A stick landed, blocks away. Six spaced explosions, six impacts, cuffing the people as they crowded into the underground entrance. Heathway heard the patter of feet on the long stairways and the roar of falling masonry. A battery near by commenced to send screaming into the air a tirade of shells which broke with far-off audibility. Someone said, "Stukas, again!" and someone, running, yelled: "They've bagged Elizabeth!"

Elizabeth was the fat balloon guardianess over the little park. Heathway saw the blaze and smoke of her up behind a fleece-ball cloud, but he did not see any planes, or hear any. Firebells were ringing, and the iron lip of the underground kiosk was soon behind him. He found steps with his feet, and went down and down in the electrified river of human beings.

Some of the "steadies" were already encamped in the murky tunnel—sprawled along the concrete platform with bags and boxes, bottles, jars, cards, lanterns, shawls, sheets, pillows, blankets, bare feet, babies, exposed breasts, knitting-needles and musical instruments. Like picnickers in Hades! Heathway leaned against the grimy tile wall and peered at them. Water dripped from a crack in the vaulted roof. A train thundered into the station. People got on. People got off. There was a noise from the surface of the earth like acrobats practicing in a room overhead.

The people, safe now, were quieting down—beginning to be bored, a little irritated, and above all else, resistant. Somebody with a mandolin commenced to tinkle the strings and to sing, "Paddy wrote a letter to his Irish Molly-O," but nobody took up the verse, so the player changed, presently, to a rendition of the Melody in F which, Heathway assumed, was supposed to show virtuosity.

A gramophone blotted out the tinny jingle. Heathway had never heard of boogie-woogie, of alligators, hep-cats, barrel-house, or even blues. He did know a great deal about Bach. His Friday afternoons off were given to piano practice. He was a superb pianist—when no one was listening to him except his mother; and he never played for anybody else. Now, listening to the disintegrated rhythms, the pounce and repetition of basses in augmented ninths which streamed from the recorded fingering of a blind Negro, Heathway was moved and envious. So much skill, wasted on such trash.

But he kept listening. The man was improvising, obviously. He knew nothing of counterpoint. But he had a sort of instinct. Heathway kept expecting the trite chord, the obvious sequence in the left-hand clef, but it never came. Always something new, erratic, monodic, and deliriously resourceful—diminished fifths now, in triads—a jungle travesty of Bach.

Bomb- and gun-bursts above had a random, dysrhythmic effect, but that too became an accent for the music.

A girl stood up in the reclining crowd. She locked her hands behind her head. There was not much room for her to move about in. Heathway had never heard of the "slow grind," either. But he understood that too by the infernal metempsychosis of the place. The record came to an end, and he found himself joining in the applause.

"More!" he said. "Please!"

Faces turned toward him, smiling a little. No wonder the toff liked it! Vera was as pretty as a spring garden, and she'd been in the front row in Olman's Canadian Music Hall for a year now. She had eyes like delphinium, and long tawny hair, so heavy it seemed to lift her chin when she let it down. She had a figure, too; and when she came to the last part of her specialty and the men saw it, they'd cheer till you'd think the lights would burst on the ceiling.

Vera smiled, also, toward Heathway. It was her professional smile, because she had only heard his voice and recognized its quality. But the smile changed when she saw how plain he was—with glasses sitting on his nose, and his moth-eaten hair combed straight as string, with his blue serge rumpled a bit and his bowler dangling in his hand, since he had addressed a lady.

She turned to the girl who was cranking the gramophone. "Give 'im the 'Maltease,'" she said. "He'll like that, I dare say."

Somebody said: "Yea, man!"

Somebody said, "How's that?"

The first person answered: "It's American, that's wot it is!" He repeated the phrase, defensively: "Yea, man!"

The fingers of the blind Negro began their ascetic diabolism. Vera was dancing again. The scientist pushed the palms of his hands against the cool tile wall and watched her. Ellinson, he thought, would be interested in the dance: primitive, all right; Polynesian in origin, probably. Ellinson would know. Then Heathway smiled at himself. That mental reference to Ellinson was merely an attempt to intellectualize the way he felt.

The dance stopped. Vera walked toward him, picking her steps carefully. "Like it?" she asked.

HE thought, when he saw her approaching, that he was going to be embarrassed. But he found a sudden escape from that habitual dilemma. He told the truth: "Very much."

She scrutinized him with interest. "You think I'm pretty?"

"Yes. I do. What's your name?"

"Vera."

The underground station received an elephant kick; a splitting concussion erupted into the stuffy chamber. Vera started and came nearer to his side, trembling a litttle. Babies woke and began to bawl. The man with the mandolin started again with noisy fury. A faint scent of burned powder seeped into the place.

"Close," said Vera. "Scares me!"

Heathway wondered if he too was afraid. He wasn't, he realized. He wondered why. Perhaps, working with high voltage—smashing atoms when the result was uncertain—had given him a special immunity to fear. The haloes of lavender fire, the flash and roar of man-made lightning ripping across a twenty-foot gap in accidental discharge, the whole apparatus of Tubal Cain—

"You a perfessor?" she asked.

He would have called her voice, "gargly," he thought. But now he could detect a rich sense of living and of being, underneath its throatiness. *(Please turn to page 64)*

The Case of the METAL

THE kill was the Biggest Game of all. He lay beneath a sorrel with his face and body pressed like hardened quicksilver into a bed of brilliant leaves which the tree had shed. Oddly, the sorrel had been his favorite. He had planted it himself, and it was unique among the hickory, black walnut, the ash and birch and pine with which the section abounded. His blood had further intensified the hot scarlet of its leaves.

His age was fifty-six, and his appearance was unnoteworthy in any way. Only his eyes had been remarkable. That was when he had been alive. They had possessed a sympathy and kindness which even a lifetime spent at his job had failed to dim. This became truly exceptional when you realized that, as an auditor, his work had held him constantly in a state of profound suspicion of his fellow-men, and that he had been so frequently faced during his investigations with petty and major perfidies of the nastiest sort: in the s[illegible] that each had stood for some betrayal o[illegible] trust.

His reports had been surgically perfect in content and had, when required, unfalteringly sliced open for inspection any hidden growths of defalcation. But he had rendered such ones with reluctance, and would be intensely bothered for a long time afterward from an appreciation of the contributory causes which must have led the specific embezzler into his wretched crime.

His name was unnoteworthy too: Fred Rempson.

The sorrel tree beneath which Rempson had been killed stood about two hundred yards away from his small camp. This was a log cabin he had owned for a good many years in the heart of Ohio's southeasterly Onega County. It had been Rempson's habit to retire there to hunt, and to replenish from some occult source of nature his ever-shaken longing to believe nothing but the best about mankind.

There were no roads. The section's thickly wooded hills, its labyrinth of narrow ravines, its generally rugged character, which was the quality of the great Allegheny Plateau, were a good two hours' trek to the nearest hamlet of Sonella at the south, with its population of one hundred and sixty. Or you could, if you wished, strike more toward the southwest and trek to Zanesville.

A combined caretaker and guide, Luke Anvers, stayed in the cabin with his wife the year round. He was the surviving member of an Anvers branch which had migrated to Ohio from Tennessee. He was also the black sheep of that branch, having a raffish predilection for penny-ante, for the hilarity of opossum-hunts, and for other violent excesses, all of which (including the cinema) his folks considered unmitigated sins.

Luke had married a *Little Eva* out of a traveling *Tom* show, to his family's horror (a horror which possessed them to their dying days), and they had paraphrased a sentiment from the play, and had instructed him and his grease-painted bride never to darken their door again. This had been perfectly jake with Luke and with his wife, whose name was Lola, because doors or the lack of them meant nothing—they were so crazy about each other.

Luke's final appearance of any public nature had been back in 1924 when, as an ebullient member of the Ku Klux Klan, he had sheeted around on a bored plow-horse and had ultimately got involved in a disturbance which won him a hard knock on the head. He had recovered consciousness to find himself stone deaf. Fred Rempson had offered him the job of taking care of the camp (which required no care whatsoever), and Luke and Lola had stayed there since. Whatever nostalgias may have stirred in Lola for her Career and for the glamour of the footlights were competently kept under wraps both by her deep love for Luke, and a conviction that sporadic indulgences in corn whisky made for a long and happy life.

Peg stayed there too. She was a fifty-five-pound English pointer: of good caste and quality, large, very lean and handsome. Her smooth hair was patterned in liver spots and patches against a background of white, and her soft long ears lay close to her cheeks. She was eleven years old, and there was practically nothing, within the limits of her private world, which she didn't know.

It was a clear day: Saturday, November the 11th.

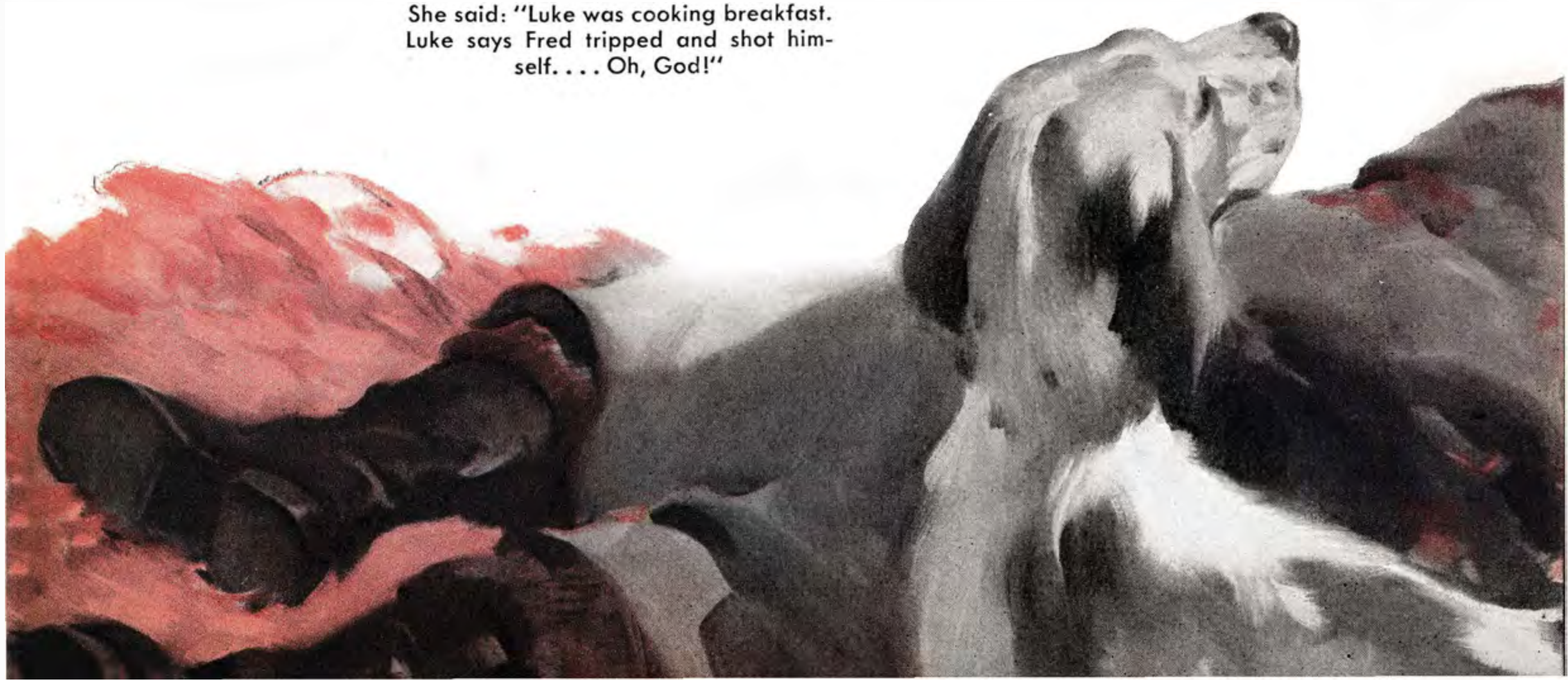
Sunrise had been at seven minutes after six. Peg had gone into the cabin at seven. She had ignored Lola, who was still sleeping off a periodical week-end effort toward centenarianism. Peg had gone into the kitchen and poked Luke significantly; then she had taken him to Rempson's body at the foot of the sorrel tree.

DR. COLIN STARR reached the camp at eight.

There was nothing miraculous about Starr's arrival, for it had been arranged during the previous week. Rempson had suggested to Starr, in Starr's office in Laurel Falls, that Starr take the week-end off and use the camp for some hunting. Not that the section offered much: the bear, wolves, bison, deer, the wild turkeys and wild pigeons which had been common in the primeval forests, had long since disappeared. But there were partridge, and the bracing elevation of the air, its pungent odors of fall, and the deeply hollow stillness of the woods. The place (Rempson had said) would be Starr's, for Rempson planned to shove off on Saturday morning for Cleveland.

Time was to prove a curious element in the case. . . .

An alarm-clock rang beside



She said: "Luke was cooking breakfast. Luke says Fred tripped and shot himself. . . . Oh, God!"

RING

Dr. Colin Starr takes a week-end off to do some hunting and crashes headlong into one of the most baffling cases of his illustrious career.

by

RUFUS KING

Illustrated by

ELMORE BROWN

Starr's bed at four in the morning. He awoke with his customary sense of complete refreshment from sound sleep. He showered under tepid water that fresheted down over strong shoulders and a strong body. He dressed, putting on stout boots, a pair of old tweed trousers, a sweater, a leather windbreaker, a bright red hunting-cap. He collected a packed knapsack, a carton of shells, a shotgun. All of his movements were unhurried, and held a nicety of reserve you would not expect when you considered his power and size.

HE went downstairs through the large quiet house and felt suddenly years younger, with the sort of excited feeling he had known as a boy whenever, like this, he had started out to go hunting. It had been an escape from the staid security of a home: with his mother and father asleep on the floor above, and with Windlass (the fat colored cook) and Etheldyne and Myrtle (the thin colored maids) asleep on the floor above them, beneath the period elegancies of a mansard roof.

His mother and father were gone, but Windlass and Etheldyne and Myrtle still remained, respectively fatter and thinner and with, of course, their twenty-five years' of aging since that earlier day. But then, he was twenty-five companion years older too, so they did not seem to him to have changed.

He made coffee in the roomy kitchen, which had never lost its pervading aroma of some fragrant spice, that effect of a disembodied, fresh-baked gingerbread which would require but the faintest gesture of mediumistic encouragement to materialize out of the air. He thought: "I'm getting on." And then he reflected that he had thought that then, and in just the same manner, when he had been an aging man of sixteen. Nothing was different, really, except that his voice now stayed deep and comfortingly steady, and no longer betrayed him into scarlet embarrassments by shifting suddenly from a pleasing basso-profundo into a shocking squeak.

He helped himself to doughnuts from a crock; then he went into his office and penciled a last-minute memorandum for his secretary, Miss Wadsworth: *"If the Woodberry brat gets an attack of colic, ask Doctor Jefferson to fish for upholstery buttons. Junior has had a morbid appetite for them since the age of three. Not hereditary. Senior, I understand, preferred marbles."*

He let himself out into the cold clear darkness which precedes the dawn, threw his things into the rumble of his Duesenberg, and headed north along Onega Drive past the town's spacious estates, then along the lovely reaches of the Onega River; he struck east, and reached the meager confines of Sonella about six. He left the car in the shed of Wilmot Twoman's general store and headed into the woods.

LUKE said, when Starr dumped his knapsack on the cabin porch:

"Fred's dead."

You could not talk very well with Luke. He had not had the slightest inclination to acquire the art of lip-reading.

Luke's notion of a chat remained, in consequence, a monologue in which Luke said whatever he wanted to say, and then said whatever he thought fitting, in answer to whatever he thought *you* had said.

Starr started to go into the cabin, but Luke stopped him and led him over to the sorrel tree, where Peg sat beside Rempson, too utterly shocked with sorrow for any sort of greeting activities at all. Lola was there too, standing off a bit.

"I left things," Luke said. "I knew you'd be along."

Starr felt suddenly outraged, in addition to his grief at this loss of a friend. He thought: "Why is it so often like this? You couldn't want a finer fellow than Fred. He had years of happy life still due him, of useful, decent life, and yet he dies, and dozens of worthless scoundrels will go on cluttering the earth until a ripe old age."

He looked over to where Lola was standing, with her hard, expressive little face under its tumbled mop of curly hair, and said: "Tell me about it, Lola."

Even her voice seemed nervous. Starr could sense it trembling as he could see her trembling, as she said: "Fred got here Wednesday morning, Doctor."

Luke said, simultaneously: "Fred's been working on a couple of ledger books and some papers since he got here."

She said: "Luke says Fred went out this morning after partridge."

Luke, still simultaneously: "He worked on the books more than he hunted. He was nervous and upset, and it seemed like he wasn't here. His body was, but not him."

She said: "Luke was cooking breakfast. Luke says Fred tripped and shot himself."

Luke, winning the endurance contest: "Nobody else has been around."

Lola muttered, "Oh, God!" drearily, and pressed a shaking hand on her damp brow.

Starr wrote on an envelope: *"Go into Sonella and get the sheriff and a stretcher and a couple of men."*

Luke read it and said: "All right. You might take a look at Peg's head. I guess the gun hit her when Fred fell. She's still droopy. You'll find breakfast ready on the stove, if you can eat it." He looked at Lola with that full-up, contented look he always had when he looked at her, and said: "So long, honey."

"Where's he going to, Doctor?"

"To get the sheriff and a stretcher."

"They'll say he did this."

"Why?"

"Because everybody knows Fred left him all his money."

"That's nonsense. Everybody also knows how Luke felt about Fred."

"People don't like other people to get money, no matter how much they like them. It makes them envious. You wait and see."

"Get a blanket, will you, Lola?"

"All right."

Starr crouched by the body. It could have been, he reflected. . . .

Nothing untoward disturbed the obvious pattern of Rempson's death. Death had struck, Starr decided, around six o'clock. Rempson's gun lay within a few feet of the body: a single-barrel pump, twelve gauge, with a half-choke bore. An exploded shell remained in the breech.

His eyes rested for a moment on the odd sight of one of the pallbearers sprinting toward the trees.

The wound was quite exemplary: properly burned, blackened and tattooed—properly almost single and without pattern, just as it should have been had the gun gone off within a foot or less of Rempson, while both it and Rempson had been falling to the ground. With Peg in the way to receive the smack of recoil on her head?

Still, it could have been. Just one of the futile, tragic and accidental deaths with which every gunning season was filled; each with its element of the freakish, with its private and forever silenced answer to the problem: How could it have happened like that?

Leaves from the sorrel tree kept flecking down on Rempson, and on Peg who stayed near by, very flat, and as still as Rempson. Lola brought a blanket and then went back to the cabin, looking weak and sick. Starr covered the body to keep away flies, and the sorrel leaves then fell on the blanket, spotting its khaki-brown with red.

Suddenly Luke was there again. He said to Starr: "I turned back. I told you Fred was acting queer. Well, he burned something this morning down in the ravine. I'll show you."

They followed the trail that led toward Sonella; and a mile from the camp, deep in the cold moist twilight of a ravine, were the carefully stamped-out ashes of a fire.

Luke said: "I also told you there hadn't been anybody around here. The ground's still warm, so the fire was made by Fred. I'll be back before two."

Luke left, and Starr examined the ashes. They were cupped in arranged rocks where a fire could have burned fiercely and done its work, and then have been stamped out. The ash was too pulverized to expose the least identity.

Under the ashes, pressed by the stamping into the ground, Starr found the metal ring.

SHERIFF McBRIDE, a stretcher, and four deputies arrived from Sonella shortly after two. Luke wasn't with them. Lola had been right: Luke was being held in jail at Zanesville for "questioning." Starr took McBride to the ashes of the fire while the deputies were alternately calming Lola, and preparing Rempson's body for the trek to Sonella.

McBride admitted that to prove any case against Luke would be tough, in spite of there having been both opportunity and motive. McBride was sincerely convinced that the motive was sound: Lola, he reasoned, figured strongly in it as the incentive for Luke's act. Sort of a *Lady Macbeth.* Nineteen—or was it twenty, years of married life, stuck in a deserted wilderness, was enough to upset any woman's moral valuations and drive her to the point where even murder seemed a rational avenue of escape. Especially when you considered her theatrical background. It wasn't as if she'd been born to this sort of a backwoods existence in the first place.

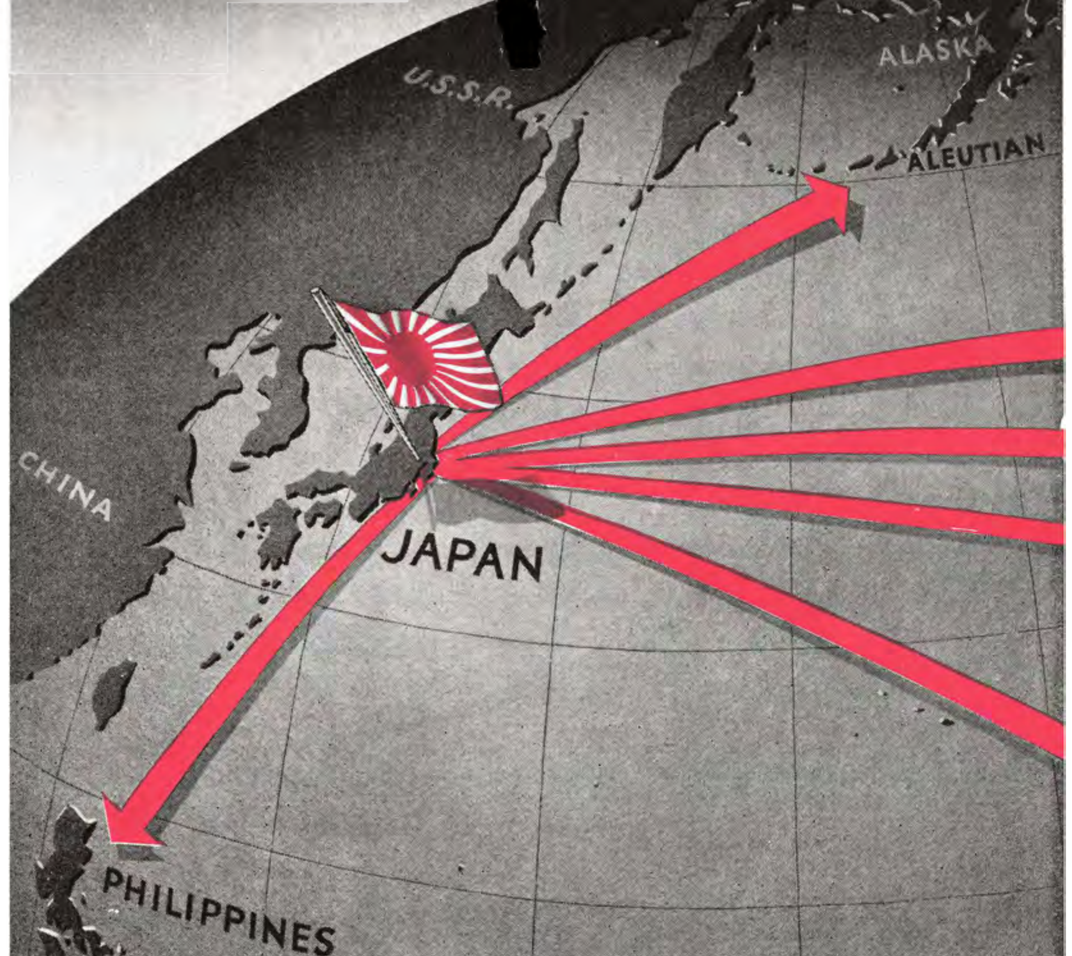
It was so simple: blast Rempson close with a load of buckshot, put the gun near by, and there was your commonplace hunting accident with no bother at all. There, also, was a fat inheritance as a passport to (McBride capitalized it) Life. . . . Luke could be broken down and led into a confession.

Starr said: "I don't think you'll break Luke down, because I don't think he did it. And you're wrong about Lola. She's a unique woman. Luke suits her. She'd stay with him contentedly either here, or in a city, or on a dump-heap—wherever he happened to be put. If it was murder, and not just an accident, I think your solution lies with the Chranron packing plant in Cleveland."

McBride had a profound respect for Starr's opinion. He asked Starr why, and Starr told him.

"It's worth a check-up," McBride admitted, after Starr had finished. "I'll take a run up to Cleveland this afternoon. I don't know just how far I can go with people like that. They get touchy after their first million."

"Take the ledgers and the report with you. I think under the circumstances they'll coöperate. It might be a good idea to take Rempson's portable typewriter in too, to get an opinion on whether the report was written on it or not. Also, there's his signature." *(Please turn to page 88)*



Should Japan decide to risk her past, present and future in a war with the United States, what ramparts would we have to watch? The following article by the author of "Days of Our Years" —and the "strategic sketch" on the right —supply the answer.

IF JAPAN FIGHTS

IS a Japanese-American war inevitable? Berlin and Tokyo say it is. Washington still refuses to believe so. All agree that the Pacific war of nerves is approaching a climax. Few, if any, diplomatic moves remain to be made. Statesmen and politicians of both Tokyo and Washington have exhausted their vocabulary almost to the last warning. Unless they drastically change their tune, guns and bombs will have to speak.

There is a deadly parallel between America's attitude to Nippon, and Great Britain's policy toward Germany during the years following the World War of 1914-'18. England unquestionably helped to build up the Nazi war-machine which now threatens her very existence. We too for years have supplied Japan with the materials essential for the building up of her war-machine, which is now trained in our direction.

And now the challenge has come.

"Should the United States refuse to understand the real intentions of Japan, Germany and Italy, and persist in challenging them in the belief that the pact among them represents a hostile action, there will be *no other course open to them than to go to war.*"

This threat was not uttered by an irresponsible military extremist in the Land of the Rising Sun. These are words enunciated with careful precision by Prince Fumimaro Konoye, Prime Minister of Japan, a few days after the Tokyo-Berlin-Rome military pact was made public on September 27, 1940.

When the tall, aristocratic, soft-spoken head of Nippon's cabinet referred so nonchalantly to the "real intentions of Japan, Germany and Italy," a sheepish smile must have illumined his usually melancholy Oriental face. For although his country's military leaders consider him the weakest of Japan's strong men, Prince Konoye knows only too well that these "real intentions" mean war.

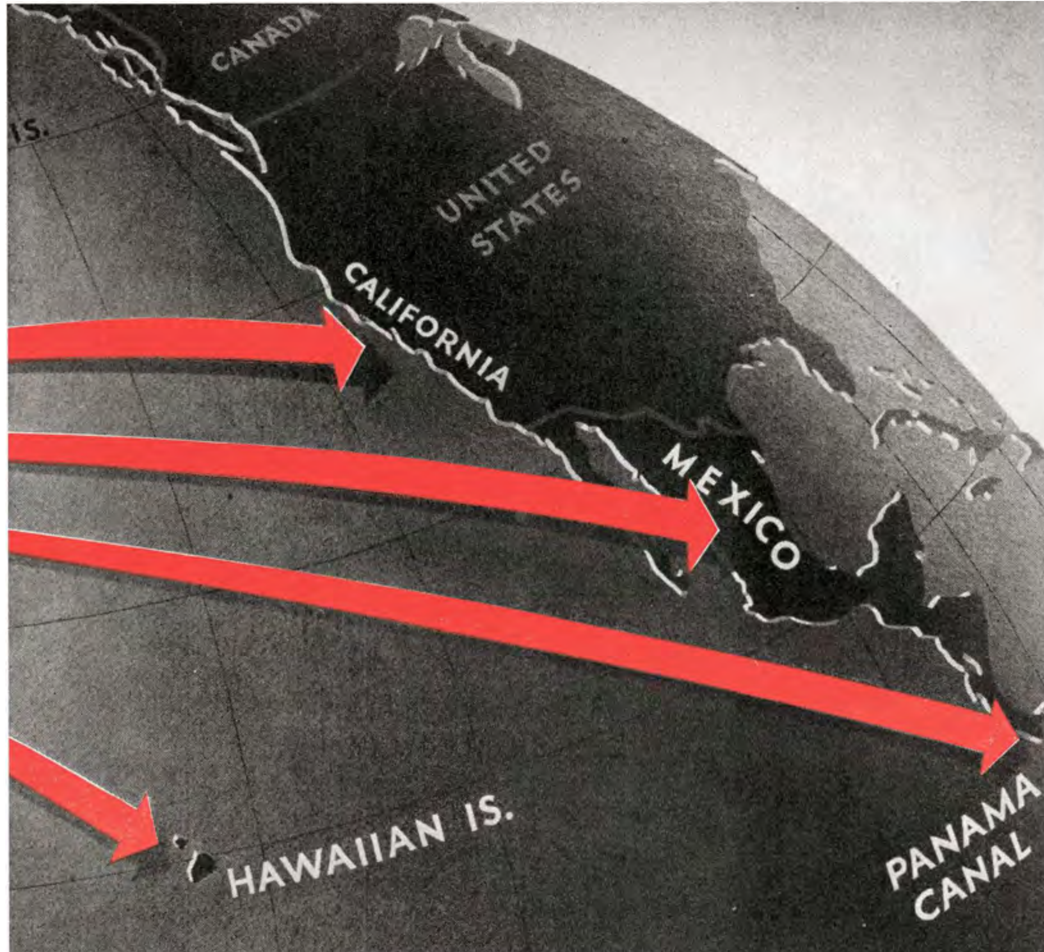
In the view of the present leaders of Japan, the United States stands in the way of Japan's dream of "the Greater East Asia." Nippon's hegemony over the Pacific requires the reduction of America to the rank of a third-rate power. Unless we agree to be stripped of all influence in the Pacific, Japan cannot establish a new order in Asia under her domination. The sphere of Japanese influence—which Hitler so graciously bestowed upon Emperor Hirohito last September in the gilded Hall of Ambassadors in Berlin's sumptuous Chancellery—takes in quite a bit of territory.

According to a quoted statement by Admiral Sankichi Takahashi, former Commander-in-Chief of Japan's combined fleet, Japan's Greater East Asia must include Manchukuo, China, Indo-China, Burma, the Straits Settlements, the Netherland Indies, New Caledonia, New Guinea, most of the islands in the West Pacific, Japan's mandated islands, the Philippines, Australia and the rest of the East Indies. The realization of this Greater East Asia would transform the United States, economically, into a yes-nation of the Empire of the Rising Sun. No wonder Prince Konoye smiles when he asks us to understand and accept the real intentions of the Axis powers.

Japan is the Prussia of the Orient. Her appetite for power and expansion is unlimited. Her faith in military might over moral right has been the dominant note of her foreign policy ever since she entered the arena of international politics. Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, a keen student of the Orient, was one of the first European statesmen to recognize in Japan a rival of Germany for the conquest of a substantial portion of the globe. For years he ranted against the "Yellow Peril," but without avail. Japan's reaction was to grin and bear it, and to continue sending her political and military students to Germany for post-graduate courses. Among the foreign observers at German military maneuvers, none watched more assiduously than the military attachés of the Japanese Embassy at Berlin.

So effectively did the Kaiser succeed in impressing the German General Staff with the potential powers of Nippon, that the planners of Germany's world-conquest decided to make Japan an associate in their ambitious plans. It was, however, only after the World War of 1914-'18, when the former Kaiser's anti-Japanese tirades had become a thing of the past, that Karl Haushofer, chief of the German Geopolitical Institute, evolved the rôle of Japan in the Tokyo-Berlin Axis in the inevitable War of Continents.

A formidable Gestapo guard keeps watch day and night at the doors of the Pacific Room of the Geopolitical Institute at Munich. Nobody may enter it unless he is provided with an admission card personally signed by General Haushofer. The Pacific Room is a large hall in the center of which stands a gigantic, brightly illuminated globe. Rows of seats are arranged all around it in amphitheater fashion. It is there that Professor Haushofer, the man who thinks for Hitler, lectures on the destiny of the Pacific. The



Strategic Sketch by
FRANK E. MANNING

Japanese in the Pacific, Haushofer's teaching staff emphasizes ceaselessly, depends on close co-operation between the Axis Fifth Column leaders.

America's naval power is more than a match for Japan. Both Berlin and Tokyo are well aware of this. In order to overcome America's superiority, the German plan provides for perfect timing of Japan's launching of hostilities in the Pacific. The most propitious moment—which Berlin will do its best to bring on—will come when a good portion of the American fleet will be busy in the Atlantic. As long as the major part of the U. S. fleet is in the Pacific, Tokyo will not budge. Of this there seems little doubt. As soon, however, as Berlin will have succeeded in creating a diversion that will compel Washington to split its fleet into Atlantic and Pacific squadrons, Tokyo will get the signal to go ahead. And the first blow will not be struck against the Philippines or the Guam base alone. It will simultaneously fall on the Panama Canal.

One of Haushofer's associates,—an authority on the Pacific,—is said to have devised the plan which is to incapacitate the system of dams, locks and chambers that permits ships to pass through the narrow channel connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific. Whether it is to be done by a submarine or by aërial attack, by a neutral ship loaded with dynamite or by still some other means, is a well-guarded secret. But it is no secret that German and Japanese officers smile contemptuously at the precautions which America is taking to protect the Panama Canal from such a fate.

Tokyo and Berlin confidently expect to have swept the United States from the Pacific before the American Atlantic fleet will have made its way around South America. Tokyo does not anticipate much resistance from the Philippines. It discounts British interference with any part of its program in the Pacific. As a matter of fact, it believes in its ability to smash Singapore without too much difficulty. Nothing will stop Japan's occupation of the Netherland Indies,—so important for her supply of essential raw materials,—claim the Berlin plan-makers. The Hawaiian Islands, with their most modern harbor facilities on Oahu, are made to order for aërial attacks launched from well-located aircraft-carriers, boast Haushofer's disciples. Pearl Harbor, which is large enough to house the entire American fleet, and from which the U. S. Pacific naval units are expected to operate, is labeled a death-trap on the geopolitical charts. The American naval bases at Guam, Wake and the Midway islands, not to speak of Tutuila, are regarded as so isolated from effective protection by the American fleet as to constitute no barriers to the attack on and conquest of the Hawaiian Islands.

But while some of the most authoritative United States naval experts admit the possibility of a Japanese *coup* that would result in Tokyo's taking over of America's possessions in the South Pacific, they believe that the Aleutian Islands provide an almost invulnerable lane for the American fleet's offensive against Japan. That region of the North Pacific, however, is just the spot where the Tokyo-Berlin Axis reserves its biggest surprise for the *ahnungslose Amerikaner* (unsuspecting Americans). Japan's warlords are envisaging the Aleutian Islands as the bridge to Alaska, whence they will hurl a land force through Canada at the United States. In the Munich schedule, Dutch Harbor is *(Please turn to page 92)*

By PIERRE van PAASSEN

head of the Institute, incidentally, speaks Japanese fluently and is well versed in Oriental psychology. His experience as military attaché to the German Embassy in Tokyo at the beginning of the century evidently stands him in good stead.

For more than six years General Haushofer's Pacific sessions have been the Mecca of Japanese General Staff officers, divisional heads of Tokyo's elaborate spy system and representatives of Nippon's Foreign Office and Supreme War Council. And the subject that Haushofer's Japanese disciples have been studying so intensively is Japan's war against the United States. Fantastic as it may sound, there in that Oriental room of the Geopolitical Institute, less than a stone's throw from Munich's noisy Bierstuben, the charts and blue-prints of the Berlin-Tokyo plans to establish a Greater East Asia are untiringly discussed and patiently checked and re-checked. It is there and not in Tokyo that the decision will be made *when*—not *whether*—to launch the total war which is to end American holdings and influence in the Pacific.

In the Munich plans, an important rôle is assigned to the Japanese Fifth Column in California, Mexico, the Hawaii Islands and the Philippines. It will be instructed to strike in concert, each unit acting simultaneously within its own sphere. Thus the California unit has been coached for sabotage work primarily. On the action chart in the Pacific Room, Santa Monica, Burbank, Downey and Glendale are marked with a red circle. A quick blow is to be executed there to cripple the plane output of the United States.

THE Mexican unit is to act more in the rôle of a political trouble-maker, counteracting Washington's good-neighbor policies. But should Mexico align herself irrevocably with the United States, her oil production is to be sabotaged, and civil war activities are to be promoted.

In the Philippines and Hawaii the Japanese units are being used chiefly for espionage. It goes without saying that the Japanese espionage ring in the Pacific and Mexico constantly exchanges information with the Nazi and Italian espionage groups in North and South America. Much of the success of a quick stroke by the

To him it was a joy to find her standing there when the door opened . . . when he entered their home.

10th Anniversary

Redbook's NOVELETTE OF THE MONTH

By VILHELM MOBERG

By special arrangement with Simon & Schuster, Inc., we are reprinting this excerpt from "The Earth Is Ours," a distinguished novel by Sweden's foremost contemporary writer.

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THE light of dawn spreads over the country's capital city. Half a million people work and sleep, play and make love, rejoice and suffer here, totally ignorant of each other's lives. One-twelfth of the country's inhabitants are packed together on less than one-three-thousandth part of the country's soil.

At the vernal equinox the sun rises before six, but neither its rising nor its setting affects the life of the city. At midnight the streets stirred briskly; later the pace slackened; now, during the early morning hours, exhaustion has set in. But night did not bring sleep to all the people. The city's machinery cannot be left untended for a single hour, for a single minute. Any stoppage means disaster, for the city demands constant care. It must keep moving or die.

And now the business of a new day begins. The city summons forth all who must be transported from their homes to where they work. Traffic begins to move at full speed. The trolley wires hang over the streets like a wide-meshed net, and the streetcars writhe beneath like trapped fish. They glide along the rails, creaking as they turn corners, shrieking as they halt, but always imprisoned from above. Like the other slaves of the city they must go their appointed way.

As the sun rises higher longer trains of streetcars carry heavier loads of passengers. A new day has come to the country's capital city, and under its flooding sunlight the asphalt pavements glisten like the smooth surfaces of many streams. . . .

In a four-room apartment on the third floor of a house on Frey Street a man lay sleeping. No one occupied the other half of his double bed, but the covers had been thrown back and a dimple on the pillow showed that someone had been there. The sleeper lay on his right side. He had pulled his knees up under him and had turned his face from the window and the morning light. Strands of blond hair fell across his eyebrows. A light-brown stubble covered his cheeks. His half-open mouth revealed a set of wide, strong teeth. His labored breathing suggested fatigue; his flickering eyelids betrayed a seething nervousness within.

Through the open window toward the street, noises from below assailed the sleeper's ear. The wheels of streetcars jolted at each new rail, automobile horns brayed, their motors roared. A whistle sounded from a speaking-tube. In the dining-room a vacuum-cleaner purred; from the kitchen came the sound of children's voices and the rattle of dishes. All these disturbances mingled in the man's half-awakened consciousness. Some became part of a dream; others served only to annoy.

The boy walks barefoot along the cowpath through the meadow. Birds caw and screech around him. Under the soles of his feet he feels prickly pine needles and gnarled, slippery roots. He pulls up a juniper shrub to make its root into a snare.

"Drink your chocolate, Karin."

"Don't hurry me, Mamma."

A bell rang in the hall. Was it the postman?

Fastening his snare to a pole, the boy tiptoes along the edge of the brook. He looks cautiously before he puts down his foot, as he is scared of stepping on a snake. Once he had done so and it felt dreadfully cold, though it was only a harmless one which had wriggled away in a panic. Suddenly he stops—but it is only a blade of grass tickling his heel.

"You must eat your bread and butter too, Rune."

"I haven't time."

"You have half an hour."

"Do you think I can fly to school, Mamma?"

The ringing continued. Would it never cease?

Shading his eyes with his hand, the boy stares into the water. He can see the stones on the bottom, green and smooth and glittering. A pike hangs motionless. Its striped back glimmers yellow and brown. The fins beneath its belly quiver slightly. With trembling hands the boy opens his snare. Slowly, very slowly and cautiously, he drops it into the water right in front of the pike's pointed snout. The fish does not stir, thinking it is a blade of grass bent by the current.

"Can't you see I haven't time, Mamma?"

"What a nuisance you children are!"

Bang . . . the outside door . . . they departed.

But the ringing went on and on. Would it never end?

"You had better bring the cleaner in here, Martha."

The pike is still there. The boy coaxes the snare across the gills, but does not dare to pull until he has it past the fins. If only his hands would not tremble so with excitement! . . .

"It is half-past eight."

Slowly now . . . he is getting the snare past the fins!

Confound that ringing! *Plop! There goes the pike. Something frightened it at last.* Oh, that ringing which never ceases! *He is sick with disappointment.*

"Have you gone to sleep again, Knut?"

The streetcars streamed by outside. He heard the clatter of the wheels and the muffled hum of the wires. The noises died away at the stopping-places and rose again: Vanadis Road, Frey Street, Odin Place. A car arrived and turned around at Haga . . . his car. Generally he caught the 9:15 . . . or the 9:20 . . . or even the 9:25 once in a while. But usually he managed to get the 9:15.

"Yes, I must have fallen asleep again."

Knut Toring opened his eyes. His wife, in a wrapper, was standing beside the bed. He had been fully awake when she got up a few moments before.

Transition from one world to another. Strange how vividly one dreams in the morning! He had actually seen the fins of the pike quivering in the water, and he had gripped the pole firmly with both hands. It was a dream that returned frequently: he was a boy once more, fishing in the brook near the village of his childhood. It was funny that the same incident should recur again and again.

But he was a boy no longer. He was a man of thirty-five with a son of his own who had already reached school age. He no longer ran barefoot in the summer along cowpaths full of pine needles and slippery roots. He wore shoes on the level, asphalt-paved streets of Stockholm. And he could not snare pike in Goela Brook because he had to hold his position with Reading for the People, Inc. In another hour he would start his day's work . . . as he had started it a thousand mornings before.

Knut Toring cast a hateful glance at his watch on the little table beside the bed, where its chain twined around it like a golden snake. The watch was the symbol of bondage. It summoned him to duty. The little second hand circled its dial in a series of infinitesimal jerks. It crawled around and around like a worm, a worm that left him no peace. Yet the hand was impelled by a spring which he had wound. He wound the watch, and the watch goaded him along. It was a closed circle.

If there were no instrument to measure the passing of time, humanity might enjoy blissful peace, he thought.

LANGUIDLY he got out of bed, yawning and stretching. He never felt fully rested in the morning because his sleep did not have that bottomless profundity which alone brings a complete renewal of vigor.

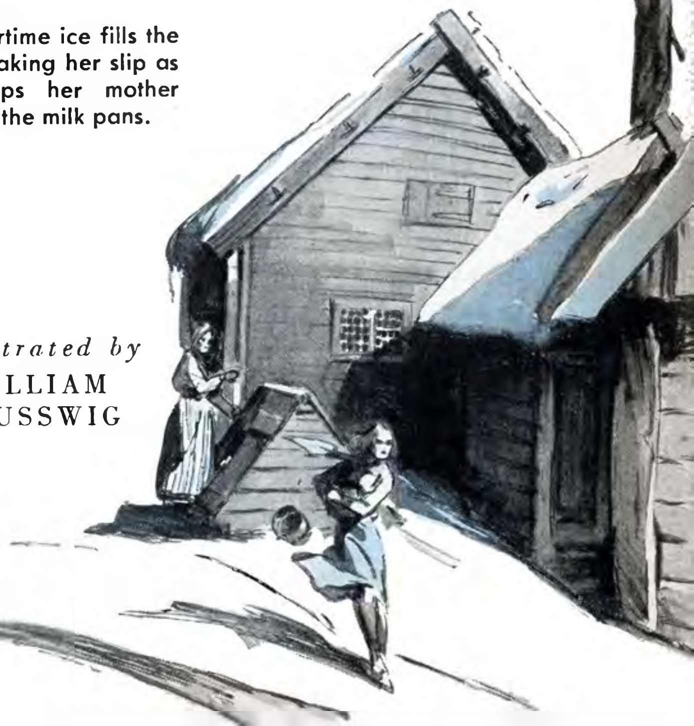
"You are late."

Fru Toring began to make up the bed. She was tall and slender, with a finely developed bosom, lustrous black hair, and light brown eyes. Her thin cheeks still showed the fresh and unimpaired complexion of a young girl. She was thirty-three.

"What's the use of wearing yourself out?" her husband muttered, shedding his pajamas.

Then he reached the bathroom in a couple of leaps and turned on the shower. He let the needles of icy water sting his body until his skin burned. Taking the shower as cold as he could stand it, he breathed as if in agony, ground his teeth together, and forced himself to endure it until he began to feel dizzy.

Afterward he rubbed himself violently with the bathrobe. Both his torso and his limbs were thickly covered with hair which now



In wintertime ice fills the yard, making her slip as she helps her mother carry the milk pans.

Illustrated by
WILLIAM REUSSWIG

Plop! There goes the pike. . . . Something frightened it.

lay close to the skin like grass on the ground after a heavy downpour. This hairiness was undoubtedly a family trait.

Knut had kept the fur on his chest, but as he rubbed his arms with the bathrobe, he missed the firm muscularity of youth. The flesh hung too loose. Once he had the hard knotty muscles of the plowman and woodsman. But his body had changed and adjusted itself to his occupation. Everything superfluous must disappear. A man reading manuscripts or proofs in a publishing house needs no muscles.

He ought to have prevented this change by taking more exercise. But mechanical motion as an end in itself had always repelled him. He wanted to employ his body usefully, to get results from its labors, and with central heating and gas he lacked even a woodpile. The city offered so little physical resistance that the strength of the body disappeared. . . .

Knut and his wife had their morning tea in the dining-room and he noticed something like expectation or speculation in Aina's eyes. As he could not interpret her expression at once, he asked what was on her mind.

"Nothing," she replied. "Nothing in particular."

Her answer carried so little conviction that he began to rack his brains. Was she expecting something of him? What should he say or do? His memory was rather unreliable, and he had probably forgotten something she wanted him to remember. But all he could do was to ask himself what it might be. His wife's air of expectation was unmistakable, not to be escaped. But Aina had a great deal of pride. If he neglected some duty toward her, she would think it beneath her to remind him of it.

What did she expect? His memory would not yield an answer, and he was still pondering the question as he walked down the stairs.

When he reached the street, the cool air of the March morning affected him like a refreshing bath. He breathed more deeply as he stationed himself at the stopping-place where he would be near the door of the car when it came to a halt. But he missed it this time and was the last one on board. All he could find was a place in the middle of a seat between two other men of equally heavy build. They did not leave him enough elbow-room to read the morning paper which he carried in his pocket. It did not matter, however, for he had already scanned the headlines and had seen that nothing important had happened since yesterday. Under such circumstances newspapers became quite needless, he thought. They should be published only on those days when they really had something to tell.

THE car swung into Odin Place, creaking and pitching under its human burden. Knut observed his fellow passengers and recognized several faces which had become familiar during thousands of journeys along the same line: people working in offices, banks, shops. He sensed a certain community with all of them. They traveled by the 9:15 car, his car. It carried them to the day's work, which began about the same time for all of them. That 9:15 car was the tie the city established between people otherwise quite foreign to each other.

Now he was riding to his work as he had done thousands of other mornings.

Opposite Knut sat a young woman he had noticed several times before, and her glance happened to hold his for a few seconds. Liquid eyes, a broad, low forehead, a full mouth that made one think of kisses . . . the sensuous type. He regarded her with masculine eyes and felt a vague, quickly passing desire. Usually she looked much fresher and livelier, but today she kept yawning as if she had not had enough sleep.

For a moment the conductor's broad back hid the young woman from him.

"Transfer, please."

He had never heard her voice before. The *r* in that word *transfer* was unmistakable—the *r* made on the root of the tongue. That rolling *r* of a provincial dialect clung to her. She was from Smalland, his own province.

As the car rocked through the city, a series of pictures took shape in Knut's mind. The childhood of that young woman: a small farmhouse with a roof of aged and blackened tiles; she had been born there and once she had longed to get away. The images grew more vivid: during the summers of her childhood her father cuts the grass in the yard. The scythe is hissing. The farmer takes out a red-checkered handkerchief to wipe the sweat from his forehead. She herself is a little girl in a faded cotton dress, and she is raking the hay into windrows. It is pleasantly warm; she is barefoot, and the feel of the cut grass against her feet is cool and soft as silk. The fragrance of the hay fills the air. It comes to her through the window when she is falling asleep at night, and when she wakes in the morning the smell of it is like a greeting from the newly dawned summer day.

But in wintertime ice fills the yard, making her slip and fall as she helps her mother carry the milk pans to the cattle barn. The grass now lies in the loft, changed into dry, brittle hay, and in their pens the sheep are bleating: "Long winter, a-a-ah, long winter!" Her father stands by the woodpile. On his head he wears a cap of black fur with earlaps to protect him against the cold. They make him look as if he had the ears of a hound. In such cold he seldom takes out the handkerchief to wipe off the sweat. But when the blizzard comes roaring around the house she sits by the window and yearns for summer and for soil that feels hot underfoot.

Now she is gone—gone during summer and winter alike. Her father still cuts the grass in the yard with his scythe, but on account of his age he cannot cut so wide a swath, and he has to do the raking himself. Her mother is alone in the cattle barn. In the winter the path to it is so icy and treacherous that she has to walk very slowly and cautiously. There are pains in her legs, and she needs twice as much time to cross the yard. Nor is there anyone to help her carry the milk pans. . . .

"King Street!"

The web of images is suddenly shattered by the voice of the conductor. The girl in the opposite seat has gone. She left long ago, at Railway Square.

KING STREET. Here the city traffic roars like breaking ocean waves. Endless lines of automobiles pass each other with the softly gliding motion of a ground swell. Signal bells issue their warnings. A booth with a traffic officer inside looks like a buoy where the current runs strongest, while on both sides of the street a dammed-up stream of pedestrians waits impatiently to cross. . . .

Knut rushed through the car and jumped off. Then he halted on the safety island in the midst of the tumult. Around him the traffic shrieked and billowed and roared. He felt as if he were marooned on a raft.

As he leaped from the car the answer to the question that had worried him all morning flashed across his mind. It was just like his memory to supply information in that unexpected fashion. Now the realization of the answer startled him into sudden immobility.

At last he was able to interpret the expectation he had read in the eyes of his wife. It was the eighteenth day of March, and on that day ten years ago he and Aina had been married.

The flower shop offered a rich and varied supply to choose from —roses, tulips, carnations—and Knut found it hard to make a choice.

"Perhaps you would prefer a plant?"

The girl in the shop eagerly suggested new possibilities. All he had to do was choose. But the confusing abundance of the city always filled him with indecision. Nothing was lacking. So many opportunities offered themselves that it seemed impossible to choose a single one.

No, a potted plant was too prosaic. Roses . . . no, he had bought roses several years in succession on that day.

Then a troublesome, impertinent "why" popped into his mind. Why, indeed? To buy flowers for his wife on their wedding anniversary—was it not a purely perfunctory action, a concession to habit and custom? He could not give Aina the pleasure of surprise with such a gift. She was already expecting those flowers. They had always appeared on their anniversary. Of course, she would be disappointed if the established ritual were not repeated, but what he had in mind was something more than protecting her against disappointment. Following the well-worn grooves of habit and custom made men and women grow tired of each other in marriage. Why not seek a renewal of interest through a change of

habit? He wanted to do something that rose spontaneously from an overwhelming desire, from an irresistible necessity.

Why send her flowers? Gradually he had developed a system of self-analysis by which he strove to find the true motive behind every action. In this case he could find nothing but the fact that it was what he had always done.

It was irritating to be pursued by this "why." Something seemed to have happened to his capacity for action. He could not put his finger on what he aimed at doing beyond the habitual and purely mechanical. He must always ponder lengthily on what he did. He must always find a reason before he could act.

"These tulips are quite lovely."

He must buy a bunch of flowers because he had always bought them on that day.

And it was their tenth anniversary. The eighteenth of March ten years ago had also been a sunny day with some remnants of lingering winter in the air. But the spring must have been more advanced. It came very early that year. Their first little apartment had a balcony on the sunny side, and on that balcony they had their morning coffee the day after the wedding. It was quite warm out there. Aina had talked of getting boxes of dirt to grow tulips in as the time to start them was near. Yes, the day had been more springlike ten years ago.

His mischievous memory had certain favorite spots around which it hovered insistently. This was one of them. It should have told him what day it was before he left that morning. The moment he woke up, his consciousness should have registered the fact that it was their wedding anniversary. And Aina had said nothing, although she undoubtedly remembered. She expected him to do it first. That was like Aina. She had so much pride.

After all, he could not spend any more time in the flower shop trying to make a choice. And so he decided on roses . . . as he had done the year before, and every preceding year. But there must be more of them because ten years had now run their course.

The spacious and solidly furnished offices of Reading for the People, Inc., on King Street testified palpably to the stability of that enterprise. The presses occupied the ground floor, while two upper floors housed the editorial and business departments. The company had been started some ten years before by a small group of foresighted and ingenious men who, according to their initial prospectus, wished to meet the need of the Swedish people for good literature of an entertaining character. They had been very successful. The company published four weeklies with a total circulation of two hundred thousand. Stockholm alone consumed fifty thousand copies, and it had been figured out that one Swede out of every ten read at least one publication issued by Reading for the People.

Three of those publications appealed to particular members of the family. *Home and Hearth* was meant for the lady of the house and older women in general. *By the Evening Lamp* offered reading matter for grown-up males, while *Colored Pages* was designed for the children. The fourth one, *Leisure Hours,* combined

Opposite Knut sat a young woman —her gaze happened to hold his for a few seconds.

the purposes of the other three and provided literature for the entire family.

For the last eight years Knut Toring had been the editor of *Leisure Hours.*

His office was on the third floor. The elevator glided him past the editorial departments of *Home and Hearth* and *Colored Pages.* Then he entered a narrow, endlessly long corridor, on which opened a row of editorial quarters shared by his own publication and *By the Evening Lamp.*

The walls of the corridor were brightened by framed drawings that Knut used to greet with a smile of recognition when he arrived in the morning. They seemed to be parading before him as he passed along. The pictures represented particularly successful covers for *By the Evening Lamp* and *Leisure Hours.* They displayed young girls with peachblossom skins, starlike eyes, and glowing red lips; also young men with broad chins, correctly parted hair, white teeth, and fearless eyes. The young girls were unmistakably innocent; the young men were undoubtedly chivalrous and pure of heart.

This morning Reinstedt, editor of *By the Evening Lamp,* was standing in his doorway and greeted Knut with a nod. He had a moonlike face and a completely bald head.

"Fine spring weather! I walked in."

Reinstedt occupied a villa outside the city. Ever since he bought it his slogan had been: "To have a home of your own in the suburbs is the final aim of life." And he insisted that, out there in his garden city, he recaptured the idyllic life while he recovered from the exciting detective and adventure stories toward which his publication leaned.

Toring's editorial office was at the very end of the corridor. It was rectangular in shape and not very large, but it was amply lighted by a tall window overlooking the street. Nearly half of one long wall was filled by a huge cabinet for storing manuscripts. There innumerable stories had awaited the hour when they would see the light in printer's ink. Against the opposite wall stood his work-table, an American desk. The room smelled faintly of old paper and damp proof sheets—that peculiarly editorial smell that no charwoman on earth can ventilate away.

The desk overflowed with material calling for action: a large pile of envelopes bulging with manuscripts, and a big roll of proof sheets. All of it must be read. Every day a pile of unpublished stories poured into his office to be attacked one by one in their proper order. Perhaps one-tenth of them were used, but he had to delve his way through them all. Like a potato-digger, he had to ply his hoe many times before finding something to put in his basket.

There they lay on his table—stories and proof-sheets—as they had on thousands of other mornings. And the table must be cleared before he left at night.

He took off his coat, put on a light alpaca jacket, and fell to. Opening the envelope on top of the pile, he took out a manuscript and began to read: "Twenty Years Between a Kiss: A Picture of Real Life," by Berndt Skogfelt.

The title of the story surprised him slightly. Twenty years between *one* kiss? But a manuscript can no more be judged by its title than a dog can be judged by its coat. Hastily he glanced through the opening pages:

Olivia Stoalstroem has a small but well-situated notion shop on one of Stockholm's principal streets, but she lacks capital and is troubled by serious economic difficulties. She carries a large stock, but no bank will accept it as security for a loan. And just when spring is near and every human being should be happy, two big notes have to be renewed. Olivia is a wholly virtuous woman of a most respectable character, and yet life is treating her cruelly. She finds herself on the verge of bankruptcy.

Two days before the notes fall due Salomon Krans, a broker, comes into her life. Mere chance brings them together, and he offers to advance money against her stock. Olivia is jubilant. She, too, will have a right to feel happy that spring. But her joy is premature. The broker is well dressed, a soft-spoken man of the world who means to use the position of that unsuspecting woman to seduce her. The real security demanded for his loan is her virtue. Olivia repels him scornfully. Her honor, her priceless virginity, which she has succeeded in preserving through fifteen years of temptation . . . this is not to be sacrificed to a "helper" of that kind. She turns him away on the day the larger note falls due.

Then, just before the bank is about to close, she unexpectedly meets a childhood friend from her own province, a man who, twenty years ago, had kissed her once. . . .

Knut Toring had read too many pages. Gently he dropped "Twenty Years Between a Kiss" into a box where a number of other manuscripts awaited the outgoing mail.

After that first taste of the new pile he looked out the window. It offered him a glimpse of sky which he used to call his "weekday glimpse." The sea of traffic below sent up a muffled roar while above the top of Stockholm's only skyscraper shone the pure sky of approaching spring.

A remote look came into the eyes of the editor of *Leisure Hours.* The sky was shining with the bright blue of spring—with the strong, clear, cloudless daylight of March. It was easy to guess that the heat of the sun was working mightily in the fields. He felt for the soil as it suffered the pangs of thawing ground frost. It seethed and boiled beneath the surface, and water from melted snows scurried and tinkled in the ditches. The last ice on the roads was breaking like brittle glass beneath the nails of the horseshoes, but in low-lying places the fields were probably still spotted with snow.

He wondered if the plowing had begun in his old home at Lidalycke.

Knut picked up the next manuscript: "The Mystery of a Woman's Heart," by Elsa Brandskog. He turned a few pages, read a sentence here and there. "She did not yet think that she had come face to face with love. . . ." It did not look very promising. But perhaps some line might finally arouse his interest. "She fought bravely in behalf of her happiness—" *(Please turn to page 80)*

A SHORT SHORT STORY

Lucky LETTER

By HUGH BRADLEY

Illustrated by O. F. SCHMIDT

JOAN wished that Ken would quit talking as if she were trying to start an argument. She knew that he felt badly about it, and she did not blame him. It did seem a pity that now, after he had worked so hard and had the business almost ready to click, the lack of a measly three hundred dollars was going to spoil everything. She rubbed her dust-cloth against an imaginary smudge on the mirror while she tried to think of some new way of telling him that perhaps all the cards were not stacked against him.

"Yes," she said. "But maybe—"

"Sure," Ken interrupted. He straightened his drooping shoulders and tried to grin. "Sure," he repeated. "I know that line too. Maybe it's a blessing in disguise that the bank did turn me down flat on the loan today, because maybe tomorrow I'll find a bigger bank that will want to give me a bigger loan. Or maybe something else will turn up for the best, or—" The shoulders drooped. "Oh, heck," he said. "What's the use of kidding ourselves? You run along and dream about fairy godmothers and hearts of gold and things like that if you want to. I've got other things to think about."

The key was turned in the lock as soon as the door was closed, but Joan did not mind. Even if there had been more such moments during the past month than during all the rest of the five years they had been married, she knew that Ken never really meant them. She decided that this time when he came out to tell her so, she would have some of his favorite prune whip waiting for him.

Before she reached the kitchen, Joan remembered that there was not an egg in the house and scarcely enough sugar for his coffee. She listened to Ken's restless footsteps echoing through the thin walls, and decided that even though he might have a dollar to spare for groceries, she would not bother him now. She leaned against the old Saratoga trunk that took up so much space in the dining-nook, wishing that she had not completed the housework so quickly, and wondering what next to do.

The trunk had belonged to Aunt Matey—who really had been Great-great-aunt Matey, and had lived to be ninety-six years old. It was about all that had been left after she had died and the big old house down in Prince George County had been sold. Even Joan sometimes wondered why Aunt Matey had saved some of the countless things that were stored in it. She decided that maybe Ken was right about the basement being the proper place for such junk, and determined to surprise him by having it moved there. She raised the lid so that she might have one more look before ringing for the porter.

Freed of the high-curved iron-banded lid, the tight-packed trunk yielded an almost imperceptible scent of lavender. Joan knelt so that she might inhale it better. She remembered the rainy summer afternoons when Aunt Matey used to send her to play in the attic of the big old house. Still listening to the echoes of Ken's footsteps, she began sorting the contents.

Dance-cards from White Sulphur Springs, a menu from the Old Bay Line, a faded photograph of the Capitol in Washington, and an ostrich-feather fan wrapped in countless layers of tissue were passed over quickly. So were the cards announcing weddings, births and deaths among all the Maitland and Cleghorn kin and connection for miles around. Of all the items in the top tray Joan liked best the yellowing scraps of flowered silk, each bearing a tag upon which Aunt Matey had written in small, precise hand the details as to when the gown had first been worn, and when at last it had been conscripted for a patchwork quilt.

Joan fingered the silken scraps while she thought about how nice it would be to attend a series of parties, each in a fine new gown. She noted the raised tempo of the footsteps, flushed guiltily and replaced the silk-box. When times were so tough for Ken, it was unfair to think such things, she told herself. She tried to concentrate her thoughts on some way to make him feel better, and reached again into the trunk.

THE thin book, encased in homemade covering of black cloth, had been Aunt Matey's favorite volume. Holding it now, Joan remembered the late afternoons when they would sit under the trees near the river, and the old lady would read aloud from the collection of verses. She wondered what the envelope, long, clumsily made, with shreds of wax still adhering to the flap, was doing there, and decided that Aunt Matey must have been using it for a book-mark.

Joan drew the single sheet of paper *(Please turn to page 83)*

A MAN'S DAILY BREAD

A Love Story

by

PEARL S. BUCK

who wrote "The Good Earth"

Illustrated by RICO TOMASO

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The Story Thus Far:

YOUNG William Braton had been painting all morning—the lovely June landscape of Pennsylvania was full of pictures. Walking back toward a farmhouse, he ventured to ask the farmer's wife to give him luncheon. But it was Ruth, the daughter, who held his eyes. And afterward he begged them to let her pose for him—in the kitchen, slicing bread.

Day after day he came. *"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread,"* he called the picture when it was done.

He sent it to an exhibition, and it won immediate praise from the critics. More important, he went back again and again to see Ruth, for he had found his attempts to paint in the city studio his wealthy father had provided were futile now. "I haven't worked well in New York."

"That's odd," his father said, and lifted his gray eyebrows. "I should have thought the intellectual stimulus—"

"I can't paint out of intellectual stimulus," William said bluntly. "I paint out of earth and bread and water—and light. I am in love," he said. "I am going to be married to Ruth Harnsberger."

"Not that peasant girl!" his mother cried.

"She is not a peasant," he said. "She is a farmer's daughter—a very different thing, Mother, in our country."

"Nonsense!" she said sharply. "Harold, why don't you speak? Why, it's absurd!"

"I don't know what to say," his father stammered. "Your mother is right, of course, William. I don't know that it's absurd, so much as dangerous. Yes, that's it."

"It's absurd," his mother interrupted. "A girl I would not have in my kitchen—ignorant—"

"Be quiet," William said sharply. "It is for me to say what she is. She is the sort of woman who is a man's daily bread. I want no more."

He left the house that night. Shortly thereafter, he was married to Ruth. *(The story continues in detail:)*

RUTH paused in sweeping to look out the window of her kitchen. Her blue eyes, bright with watchfulness, were upon her fourteen-year-old son, who was mowing the grass with crawling slowness.

"Hal!" she called through the open window.

"What, Ma?" he called back. His round face, turned toward her, was full of aggrievement.

His mother turned to the young woman. "My son is bucolic," she said maliciously.

"If you don't go faster'n that, you'll never get off this afternoon!"

He did not answer. His face took on a stubborn look, and he increased his pace by a little. Ruth, pressing her full lips together, began to sweep with energy. Mary and Jill had never been the trouble that Hal was, though she had tried to take the brunt of them all, so that nothing would trouble William. But she did not know what to do with Hal. He had been restless even in his babyhood, and now it was almost impossible to make him finish his work. And William was so queer about the children.

"Why should I press my will upon another?" he always said.

"But you have to bring 'em up to be good," she insisted one day.

"You will do that," he replied, with his smile upon her.

The girls were good, but Hal she could never be sure about. She watched him now, her broom in her hand. He had stopped altogether, and suddenly at the end of the lawn he disappeared behind the crabapple tree. She set her broom against the door and walked quickly down the path. But he was gone.

"I can't run after him in this August heat," she thought with anger. She was about to turn back to the kitchen when she saw William on the hill in the shade of the big old ash tree, painting. He was standing before his easel, a tall cool figure, his blue shirt vivid against the green trees. How easy his life was, she thought. He never asked how she did anything. She bore the children; she took care of them, tended the house, looked after everything; even the land she rented on shares, while William painted his pictures. The sight of him now in the green shadows sharpened the thought of her own Saturday cleaning still only half finished, and dinner waiting to be made ready. He would come in expecting everything to be just as he liked it, too.

"This time he'll have to help me with Hal," she thought.

Her anger gave her more vigor even than usual, and she walked quickly up the low hill to the orchard. William did not see her, she thought; he saw nothing else when he worked.

But he, putting down upon his canvas the strong white silver of the river, did see her, as he saw every change and accent in the landscape before him. He watched her with full appreciation of her value in the picture. She was heavier than she had been as a girl, but only pleasantly so. She would never grow into the repulsive lump of flesh her mother had become before she died. Ruth had too much of her father's wire in her, and an energy besides, that kept her still graceful. She was very beautiful, he thought with quick passion as he watched her approach. He could see her face now, firm-cheeked, rosy, untouched by powder or paint or indeed pretence of any kind. Her hair was still brown and her lips red, and her eyes bluer than ever in her browned face. She came near him, holding up her skirt as she climbed.

"Hello, dear," he said amiably. He had not ceased painting, and he went on brushing in the soft green cliffs above the river.

"William," she cried, "what shall we do with that boy? He's disobeyed me flat and gone off!"

William laughed. Secretly he could never believe that the three sturdy young creatures who were in this house had anything to do with him. Practically, of course, he was their father. That is, something from him bestowed upon Ruth had enabled her to produce, entirely, he felt, out of her own ancestry, her three robust stupid children. She grew very angry when he called them stupid, but of course they were on the whole, stupid, in spite of being well-meaning and always pleasant to him.

"You shouldn't make a boy work on Saturday morning, my dearest," he said gently. She was so beautiful he wanted to kiss her lips. But at that instant a butterfly darting at the fresh green on his canvas became caught in the paint. William forgot everything else.

"Oh, this poor fool!" he cried. "Ruth, see it! What's to be done? Its wings are broken!"

SHE came at once, and taking a hairpin from her long hair she lifted the butterfly carefully out of the paint.

"Has it damaged the picture?" she asked anxiously.

"Oh, never mind that," he replied. "What'll we do to clean its wings?"

"We can't do anything," she said practically. She put it down upon the grass. William stooped to it.

"Oh, dear—it's simply quivering," he said in agitation.

"Never mind," she said. "I'll take it to the house. Maybe I can think of something." She would quietly destroy it, she thought, when he could not see her do it.

"Do," he said gratefully. "I never had such a thing happen before."

He was so perturbed that she saw it was useless to talk to him now, and she lifted the butterfly into her apron and went down the hill. When Hal came home at night she would whip him, she thought. Someone must manage him.

In the kitchen she lifted the lid of the garbage-pail and threw the butterfly, now dead, into the refuse. Then she went back to her work, her strong face closed over her thoughts.

The girls came in from blackberrying, and she directed them quietly, with no spare words.

"Put the pails down cellar. You can help me this afternoon to make jam. Now get yourselves washed. Your father'll want everything ready when he comes in."

She had brought them up so that the two words "your father" were the sign of last compulsion. William, who never commanded them, was through her in command of them all. They loved him and yearned to be close to him, but their mother had kept him far from them. "Your father won't like so much noise," she said. "Your father don't want you girls should go barefoot so big," she said. "Your father wants you to grow up a hard-workin' good man," she told Hal.

None of them had heard such things from their father, but they believed what she said, and their love was shadowed. And without knowing it, William by his difference from them, deepened the shadow. They learned to do as their mother did, but they saw William's difference in his fastidiousness at table, in his scrupulous cleanliness of person, and in his speech. And a fastidiousness of his spirit which they could not perceive forbade him from judging them, lest in so doing he seem to judge Ruth.

For he had said to himself until it was now the habit of his being: "I will not have Ruth changed. What she is, is what I want."

TODAY, coming home to his midday dinner, he entered the door with his invariable pleasure. Ruth kept the house always clean, warm in winter, cool in summer. He had made changes enough in the farmhouse until now it seemed his as well as Ruth's. Nothing, of course, could be changed while the old pair had lived. He had spent many an hour, while he listened to Mr. Harnsberger telling over and over again the same stories of his boyhood on this very farm, planning how one day he would rip the ceilings from the old hewn beams, how he would take out partitions and enlarge the rooms, how he would put back the old bricks into the dining-room floor. For years it had looked as though Mr. Harnsberger would live on forever after his wife died of dropsy. But a new highway had been made out of the road beyond the lawn, and he had stepped in front of a truck one day and been killed. He was then eighty-one. That morning he had eaten his breakfast with all his usual zest, and putting on his old straw hat, he had said to Ruth as he always did:

"Guess I'll walk around a little."

"All right, Pop," she had said.

William, coming down late that he might breakfast after the old man was through, was in time to see a strong young truck-driver carrying in his arms a crumpled heap which he laid on the parlor sofa. It was old Mr. Harnsberger, his face untouched, but his thin body crushed across the loins.

And William had been ashamed because his first involuntary thought, driven away at once, had been that now he could make the house what he wanted it.

But he had had to make what he wanted out of what he had, ever since he knew that because Ruth could not become part of his world, he must become part of hers, if their marriage was to endure—would not or could not, he would never

Ruth threw open the door of the closet. It was empty. "He can't be so foolish!" she cried.

know, because he would not inquire. If she were unhappy, it did not matter which it was. To keep her happy had been essential to his own happiness. And because she never complained, he had made himself sensitive to every change in her look and her voice. Her content was the atmosphere of his soul.

"Dinner ready?" he called gayly from the hall.

Ruth came out of the kitchen. Her hands were white with flour, and her look was anxious.

"Aren't you a little early, William?" she asked. "I'm just makin' the biscuits."

"No hurry," he said quickly. "I have to clean up. Did the butterfly recover?"

"The butterfly?" she repeated. Then she remembered. "I fixed it up all right," she said calmly. Long ago she had arranged her conscience to cover anything that was necessary for William's comfort.

"That's good," he said gratefully. He saw his daughters coming up from the cellar and waited for them. "Hello," he said.

"Hello, Father," Mary replied. Jill did not speak.

"Come and kiss me," he said, and they came to him warmly and laid their cheeks against his shoulders. He kissed one forehead and the other. "You smell of sunshine and earth," he said. "You smell the way your mother smells, and that's the best perfume for a woman. Want to clean my brushes?"

"Yes," Jill said eagerly.

"Fine—then I'll only have to clean myself," he said. He put the sticky brushes into her hand and went upstairs. The bathroom he had put in almost at once. The old man had not objected to that, though he himself had still bathed in the tin tub on Saturday nights, in the woodshed in summer and the kitchen in winter. William whistled softly while he scrubbed his hands. He was pleasantly tired, very hungry, and almost content with his morning's work.

If he had stayed in New York, what would he have painted? Not landscapes, certainly! He had been working on a nude when he left. He had never finished it, because he had found out suddenly how Ruth felt—about everything.

"Stand in the sun," he told her that morning. "Let me see the sun shine through your flesh."

She moved into the long block of sunshine that fell through an eastern window, and tried not to mind. She was married to him. Nothing could be wicked between her and William. It was not wicked for her to take off all her clothes in the daylight before him, so long as the doors were locked.

"That's right," he said eagerly. "That's what I want. Now pretend the sunshine is a mantle. Pretend you are wrapping it about you."

She obeyed again, putting out her arms as though they drew to her fold and fold of cobweb stuff.

"The silver mantle!" he murmured. He began to paint furiously, and she stood motionless. The sunshine would last less than an hour. Then a high building would cut it off. She would put on her clothes and do her housekeeping—that is, if he would let her. He did not let her. When the sunshine disappeared as though a touch had put it out, he threw down his brush. She had already turned, and was reaching for her garments.

"Wait!" he commanded. He went to her. "Don't put your things on just yet!" he whispered.

"But there's the room to do," she said unwillingly.

"Ah, no—there's no haste about it."

"I like to get my work done in the morning," she said.

"Your work!" he said with fond teasing. He had her lovely bare body in his arms now, this beautiful flesh which in the sunshine had been light and substance for painting, was now only material for love. But she would not yield.

"What is it, sweetheart?" he inquired. "What's wrong?"

She hung her head until her long brown hair covered her face. He had held her only a moment longer. Then she had put on her clothes, and he had taken his brush again and worked a long time in silence upon the dark background behind the silvery figure. All the time he worked, he was aware of her as she busied herself about sweeping and dusting and preparing the lunch. But the room which could be at times the vessel of all his dreams was now only an ordinary room. He spoke to her once or twice cheerfully.

"Shall we dine out tonight, Ruth?"

"Whatever you say," she replied.

"No, Ruth, what do you want to do?"

"I want whatever you want," she replied; and when he did not answer, she paused to say anxiously: "Honest, William—I mean it."

She did mean it. He knew she did. She gave him all within her power. And was she to be blamed for anything? Her pretty face begged him for tenderness.

"Then we'll go," he said gently.

They came back from an evening of loitering over a sidewalk table within hearing of a park band. And in the night, when decent darkness covered her, she atoned. How rich she was, how generous, how deeply abandoned to him!

But she was a creature of instinct as honest as a healthy beast. She could conceal nothing; and when she sickened, he knew it, though she said not a word, because her instincts sickened, and it was through her instincts that she spoke to him.

She could not eat; she slept fitfully; and at last even her passion grew languid.

"You aren't happy," he said at last.

"Yes, I am," she said. "At least, I wouldn't be happy anywhere else, if you weren't there."

"Where would you be happiest with me?" he asked gently.

"Oh, at home!" she cried. And then he found out that she hated the city and these rooms and all her life here. She hated the people he brought to her, and the people she saw on the streets. All the time she had been living through the days and nights she had lived out of increasing hatred.

He was appalled by what he discovered, and silenced by her helplessness before her own hatred. For she was the sort of creature who is part of the soil which gave it birth. Her being shriveled and withered, away from that soil, and no work seemed to her really worth doing, and yet work was essential to her health, body and soul. He saw to his alarm that she was actually less beautiful here than she had been before she came; and he began to look about him and to consider whether or not he could leave New York. Why should he have to live here? His genius was strong enough to work anywhere, or ought to be, if it were worth anything.

He was cast into alternating love and hate of what she only hated. Sometimes he saw the city as she saw it, a place of noise and quarreling confusion. Then every face he saw was hideous. "These people look at me out of a nightmare," he thought as he passed them on the streets or sat in the long row of a subway train. But there were other days when the same faces spoke to him, and then they were not ugly. But to her, ugly or not, they were the faces of eternal strangers.

He had worked only well in these months of their marriage. Out of his bottomless content in her he had worked as one works out of ample food and sleep and sunshine, with no anxiety. He had painted four pictures and sold three of them quickly. The galleries were growing eager for his work, because his pictures sold well and critics waited for them—a new impetus, they said, had come into his work which lifted it above the regional, that curse of all American art. He was beginning to paint human life and not a section of it. His first picture of Ruth he had sold to the Metropolitan. That he could not resist!

So there were other times, too, when because he was working so well and because he felt so close here to life, that he asked himself how he could return to a farmhouse, and to the company of two old country people. And Ruth, if she returned to the place of her birth and childhood, could she ever grow beyond it?

WITHOUT suddenness and without intention of permanence, they had returned. Her mother was taken ill, and her father wrote to know if she could come home for a little while until things were better. It was September, and the city was still hot.

"No reason why we shouldn't both go to the farm," William said cheerfully. "I can paint there too," he added.

"Oh, William, can you?" she cried; and for the first time in many days she flung herself into his arms.

They had left everything in their rooms exactly as it was. Neither of them spoke of return or of no return. They merely went away.

He had kept paying the rent on the apartment for nearly a year, but they had not gone back. Nor had he, after long self-questioning, gone back alone. If he went back alone, he would not be able to work. He could work only when he was with her. It was necessary for him to be with her in order to forget her, as a man when he has eaten and slept forgets these things and goes on with joy, out of the strength he has found, to do what he likes.

Her mother had grown worse, and then she had died. And Mr. Harnsberger had grown suddenly old, and he wanted them to live with him in the farmhouse.

" 'Tisn't as if you had reg'lar work, William," he said. "What you do can be done here as well as anywhere." *(Please turn to page 74)*

NOT GUILTY —of Much

Two lovely girls in a hot car.

By ERIC HATCH

IN the dress department of a store on Fifth Avenue, Kitty Dayne, hoping her blonde hair didn't look as hot and sticky as it felt, walked back and forth before her customer. She walked with the professional model's slinky step, making the satin evening gown she wore show that whatever heavenly architect laid down the lines for her molding knew his stuff. She made it seem that the dress was making her beautiful; whereas anyone except an overly vain customer could see that it was she who made the dress seem lovely. Even on a hot afternoon in August, Kitty Dayne could do that to anything she wore—even to the tiny beads of perspiration on her brow: She made them seem like dew.

The customer bought the gown. Kitty sighed. The little commission she would get was welcome. She glided into a dressing-room and slipped out of the white dress. She wished she were in the mountains with her roommate Thelma Barday. She wished she owned a yacht. She wished Mr. Ackerbie, the head of the jewelry department, would, as he sometimes did, decide to lend her his car that evening. She and Mary Lou, her other roommate, could drive down to Jones Beach. She wished she was Hedy Lamarr. She put on the print dress, with the price-tag hanging on the sleeve, that she was wearing that day when not modeling something specific, and strolled back onto the floor. The first person she met was Mr. Ackerbie.

"How's my little girl?" asked the head of the jewelry. He was a career man, having been with the store some thirty years, and could say things like that without sounding at all unpleasant, the way a floorwalker would if he said the same thing. He bent over and took the price-tag in his fingers. "One hundred dollars!" He smiled. "You are worth more than that, my Kitty!"

Kitty smiled back. This was a standing joke. She liked Mr. Ackerbie—all the girls did—because he was nice to them and did little things for them with no strings attached, and because they all knew he had a wife who did not appreciate him. The store was his real wife, and the models and salesgirls were his children. Because he honestly felt that way about them, they felt that way about him.

"Gosh, it's hot, Mr. Ackerbie," said Kitty. "I sold the white evening dress—the two-hundred-dollar one. Gosh, it's hot today!"

Mr. Ackerbie closed his eyes in a squint and cocked his head on one side. He was still smiling.

"If no one should ask me," he said, "in that case I would say my Kitty was hinting that she would like to go driving in a beautiful big blue convertible cabriolet. Would I be wrong?"

"Not very," said Kitty, faintly ashamed. "But really, if you're going to want it— I mean—"

"It's parked uptown—on Forty-eighth Street, by the Chatham Hotel," said Mr. Ackerbie. "The keys are on the floor."

Kitty impulsively threw her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek. He blinked a few times.

"Don't drive my beautiful big blue convertible cabriolet so fast you get put in jail."

"The *very idea*!" said Kitty. "Me in jail!"

AT a quarter to six Kitty and Mary Lou Brend, thinking lovely thoughts about Mr. Ackerbie, walked along Forty-eighth Street until they came to a big blue convertible. They opened the door, found the keys on the floor as advertised, climbed in and headed for Jones Beach.

"Let's us pretend we're débutantes," said Mary Lou as they swung down off the Triborough Bridge onto the serpentine ribbon of the Parkway. "I've always wanted to be a débutante. I s'pose now, pretendin' is as near as I'll come to it."

She spoke in a voice that had honey all over it, soft and Southern.

"Pickaninny," said Kitty, "you just pretend you're a little girl who's a cashier in a restaurant who's lucky enough to have a girl friend who's lucky enough to have a friend who's nice enough to lend her his beautiful big blue convertible cabriolet. Gee, this is swell!"

She stepped on the accelerator. The big car slid up to fifty miles an hour, noiselessly, restfully.

"Honey!" said Mary Lou, looking at the speedometer, "you better watch out! Some big handsome p'leeceman's gonna pull right alongside and say: 'Kitty Dayne, you come right along with me to the hoosegow.' "

Kitty slowed to the forty allowed by law. She was amused. That was the second time today someone had warned her about jail.

"There," she said. "So long as I stick to forty, I can't be arrested. Unlax."

Mary Lou "unlaxed" and enjoyed the soft air, cooling now as the stone oven of the city fell behind them. She dreamed, her usual dream of a big house on a plantation deep in the pines. She dreamed, too, though she hadn't meant to, of young Sammy Poulten, Midwestern and chronically lonely, who before they quarreled a few weeks ago had been more than willing to provide said plantation. Of course it was too downright bad Sammy was fat and No'thern and didn't have curly hair; still, it had been maybe silly of her to fight with him because he thought Grant was a better general than Lee. It would have been nice to have had Sammy to buy them dinner at the expensive restaurant at the beach. As it was, they would eat at the cafeteria.

Kitty dreamed too as she drove, vague dreams of some day—when she wouldn't have to walk slinky any more. She didn't have

Illustrated by
ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

"Kitty! Mary Lou! I've fixed everything!" Kitty could have shot him where he stood!

any boy to dream about, except of course George Ormsleith, who lived in the flat above them. Dreaming about George or, as they called him, Young Lincoln, wasn't much fun. He took his lawyering so seriously. She decided she'd dream about Tom Dewey instead. Then she realized she didn't *have* to dream about lawyers just because George was one, and so, like Mary Lou, she dreamed about a house. Her house would be in Maine—on an island off Bar Harbor.

HAPPY and tired, they were singing torch songs in harmony, on the way back to town around eleven, when it happened. One Officer Milen chanced to notice the license-plates of their car as they neared the bridge approach. The sight of them rang a bell in his memory. A minute later he was chugging alongside.

Officer Milen looked with astonishment at the two girls in the big convertible. He had expected to find something weasel-faced behind its wheel. He liked their looks. He liked their voices too, for they kept right on singing. They were pretending he wasn't there. They were whistling in the dark.

"I hate to do it, I hate to *do* it!" muttered Officer Milen. "But I gotta!" And then loudly: "Pull over to the curb!"

Kitty with a sinking feeling obeyed, but a glance at the speedometer before she slowed down was reassuring. Forty. She could smile her way out of that. Then Officer Milen said something that chilled her.

"I hate to do it," he said, " 'specially on a nice night like this, but you young ladies are comin' right along with me to—"

"To the hoosegow!" said Mary Lou. "Kitty, I told you. I just said right out to you, a big handsome p'leeceman would—"

"Save it," said Officer Milen.

"I was only doing forty," said Kitty.

"Sure," said the officer. "I wouldn't pinch a girl like you, hitting under fifty." He looked more closely at her. "Under sixty, even."

"Then what's the matter?"

"Of course," said Officer Milen, shaking his head with gentle sarcasm, "you two kittens wouldn't *know* you were drivin' a hot car, would you!"

"A hot— Kitty, honey, he says it's a stolen car! Well, Mister Policeman, I'll have you know the owner of this car gave us his loan of it. His name is—"

Kitty shushed her. She thought it would be a dirty trick to get Mr. Ackerbie mixed up in this.

"His name," said the officer, looking in his notebook, "is Thomas R. Zant, Melrose Street, the Bronx, and he reports a convertible cabriolet of this make, license number 2V37-14. stolen from in front of the Chatham Hotel at approx. five-forty P.M. this day. You're drivin' that car."

"We just are nothin' of the kind!" said Mary Lou. "An' if we were, we wouldn't do a thing like that. You can ask about us. You can ask anybody you like. They'll tell you."

"Please," said Officer Milen, "quit makin' it tough for me with that baby talk. I'm takin' you in anyhow."

He started his motorcycle and rode just in front of them, leading the way to his precinct station-house.

ON the way to jail, for that was where they ended up, Kitty Dayne did much thinking. She knew they were in for trouble. Somehow, because of the evils of mass production which made it possible for many men to own big beautiful blue convertibles identical to Mr. Ackerbie's, they had got the wrong car. She could of course explain to the judge or somebody that Mr. Ackerbie had loaned her his car, and that his car looked exactly like this one. Then they would send for Mr. Ackerbie and for his car, and she would be let go free, and everyone would think Mr. Ackerbie was her sugar-daddy instead of just a kind-hearted old gentleman; and Mrs. Ackerbie would divorce him; and she, Kitty Dayne, would be the corespondent, and it would just about kill her father and mother. Among other things, she'd lose her job.

On the other hand, if she and Mary Lou didn't get out of it, they'd both lose their jobs. Sharts' Restaurants wouldn't want a cashier who stole cars; the store wouldn't want a model who did such a thing. Kitty needed help, and she needed it bad. She needed, though she hadn't realized that yet, bail and a crackerjack lawyer. She needed a magician.

When these things were brought home to her by Officer Milen, the only person she could think of who would be any use at all was George Ormesleith. She telephoned him, feeling even as she did so that had she searched the phone-book trying to find someone who would be of less help, she wouldn't have succeeded. But George *was* a lawyer. When he heard Kitty's voice, brave but tearful, he was the most worried lawyer in New York City.

"George—George darling, I'm in jail!"

George's Adam's apple, always a conspicuous part of him, throbbed so violently with emotion that had he been on the street instead of alone in his flat, he would undoubtedly have collected a small crowd. For a moment he couldn't speak. Then he got control of himself.

"I regret that," he said, "exceedingly. It—it's most unfortunate." He was being Young Lincoln, the family lawyer, but his emotion was too strong for him to keep it up. "Oh, Kitty, *where?* And what have you done now?"

"I haven't done anything," said Kitty. "Mary Lou and I are arrested for stealing Mr. Ackerbie's car—only it isn't Mr. Ackerbie's car; it belongs to somebody else. And oh, George darling, please come quickly and get us out of here."

George turned on the legal brain.

"You're arrested for stealing Mr. Ackerbie's car. Hmmm. I see." He paused. "Only, it isn't Mr. Ackerbie's car. Hmmm." Another pause, then: "Say, what goes on around here? You're not making sense!"

"George," said Kitty desperately, "you're the only lawyer we know. You've got to help us—now—right away."

"But I don't know where you are," said George.

"We're in Brendon, Long Island, at the police station; and we've got to get five hundred dollars bail."

George was no help.

"It's usually at least a thousand—for grand larceny," he said.

"Yes, I know," said Kitty, "but the policeman was very nice and found out we're respectable. Please come and bring five hundred dollars right away."

"I haven't got five hundred dollars," said George. "I've only got ten dollars—till next Friday."

"George," said Kitty, using the tone of voice for addressing kind but dumb children, "you don't understand. We can't spend the night in jail. Father—Mother—our jobs—George, you've got to do something right now. I just can't—"

She broke off, and the sound of sobs came over the wire. It acted on George like a shot of adrenalin. It made him a man of—for him—swift action.

"All right," he said, "stop worrying. I'll be there with five hundred dollars within—within—within four or five hours."

"Hurry!" said Kitty and hung up the phone.

GEORGE hung up his phone and started to dress.

"The boss," he mused. . . . "The boss' wife—no, they wouldn't do. A bail-bond company!" He was elated and hurried his dressing; then he bogged down again. "No, they'd want twenty-five dollars to put up a bond, and I've only got ten. . . . *Sammy Poulten!*"

He had not forgotten that Mary Lou and Sammy Poulten hadn't spoken for weeks, and that she had called him names that had she been a man would have forced Sammy Poulten to pin her ears back. That didn't matter now. Sammy Poulten was rich, and he lived at a hotel on Park Avenue; the hotel undoubtedly had five hundred dollars kicking around in cash for just such emergencies. George called Sammy Poulten, and trusting to luck said: "This is George Ormesleith. Mary Lou's in jail. She needs five hundred dollars to get her out."

"Thank God!" said Sammy Poulten.

George stiffened. "I think you're rather a cad," he said, "to say a thing like that about someone you were once fond of."

"Abe," said Sammy, his voice jubilant, "you've got me wrong. I mean thank God I've got a chance to do something for her so she'll have to speak to me again! Get up here as fast as you can. Use antelope's wings. Hustle!"

George hustled. It took him less than an hour to finish dressing and thinking, and to travel the distance to the hotel. . . .

The drive from Long Island to the girls' miniature apartment on West Twelfth Street was for all four concerned one of the stickiest drives any of them had ever had. Kitty cried softly most of the way; Sammy sat stiff and embarrassed; Mary Lou stared out the window; and George mumbled legal phrases. It was only when they were in the apartment which, being home, gave the girls a feeling of safe haven, that the strain relaxed some. They fixed their eyes and their noses, and Kitty put on her blue negligée, tying it tightly and modestly because Sammy Poulten was there. With just George around, she wouldn't have bothered about making sure it was modest. It wouldn't have mattered. Then she and Mary Lou went into the tiny kitchenette and mixed cocktails. It was an odd hour for cocktails; but as the girls never served drinks except in emergency, it was the best they could do. They gave Sammy a double one. George wouldn't take any.

"I must keep my brain clear," he said, "while I work up my case."

With that, he retired to a desk that stood in a corner of the room and began to spray sheets of scratch-paper onto the floor. It was a little desk, and nowhere near big enough to hold the long words he was scribbling. Sammy sank to the sofa beside Mary Lou. Kitty curled herself on the studio day-bed beside Siam the cat, who promptly curled himself in the curve of her arm. There was a silence, broken only by the scratching of George's pencil and an occasional legal muttering that kept everyone reminded of the Damoclean sword hanging over them. Once Sammy took his eyes from Mary Lou.

"Shouldn't you be up in your room," he said to George, "looking in your books for precedents and things?"

George gave him a hopeless look. "There is no precedent for a girl like Kitty innocently stealing a car she thought belonged to Mr. Ackerbie!"

"Please," said Officer Milen, "quit makin' it tough for me with that baby talk. I'm takin' you in anyhow."

"Bet you there is." said Sammy.

"If so," said George, "we will keep it irrelevant. She would without question have been convicted."

"You mean things look a little on the dark side?" said Sammy.

"They look fierce," said George. "They look just fierce. In fact, if it comes to trial, unless Kitty is to go to prison, Mr. Ackerbie will unquestionably have to be exposed to the glare of the public spotlight."

"I won't do it to him!" said Kitty.

"He'd insist on it—if it came to a trial," said George. Then, lawyer-of-the-old-school fashion, he rubbed his hands together. "But perhaps I can secure a dismissal at the arraignment. I've still got one or two tricks up my sleeve!"

A shudder passed over Kitty's frame. She could imagine the sort of tricks George would have up his sleeve.

"By the way," said Sammy brightly, pulling a dollar bill from his pocket, "seen this one? I make Washington's head turn upside down without turning the buck over at all. Watch." He began a folding operation. "I fold it this way, then that way, then once over again like this, and—"

He stopped. Mary Lou at last was looking at him. Something considerably more attractive than the Southern Cross was shining in her eyes.

"Sammy," she said, "I was just rememberin'—you know, honey, General Grant did win a couple of pretty good battles. Course, he was supposed to drink a lot, but—"

"Mary Lou!" Sammy spoke in a ridiculously deep voice, perhaps because the words came from his heart. He spoke again, normally. "Mary Lou!"

Her eyes were turned down now, so that as she batted her long lashes it would be more effective.

"I was thinkin' maybe he *was* a better general than dear General Lee," she said softly, " 'cause after all, he won the war."

Sammy went love-mushy all over.

"I've been thinking too," he said. "And I've realized I was wrong. Lee was a better general than Grant."

He couldn't stand his lady taking the blame for their quarrel, abasing herself. Kitty, on the day-bed, couldn't stand the way he was looking at his lady. It made her feel a little ill and very lonely. She wished she had someone who looked at her like that. There were any number of men who looked at her with what they thought was love, but this was different. She got up and said: " 'Night, everybody. God bless you, Sammy! I need some sleep."

Then she went into the bedroom and shut the door. Her heart was heavy. She got into bed, prepared for a night of wakeful tossing. In five minutes she was asleep. In five minutes Sammy and Mary Lou were in a violent argument again, Sammy fighting for Lee this time, Mary Lou for Grant. So far as everyone in the apartment was concerned, except George, Damocles might as well have been a punkah boy waving his fan over their heads instead of the sharp two-edged sword of history.

It is like that with young people, to sleep and forget sadness. It was not like that with George; but then, he was born old. He sat at the desk scratching on and on. Long after Sammy, still love-mushy but full of gallant plans, had gone, and after Mary Lou snored gently beside Kitty, he kept up his scratching and thinking and muttering. He believed he was preparing a case.

THE arraignment of Kitty Dayne and Mary Lou Brend on a charge of stealing the automobile of one Thomas R. Zant did not, from the State's point of view, amount to much. It was an unimportant trial of unimportant people, represented by a most unimportant attorney. There was no more public interest in it than there is in the passing of a dog-catcher's wagon full of unimportant dogs. Even Thomas R. Zant passed it up as an attraction, and went about his business, hoping they'd let him have his car back by quitting-time.

To George Ormesleith, it was the Scopes Case and the trial of Sydney Carton. To be in keeping with the importance it held for him, the judge should have worn red robes and a beribboned wig instead of a pepper-and-salt business suit. To Mary Lou, it was just awful. To Kitty, it was life or death. Where Mary Lou thought from minute to minute, Kitty thought ahead. She and her two roommates had fought hard for their self-respect, for their home, really. They had fought the perils of the big town. Being pretty, it hadn't been easy; but until now not one of them had let anything happen that could stalk them in their thoughts and make them ashamed. They still wore in their hearts the fresh sweetness of the country flowers that grew in the little gardens of the distant homes they had come from.

Kitty, standing next to Officer Milen in front of the judge's bench in the courtroom, could hardly believe she was really there, that right now the clerk of the court was saying: "People of the State of New York *versus* Mary Lou Brend and Katherine Waters Dayne, charged with the theft of convertible cabriolet, engine number nine-two-three-four-seven-six-seven, license number two-vee-thirty-seven-fourteen, stolen from in front of—"

It just didn't seem possible. She began to tremble. Tears filled her eyes and spilled over. She stopped listening, and looked up at the judge. He didn't look like a judge. He looked like Mr. Ackerbie, or Mr. Brown the dress-buyer, or her father. He looked like anybody else. She wanted to scream out and say: "You're a man; you're a human being; please don't do this to us; we haven't done anything wrong."

The judge looked down at her. He was indeed a man, and he hated being a judge. Half the time, especially in the spring and summer, he didn't feel like a judge at all; but the salary was good and his wife liked having his mail come addressed *"Honorable."* His eyes met Kitty's.

"You know," he thought to himself, "she's trying to tell me she's innocent. I *wish* I were thirty years younger." He glanced at Mary Lou, who promptly smiled, widened her eyes and turned on the Southern Cross. "Guilty as hell," thought the judge, "but not the blonde one. Stake my oath on it."

Kitty had lowered her head. The judge turned his glance back to her. She was lovely, he thought, symbol of clean American young *(Please turn to page 78)*

IT ALL BEGINS *Again*

The story of the three generations that found no peace.

BY HELEN HULL

MARY BRISCOLL had intended never to live with any one of her children. The decision had been automatic, full-formed even as she had sent the telegrams telling them their father had died suddenly. That had been fifteen years ago, when she had been just past sixty; and her income (arranged cannily by Will in annuities so that no one would look hopefully for her death!) had been enough for independence and even for assistance to one or another of the children. Except for an appropriate and swiftly abandoned gesture from Vera, the children hadn't suggested that she live with them. Hugh, the youngest, ran through wives and jobs too rapidly to offer sanctuary to anything. She might have enjoyed an occasional visit with Tom, the middle child, but his domestic life was irregular. And Tom had died, a few years after his father's death—the neat surgery job done on his interior after Verdun being inadequate for many years of service.

After Mary's serious illness in the late winter of 1940, Vera insisted that she must not stay alone. In the discussion, Vera let drop that if her mother would stay with them instead of going alone to some expensive summer hotel, they could open the Westchester house, Vera could take out a cook and second maid, Clement would stop his talk about selling the house, and the children would give up their ridiculous proposals for the summer—dude ranches, heaven knew what! "Why not say you need the money, instead of going on about my health?" Mary had asked. Vera's answer had been: "When I'm so distressed about you—how would it look if you had a stroke or something all alone?—must you be carping?" Vera was like that, insistent and unsubtle in projecting upon someone else the necessity for doing what she herself wished. Mary liked showing her up; and perhaps one reason she didn't want to live with her daughter was that she knew she'd have to hold her tongue. It was one thing to catch Vera up in an afternoon call, when Vera could take her injured feelings home and forget them in some new scheme. But under one roof—

If Mary had been stronger, she might have given Vera a check for her summer and rejected the plan. But the pneumonia germ had been vicious, and the climb back to health seemed scarcely worth the effort when the years left were of necessity so few. In a way Mary regretted her recovery; she felt rather silly about it, having been sure that she was through with life. Much like the state of mind of one who has stripped her house and packed her trunks for a long journey, only to find herself sitting on top of a locked trunk in an empty house with no place to go and no reason for going. Perhaps if she didn't unpack—all her concern about the family, all her interest in their affairs, all her amused, sardonic contemplation of them; perhaps if she perched on a locked trunk, aloof, ready for departure—she wouldn't have to wait too long. She had agreed to Vera's suggestions, so compliantly that Vera asked: "You aren't feeling worse today, are you?"

("Maybe I am," thought Mary, "to let you bully me.")

Vera had gone on in her high-pitched, quick voice, with talk of her problems. Clement was impossible; he was such a grouch; surely the market was better than he thought; in war times steel and wheat always shot sky-high. She would write at once to that woman who'd worked for them three years ago. Hilda, Vera's daughter, would have to drop her notion of getting a job for the summer; it was just an excuse to stay downtown where she could meet that boy; if he had any pride at all he would stop chasing Hilda—not a penny to his name. Mary had looked at Vera, smartly slender, well groomed, her silvery hair (she still called it prematurely gray) in soft

"They are blind and empty. . . . I must tell them this. . . . It may not be too late."

The
PARIS THREA
STOCKS BREAK
David Robinson

curls under the thimble of cornflowers she perched over one eyebrow for a hat, her mobile face marked with sharp lines. She exaggerates everything, thought Mary; she uses her face too much; she has more wrinkles than I have. "Is Hilda in love with this boy? What's his name?" Mary was fond of her granddaughter; she liked the girl's looks, fine-skinned, small-boned, intense.

"Oh, love!" snapped Vera. "At her age? But she doesn't tell me anything. You simply can't imagine what modern children are like."

"I seem to remember saying just that when you were young."

"Things were simpler then." Vera sighed. "And you never had to worry about money."

"We didn't have much to begin with," said Mary. "I haven't seen you starving or taking in washing."

"It's much worse, having to give up what you're used to, than it is not to have it ever!" Vera's hasty kiss buzzed against Mary's cheek, and she whisked herself away. . . .

"It's much better, isn't it, if you aren't too crazy about a man. You can manage him better."

For the next few weeks Vera was so busy closing the apartment in town and opening the country house that she had little time for her mother. During those weeks Mary grew steadily stronger. She could walk about her rooms with her heart quiet in her breast instead of acting like a frightened caged squirrel. She looked, she thought, like an elderly *Alice in Wonderland,* with a ribbon tied around her white hair to keep it back of her ears. No, more like the *White Queen,* the way her body had sagged and thickened. Her face had kept its structure, the dry skin taut over the fine, high brow, the eye-sockets deep and cleanly modeled, for all the worn lids drooped over the dark eyes. She couldn't read long, but she began to look at headlines, with an amazed anger at what was going on, as if Hitler had taken advantage of her illness to wreck the world she had known. "Oh, my," she thought, "I'm too old to reckon with another war!" Holland, Denmark, Belgium, Calais. Yet no one seemed to pay much attention to it.

When Vera telephoned, Mary said: "What does Clem think about the war?"

"It's simply ruined the market," said Vera. "I don't even mention it to him any more. I'm calling from the country, Mother. I'm not coming in again this week; if I turn my back something goes wrong. Clem says he'll drive you out Saturday. You can get a maid to help you pack, can't you?"

"I'm not helpless yet," Mary had replied tartly. She didn't like to have Vera pawing over her personal belongings, exclaiming: "At your age, Mother, some quieter color!" Will Briscoll had always liked her in bright colors, deep, dark red, yellow. As long as her public costumes were decorous enough, white in the summer, black with white in winter— But she tired quickly, so it was the chambermaid who packed for her. "I don't want that—nor that—" Mary discarded recklessly; she might need nothing when fall came again. "You can have them. Only, they won't fit you."

The woman gathered up the pile of clothes, looking at Mary with bleak eyes. "There are some who can use them," she said. "If they still live. I do not know. I have not heard."

"Your people?" asked Mary. "Where are they?"

"Farmers in Norway. For many weeks I do not hear. It is a great blackness not to hear."

IN Mary's mind the words sounded like a deep bell far under water. As she waited for Clem, she kept hearing them. *A great blackness not to hear.* If she sat very still, scarcely breathing, the sound might come more clearly, floating up and up through the waters of time. . . . She must have been a child—she could feel herself spraddled over the edge of a high feather bed, trying to reach the floor with her bare toes, afraid of the darkness, compelled by the sound which had wakened her—a low moaning, broken by sobbing breaths—to extricate herself from the safe warmth of her bed and brave her way across the black room to the other bed where her mother lay. "Is it another baby, Ma?" Her hand had found the heavy rope of hair, had moved up it, had touched the clammy wetness of the pillow. Just a year earlier her brother had been born, right in this very bed. He whimpered in his crib.

The moaning had ceased; her mother had said: "Go back to bed. What are you doing up?" Then she had laughed—at least, the sound was not crying. "A baby? How would I get a baby?" She had reached out in the night and pulled Mary's head against her thin neck. "I didn't mean to wake you up. You aren't old enough to know. . . . Oh, God, if only I could hear from him! It is death not even to hear!" She had led Mary back to her own bed, had lifted her into the hollow of the feathers.

That was another war, thought Mary, and her mother wept for her husband. When he came back, he was a gaunt, bearded stranger Mary had never seen. He had been in a Southern prison; he must have been sick for a long time after he came home. They had given up the farm and moved into a village. Her father had a cobbler's bench in the shed off the kitchen; Mary could hear the tap of a mallet driving in wooden pegs, and the dry rasp of his cough. He had done other odd jobs; she remembered clocks with their wooden wheels strewn over a table, and the hot smell of soldering. She and Tom, the next younger child, had gone to the village school, and then she'd taken Jimmy when he was so little she had to carry him part of the way, because her mother went out by the day, nursing, cooking, sewing.

"If I had died, I would have been a hero! And now look at me!" When had her father cried that out in a terrible voice? Mary could feel herself running away from the house, dragging Jimmy with her, out of reach of the voices, her mother's sharp with flailing impatience, her father's like white torment. They were still young—her mother had been seventeen when they married—but Mary could

Illustrated by
DAVID ROBINSON

not see them; her effort evoked only the image of an old tintype: her father in a stiff hat standing with his hand on the shoulder of her mother, long dark ringlets over the tightly fitted basque of the young girl who stared soberly out of the faded square. "Well," she thought, "I can't remember how I looked when I was twenty." Queer, as if time destroyed the image with the prototype.

She did remember that she had grown to share her mother's irritation with that increasingly silent, useless, ailing man. She had meant to get ahead, to make something of herself, to escape poverty and ignominy. Because she was the oldest, she would pull Tom and Jimmy up with her. Well, she had helped them; it was a long time ago, and they were all dead now, all but her. Other women now were saying of their men: "It is a great blackness not to hear, it is death not even to hear."

Odd, how vividly she could see her father, dying. Her mother had sent for her—she was the principal in a high school in Northern Michigan that year. Will Briscoll had driven to the station with her. He was a mining engineer who ate his meals at the boarding-house where Mary lived. "Don't be gone long," he had said. Tom, summoned from college, had met her. "He's going," he had said. "Had another hemorrhage." She must have sat beside her father's bed that night; she remembered the acrid odor of a kerosene lamp, the faint rale, the only sound of life in the figure propped on pillows. He had lifted papery eyelids, disclosing eyes brilliant with fever, and the line of his sunken, colorless mouth had altered into gentleness. "Why, Mother!" he had said.

"It's me, Mary," she had told him. But he had not heard her; he had pushed himself up, talking in a high, shrill voice, like a boy's.

She had not heeded his words, but now they sounded again: "Don't cry! It's a grand new land where a man can be free, and his children after him! I'll be coming back to visit you, driving high-stepping black horses and bringing you the grand gifts!"

THE telephone jangled; it was like silver trappings on black horses. The sound scattered the images of the past, just before she might have found out what they meant. What had set her digging into those old years? She hoisted herself stiffly to her feet; the desk clerk said that Mr. Clement Lawmen was on his way up.

Then Clement was at the door, an artificial brightness in voice and manner. Well, well, how was Mother? Fine that she could spend the summer with them! Were the bags ready? He seemed to turn on his manner and retreat behind it into protective coloration: gray hair, eyebrows, eyes, suit, skin. He had been an amiable fellow who wished to please, but having failed to do so, he now wished chiefly to avoid unpleasantness. "Vera's worn him to the bone," thought Mary, and then forgot him in an exasperating last-minute search for purse, gloves, spectacles.

"Just stop and think," advised Clem, blinking. "Just stop—"

"If you'd stand still," cried Mary, "maybe I could think!" The ineptitude of age irritated her; it made a husk between herself and the small affairs with which she had to deal. The porter shook out her coat, and there lay the missing articles. "I knew I'd put them somewhere!" She gathered them triumphantly, and headed the procession toward the elevator.

She was sorry there were not more people in the lobby to witness her departure. Going away was, after all, exciting, once you surmounted the inertia of staying where you were. Clement helped her into the front seat of the elderly family car and sat beside her, clearing his throat anxiously as the starter hummed twice before the motor caught. "It's really a good car yet," he said. "A very good engine." Mary thought, Clem really drove well when Vera wasn't telling him how; and then she looked contentedly out at other cars, at the curve of ramp up to the highway, at the river wide and ruffled in the hazy sunlight. An airplane sounded overhead, and she saw its shadow over the water; she thought: "We don't have to scurry for shelter." After a moment Clem said: "Lord, if they'd only get it over with and let a man go about his business in a normal world!"

"That would be nice, wouldn't it?" said Mary dryly.

Clement peered at her, his eyelids twitching. "I mean, look at us; nothing's happened here; business ought to be good. Ought to start big production, factories running double shifts. Do they?" The car rolled on in spurts, fast, slow, fast, slow, as if Clement beat time with his foot. "No. Everyone's scared; everyone's waiting."

They had reached the toll-bridge; and Clem, fumbling for a coin, let the motor die. By the time he had it started, his ears were scarlet and he had forgotten larger issues. "It's the mixture," he muttered.

Mary's hat slid backward on her spun-glass hair; she moved a little from the window, and Clem smiled at her, inquiringly. "You all right?"

"Yes, I am." She wouldn't be like Vera, wanting windows open and then shut and then half open. "Clem, what is a normal world, anyway?"

"Why, you know! The kind I grew up in, the kind you grew up in!"

"We grew up quite a while apart."

"You know what I mean. A world where you knew what to expect, where you could make a living for your family. Why, look at Father Briscoll—that's what I mean, climbing straight up. He had a good life; he made a lot of money. The kind of world we've tried to get back to, ever since 1918. Instead of this—this headache."

"Perhaps headaches are normal." Mary spoke testily. "Just because you can't make a fortune!"

"A fortune? *I* can't make a cent!" The words rasped. "But I—I didn't mean to get on that subject." *(Please turn to page 69)*

Lute never slackened his pace. "Go ahead and shoot your damned popgun!" he said.

No man or woman contemplating divorce can afford to miss this story.

CHARGE—Cruelty

ALL I wanted out of that trip up Sarridan Creek was a look at Nettie Ranford's scrapbook, which I had heard about the winter before. Sheriff Andy Barnes, in whose car we were riding, wanted a confession of murder from Nettie's husband Lute. I knew there might be copy in that too, but my chief interest was in Nettie. It's the women who count in a business like mine.

Rod Simpson, Andy's deputy, was driving; and Andy was in the front seat beside him. I spoke to the back of Andy's neck.

"Think Lute'll talk?" I asked him.

"Maybe not, but Nettie's a cinch to help us."

"I guess you're right," I said. For twenty years Nettie had taken more beatings than any other wife in Sarridan County.

Rod Simpson laughed.

"If Oren guesses so, we're in," he told Andy.

"I'll say," Andy nodded, and he grinned at me and closed one eye.

They were thinking of my column in the Sarridan County *Intelligencer* called "Oren Guesses," where I have to be accurate. You can't fake a gossip column.

Naturally, politicians like Andy Barnes have always been nice to me, figuring I may influence quite a few votes. Andy was being especially nice at the time I am writing of, since he was up for reëlection, and a fellow from Maddern City was making it hot for him. He needed all the breaks he could get, and he wanted my help.

A real break had come that morning, when Harlan Ames was found shot in the pasture behind his barn. Harlan had been the richest farmer in the county, fifty years old and a bachelor, so that the case was bound to attract attention. It was Andy's chance to make hay.

He called me up when they found the body, and I drove over. There was quite a crowd in the pasture, but Andy and Rod made sure I saw everything. Harlan had caught a load of buckshot in the chest, and his watch had stopped at four o'clock. The coroner said it must have been the previous afternoon, because Harlan had been dead more than twelve hours. It seemed queer that nobody had heard the shot, but his housekeeper told us he had sent her and the hired man home at noon that day.

Andy took me aside and showed me a line of footsteps leading away from the body. They went toward Pine Knoll, two miles away, where Harlan's land bordered Lute Ranford's. The prints were somewhat blurred from a rain that had fallen during the night, but whoever had made them had walked in a straight line, taking the soft ground with the hard, and making no effort to cover his tracks.

"The fellow was certainly careless," I said.

"There's only one person around here who would walk away from a killin' like that."

"Lute?"

"Sure," Andy nodded; "and he was spoilin' to do it."

"You've got something there," I told him.

Everybody knew the story. Just the week before, Harlan had put some birdshot into a young hunting-dog of Lute's because the dog strayed onto his property during a run. Lute didn't have his gun with him at the time, and he couldn't reach Harlan because the farmer was on horseback; but he told him to do some praying before they met again.

Harlan left home that evening on a business trip. He stayed away a week, returning on the morning of the day he was killed. Nobody knew why he dismissed the housekeeper and hired man that day, but he should have had better sense. He might as well have telephoned to Lute and said: "Bring your gun and meet me in back of the barn. Nobody's around."

Of course it was fine for me. I had known for years that there was a story up at the Ranford place, but I had never been able to get it. Sometimes when Nettie came to town with a bruise on her face, I wrote: "The black-eyed Susans along Sarridan Creek are blooming again." People got the point and laughed, but I wasn't satisfied. I knew there was something bigger in that woodpile, and I meant to drag it out.

BY PUTNAM FENNELL JONES

Illustrated by JULES GOTLIEB

When we came in sight of Lute Ranford's elms, Andy turned his head. "We've got to be sure of Nettie, Oren. What were you saying about a scrap-book?"

"Pearl Gleason tipped me off. She found it last winter, while she was nursing Nettie through pneumonia. She said that if I wanted to know how much Nettie hated Lute, I only needed to see her scrap-book. I've been curious about it ever since."

"Can we get to it without a search-warrant?"

"Pearl told me it's in the bottom drawer of the dining-room buffet, under some tablecloths."

"Okay," Andy said. "Remember that, Rod."

Looking up the road, I understood why Andy had insisted on taking the long way over. The people who had been at the Ames place were now waiting for us at the edge of Lute's property. Andy had his audience ready, and it was a good one. Ike Gannett, I noticed, had even brought his wife and kid. The kid was ten years old and freckled, with big ears like his father's, and he was wriggling through the crowd, hunting a spot where he could see everything that went on.

LUTE'S house was painted white, and it had a curving lawn in front. A white picket fence bordered the road; and the barn, which stood at the side of the house, was painted white too. Lute always took care of his buildings.

He was driving a team out of the barn when we got there, and you would have thought there was nobody else within a hundred miles. He glanced at the crowd the way you would look at a hoptoad, then spoke to the horses and turned them toward the fields. He was a tall lean man with a face like an Indian's, and you never could tell what he was thinking. Nobody ever tried to find out, either, because nobody was willing to risk his temper.

Andy called to him:

"We want to talk to you, Lute."

Lute dropped the reins over the horses' shoulders and walked across the lawn to us. The people who had been watching moved closer, but Lute kept his eyes on Andy's face.

"Well?" he asked.

"How come you weren't in town yesterday? Aint Wednesday your day for marketin'?"

"It generally is, but I was busy."

"Doin' what?"

Lute's eyes narrowed a little:

"Minding my own business."

Andy shrugged and gave him a nasty smile. "The State's business too, I'm thinkin'," he said. "Hell, there's no use foolin' around. Why did you shoot Harlan Ames?"

"I didn't shoot Harlan Ames."

"No? I suppose you liked him too well."

"I didn't like him, and I meant to shoot him the first chance I got."

"You knew he was home again, didn't you?"

"I heard he was, but I was busy yesterday."

"All right, doin' what?"

"I told you."

"Very mysterious!" Andy said, and he looked at the rest of us to see how we took it. Then he turned to Rod Simpson, leaning on the fence beside him.

"We'll have to check up. Go get Mrs. Ranford."

Lute stepped forward. *(Please turn to page 67)*

YOU CAN'T BEAT Beauty

The romance of a shy man.

By PHILIP WYLIE

Illustrated by R. G. HARRIS

The Story Thus Far:

IT all began when the beautiful Sigrid—star of the Parkens Model Agency, and the central figure in the expensive advertising campaign of the Merrybridge Auto Accessories Corporation—took it into her lovely Norwegian head to go back to Norway and see her people. And she did this dreadful thing forthwith, via Clipper, leaving Mr. Parkens and Mr. Merrybridge frantic. For nowhere could they find a girl who really resembled the unique and lovely Sigrid—unless you counted that girl named Bessie Bimmel from Iowa, who did have hands like Sigrid's. And then—then a photographer, developing some color films of birds, taken in the Virginias by a wealthy amateur ornithologist named Marsfield, came upon the incidental picture of a mountain girl who was almost Sigrid herself.

Mr. Parkens and Mr. Merrybridge chanced to see the picture—and their problem seemed solved.

Mr. Parkens flew to West Virginia; he explained the very unusual situation; finally Jenneth Narbey agreed to come to New York, chaperoned by her doughty Great-aunt Susannah.

And as fate would have it, while Jenneth was in New York being made over like another *Cinderella* by the best dressmakers and hairdressers, the young ornithologist Mason Marsfield came back to West Virginia trying to find her—for he had fallen hard for the mountain girl.

He did find her; but only after he had returned to New York, had seen her picture in the advertisements, had besieged the model agency in vain and had flirted with other models, while trying to learn her address. And only after Jenneth had met Mason's mother at a night-club and had pulled the hair of Miss Leunette Medlaike, who hoped to marry Mason herself.

It was in a fashionable bar that Mason found his mountain sweetheart, who now went under the name of Vivian Tolfrith—found her so changed that he hardly knew her at first. But he was a constant young man, and promptly took her home to his mother. And at once Miss Leunette saw that she would have to fight to win Mason. She gave battle by inviting the Marsfields and Jenneth to a house-party in Maryland, sure that the mountain girl's *gaucheries* in polite society would kill Mason's affection. *(The story continues in detail:)*

THE hill-billy costume dance broke up at the reasonable hour of three in the morning. It might have gone on until breakfast time, but a far more pretentious engagement was scheduled for the next night—a formal ball, the *pièce de résistance* for the house-party.

Thus Mason found himself making his way to his room in the thickest hours of darkness with a feeling of moderate fatigue and of prodigious triumph. He undressed, chuckling at his mother's sagacity and at the way Jen Narbey—alias Tolfrith—had made herself the belle of the evening by a ruse that was not a ruse at all. Mason slept serenely and woke in superb condition. He had not heard Leunette's threat to undo Jen's victory, so he had no misgivings.

He lay in his bed for a while, regarding a blue sky and a filtering of sun through red and yellow leaves that was extremely tranquil. He could see, from his bedroom window on a distant main highway, numbers of shining automobiles, most of which were headed south. The autumn exodus was under way. As he dressed, he reflected that this was the sort of day on which motorists go on another hundred miles after supper. Birds, too, he thought characteristically, probably do the same thing when migrating: instead of spending the night at the old route stop in the woodlot beside the cider mill, they push on through the halcyon evening to the next post, across a State border—which, when you came to consider it, does not exist for birds at all.

That was Mason's mood when he looked at his watch and discovered he had slept until nearly noon. The mood stuck when he found, an hour later, that Jen had not yet wakened. She came down at two o'clock in lounging pajamas and said that she was too lazy to do anything. So Mason accepted the invitation of Jimmy Henderford to shoot some golf. Jimmy was a pleasant chap, a Georgian, who had been very kind to Jen from the moment of her appearance. Mason enjoyed the vistas and the walking afforded by golf. His game was nothing special. The fact that a bad slice of his flushed a pheasant pleased him more than a hole-in-one would have.

He left Jimmy at the club bar and walked back to the Maryland estate through the prelude of a first-class gloaming. He entered the great mansion. All was idyllic. He put his hat on the refectory table in the hall. . . . And then abruptly—all was hideous.

Voices broke sporadically from the adjacent drawing-room—a room which could have been copied *in toto* in the restoration of Williamsburg.

"Your deal, Mrs. Tolfrith."

"By jiggers! Beg pardon—quite right!" Susannah's voice was like the carillon in a great man's mausoleum.

There was a pause while cards flapped, rustled and were dealt. A drawing, accompanied by chit-chat.

Then someone said: "Well?"

"I'll bet a hundred," said Susannah.

"Up twenty-five," said a male voice that was unidentifiable to Mason.

"—and up."

"I'm out."

"I'll raise it again." Still—a male voice. No other women were in that game. Aunt Susannah chuckled grandly: "Well, pikers, I'll see you—and I'll add another hundred."

"She's got four bullets," someone said. "I drop."

"I fold."

Mason clung to the nearest big picture-frame. Leunette had evidently asked Susannah to join the house-party. He and his mother had tenderly avoided that possibility—arranging week-end engagements for the old lady, and vowing that she would have more fun in Manhattan. But Susannah was here—the new Susannah, alias Mrs. Tolfrith; and anything could happen.

"Poor Jen!" Mason whispered, as he went upstairs to change.

He came upon his mother sitting in the shadows in the hall, peering at the twilight.

"You saw her?"

Mason nodded.

"I'm trying to think of something. And I can't. Mrs.—Tolfrith—has already ordered a maid to lay out her evening dress. It looks like a peacock-feather whirlpool. She was introduced to Mrs. Moant, and Mrs. Moant asked her if she 'hunted,' and Susannah said: 'Hunt, child? Why, I once killed a bear with an ax!'"

Mason's lips twitched, in spite of himself.

His mother sighed. "I know. It would be—wonderful—if it weren't for Jen. Everybody's going to know she's Jen's aunt. She's already said so. And so has Leunette—who's going to pop herself, gloating!"

DOWNSTAIRS, chimes sounded. That meant "On your mark" for getting dressed for dinner. A super-phonograph began to shake distant chandeliers with swing. Mason moved through the hall toward his cubicle. . . .

Through dinner, Susannah dominated the table. Good ladies were variously crimson and fascinated. Young men and middle-aged men were secretly in a state of devotion: there had never been such an entertaining banquet here! A summer's education

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Jen started shooting. . . . At the same time she crashed her knees into Mason, and pulled down on his shoulder.

had taken some of the mountain twang and idiom from her voice, but it had not touched the salt and gusto of her soul. Moreover, life in the Blue Ridge Mountains proceeds under conditions less self-conscious and more primitive than those controlling life on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Jen endured a long agony of chagrin and humiliation which was fed by glances from Leunette—and from other ladies. Mason just stared at his plate. Susannah was something that could be neither concealed nor reconstrued.

AFTER dinner, Jimmy found Jen in the conservatory, crying on an orchid plant.

"Your aunt's marvelous," he said. "Don't cry so! You ought to be proud of her."

Jen's humiliation was beyond mere sobs. She shed tears, but her voice was steady: "She joined a lending library last summer—"

"So *that's* it! She certainly has a taste for the bizarre!"

"I wish I could die!"

Jimmy shook his head. "That's wrong. You go in there. You dance. Dance with everybody. Flirt. Have a good time. If you need help, just signal me. Wiggle your thumb—"

"I couldn't!"

He shrugged. "I thought you people—coming from the oldest and the toughest stock in the country—were fighters!"

Pretty soon she stopped moistening the orchid. "That's right," she said. "We are." She looked at him balefully. "Fighters," she repeated.

What is called a "name" band commenced to snarl and tootle in the ballroom. Leunette was one of the first on the floor. She was closely followed by Jimmy and Jen. Mason danced with his mother—danced rigidly and with his eyes fixed upon infinity. Things were too thick for him.

Leunette had invented a limerick. She began to pass it from one gentleman to another:

A roaring old rip from New York
Wore a bustle she'd carved out of cork;
When struck by a bullet
This doughty old pullet
Just reamed out the lead with a fork.

Mason heard it—eventually. So did Jen. Bursts of laughter marked its dissemination. Mason cut in on the girl from the mountains. "I've ordered a car," he said.

"Car? Look, Mason, I'd rather not even dance with you."

"A car to take us back to town. You—and Mother—and me. Your aunt too, if she'll come."

Jen searched the dancers. People—some two hundred—had added themselves to the party. She saw Susannah dancing with Mr. Wakeden. They were twirling. "I don't think Susannah would leave. And I know I wouldn't."

"But—Jen!"

"This is my last appearance in society. I don't want to cut it short."

It grew to be midnight, one o'clock, and two. The band had warmed up to that pitch of enthusiasm which is known as barrel-house. Lesser personages in Maryland society were beginning to "crash" the goings-on. They drove up in their most conspicuous cars, and were admitted by dazed doormen. The ballroom was a crowded mass of spangled swing fanatics.

French windows that gave onto the lawn were open for the goings and comings of the multitude, and for ventilation. Three of the five men came through those windows. One came from the kitchen, driving the servants in the hall by the same method. At a word from the man nearest the band, the leader dropped his arms and the music tapered off. A silence fell upon the people—such a silence as must have accompanied the appearance of the Red Death at the famous masque.

"Everybody," said one of the men, adjusting the bandanna on his face with his unengaged hand, "line up along that wall! Just line up. Keep your hands high." One of his companions had yanked down a portière. "Start stripping off the stuff," the man went on, "and toss it out here on this curtain. Anybody reaching for a pocket—will catch it fast."

The crowd precipitated against one long wall of the room. The band rose in a united move—as if to make it plain that its combined hands were "reaching." Not many people hesitated; there was a cooling quality in the voice of the men, the flash in their eyes—and an inflexibility in the point of their automatics. Besides, there was precedent for this form of robbery; several of those present had been in the ballroom of a Manhattan host during a mass hold-up. Only one man—a young man who perhaps felt the South in his veins and who certainly felt the one-drink-too-many—ventured to demur. He stepped out of the packing throng and said hotly: "If this isn't some kind of a gag, I demand that you thugs—"

That was all he said. One of the guns snapped. The young man grunted and slipped to the floor. Somebody started to bend over him, and the man who had shot said coldly: "Reach, there!"

A silence followed. In it, sharp and frightening, was the gasp of the wounded reveler. Mason had observed that his mother was in the background. Now, with his hands high, he stepped out of the press of people a foot or so. Coolly, watching the gunman—who followed his move—he walked down until he stood directly in front of Jen. He smiled at her. "If you've got anything valuable, Jen, you better toss it out."

That was a signal for the women to begin stripping themselves of jewelry. It flashed in the air, missed the drape, skidded along the polished floor: bracelets, clips, earrings, a tiara. The gun of the leader jerked. "All right! Men forward!" The men came out. There was a crumbling bump as one of the ladies fainted. Nobody bent to help her. A bandit began to search the men—tossing wallets and rolls of bills into the glittering pile. Another started going through the handbags of the ladies.

Jen had stood quietly. This sudden and grim descent of terror had driven out of her mind all personal recognition of shame and rage; but as if the emotion left an effect, she found herself stupefied by a kind of incredulity. Other people might have a feeling

Jen looked back from the Pullman steps. She saw him coming.

of unreality—a locked-in-a-nightmare kind of consciousness. But Jen did not. She knew what was happening, and she could not believe it.

In Stumpneyville, no five men would dream of trying to hold up a hundred and fifty able-bodied males. It wouldn't be safe. If anybody did try, some citizens would probably be nicked, but the robbers would be lying dead. That was all she thought, at first. Her eyes went from white face to greenish face; the sickly resignation of the men increased her wrath. Then she remembered the big gun generally to be found in Susannah's handbag. It was probably there now. She glanced sidewise and saw the bulge. One of the thieves was still examining handbags. Jen touched Susannah with her fingers—under the pretense of undoing a piece of costume jewelry. The old lady turned. The girl winked.

Susannah fumbled with the catch on her bag. In doing so, she almost dropped it. Jen felt the gun rammed under the sash of her dress as her aunt bent to recover. The bandit took the bills Susannah had won at poker.

Servants were crying. The man who had been shot was cursing. Leunette was repeating in a high, shrill tone: "Don't move, anybody! Please don't move!" It was evident that she feared a move on the part of anyone would endanger herself.

The men in the center of the room poured the jewelry into a suitcase which had appeared at the right instant. They poured in the money too. They picked up coins and gems from the floor—like performers on amateur night who had been showered by the audience.

The leader spoke again, as the five men bunched together. "Now! You all just sit tight! We've got people covering this house with tommy-guns after we drive off! The wires are cut. In half an hour—you can do what you please. Anybody going outdoors before then, is likely to be killed."

Some of the bandits shoved their guns back in holsters. One of them picked up the suitcase. . . . Then Jen started shooting. There were five shots, as fast as a trigger can be pulled—five that rang in little more than a second. At the same time, or just before, she crashed her knees into the backs of Mason's knees, and pulled down hard on his shoulder so that he dropped to the floor. Afterward Mason said that she had done it to get him out of the line of any possible return fire. But she always insisted the maneuver had been made to disturb the attention and aim of anybody who tried to shoot.

One man did. His bullet whizzed into the wall over the heads of the people. Jen got him the second time. Her five shots knocked the gun out of the hand of the leader, raked four fingers of the man behind him, took the third man—who also had a gun—in the stomach, which made him toss his firearm, smashed the arm of the fourth and missed the fifth. She made up for her miss with her sixth shot—which broke a shoulder.

MASON did not try to get back on his feet. Without waiting to see what happened, he gathered his long legs under himself and hurtled toward the bandits—like a football player illegally clipping. Jimmy went into action at the same split instant, and three or four other guests were right behind them.

It was Mason, too, who presently tried the phone, found it silent, decided the story about the tommy-guns was a fake, and raced for the garage. No one shot at him. Twenty minutes later police cars were screaming into the drive. A red-eyed ambulance followed. Nobody killed. One guest from Virginia with a nasty flesh-wound that had barely missed his peritoneum. Five bandits, in varying stages of non-fatal disintegration.

Jen was sitting on the bar. The crowd around her was dense—and largely male. It had finished cheering. Glasses were being lifted. When they touched rims, many pairs of them gave forth a chittering sound. Ladies with white hair were still going about trying to get someone to fasten their necklaces. Men were still frowningly recounting their funds.

. . . It was about time! Mason saw her arms reaching out.

"Where," Jimmy called, ignoring the daughter of an ambassador who was trying to fasten his rent pocket with a safety-pin, "—where on earth did you learn to shoot like that?"

People wanted to know the answer. They were—for the most part—people who understood good shooting. They listened.

Susannah's voice broke the intent stillness. "Wasn't so good, in my opinion! She missed that little red-headed fellow, the first crack."

They laughed.

"Where?" Jimmy repeated.

Jen was flushing. "Oh—a fellow named Bart taught me. We used to throw acorns in the air, and—"

Somebody whistled.

Mrs. Marsfield pushed up to Jen's side. She, like everyone else, was pretty proud of Jen. She was also proud of Mason. And she was, perhaps, the coolest person present in those early moments that followed what came to be called the "battle." She wanted Jen's attainment of an indelible prestige to be absolute. She knew there was a way.

Some man was laughing, heartily. "She couldn't play golf! She couldn't play tennis! She couldn't ride. But nobody asked her if she could *shoot!*" He roared.

"Did you ever use," Mrs. Marsfield was close, and her voice was low—"a shotgun, Jen?"

The girl tried to wriggle down from the bar, as if it was not polite to address Mason's mother from such a posture. But the men wouldn't let her. "Why—of course!"

"Are you able to hit—birds, say, the way you can hit—people?"

"Why—'most anybody is handy with a shotgun that shoots much!" Jen was puzzled by such a question.

"I see. I mentioned it because there's going to be a trap- and skeet-shooting contest at the country club on Monday."

"What kind of birds are traps? And skeets?"

Mrs. Marsfield explained the clay pigeons. "You see," she added, "Leunette's won some events, and I thought—"

Jen's face was somber. Only the center of her eyes showed her mood—with a flicker of blue light. She said slowly: "Leunette's won some events—shooting?"

LEUNETTE understood the uses of applied psychology. She knew that the girl from the mountains had "topped" her, stopped the show, and blown them out of the back of the theater. Leunette did not appear for the tourney. But the Maryland gentry followed Jen about as if she were a fox and they the hounds. In a pack, they accompanied her to the skeet shoot. Jen did not have her rival to vie with, but she broke the local women's record in the morning—and then surpassed her morning's achievement in the afternoon.

They gave her a large engraved cup.

When Jen, Mason, his mother, and approximately fifty other persons—including two reporters—returned to the Longmort premises, they found that Leunette had decamped. On the following day the Marsfields, *mère et fils*, accompanied by the Tolfriths and a glittering trophy, embarked in the limousine for Manhattan. It was one of those dreamy rides through enchanted purple and smoky blue, which are invented to bring together the eyes, hands, and lips of the young.

However, Mason did not respond correctly to the atmosphere. For one thing, he was sitting on a jump-seat. For another, Jen fell asleep—or seemed to fall asleep. Just outside of a place called Metuchen, in New Jersey, they had a flat. The ladies descended. Mason helped to change the wheels. After that his hands were dirty. It was dark by that time. He had planned, rather audaciously, to beat the ladies back into the car so that Jen would be forced—or, at least be given the opportunity—to sit on his lap. His mother had sensed some such maneuver and tried to help by engaging Susannah in dialogue. But Mason, disappointed, with blackened hands, and a growing memory of the fact that every man in Maryland had been chasing his girl, fumbled the whole operation and found himself on the jump-seat again.

Such things happen to persons in love. To persons like Mason who are in love, they happen almost continuously. He had no way of knowing that Jen was lying back in her seat stiffly, though with shut eyes, and saying to herself: "He can't like me! He can't! Or else—why doesn't he at least reach out and hold my hand? It's the nearest we've come to being alone together—ever—and he sits there like a darned piece of waxwork!"

Such situations are susceptible of deteriorating.

THE limousine drove up to the marquee of the hotel. A bellboy began to collect the Tolfrith luggage. Susannah thanked Mrs. Marsfield for a "perfectly scrumptious time" and automatically headed for the café. Mason escorted Jenneth to the elevators. For a moment there were no cars on hand, and the small foyer was empty. Mason wanted to seize the girl and tell her he was crazy about her; Jen had decided that, if he didn't, she would be really mad.

He didn't. He smiled weakly and said: "Well—"

She said: "Yes. Wasn't it nice?"

"I'm—I'm—glad you won that cup."

Jen looked at the cup. "Yes. So am I."

"I'll be—seeing you soon—I hope?"

She glanced at the elevator dials. One was sluicing down. He'd have to hurry. But she wasn't going to help. "Why—yes, I hope so. Of course, since I've had a vacation—I'll be busy—"

"Mmmm—" He realized that he'd run out of things to say. The idea that he might not see her soon—that he had chivvied himself out of it when he had expected to spend that very evening with her, and every other evening—was unbearable. His throat felt as rigid as glass. "I'll be—popping off, I suppose, sooner or later—on some expedition. South America, maybe—if my record is worthy of it—" It was intended to worry and soften her. It was a fearfully wrong attempt.

Jen bit her lip. The elevator hit bottom, and the gate slammed open. People came out. She ran into it.

Mason hurried back to the car. His mother peered at him.

"What are you looking at?"

"Looking to see if you have lipstick on your mouth. And you haven't. Mason, you're an idiot!"

He felt as if he had been stepped on and not quite killed. He sat down, slammed the door, and answered with misery: "I don't know what you're talking about! After all, I hardly know the girl! Only seen her a few times, really! I don't think she cares for me!"

Mrs. Marsfield did not answer. It would have been dangerous to her vasomotor system.

The limousine pushed through the evening.

Mason teetered into the feather purlieus of his private apartment and began to trample its carpet. He knew he was tired and out of sorts. He knew his courtship of Jenneth Narbey—alias Vivian Tolfrith—had out-collapsed the one-horse shay, and on the home stretch, at that! He tried to examine himself reasonably. There were things wrong with Jen, he decided. For one, she had become too sophisticated. Ever since he had encountered her in the bar of the hotel, he had worried about that; the hats and the dresses she wore, and the way she sat on a bar stool, were evidences of disintegration; she was no longer the sweet and pastoral creature of his dreams. For another thing, she certainly had shot those hold-up men in a mighty vindictive way!

For a third—Mason felt tired and inferior, and his old distaste for women welled up inside him.

HE slept little that night. The next morning, he tried to catalogue some eggs. He made mistakes. Toward noon, he was interrupted.

Howard, the butler, entered. He was carrying a phone. He plugged it in. "Miss Rosebelle," he said.

"Rosebelle?"

"She has called constantly for the past two days. Says it is very urgent."

"Tell her I'm sick! Tell her I've caught psittacosis! It's contagious!"

"I strongly urge you, sir. The tone of her voice grows more anxious with each call."

Mason seized the phone. "Hello?"

"Oh! Oh, Mason! You're back! Look! I want you to meet me in half an hour—"

"I won't meet you in half a week! Or half a year! The way I feel about women right now, I'd start a movement to repeal suffrage."

"I'm not *asking* you to meet me. I'm *telling* you to! On the corner of Broadway, by my street, is a pineapple-drink place and I'll wait for you there—"

"I do not want any pineapple drink."

"Listen, cluck! This is a simple case of life or death."

Mason was startled. "Whose?"

"Perhaps Mr. Parken's." And she hung up. . . .

He met Rosebelle at the pineapple stand. She was dressed in the autumn combination of regimental scarlet and black. She wore a large off-the-face hat with a scarlet crown and an enormous turned-up brim. Since her hair was heavy, curly and blue-black, it made a most striking outfit; indeed, the pineapple-drink place was three deep with customers, all men.

"Well?" said Mason.

"I want you to identify somebody." Rosebelle put a dime on the counter, dragged the tall student of avian affairs across the pavement, and pushed him into a cab.

"Where are we going?"

"We're going to get a drink called 'Panther Dew' at a place not far from here."

"Hunh?"

"You look," Rosebelle said, "as if you'd dieted your heart on bread and water. I expected something different. I was all set for the solemn chiming of wedding bells. What happened? Did the gun-play scare you?"

There was a concentration in his stare which swung it way over on the acid side. He said nothing.

She peered out of the window, presently. "We're here."

Mason paid the driver. Rosebelle handed to him a pair of large-lensed smoked glasses. "Put these on."

"I—"

"Keep moving!" said Rosebelle. She towed him down a flight of stairs and past a check-room girl who resembled a statue carved out of French pastry. They went into the dim penumbra of a cabaret, and sat at a table covered with a red-and-white checkered cloth. The decorations, Mason observed, were of a barnyard variety. An orchestra was playing—an orchestra with a fiddle, a piano, a bull fiddle, a banjo, a couple of mandolins, and various non-Carnegie-Hall percussion instruments, such as a barrel-top, a suitcase covered with sandpaper, jugs, a pair of dried cow-ribs, a saw, and a school bell. This ensemble, beating out heady jive, set Mason into jerky spasms of involuntary recollection.

In Our Next Issue:

Beginning

"MISS GRAY EYES"

A Novel of This Tremendous Moment

by BRISTOL S. D. GROSVENOR

Rosebelle pointed with a tilt of her hat: "Who's that guy? The one with the camp-fire-colored hair and the slit eyes—the one whamming the skillet?"

Mason gazed through the double umbrage of café atmosphere and smoked spectacles. He gave the musician what is known as a triple-take. "That's Bart!"

"And who is Bart?"

"A fellow from Stumpneyville."

"That's what I thought!" Rosebelle stared at Mason. "A glug I know who lines his pockets with hundred-dollar bills before he takes a girl out to get a sandwich, brought me here. This Bart heard I was in the pay of Parkens. He considers Parkens the cause of Jen's coming to New York—and consequently of her disappearance now. So he came and sat at our table. When I found that he was going to call on Parkie, I got worried," Rosebelle said.

Mason remembered a night in the mountain country, when Bart had sworn to come to New York and destroy the man who had sold his little Jen the idea of New York. He shivered slightly, inasmuch as he did not need evidence of the sincerity of the upland folk in the matter of assassination. Bart was in New York!

Rosebelle continued: "He asked if I knew anything about Jen—and I said no. Everybody seems to use me as a sort of rung in the ladder to her. Bart—especially after my friend and I had bought him about a gallon of Bourbon—really did seem dangerous! So I started phoning you."

"I see," said Mason. "Yes. I see."

AFTER lunch, Mason put Rosebelle into a cab. He offered her five dollars for her fare—which was generous; but she refused. "I won't be using gift-money after Tuesday a week," she said.

That surprised Mason. "No?"

The Brooklyn Latin smiled. "No. Can you keep a secret? I met a guy a little while ago—an advertising-copy writer. He makes seventy-five a week, and he lives in half of a two-family house in Connecticut. There's something about the way that guy looks at you—and something about the cowlick on the back of his head—" She sighed. "I'll keep working—while I have my figure—"

Mason frowned with incomprehension.

"We'll have babies, don't you suppose?" she clarified. "Dozens! Mother did. I mean—Mason, I'm going to marry this egg. I love him! I have lost my mind. Don't bother to tell me. But warn Parkie, will you? And the next time you see Jen, try the old Princeton stuff." The cab started. Rosebelle leaned out and yelled: "You know! Flying tackle."

He murmured his congratulations to a receding smile. . . .

Once again he sat in the Parkens reception-room.

He was, once more, in a familiar and debilitating mood. He swore it would be the last time. What had Rosebelle meant when she had told him to use the old Princeton stuff on Jenneth? And why hadn't Jen called him? Mason was in that state of indecision and self-pity which makes it possible for a swain to believe his inamorata should undertake the removal of any verdigris on the romance.

He was sitting there, sodden and self-pitying, bitter and reckless, when a different door opened and Jen walked into the reception-room. She was going at a rather fast pace, and she glanced toward him once through the elite but dimmish illumination. Glanced—and cut him dead. He shaped his lips to her name, but could muster no sound to go through the orifice. Jen went on out through the front doors.

"Cut me," he thought. "That—is the limit! I will stand a great deal—and maybe I've been a little clumsy; but I've done nothing to her that is wrong enough to deserve a snub like that. Rosebelle is right! She's primitive! The old Princeton stuff! She won't understand anything else."

Mason rose. Breathing invisible fire, he sauntered into the marble halls of the skyscraper. Jen was not there. She had caught an elevator. Mason put his thumb on a button and held it until a car stopped. He dropped to the main floor, deciding on the way that he'd come back later to warn Parkens a man might be intending to shoot him. He was in time to see Jen slamming a door of a cab. Mason, like a man in a detective-story, hopped on the running-board of another taxi and said: "Follow that car!"

The driver enjoyed the chase, but Mason did not. Across the grind and bobble of traffic, he could occasionally see the back of Jen's head. She was smoking a cigarette as coolly and assuredly as if her heart were not breaking. Women, Mason thought, are like that: even when their deepest feelings are engaged, they can flick an ash as unemotionally as Mata Hari.

The cab ahead stopped on West 52nd Street, and Mason knew that Jen was going into one of the restaurants or clubs there. For a late lunch, no doubt. It was three-twenty. An early cocktail, maybe. Dissipated! Or perhaps she was suffering. He hopped from the cab. He tossed a wadded bill to the driver, in the manner of a man throwing a fish to a seal. He went roving down the street toward the spot where Jen was trying to get at her change—an operation which requires, for all females, much upside-down juggling.

Mason applied the old Princeton stuff from a point off Jen's stern quarter. He took her just below the shoulders with a grip adequate for shinnying a tree. It knocked the pocketbook out of her hands. It almost knocked both of them off the curb. It would have been good for a five-yard loss, any day.

"I love you," he said hoarsely, and with the violence of an unmanned locomotive on a Western grade. "I'm nuts about you! I want to marry you! I'm going to! *Now!* This afternoon!" That last statement conflicted somewhat with the laws of the State of New York, but it was earnest.

Jen tore herself loose. Her face was white. Her eyes squinted. Her response was dynamic. She doubled her fist and took Mason squarely on the jaw with the full weight of a hundred and nineteen pounds. He was injured, and he recoiled. He saw a blizzard of falling sparks, and he felt pain. His upper centers of thought were fogged over. But that cerebral condition only gave freer play to the elemental regions of the brain. Fired with something beyond agony or ecstasy, he grabbed her again.

Her cab-driver had hopped out and poured around his engine-hood. He now bawled at Mason: "Say! What's the idea?"

Mason shouted back, "You keep out of this!"—which was a signal for the hackman to bore in.

Mason was tall, lean and powerful in a Lincolnian way. The driver was squat, broad, and powerful too. But Mason was filled with a kind of vulcanism, the product of frustration, misery and humiliation. He let go of Jen. He turned to his adversary, who was a better boxer. He ignored the rights and lefts which were performing non-cosmetic surgery on his face. He set his feet, swung, and put the driver in the gutter just as a second driver—the one to whom Mason had thrown the dollar—charged into the foray with a monkey-wrench.

The wrench made a cut, and later a giant lump, on Mason's head. But Mason was in no mood to be knocked unconscious. He merely turned around, a shade glassily, and started toward the driver in the manner of an enraged orang-utan—with his long arms out and his eyes wary. The driver backed up, but Mason caught his hand. He twisted the wrench out of it and began shaking the man like a rat.

FOR all such scenes, in Manhattan, there is a cop, who appears from the earth, like one of Jason's men. This cop had been standing down the street a half-block, talking to a pretty widow who was feeding sugar to his horse. Now, however, he ran up with the formal query: "What's going on here?"

Mason dropped the hackman and faced the police officer, who was big and rugged. He stepped back and glanced at the girl.

"Insane, I guess," she said. "He—grabbed me. I never saw him before."

"Oh," said the officer. "That so?"

Mason would undoubtedly have mopped up the street with the cop—nightstick and all. He was—literally—insane, though only temporarily. He had never been in a public fracas before. And the fact that he had laid out two cab-drivers was beginning to please him. A cop, for the next victim, would be about right. After that, he'd be ready for what came: reserves, emergency squads, marines, a lynching mob. But Jen's words took all the steam and sizzle out of him. Because it wasn't the girl's voice, and the girl spoke with a marked foreign accent. Mason realized that he had pursued and publicly assailed the long-missing Sigrid.

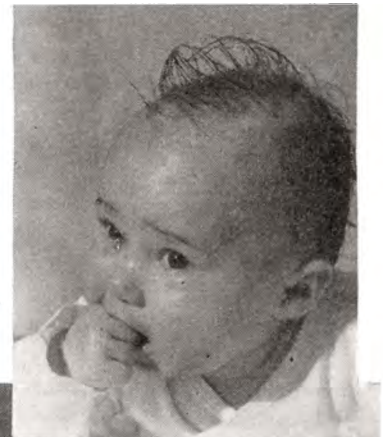
The realization interfered with his de- *(Please turn to page 84)*

OUR *Prize-Winning*

THE EXPERT SELECTS . . .

EVEN our expert, Mr. Ruzzie Green, chooses four pictures this month instead of three. That he is just an old softie at heart is proved by his including two—count them—baby pictures. Mr. Green feels the photograph of the skier is superior to the laymen's choice. And all eight are by men!

First prize of twenty-five dollars to Dr. Irving B. Ellis, of Piedmont, California, for this striking action shot.



Honorable mention and ten dollars to Mr. Joe May, of Hayward, California.

And another ten dollars and honorable mention to Mr. Earl Murray, of Cordele, Georgia.

Honorable mention and ten dollars also to Mr. Robert Earl Chan, of Atlanta, Georgia, for this knight of the bath.

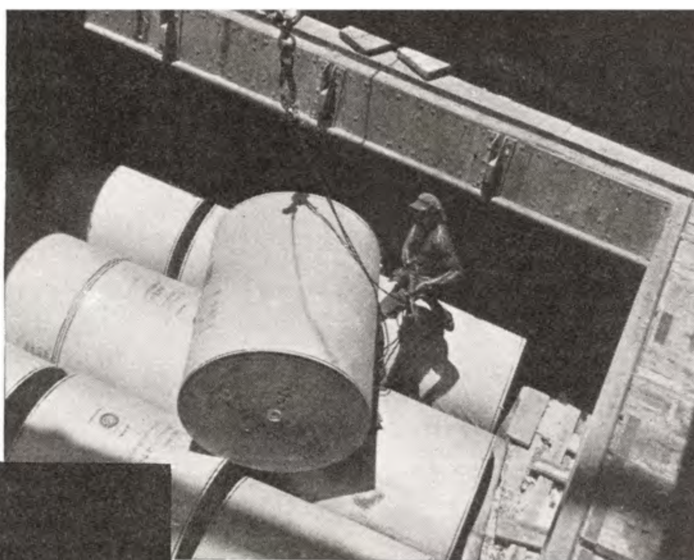
SNAPSHOTS *of the* MONTH

THE LAYMEN SELECT . . .

THE laymen crash through again with four pictures. They liked the design in the shot of loading rolls of paper, and of course they couldn't resist the spaniel. For rules of this contest see previous issues.

First prize of twenty-five dollars to Mr. Robert C. Hill, of Brooklyn, New York, for this 1941 Whistler's Mother.

Honorable mention and ten dollars to Mr. Henry L. Hodges, of New York City.



Honorable mention and ten dollars, too, to Dr. Selby Cramer, of Carrollton, Georgia.

And another honorable mention and ten dollars to Mr. E. R. Dixon, of Tyler, Texas.

The winner of Redbook's Award of 1940 for the best short story written by an undergraduate and published in a college magazine.

by

ANDY LOGAN

Reprinted from "The Swarthmore Dodo"

The VISIT

"NED'S people live there," said Jane, suddenly lifting her hand from the wheel and waving widely at two figures moving about one of the fields they passed. "It's a big farm. I don't know anybody who's got more land or who's better thought of around here than Mr. Kleith."

"Really?" said Dan. He crooked his elbow in the air and groped about in his pocket for cigarettes. "Have one?"

"Oh, no!" She looked at him quickly and turned away. He liked the look of her hands as they drove. They were small and brown and full of strength. Funny, he thought, she used to smoke.

"Did you have an interesting time in China?" asked Jane politely.

You might call it that, thought Dan. His best friend had had his head blown off. And one day when he came home from a walk around the block, his trouser-cuffs were reddish brown around the edges. He remembered sending the suit to the cleaners.

"Rather interesting," he said. "You're very nice to let me spend the night like this."

"Don't be silly," said Jane, slowing up to let a hen run squawking to the other side of the road. "There was no sense in your making that long trip down from New York just for a couple of hours. We've got loads of room."

They were quiet for a while, driving through the autumn sunshine, past a church and some gray farmhouses and a big, raw brick school building which Jane proudly called to his attention.

"The county's had to work hard for that," she said. "Ned's father made speeches, and Ned too, and we finally got it. It's only been finished since August."

Dan had forgotten that there were things like schools which were important and which people fought for and took pride in. He looked back at the ugly building with its red clay front yard. Probably Jane belonged to the Parents' Association. He imagined her presiding at meetings: "I think Mrs. Thatcher is quite right. I think the third-grade room needs curtains very badly."

"Are the children—how old are they now, Jane?"

She glanced at him briefly, disapproval hovering around her mouth.

"Margaret was seven in July, Dan, and Hugh will be six next March."

"Oh." He had thought of them as older. He had thought of them, he realized suddenly, as somewhere between ten and twelve, with long brown legs and old faces. He seemed to have been away so long.

"You never call them Maggie and the General any more?" he asked, after a moment.

"Oh, no," said Jane, "—just Hugh and Margaret. Ned doesn't care much for nicknames," she added as she turned into the driveway.

The low bulk of the house lay awkwardly among the brown autumn leaves like a thin, sleeping hound. It was an undistinguished old place, but Dan saw nothing pathetic about it, as he had half-expected. "I wouldn't be ashamed to point it out to anyone," he thought; and he had a sudden picture of himself driving along with a carful of men in top hats, and saying casually: "Oh, by the way, that white house there is where my wife and children live. My former wife, I mean," he would have to add, and that would be awkward. He was glad it was only a silly idea.

After Jane had taken him upstairs, and he had set his bag and the presents for the children on the floor by the bed, and washed his hands in the dark bathroom, Dan went out into the garden where his son and daughter were playing, and was formally introduced to them. Their clothes were rather nicer now, he suspected, than everyday; there was something odd about a little boy playing around a farmyard garden in pleated linen. "I'd put you in khaki shorts if you were mine," thought Dan, and then stopped suddenly, because it was such a strange thing to say.

After a while Jane went back into the house to see about supper, and the two children stood there before him in the late afternoon sun—a little girl with bows in her hair, and a thin-nosed boy; and they kicked the garden dirt with their shining shoes and called him "Father," but there was no conviction in their voices.

"Do you go to school?" he asked them politely.

"I do," said Margaret. "But Hugh's too little. You have to be six."

He tried to tell them about China and Spain and Ethiopia, but they were too young to be very interested. They showed him their playhouse, ostentatiously, and as if it had been suggested beforehand.

"Did you come on a boat?" Margaret wanted to know, and he told them about that for a while, but soon they were making little bored jabs at each other and quarreling sharply. He stood watching them uncomfortably, like a stage father who couldn't remember his lines.

"Are you really our papa?" Hugh asked him when the dinner bell had rung at last, and they were hurrying up the walk toward the house.

"I'm glad too," said Dan, looking at Ned. . . . He wanted to make her meet his eyes, to show him the truth.

Illustrated by RALPH ILIGAN

"Of course," said Dan, but he had a quick, guilty feeling that he was lying.

It was just before dinner that Dan met Jane's husband. As he climbed up the steps to the back porch, he saw Ned and Jane standing there together, talking in low voices. Jane was running the dark opal ring up and down her finger, and Dan knew she was upset about something. Ned stood beside her and smiled quietly at Dan. He was in overalls. Dan saw the way the children were dressed, and how careful they had been in the garden about how they played and where they sat. He remembered them wiping off their shoes with light fingers before coming up to dinner. He understood why Jane's face was flushed. She had wanted him to see them all at their best, and here was Ned in dirty, manure-green overalls.

"How do you do," said Ned. "I'm Ned Kleith. Glad to have you here." There was no embarrassment in his face as he looked at Dan, or in his large hand as it shook Dan's strongly. "Sorry I'm dressed this way, but my prize mare just foaled, and I had to see to her." Dan saw that the tip of the man's red nose was peeling a little. He smiled back uneasily.

The children, who had been standing shyly in the background, ran forward now and threw their arms around Ned, jerking at his sleeves and grabbing his knees and looking up at him happily.

"Is't a big colt, Ned?"

"Is't black, Ned?"

"How soon can I ride it—ever, maybe?"

"We'd have come down to see it, Ned, if—"

"Hugh," said Jane, "come, let me wash your face."

DINNER was good, although the hired girl served it awkwardly, and a little resentfully. Dan suspected that on ordinary evenings she sat down to eat with the family. He ate briskly as the others did, and tried to be intelligent about seed and threshing and the breeding of cattle. The children's eyes were big and watchful.

Once Jane broke in sharply: "Let's not talk about farming all the time, Ned." She turned her spoon over and over on the table as she spoke. She didn't look at either of them.

"O.K., honey." And Ned smacked Hugh's hand lightly as it darted out for a second chicken-leg. "Wait till you're asked, son! You know," he said to Dan, "we had more trouble getting that child to eat for a while, and then all at once about a year ago he turned hollow to his toes. Awfully funny thing." Ned reached over and pulled the little boy's hair playfully.

"Margaret," said Jane, "please don't dunk your bread."

"But Ned does, Mother." *(Please turn to page 86)*

(Continued from page 15)
buildings, all told, with sixty-three men bunking in each. The barracks are heated by hot-air furnaces with thermostatic control. The bunks are not old-fashioned army cots, but single iron beds with springs. Every soldier is given a pillow and four or five blankets or comforters. And it will give the old-timers a wry chuckle to hear that he receives, also, pillow-cases and sheets, which he does not even have to launder. He has his own locker for the storing of personal gear—civilian clothes, if he wants to wear them off-duty, photographs and books and private treasures of whatever sort.

The list of clothing issued to a recruit is too tediously long to print here. It is enough to say that the men have everything they could possibly need, in sufficient quantity and of durable quality.

Chow is certainly the most important single item in a soldier's life. He works hard, out of doors, and he is perpetually hungry. Old officers get a little worried when the men do not complain about their food. It is an unhealthy sign, given immortal recognition by Napoleon when he said: "What is the matter with my soldiers? They are not grumbling enough."

Mothers who lose sleep over the meals their sons are eating at camp may still their fears. If a boy writes home, "Gee, the grub is lousy. I'd give a million for just one of your meals," the mother should remember that this is the oldest *cliché* of filial affection. It's the nicest compliment Mother can get, and so she gets it sometimes.

In our army, troops mess by companies. That is to say, each company of about 230 men has its own kitchen and mess-hall, plans and prepares and serves its own meals. The job is in the hands of the mess officer, the mess sergeant, the company cook and his assistants. Every company makes up its own menu every day, and the list of raw foodstuffs that are necessary to prepare that menu. These foodstuffs must be "bought" from the post commissary—not with cash, but by entries into a bookkeeping system. The daily allowance for the feeding of a single soldier is about forty-one cents. An average company, therefore, can spend about ninety-four dollars a day on groceries—at prices established for each item by regulation.

In planning meals, the officer and sergeant and cook have three things in mind: (1) They must include certain items laid down by general orders to insure a balanced diet; (2) They must prepare enough of everything to fill every belly; (3) They must manage to save something out of that ninety-four dollars allowance for each day's supplies. For that saving goes into the greatly cherished company mess fund. Whenever it accumulates to a respectable figure, the men themselves decide what to do with it: a beer supper and smoker, a roast turkey dinner, or whatever the majority taste calls for.

The meals are served at tables, out of white plates and cups. Mess kits are used only in emergency or in the field. And here is a typical menu, the day's chow for one company at Fort Dix:

Breakfast: Oatmeal, fresh milk, French toast, syrup, butter, jam, coffee.

Dinner: Sliced tomatoes, fried beefsteak, fried onions, brown gravy, stewed kidney beans, boiled spinach, baked apples, Parker House rolls, bread, butter, coffee.

Supper: Hearts of celery, baked spareribs, baked sauerkraut, steamed rice, bread pudding, butter and tea.

(The company which served this, and plenty of it, incidentally saved $12.90 of its daily ration allowance for the mess fund.)

Every soldier in camp gets half a pint of milk a day and averages an egg a day, either boiled or used in desserts. And there are plenty of fruits. Pies and pastries are baked by the company cooks in their own ovens; but loaf bread, eight tons a day of it, is made at the post bakery.

All bakers, cooks and mess attendants must attend regular classes for instruction. The chief instructor has been at his job for seventeen years. The advantages of company mess are obvious. If the whole division were served the same rations, it would cost less, but there would be nobody to blame for failure except some brass hat at Division Headquarters. In the companies, the people directly responsible are Sergeant Bill and Lieutenant Jones. They are easy to approach, and for their own part, have one ear listening for complaints from morning until night. Mess officers are fiercely determined to have their men satisfied, and bulge with pride when they are.

Health is a mighty concern in the Army, and epidemics of disease the nightmare of the post command. It is an ancient axiom that the little bugs kill more men than the little bullets. The only serious epidemic Last Time was influenza, but that was not really an Army scourge. It swept the whole nation, and indeed the world. Otherwise, the health record Last Time was very remarkable.

Military doctors are determined that it shall be better this time. The men are inoculated upon arrival, of course, and vaccinated. Then they are held in quarantine for two weeks to make certain that none carry infectious disease into the main camp. The most present threat, always, in great gatherings of young men, is a sweep of the childhood diseases, mumps and measles, chicken-pox and pink-eye. The first victim of such an ailment is rushed off to quarantine at once.

As I write this, not a single death from disease has occurred among the eighteen thousand men at Fort Dix. Two boys were killed in motor accidents. And the incidence of venereal disease is far lower than the average would be among similar men in civilian life. There is a modern brick hospital at the Post, manned by good doctors and women nurses. Every morning the sick call is sounded, and the man with the slightest indisposition must report sick.

There are two very real ailments, however, which menace the new soldier's being: They are homesickness and boredom. Neither is regarded lightly by the officers, and strong remedies are employed to combat them.

The great specific, of course, is amusement, and the Army goes all out to keep its men amused. Every recruit is encouraged to bring small musical instruments to camp, from harmonicas to mandolins to saxophones. They are allowed to have radios in their quarters. And even the rawest buck private may keep a car (garaged outside the reservation) if he can convince his superiors that he is able to afford it.

For every three barracks buildings there is a "day room," a small building wherein the men may play cards or other table games, smoke and read and write those interminable letters which are so great a part of the soldier's life. For each regiment (forty buildings) there is a big recreation hall, with piano and ping-pong and racks of magazines, and even a floor big enough for a dance, if that can be arranged.

There is a post library full of fairly good books. Two moving-picture theaters are under construction, each with a thousand seats—the admission, twenty cents. Money has been appropriated for a minor edition of Madison Square Garden, gymnasium, sports arena, indoor track and perhaps skating rink. There are large playing-fields, and an impressive supply of balls and bats and sports uniforms on hand.

Officially appointed, and salaried, hostesses are in charge at the Hostess House, where boy may, indeed, meet girl. But this house will be succeeded, eventually, by the Post Service Club, a paradise for the enlisted men, with dance-hall, soda fountains, pool-tables and indoor games, as well as guest-rooms for visiting members of the soldiers' families. This club, under Army direction, will offer such entertainment and recreation as, Last Time, were provided by the Y.M.C.A., the Salvation Army, and similar welfare agencies. The latter will not be permitted to maintain huts or clubs on the reservation, though they are encouraged to set up recreation centers in near-by cities or towns.

For the dances, girls are brought in by buses, at Army expense, from the surrounding community. Arrangements are generally made with the personnel directors of large industrial establishments, who select a battalion or so of their feminine employes and ship them off to stomp with the men in uniform.

The provost marshal and his crew of *(Please turn to page 90)*

FAME *is the* SPUR

A Great Novel By

HOWARD SPRING

who wrote "My Son, My Son!"

The Story Thus Far:

"SHAWCROSS of Peterloo," the newspapers called him when he was campaigning for the newly formed Labor Party and a seat in Parliament. For one vivid memory of his studious and poverty-stricken boyhood still dominated him: In his step-father Gordon Stansfield's simple little Manchester house he had shared a bedroom with the Old Warrior—so called because of the tragedy of his youth: with his sweetheart Emma he had been one of the crowd attacked by the King's troops at the Manchester riot known later as Peterloo, and when a dragoon had cut Emma down with his saber, the Old Warrior—young then—had wrested the saber away and had taken vengeance. He still cherished the weapon; to young John Hamer Shawcross also it became a symbol of the ancient warfare between oppressed and oppressor. And when the old man died, young Shawcross inherited the saber—and the deep feeling that it represented.

The years passed. . . . Gordon Stansfield died, and John Hamer Shawcross earned his way as buyer for a greengrocer. Then a tiny bequest from his friend Suddaby the old bookstore man started him out to see the world. It was three years later that he came back a man grown to his mother Ellen and to his sweetheart Ann Artingstall, daughter of the wealthiest man in the neighborhood. Along with his friend Arnold Ryerson, he went into politics then, into the building-up of the just-formed Labor Party; and several years later, he won a seat in the House of Commons—several years, indeed, after he and Ann had been married.

They had one child only, their son Charles. After his babyhood Ann became interested in the Woman's Suffrage movement, and fought for it and went to jail for it along with her friend Pen Muff, now Arnold's wife. But Labor opposed Suffrage, and Ann's work somewhat estranged her from Hamer. . . .

The war came, and repeated tragedy. For Charles lost a leg on the field and returned home embittered. And his marriage to Arnold's daughter Alice only intensified his sullen radicalism. . . . Ann died of tuberculosis after a lingering illness. Pen Ryerson suffered blindness in an explosion at the munitions factory where she worked, and later was killed in a street accident. . . . As Hamer Shawcross returned from this last funeral, he knew that his youth was buried also. *(The story continues in detail:)*

TWO cities had conferred their freedom upon Hamer; he was an LL.D of one university, Rector of another, D.Litt. of a third. He was a Privy Councilor, His Majesty's Minister for the Coördination of Internal Affairs in the second Labor government; and he was sixty-five years of age. It was December 20, 1929, his birthday, and he had asked the Earl and Countess of Lostwithiel to dinner. He had also asked Charles and Alice. Unlike the Earl and Countess, they had found some reason to decline; but Lizzie Lightowler would be there, and a foreign ambassador with his wife, and a much-talked-of sculptor with a lovely girl who probably was not his wife. Eight, Hamer thought, looking in at the dining-room, was the perfect number for an intimate dinner.

The room had never looked so enchanting. He had been in Half Moon Street for some years now, and had acquired some lovely things.

He had found the long refectory table in a Yorkshire farmhouse. Generations of bucolic elbows had brought its surface to the sheen of satin. He looked with satisfaction at the firelight catching its edges, shining in the deep hollows worn in the rungs. It would be a shame to put a cloth on such a table. He walked round it, touching here and there the silver that had been laid out, rearranging with a sure touch the flowers that had come round from Shepherd Market. In each of the finger-bowls on the sideboard floated a few petals of syringa. The china waiting for use was a reproduction of the Copenhagen Flora Danica set.

IT was the first time Hamer had "entertained" in a grand way. But he was easy in his mind, waiting there for Lizzie, who would be with him to receive the guests. He had chosen his company well. The sculptor was a witty talker who was anxious to sculpture Hamer's head, and the girl with him was desirable for her startling decorative value. Hamer liked the company of handsome women. The ambassador was a sardonic fellow with no illusions. His conversation was salted and astringent.

Lostwithiel was the dubious member of the party. Hamer was without self-deceit where Lostwithiel was concerned. The man tolerated without liking him. It was Lady Lostwithiel who seemed not only willing but almost anxious to cultivate him. "She wants to cut your claws, Chief. That's the long and short of it," Jimmy Newboult dared to say one day; and in his heart Hamer was prepared to admit that perhaps in the beginning that had been part of her intention. But now, he believed, she had some personal feeling for him; and he didn't care who knew that he liked her. She had retained her beauty; she had deepened her humanity; her voice had lovely tones. He wouldn't have minded, he sometimes extravagantly thought, if the tones of Lettice Lostwithiel's voice tolled off his passing like the silvery bell on his study clock.

Lostwithiel was another matter. The years had changed the ineffective youth of St. Swithin's into a small, dry, formidable man, profoundly versed in all the chicane and trickery of government. If to meet these Labor chaps helped, if it would do anything to keep them quiet and docile, then so far Lettice had better have her head. That was his view, and Hamer knew it. . . .

He led Lady Lostwithiel into the dining-room. She sat at his right hand, the ambassador's wife at his left. Beyond the am-

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bassadress sat Lostwithiel, who screwed a glass into his eye, gave a searching sardonic glance at a Labor interior; then, as it were with a startled jerk of the eyebrows, caused the glass to drop abruptly.

"Didn't Keir Hardie toast his own bannocks, Shawcross?" he asked loudly.

"He did," said Hamer suavely. "Would you call that a virtue?"

"In a way—yes."

"Well," Hamer smiled, "it's open, I suppose, to any one of us to practice it?"

And he turned with contentment to Lady Lostwithiel.

"I'm going to be a nuisance to you," she said. "I expect a lot of your friends ask you to read their books?"

"As a matter of fact, no. I'm not a man of letters, you know," he said, believing that firmly. "I've written a lot in my time, but it's all been propaganda stuff. Why should people want my opinion about books?"

"You are too modest, though of course this is the only matter on which you have any modesty at all. You are as vain as Lucifer, and look it."

"Lucifer wasn't vain," he corrected. "He was proud."

"Have it how you like," she said. "But I do want you to read a little book I've written. You remember old Buck?"

Did he remember old Buck! The waiter's black sleeve came across his shoulder, and he watched the rosy wine rising in the glass. So rosy, so tinged with reminiscent sentiment, was the thought of old Buck now—a strange, ogreish, legendary creature out of a tale read in youth, a tale that had caused a shudder but now was powerless to affright. He raised the glass to his lips and sipped the wine. "Yes," he said. "What a man! They don't breed 'em now."

"He was obsessed," said Lettice, "with the idea that all he stood for couldn't last. It was on his mind the night he died. I wrapped him up before he went out for that idiotic drive, and he talked about it then. He said he hoped I'd have a son. We'd need men, he said. Well, I didn't have a son."

She sighed, and Hamer knew well enough what the sigh was for. But Lettice Lostwithiel was not one to parade things, and especially this thing. She went on: "I think Buck was right. It's all going—all that he knew. Half my friends seem to have estates in the market." She smiled. "You know, you Socialists have won."

Lostwithiel, who had heard the end of the conversation, turned to say: "Yes; a grand victory, Shawcross. You've handed over England's green and pleasant land to the jerry-builder. That's the Jerusalem you've built. You'll want that cornland and pasture one of these days. When the next war comes, it'll be a great help to have ten thousand stockbroker's clerks living on an estate like Castle Hereward."

"The next war, my friend," said Fuentavera, who could never resist the subject; and they were off again. Hamer turned once more to Lettice: "And your book is about all that?"

"Yes. It's just the story of my own childhood. I've tried to put on record what it was like to be born and brought up in the great houses. It was all rather lovely, you know, in its way. The hunting and shooting, the Christmas parties at places like Trentham, the speech-days at Eton, and the cricket-matches and races. All the boys and gels I knew—"

All the boys and gels I knew. That was it. That was the essence of any story, and the story was much the same, whether they were chimney-sweepers or golden lads and lasses.

"I'd love to read it," Hamer said. "Have you found a publisher?"

"No. I don't know anything about that sort of thing."

"Leave it to me," he said confidently.

"Oh, but I couldn't bother you. With all your work."

"I'll deal with it." He could find time for *that!*

PERHAPS Hamer was growing old. He was beginning to like his comfort. He could still work hard. He could read till three in the morning and be up at half-past seven, and feel none the worse. But he would have hated to get up if Pendleton had not brought his morning tea. From a hard day's work in Whitehall and the House of Commons, he could go on, fresh as paint, to speak after a dinner; but he wouldn't have liked the bother of putting his studs in his shirt. At the recent election he had worked in St. Swithin's with furious energy and had found time, too, to go and speak for Jimmy Newboult and other candidates. But he had taken Pendleton with him, to look after his creature comforts. "Remember Pen Muff wi' the cold tea for Arnold?" Jimmy asked with a grin. He slapped Hamer on the shoulder: a gesture few of Labor's rank and file would have used in those days. "Yon chap Pendleton's your cold-tea bearer. You used to have a sword-bearer; now you want a cup-bearer, a blanket-carrier, a foot-warmer."

Jimmy spoke jocularly, but Hamer was not misled. Jimmy was not his man in the full and dedicated sense that he once had been. He was prepared to criticize. He was on the lookout for sun-spots. He had gone to Pen's funeral at Cwmdulais. He had followed her body up the winding road on which Ap Rhondda and Richard Richards and Evan Hughes had preceded her. He had left the house in Half Moon Street soon afterward, and had never been quite the same since. Now Hamer had made him his Parliamentary private secretary. He loved the job and did it well. They were closer together again, and Jimmy said "Chief" with the old devoted intonation. But Hamer sensed the jealousy in his heart: the jealousy of a lover who fears, after many years, the straying of the beloved.

And so, as Hamer stood at the window looking into Half Moon Street on the morning after his dinner-party, he thought of Jimmy. He wondered what Jimmy would say of this car, now sliding to a standstill outside the house. It was not the most expensive car in the world, but it was a nice-looking thing, and a liveried chauffeur sat at the wheel. He had brought it round from the garage in a near-by mews. Over the garage was a small flat where the chauffeur lived. He was a good-looking boy. He couldn't be more than twenty-five—one of those public-school men who could not find a footing in this queer modern world. Jimmy would hate his accent.

The olive-green car stopped. Chesser—"Stinker" to old Wykehamists—leaped down from his seat, glad to be doing his first day's work, and opened the door. Chesser stood bolt upright holding the handle of the door, his face as grave as a carved marble of Apollo. Hamer came out bent double, stood upright, and said: "It's a lovely morning. You are permitted to smile." He himself smiled as he knew well how to, and Chesser obediently lighted up, with crinkles round his deep blue eyes. He preferred to smile, if only this damned world would let him. He had been haunted by the fear that this Labor chap might make him feel a worm, take it out of him. He looked at the tall figure disappearing into the office, and began to whistle. It *was* a lovely morning, now he had the heart to notice it. He took out a duster and rubbed a spot of dirt from the car.

IT did not take Hamer more than ten minutes to convey to his literary agent his enthusiasm for Lady Lostwithiel's book, and to suggest who should publish it. Then, eager to justify his car by being at Whitehall on time, he went briskly out of the office and ran down the stairs. There was a sharp turn halfway down, and it was there that he collided with Alice. She was coming up slowly and quietly. He heard nothing, and was fairly on top of her, spilling the papers she carried, before he could check himself.

"Oh, I'm sorry, most terribly sorry."

Then he recognized her. "My dear, I hope I did no damage."

"None at all." She seemed dour and cross, and bent to pick up the scattered papers.

"No. Let me do that. I'm sixty-five, but I can still touch my toes."

He gathered up the newspapers and a book which had fallen open among them. It was the sort of book which few people see: a proof copy, in paper covers. He saw printed across the top of the open page the title, "Fall to Your Prayers, Old Man," and here and there in the margin, written in Alice's bold thick unmistakable hand, and in the green ink she always used, were one or two corrections. Hamer looked up at Alice in surprise. "Hallo!" he said. "You turned author?"

He couldn't make out what was the matter with her. She was leaning against the angle of the stairs looking pale and distressed. She was not at all her usual self-possessed woman. He closed the book and handed it to her, and then his eye fell again on the title printed across the paper cover and on the author's name, Gabrielle Minto. For a moment this perplexed him; then he gave a surprised "Oh!" of complete realization. "Oh!" he said. "So that's it! I thought you looked a bit off your stroke, my dear. Are you terribly annoyed at being found out?"

She continued to lean against the wall, as though glad of its support. "It's not that," she said. "Charles has left me." . . .

Lizzie had gone for a walk. Alice was in Fleet Street. Charles was alone in the rooms they occupied on the first floor in North Street. He was so untidy that he might almost have been called ragged. The cuffs of his tweed jacket were whiskered, and his flannel trousers were spotted with grease. He wore no tie. His shirt was open at the collar. His finger-nails were dirty, and his face was not properly shaved. There had been a time when all this might have been written off as the affectation of a picturesque rebellious boy. But Charles was a boy no longer. He was thirty-two. He looked, and was, a careless, slipshod, unsuccessful man, angry with a world which had failed to see in him the character he imagined himself to be.

Angry, especially, at this moment, with Alice. He looked round the room, and everything in it screamed at him: Alice, Alice, Alice! The desk he wrote at, the beautiful modern furniture, the carpet on the floor, the pictures on the wall: Alice had bought them all.

He was beginning to loathe it all. He was beginning to see it as an Ibsenesque doll's house in which a woman had shut him up. He walked away from the window, turning that thought over in his mind. An amusing inversion: there might be a play in it. He had never tried a play. But the thought soon faded out of his mind, dissolving in his general misery like the pale blue smoke of the chimneys dissolving against the gray of the London sky.

Even the harping, carping, caviling articles that he supplied to some of the weeklies were beginning to be turned down. "Look here, old man," —this was Rossiter of *Intelligentsia*—"the disgruntled old sweat attitude is played out. The next war's too near for us to keep on the sympathetic stop for the sorrows of the last war's victims."

That was bad enough; but for Alice to back it up—that was too much! "There's something in it, my dear," she said. "I don't think anything worth while was ever created out of mere resentment."

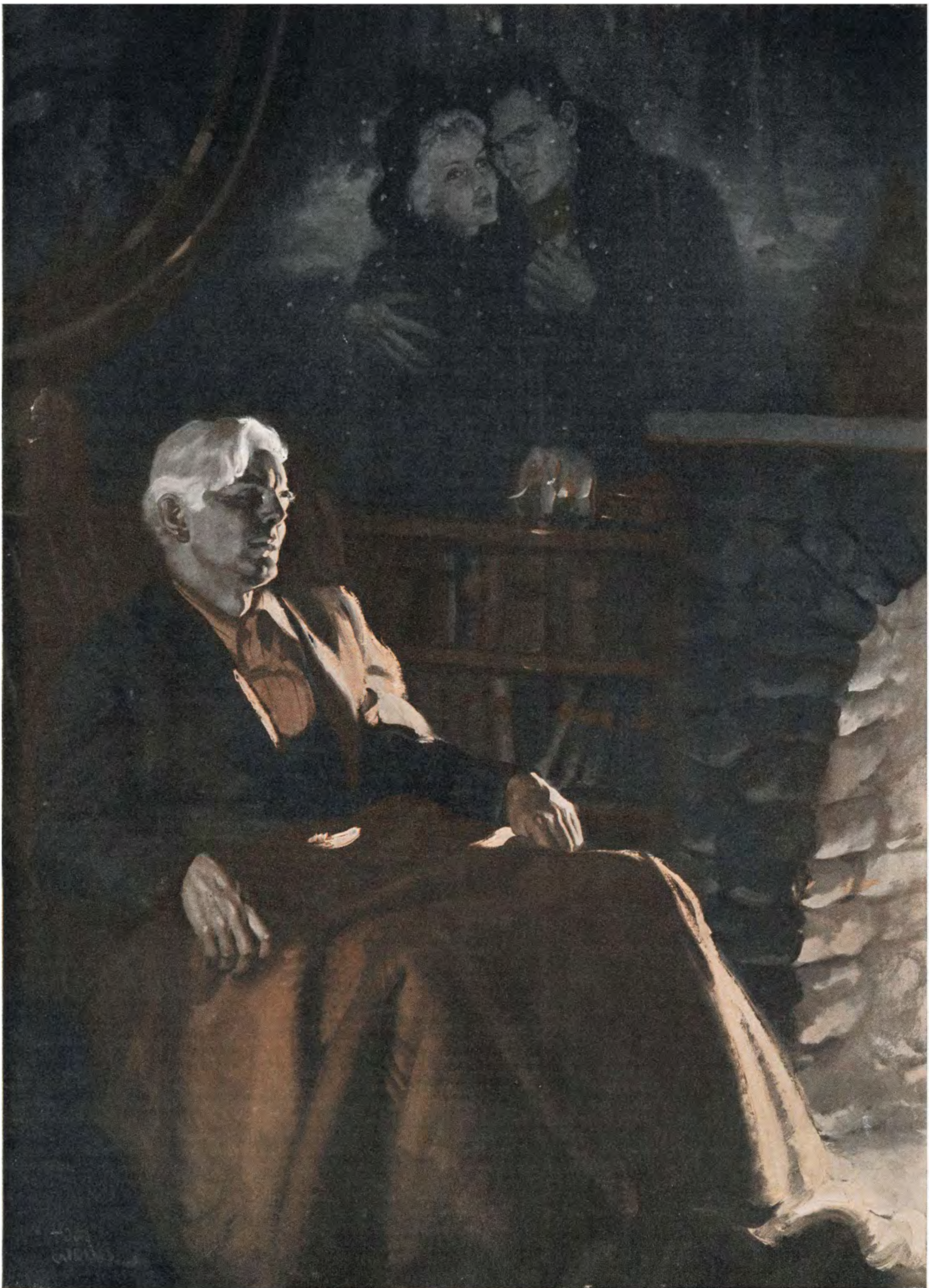
"But damn it all, Alice!" he burst out. "Don't you resent the world you're living in? Don't you think ninety people in a hundred are treated like hog-wash for fat swine? Don't you want to bring it all down with a crash?"

She looked at his pale thin weary face—the face of this man so utterly dependent on her—and her heart was wrung with compassion. "Yes," she said, "you're quite right about all that; but there is also this: I enjoy every minute of my life." She reached across the table and laid a hand on his. "I wish you could do that, Charles. When you've got a long, long journey in front of you, what's the sense of storing up your joy till you get to the end of it? You may never get there. So try to get some fun out of the road."

He pulled away his hand impatiently and stood up. "My God! Quite a little philosopher!" he said with a sour grin.

She was hurt by that. "It was a philosophy good enough

"The world is face to face with reality; it is time to make an end of romantic gestures." And she hurled the saber, far out.



If his dreams were dead, here at least he could be near their ghosts—
here in this little room to which he had come with Ann, so long ago.

for my mother," she said. "Her life was no easier than yours, but she enjoyed the fight. Even when she was blind, up to the very end, she was happy.

"Well, I'm not," said Charles. "I'm sick of my spoon-fed bloody existence." He got up, strode to the window, and stood, hands in pocket, glowering down into the street.

Alice looked sorrowfully at the bowed head, the narrow shoulders, silhouetted against the pale diaphanous net of the curtain. She could feel the tears behind her eyelids, but she would not let them fall. She knew well enough what was the matter with Charles. His love had turned to bitterness because it could not pour out the gifts of its own generosity. He would have been happy had he been able to do for her all that she had done for him. She was oppressed with a sense of crisis as she watched the defeated figure slouched brokenly against the pearly-gray light. Suddenly he turned round and demanded in a high excited voice: "And where does the money come from? That's what I'd like to know? *I* know what one gets paid for your sort of journalism, and it doesn't buy all this." He waved his hand round the room. "You're seeing a damned sight more than I like of Pappenheimer. The place reeks of his hair-oil."

She felt as though he had stabbed her. She understood the desperation and despair that had led him to make a suggestion so horrible. But all the same, she wondered if she could ever forgive him. She stared at him stonily, saying nothing. He came round the table and seized her wrist in his cold bony clutch. She had never seen him look so wolfish and ravening. "He's rich, isn't he?" he demanded. "He can give you everything. Some bloody Communist, Mr. Pappenheimer! I don't like him. I don't want to see him about the place any more—understand that? When I come in, I don't want to smell the trace of him. It makes me retch. He's—unsavory."

She could not be angry. She could only be overwhelmed by the desolation that was in her heart. She could only be numbed by sorrow that life had brought Charles to this. She got up and shook him off easily but kindly. She walked into the next room and took from her desk a little book in which she had kept a record of all the financial and other concerns of Gabrielle Minto. Then she put on her hat and coat. When she went back, he was standing again at the window. She put the book on the table and said: "Charles, I have to go out. I'd like you to examine this while I'm away."

He did not turn round; but when she was in the street, he craned his neck hungrily to catch a glimpse of the trim little figure walking along the pavement.

ALICE'S bookkeeping, like everything else about her, was clear and straightforward. It did not take Charles five minutes to discover all she wanted him to know. Since their marriage she had written eight novels. None of them was out of print. Even the first was still selling freely in cheap editions on the bookstalls. The most successful of them had sold nearly one hundred thousand copies in its most expensive edition. One way and another, she had never made less than between two and three thousand pounds a year since she began to write, and in some years more.

Charles put down the book and sat with his head in his hands, his temples throbbing, his hollow cheeks twitching with a *tic*. He couldn't understand her. She was not only rich: she was famous. It wasn't the sort of fame he would have liked for himself. Some carping, jealous reserve wouldn't allow him to admit that. But he did admit, sitting there twisting his nervous fingers into his hair, that he himself had desired above all things to be a famous man. Some fatal indecision, some native deficiency, had defeated him. And Alice all this time might have enjoyed the popular applause, the public acclaim, that he himself had savored—savored for a flashing hour to which, as to a bright oasis, he looked back with increasing gall and bitterness as he journeyed deeper and deeper into arid deserts of impotence and nonentity.

He couldn't understand her. And then he understood her with a sudden searing clarity that brought him to his feet with a curse. Damn her! She pitied him! She was hiding her light under a bushel lest it put him in eclipse. All his self-pity, all his resentment against a world which held him cheap, blazed and danced around him. He loathed the very clothes he wore, rags though they were. Alice's money had bought them. He had a small pension for the loss of his leg; he earned a guinea here and a guinea there. That was all. And the guineas were becoming fewer. His last novel had not found a publisher, and he had never tried another. A failure was fatal for him.

And what confronted him now was not a failure. It was Failure's very self, in all its grinning immensity and finality. Pitied! Pitied by Alice, as he had been, he swiftly persuaded himself, pitied by everybody: his father, Lizzie Lightowler, Pen, Arnold. He thought of the old woman Ellen, his grandmother. His vision of her was tinged with the sentimental rosy clouds of distance. She hadn't pitied him. Hers, he felt, was the only breast on which he had happily lain.

To spare his feelings, so that he should never have to come to her for money, Alice paid all she earned into an account opened in their joint names. He had only to go and draw what he wanted. But his pride made him keep such calls on the account down to a miserly sum. That was why he wore his clothes to rags. She understood that, and never urged him to buy new clothes.

Now he took out his check-book. *"Pay self £50."* It wasn't much. A cheap price for getting rid of a grave liability, he reflected bitterly. He put on the overcoat and hat, which he did not often wear, went out into the gray street, and limped slowly away.

A week later he had not returned; and it was with all the weariness and anxiety of that week in her face that Alice met Hamer on the stairway and said: "Charles has left me."

"COME with me to the Hut," Hamer said.

He and Alice had eaten dinner together in Half Moon Street. Usually she was self-reliant; there was almost a defiance about her; but leaning against the angle of the stairway, she seemed, for the first time in his knowledge, shaken and indeterminate. "You must come and have some dinner with me," he said. "You're looking like death, girl."

"I'm feeling like death," she admitted.

When Alice came to dinner, she looked better than she had done in the morning. He was glad to see that she had taken pains with her appearance. When he was alone, he often had dinner in his study, at a little table close up to the fire; and he did this now, so that Alice should feel cozy and at home. After they had eaten, he said: "Now, my dear, tell me what you've been doing today."

"Well, first of all, I went round to Fleet Street to blow the gaff on myself."

She produced an evening newspaper. There was her photograph —very attractive too, Hamer thought—and the identity of Gabrielle Minto at last revealed.

"It will be amusing to see what effect that has on my sales," she said. "The books are harmless, but seeing that they come from a notorious Communist candidate, the old ladies may turn sniffy. However, it doesn't matter, for I don't suppose I'll write any more of them. I'm going to Moscow."

"Moscow!"

"Yes, as a correspondent."

"Ah, Pappenheimer's job."

"That's it. I wish Charles had been as good a guesser as you are." Her face saddened. "I've known Pappenheimer a long time. He showed me everything and introduced me to everybody when I was in Moscow with Charles. He always called when he was over here on holiday. Now that he's resigned the job out there, he's been seeing me nearly every day, trying to persuade me to take it on. I didn't want it, so long as Charles had his little bits of work to keep him busy here in London."

"You'd have liked it, though?"

"I'd have jumped at it. To live in Moscow!"

"What a damned fool the boy is!" Hamer exploded.

"No, no!" she protested. "He's a child, but not a fool. It's I have been the fool. There must have been some way. . . . I must have gone wrong somewhere."

She looked up at him in a sad perplexity, as if out of his wisdom he might find the word to tell how she had lost her way. He shook his head. "I can't help you, my dear. You know, he left me, too. Did we both fail him, or did he fail us both?"

"The world failed him," she said. "It was never a good enough place for the likes of Charles."

"Don't blame the world too much," he advised her. "When I was young, I was as ready as you are to blame everything on to 'the world.' It's such an easy target till you come to shoot at it. Then you find, to your perplexity, that it isn't there to be shot at!"

"We seem to be a long way from me and Charles."

"That is what I am emphasizing. You think that a different sort of world would have made Charles a different sort of man. I am pointing out that I don't believe it. It has taken me a lifetime to find out that the sort of people I want to see prospering are to be found in every party and every walk of life, and that neither the party nor the walk of life has anything to do with the qualities I find admirable in them."

"It only means," she smiled, "that you've dawdled into the lazy tolerance of old age."

"I hope so."

"I'd like to hear you utter these sentiments on a Labor platform."

"You never will. I'm a politician to the marrow."

She looked at him with narrowed eyes, her blunt intelligent face sharpened by the scrutiny, as he stood before her, back to the fire. "I'm going to make a prophecy," she said. "You know as well as I do that this country can't go on as it's going on at present. You Labor people are having your second shot at pulling it out of the mess. You're not succeeding, and you will not succeed. Again, you know that as well as I do. The poor are becoming poorer. The unemployed are so many that they could destroy you by their very numbers if they took it into their heads. Something will have to be done about it, and within a very few years. I know what it will be. It will be the old patriotic act: sink your party differences, rally as one man to save the Empire. The Liberals and Tories will be only too ready to rush into that breach. What about Labor? I will tell you, and this is my prophecy: Labor will be smashed to pieces, like a barrel smashed by the waves against a rock. The Labor Party has come in your time. You saw its beginnings; you helped to make its beginnings—few men more so. And you will help to make its end. That also is my prophecy. You do not believe any more in the thing you made. You are going to destroy it, and before you are many years older, thousands of men and women will be cursing your name."

He was shocked. In his time he had heard many hard things said about him and to him, and he had gone his way with a smile. But now he did not smile. Her words disturbed him profoundly. He stood looking down at her with a frown, not answering for a long time. Then he said simply: "I'm sorry that you think that of me."

"What else can I think?" she demanded. "It screams out of every word you've just uttered, out of every action you've taken for years past. Look at that sword!" She pointed to the elegant cabinet containing the saber of Peterloo. "My father has often talked to me about it. He's told me how you once literally confronted tyranny with that sword in your hand and threatened to cut it down. Look at it now. Does it please you?"

"It's done its work."

"No, no! If you feel that, give the sword to me."

"And what will you do with it?" he smiled. "Whirl it round your head as you walk through the Moscow streets?"

"I'll tell you what I'll do with it," said Alice. "I'll return it to you if in five years' time my prophecy is not fulfilled. The empty case should help you. It will remind you how shocked you were, how unthinkable my suggestion was. Is that a bargain?"

"Yes."

Sir Thomas Hannaway leaped into the spotlight with the adroitness of which he was a master. It was the year in which his horse Darkie Cheap won the Derby; and as he led the beast in, with all the cameras snapping his rosy beaming face, the great thought sprang to his mind. Inevitably, the question came from the reporter: "How do you feel, Sir Thomas, on winning this classic event?"

Sir Thomas removed his gray top hat and said reverently: "I am delighted, but no credit is due to me. We must thank this superb animal, this fine jockey, and Almighty God."

The reporter gasped, and Sir Thomas continued: "For many years it has been my ambition to win this great race, and I have prayed that I might do so. I prayed during the race. God has answered my prayer."

The praying racehorse owner! God answers an Epsom prayer! Here was meat beyond the usual! But even now Sir Thomas had not done. "I shall express my thanks to God by giving two million pounds to charity!"

There! It was out, and Sir Thomas didn't know whether to be glad or to damn his folly. It had come over him like an inspiration. He thought of all he had heard about public benefactions, and he could not remember one case of two million pounds being given away in a single fling. More had been given piecemeal, but this gesture of his, he felt, would rock the country.

It did. Sir Thomas sprang to fame overnight. He was besieged by reporters seeking details of his colossal beneficence; and ten thousand charitable institutions, begging societies and widows of clergymen rang him up or wrote asking for an opportunity to heal the sick, redeem the oppressed, or give their sons a last chance in Kenya.

It gave him a *cachet* he felt he had lacked. He had bought it all, cash down over the counter; and so far from being abashed by that, he derived a satisfaction from it. When he opened his new house in Eaton Square, he was able to invite people he had never hoped to meet. Lostwithiel wasn't there. Tom would have liked him to come, and Lostwithiel himself was in a difficulty, because he was chancellor of a university that had pocketed close on a quarter of a million of Tom's money. He accepted the invitation on behalf of himself and Lady Lostwithiel, but on the day of the housewarming he said: "You go, m'dear. Tell the feller I've got a cold."

Tom had not hired footmen for the night. He had footmen of his own; and Hamer Shawcross heard one of them bellowing his name as he reached the head of the staircase. A vast mirror was behind Tom and his Polly as they stood there receiving their guests, and Hamer saw himself looming down upon them, overtopping hugely the fat waddling little woman, who had grown with the passing of the years absurdly like Victoria Regina in her last phase, and the rosy robin, puff-chested and big-footed, that was Sir Thomas Hannaway.

There was no need, Hamer reflected, as he passed on, for this footman to be shouting his name to Tom Hannaway. Didn't they know one another well enough? Tom, there on the landing, had given him a swift vulgar wink, as if to say: "A long way, this, from the dew on the lettuces. Remember?"

He remembered: that little shop in an Ancoats back street, the book propped open on an orange-crate upended, his efforts to pronounce the verbs in the French primer from Mr. Suddaby's bookshop: *J'ai, tu as, il a.*

What a game it had been! What a fight! And now it was all over. He realized with a swift intuition that it was all over. No more splendid fights, no more struggles, no more conquests. He was clogged with all the fame he could *(Please turn to page 95)*

Book Suggestions For March

by HARRY HANSEN

COURAGE and tenderness never before put on paper—the courage of the Mormon women who managed the households of Brigham Young's far-flung empire in the hard, tragic days—finds its recorder in Maurine Whipple, granddaughter of Mormon settlers, whose first novel, "The Giant Joshua," tells a story of this unknown phase of American beginnings. Here is the story of Clorinda, second wife of one of the Saints, a mixture of piety and gayety, eager to enjoy life, yet ready to serve where needed, a moving tale of wifehood and motherhood in the barren desert lands. . . .

How does China fight on against the Japanese invader? Eileen Bigland tells how, in a book that does not describe fighting at all. In "Into China" she writes about her day-to-day adventures along the Burma Road into the heart of that China which muddles on—filled with incompetent officials, impassable roads, inefficient aviators and courageous people—yet slowly, inexorably, moving to victory by absorbing its invaders. An extraordinary revelation of what the interior is like in war-time. . . .

The tremendous growth of interest in recorded music, classical and popular, makes "The Record Book" of David Hall a most useful and suggestive guide for people who pick their records carefully and preserve them. This book lists and describes compositions and gives a critical survey of musical periods and composers. . . .

Finally, "The White Cliffs," by Alice Duer Miller, that fine, poetic expression of confidence in England's cause, is available in a little book, and is being read all over the country.

"The Giant Joshua," by Maurine Whipple, Houghton, Mifflin, $2.75
"Into China," by Eileen Bigland, Macmillan, $3
"The Record Book," by David Hall, Smith & Durrell, $3.50
"The White Cliffs," by Alice Duer Miller, Coward-McCann, $1

This noted critic will briefly review in each issue the recently published book he deems the most interesting

The dog that lost his job

A ST. BERNARD'S JOB used to be to trudge through the snowdrifts with his friendly cask to rescue the weary traveler.

Today's St. Bernard sleeps by the fire, while weary travelers, half-frozen skaters, benumbed skiers and ordinary tired business men like you and me, hurry in out of the cold to a Four Roses Hot Toddy—the most magnificent Hot Toddy that ever warmed the cockles of your heart.

To make a Hot Toddy, such as *we're* talking about, you must, of course, have a bottle of Four Roses in the house. So, make certain you have—then follow these simple directions:

Recipe for the world's finest Hot Toddy:

Put a piece of sugar in the bottom of a glass and dissolve it with a little hot water. Add a twist of lemon peel (*bruise it gently*) . . . a piece of cinnamon . . . and 4 cloves. Now pour in a generous jigger of that matchless whiskey, Four Roses . . . fill glass with steaming hot water . . . carry it with loving care to your favorite chair before the fire . . . and relax!

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Frankfort Distilleries, Incorporated,
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LONDON BOLERO

(Continued from page 19)

"Yes."

"I thought so!" She called: "Liz! He is a perfessor!"

Heathway stood there for a considerable while just looking at her, and she endured his inspection quietly. He had to look up; she was taller than he by two inches or more. It was odd, he thought, for circumstance to put such extravagant beauty—such a luxury of it—in the frame of so humble a person. And yet, merely having that much beauty had lifted her above her heredity, whatever it was, and her environment, however commonplace it had been.

"You live near by?" she said at last, with a sudden blush of embarrassment at his continued stare.

"Not far. And you?"

Vera laughed. "I did live in Tilbury, Mister. But where I lived—aint! All the lot of us come from there. We use this shelter regular. We stay days—and nights when it's safe—in Lady Redmondon's house. It's been thrown open, you know."

"Yes. I know. As a matter of fact, I know Lady Redmondon."

Vera gasped. "Then you *are*—" She checked herself.

He wondered what she had been going to say. "Toff," maybe, or perhaps just, "rich."

"She's my aunt."

"You're not Lord—"

"No, no. My name's Heathway."

Vera began to tell him about the appointments in the Redmondon mansion. He was very familiar with them—from the least ottoman to the largest chandelier. But he did not interrupt her. He had never heard his aunt's belongings, or anybody's belongings, described with such rapture or such a reckless use of superlatives.

"All clear" sounded before Vera had finished. The grumbling debate about whether to go out again and chance it, or to stay below and eat sandwiches, occupied the attention of most of the people in the station. Heathway had known for some time what he was going to do, so it was hardly an impulse. "Vera, I'd like to take you up—to dinner."

She said: "Why not?" That phrase didn't show how much she had hoped he would go up the stairs with her, or how much she had feared that he would just tip his bowler and walk away alone.

IT was dusk outdoors. The underground kiosk had been slanted by the close hit, and there was a raw hole beside it in the pavement. Men scrambled in the débris, and hoses played on the building opposite the hole.

"When I'm not at the laboratory, not working," he began, rather apprehensively, "I have my meals prepared in my flat. There's a deep kitchen in the basement. A good cook. I mean—restaurants are slow and chancy, and at my diggings we'd be sure of a good meal—"

Vera walked several steps—walked with the ocelot undulance of her dance. "Why not?" she finally said again. . . .

She stood in the doorway with shining eyes, and she did not come in until she had absorbed every detail of the living-room. "It's so much like walking into a picture," she explained, "that I've got to get used to the idea of it first!"

Heathway phoned down their dinner order. He made drinks of gin and bitters. There was going to be chicken. He phoned down again, for a bottle of the Chateau Lafitte. She drank it with him slowly, admiring the yellow lights in her wineglass; she ate her food with a stiffly outstretched little finger, carefully not talking while she was chewing, and religiously wiping her mouth with the white napkin between bites. Like a child.

Afterward he poured small drinks of brandy in huge sniffers, the shape of tears. A waiter from the kitchens cleared away the dishes. He looked at Heathway once or twice with a curious mixture of excitement and approval.

"YOU won't believe it," Vera said by and by, "but I was never in a gentleman's rooms before."

Heathway's vague start was eloquent of surprise.

She looked down. "Not that it matters," she said, swallowing. "I know you are a gentleman. I'm of age. I can do as I please. I know what they think about my kind of dancer. But it's not true! It's often not true! Some of the girls are decent married, and some are—" She broke off and said sullenly: "When they couldn't no longer get a crowd even to a show at five in the afternoon, and I was dismissed,—temporarily, you might say, —I offered to go into the soldier entertainment. But I had to do my dance for some little blighter of an officer with a glass in his eye, and he wrote me down as unfit entertainment for men giving their lives to their country!"

"I can imagine," Heathway answered gravely, "that a man dying—for his country or any other reason—could hardly find a more welcome last glimpse of life on this miserable planet, than you dancing."

"Oh!" said Vera. "Gor! Wot a compliment!"

"And now I'm going to tell you something—something you probably won't believe."

"But I do believe you!"

"There's never been a girl—unchaperoned—in this flat before, either."

She started to chuckle. She prepared to ask him a question in the proper *genre* of riposte for such a statement. But she saw that what he had said and what he had implied by it were both facts. She cast her eyes down again and whispered: "You *are* kind of a bachelor, at that!"

"Confirmed."

"Then I'm hardly a proper person to break your rule. You should have—er—should have started out, with a duchess, perhaps—and surely not a variety girl—"

Heathway smiled. "I'm satisfied. If you are. More than satisfied. You see, what I was this morning—well, it blew up suddenly."

"I know. We've all done it—som'eres—in the last weeks."

"And when the pieces land—"

"—there'll still be a London—and better for all of us that's left, too! Me sitting here—wot's wrong with that? It's doing me as much good as water does flowers—and I'm not hurting you. No matter wot—I wouldn't hurt a person like you! Only—you didn't know that, and I didn't think I could ever be let to sit here. That's wot there is to—this." She gestured toward the black-covered windows, and the night beyond.

Heathway nodded. "I think you're right, Vera. And I think—probably—I should take you home. There'll be another raid any minute."

"Home?" she echoed, aghast. "I—I thought—"

Heathway stood up slowly. His face was very white. But his eyes were direct, smiling even. "Mathematicians," he said, as if to himself, "work things out slowly. But accurately. You haven't a home. Just—a place on the drawing-room floor in the house my aunt abandoned—"

"I'm that embarrassed—"

"You needn't be—ever. A woman as beautiful—should never be taught about —embarrassment. Funny I never thought of that before!"

She lay asleep on the divan in the living-room late that night. The guns were going all around, and Heathway sat quietly, watching her breathe. He was thinking of something—thinking of it slowly, as a mathematician should. He wanted to be sure it was right—sure it would make sense to somebody who did not exist. At last he went into his other room and unlocked the secret door in the wall-panel. He took out his mother's jewels rapidly—sticking the rings on his fingers and looping the necklaces over his wrists. He carried the flashing handfuls to his bureau and studied them. He chose the necklace with the sapphires. They would match her eyes. He put back the rest and held up the sapphires to his mother's portrait, feeling not at all foolish, until he realized that not feeling foolish was also a kind of foolishness.

He wrote a note to say that he would be back in the evening at eight, or before. He put the note and the jewels and a key on a chair beside her. Then he went downstairs and talked to the night man until dawn and the R.A.F. had chased from the sky the darkness of night and the stigmata that were its accompaniment. After that he walked to the park and sat down and looked at the swans for hours.

AT his club, during luncheon, they were not as amused as they had been on the day before. Heathway sat listening to them because he had nothing else to do. Velblein had sent over word that he would be out of town making arrangements, for the next twenty-four hours, and that his associates and assistants "jolly well needed a rest, anyway." The men at the club—men with titles, merchants, officers and top-ranking professionals—were worried. There had come rumors of a reverse here, and an inefficiency there. It made their tempers short.

One of them wheeled on Heathway. "Damn it, man, you've been in America! Why don't those blighters see what's happening to us? Why don't they do something about it?"

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Heathway undertook to defend a country he knew, for the most part, as the inside of another laboratory like his own. "Don't you think, Nest, that it's our fault? Our long willingness to coöperate with Hitler—or at least to let him run his show; or our beastly superiority for centuries? How do you think they feel about a country they had to whip, a hundred and fifty years ago, in order to be independent?"

"It's more than that, man! Here's the end of things! It's all up with us—whatever happens! Shot to pieces—business and Empire, win or lose—and we've got to win, anyway! But—America, if they helped, could make the winning easier, and some sort of restoration possible!"

"America," Heathway replied, staring at his port, "is like a superficial woman—rushing about and flirting and having fun. Until she thinks her home is threatened, she can't be bothered. Then she pulls herself together and fights like a tiger. Ask George the Fifth."

Somebody laughed.

Later on, as the same shadows lengthened across the same scene, Vilmy, the surgeon, stopped Heathway at the door.

"You—feeling all right?"

"Fine! Never better."

"I just wondered. You were acting rather—well, not peculiarly, but differently today. I mean—not like yourself."

Heathway grinned. That too was novel, for him. "Insouciant, would you say?"

"Exactly." The surgeon was startled. "You know it, eh?"

"I know it. Thanks for your concern, Vilmy. I'm in splendid shape."

VERA wasn't in his apartment. He waited until eight. Then, alarmed, he started on foot for his aunt's. There had been a few strays overhead in the late afternoon. A couple of close ones—big caliber. Heathway hurried, and an A.R.P. man blew his whistle at him, but he paid no attention.

His aunt's house was in smithereens—and burning. Firemen were spraying water over it from the tops of towers. Heathway barged through the crowd, asking for Vera. He didn't know her last name, even. But somebody—a man with blue eyes and a set, high-boned face—made quiet sense of his desperate inquiry. "Vera's shopping for wings," he said.

Absurdly, Heathway tried to interpret that expression, which he assumed was slang. It must mean, he thought, something about pilots. Maybe she'd flirted with one. Run off. . . . He felt sick.

"Angels' wings," said the man with delphinium eyes.

Heathway looked away then—at the brick and mortar, the black boards, the forked fire.

"You're the gent," the man went on. He came around in front of Heathway so he could look into his face. "She walked over here about four, to get her things. Precious few they were, too! The big one caught us all. I got out a window." He laughed with no mirth. "I was blown out. . . . She told us about you. Said you had a heart as big as the top of St. Peter's—and brains enough for the whole of Tilbury. Anyway—" He sighed.

"Anyway what?" Heathway's voice was short.

"The Germans won't get her. She was always afraid of that. Said she'd die first. Guess she did. The stones—kind of walled her in. Like a kiln. She roasted in there—with some others. She was calling. . . . Your name must be Heathway. Right?"

"Right."

The man fished in his pocket and handed to Heathway what the fire had left of the sapphires. "I'm her father." He looked hard at the scientist, and got back a look that was as unwavering. "I'm glad you're an Englishman," he said, and he spat on the ground, away from both of them. . . .

The sirens lay back in their beds of agony and were still. The tympani of dementia undertook an orchestration of night. London shook and turned red. Its jagged profile caught fire at torch-points, burned and toppled into the street. The air whistled, screamed, muttered. Sometimes, in august lapses, there came the heady hum of death's agents overhead.

Heathway stalked through it.

"Get inside!" a warden bellowed at him. "Worse is coming!"

Heathway shook his head.

"What's the matter? Balmy?"

The smaller man brushed off the firm, authoritative hand. "No. But this is my business. I've got the proper credentials for being where I choose—when I choose."

"No need of getting huffy about it! Man, the whole sky's a bloody steel foundry tonight!"

Heathway walked on.

In the north, a five-hundred-kilo lump sent thunder rolling across the pyre that was a city. It shook tiny bits from the sides of buildings. Heathway cleaned a speck from his eye—neatly, with the corner of his handkerchief. He walked on. A nearer one put up an advancing mountain of dust—dust that smelled old, musty, historical—dust that clouded the shattered place and muffled the human sounds in its midst, as if all past time were rising indignantly to veil the horror of the present. Heathway walked on.

IN the sky, alive and incandescent with bursts of gunfire, two red streams of flame made a Rosicrucian symbol as they passed each other. They faded. An ack-ack caught a big bomber with its full load, right over his head. It expanded in a spangled scintillance of death, mightier and more beautiful than any firework.

Do You Plan To Move Soon?

IF YOU do, please tell us about it early, for delay in advising the publisher may result in one or more issues being sent to your old address. The Post Office does not forward these magazines to the new address. In order to avoid loss of copies, it is necessary to send your change of address at least four weeks in advance. If that is impossible, advise us as soon as you know what your new address will be and we will make every effort to provide uninterrupted service. Write to Redbook Magazine, McCall Street, Dayton, Ohio. Be sure to give your old address as well as the new one.

The explosion came down to earth, making him stumble. Then there was a series of other blasts—great, tearing blasts that went half across the volcanic vault, as if they were reaching to rip down heaven itself. Heathway smiled softly. That was the new thing, the thing he'd helped Agley work out, nights, in his apartment. It was effective, too. . . . Burning bits that had been enemy floated down everywhere.

A stick began to break near by—goose-stepping down the street like a demon shod with iron, and striking sparks with every step. Heathway went into a doorway. He wondered how Richard the Lion-hearted was making out. He thought about civilization and science; he thought about the equations, still in his pocket. They might help to win back order. He took out the paper and scribbled Velblein's name and address on it. Underneath, he wrote: *"Please deliver. Very important."* Then he went on walking—in the symphony which bespoke his mood, which wrote it in fire.

They found him under an avalanche of broken glass, holding the note as if it were a flower.

CHARGE—CRUELTY

(Continued from page 45)

"What's the idea?" he demanded.

"Just lookin' for information," Andy replied, and I saw his hand drop into the pocket where he carried his gun. "If you won't give it, maybe your wife will."

Lute started to speak again, but checked himself. Frowning, he watched the deputy cross the porch and enter the house. We all waited expectantly, and in a moment Nettie Ranford came out, alone.

Nettie was past forty, but in spite of the years she had slaved for Lute, she carried herself like a much younger woman. She had a good figure, rather tall, and a way of holding her head that wrote pride all over her. I guessed she had often needed that pride to keep herself going. Her eyes were almost as black as Lute's; and when she looked at you, it left a tingle. Nettie was a handsome woman.

When she came down into the sunlight, everybody could see the bruise above her cheekbone. It was blue and puffy at the center, shading off into yellow along the edges. She had tried to cover it with powder, but it showed through.

"You wanted to see me, Sheriff?" she asked.

"Why, yes, Mrs. Ranford," Andy said smoothly. "Thank you for coming out. You see, Harlan Ames was shot yesterday, and we've been wondering where your husband was. He won't tell us. So we thought—" He broke off as if noticing her bruise for the first time. "I'm certainly sorry to see that bruise, ma'am! An accident?"

Somebody snickered, but Nettie gave no sign she had heard. She smiled at the Sheriff.

"It was an accident, I guess. Lute and I had a little tussle yesterday, and his hand slipped."

There was a widespread guffaw at this, and Andy gave Lute a sour glance before turning again to Nettie.

"Women stand too much from some men," he said. "Did he have any reason to slug you?"

How to knock your boss down ...and keep your job!

1. I was riding my bicycle home, first day of my new job, when who should I run smack-dab into but my new boss! I knocked him flat, skidded across the sidewalk, and went through the biggest plate-glass window in the drug-store!

2. Nobody was hurt much, but my bike was ruined. The boss was so mad he fired me on the spot. The druggist wanted to call the police . . . until I promised to pay for the window. Then he gave me a cup of coffee.

3. "One for you, sir?" he asked the boss. "No!" the boss snapped. "Never touch it! The caffein keeps me awake." So I piped up, timidly: "Have you tried Sanka Coffee? It's 97% caffein-free, and can't keep you awake."

4. "That's right," said the druggist. "I serve Sanka Coffee myself." The boss said: "In that case, I'll try a cup." He drank it. His face brightened some. "Hum—good!" he grunted. "But are you sure it's 97% caffein-free?"

5. I showed him, on a can of Sanka Coffee, where it said: "The Council on Foods of the American Medical Association says: 'Sanka Coffee is free from caffein effect and can be used when other coffee has been forbidden.' "

6. Next day I got a note from the boss. "Thanks for telling me about Sanka Coffee. It's wonderful, and lets me sleep. Come to work tomorrow . . . I can't lose a smart boy like you. P. S. I paid for the broken window."

SANKA COFFEE

REAL COFFEE . . . 97% CAFFEIN-FREE

Sanka Coffee is real coffee . . . all coffee . . . a blend of choice Central and South American coffees! "Drip" or "regular" grind.

TUNE IN . . . "WE, THE PEOPLE"—Tuesday evening. See your paper for time and station.

In every Whisky Drink your own taste will confirm this Judgment of Generations

Famous
OLD FORESTER
America's Guest Whisky
BROWN-FORMAN DISTILLERY COMPANY, INCORPORATED
At Louisville, In Kentucky.

"Well, we had an argument. I thought he should finish the kennels he's building, but he wanted to take the day off."

"Who won?"

"Oh, Lute, of course. He always does."

Andy nodded with satisfaction.

"So he took the day off, eh? Now tell us, if you don't mind, where he went and what he did."

Nettie turned slowly and looked at her husband, who had been watching her intently. She hesitated a moment, then lowered her eyes.

"I'm afraid I can't," she said.

"But listen, Mrs. Ranford! He won't hurt you while we're here; and once we put him where he belongs, your troubles will be over."

She shook her head without answering, and some of the tautness went out of Lute's face. At that moment Rod Simpson came around the house carrying a heavy scrapbook bound in yellow buckram. He called to me:

"I found it, Oren. Take a look!"

I met him halfway down the lawn, with Andy right behind me. While Rod held the book, I turned the pages and read the clippings that were pasted onto them. They were all divorce items.

What struck me was the way Nettie had chosen her cases. Though the people mixed up in them came from every part of the country and from every level of society, the complainant was always the wife, and her charge was always cruelty, either mental or physical or both. The earliest clippings went back nearly twenty years, and the most recent ones had been taken from the *Intelligencer* of the week before.

"Lord!" Andy muttered over my shoulder. "Imagine wanting a divorce for twenty years!"

"It's all right with me," I answered. "Wait till you see my next column!"

The three of us walked back to where Lute and Nettie were standing. The scrapbook seemed to amuse Lute, for his mouth drew upward at the corners. Nettie, however, was pale.

"Did you have to pry?" she asked.

"It's for your own good, ma'am," Andy explained. "If you help us get Lute out of the way, you won't need to keep a scrapbook."

"And don't forget cruelty, Mrs. Ranford," I added, "—mental and physical cruelty. I guess you know about that."

"Yes, I know about cruelty," she said, turning her head and looking at me. She asked: "Aren't you on the *Intelligencer?*"

"That's right," I told her. "I'm Oren C. Hannaby."

"I thought I'd seen you before. Are you so curious about my scrapbook?"

"I was, but it seems pretty clear now."

"There may be some points that you missed."

That burned me a little. I don't miss points.

"For instance?" I asked.

"Did you notice that those poor women—and they *were* poor women, no matter how much money or social position or movie glory they had—never mentioned the cruelty that hurt them most? Did you know that without that cruelty, they would never have thought about the card-playing or the drunkenness or any of the other things they told the judge?"

I figured I might as well lead her on. "All right," I said, "I missed that. What do you mean?"

"It's what women everywhere mean," she answered quietly. "None of those men"—she glanced at the scrapbook—"ever spoke a word of affection after they were married. I'm sure they didn't, because if they had, there wouldn't have been a divorce-suit."

Andy was getting restless. "That's right, Mrs. Ranford," he said, "and we all feel mighty sorry for you."

"Thank you, Sheriff," she said, giving him a queer smile. "Now, what was it you wanted to know?"

"Where your husband was yesterday afternoon."

"I can tell you about that."

There was a rustle of interest from the crowd, and a woman said: "Hush, Junior!" The next sound I heard was the snap of Lute's voice:

"Good God, Nettie! Do you mean you're going to?"

He stared at her, then turned and went rapidly toward the house. Andy reached for his gun. "Hold it, Lute!"

Lute never slackened his pace. "Go ahead and shoot your damned popgun!" he said.

Nettie grabbed the Sheriff's arm and held it down. "Don't do that," she said. "He isn't running away." She hung on till Lute had closed the door behind him.

Andy put the gun in his pocket. "Keep an eye on the windows, Rod," he said. "I don't want to be ambushed." Then, to Nettie: "We're listenin', ma'am."

She nodded and looked at the ground.

"I hope you won't find this tiresome, but it seems to be necessary. Yesterday was the twentieth anniversary of the afternoon Lute asked me to marry him. Every year since then, on the same day, Lute has knocked off work and walked up Sarridan Creek with me and asked me the same question he did that day. I have always given him the same answer. That is where he was, and I was, yesterday afternoon."

There was a shocked, incredulous silence, broken suddenly by a shrill voice that I recognized as belonging to Jimmy Gannett, Ike's kid.

"I seen 'em!" he yelled. "They was up by the old mill, a huggin' and a-kissin'!"

A wave of color spread over Nettie's cheeks, but she raised her eyes and glanced calmly at the wall of faces beyond the fence. Then she turned to Rod. "Please leave my scrapbook on the steps," she said. "Lute's man enough to be cross about all this, and I may want to count my blessings."

WELL, there you are. The county detectives found out Harlan had been shot by Pete Fishly. Pete was a cousin of Harlan's, and Harlan had been bothering his wife. He had asked her to come over to his place the afternoon he was killed, but she told Pete instead. I don't think they'll do much to Pete. . . . .

Andy was sore about the way things turned out. He said I made a fool out of him with that scrapbook. Maybe I did, but that didn't bother me as much as having a nice story blow up in my face. It was the best lead I ever had, but you can't make a column out of dull people like the Ranfords.

IT ALL BEGINS AGAIN

(Continued from page 43)

"The trouble was, you made too much too easily to begin with," said Mary. "Put notions in Vera's head."

"She's ambitious—for the children," said Clement hastily. "You mustn't blame her. She's had a difficult time."

"Pooh!" said Mary. "Pooh! If she is my own daughter, I know her. You never should have let her bully you out of your own profession. Why didn't you go on being an architect?"

"I'd be no better off if I had. They've had a bad time too."

"You might have enjoyed it."

"You know how it was, after those years in the army. I didn't want Vera to go on working; we wanted to settle down, raise a family."

"You were very handsome in your uniform." Mary chuckled. "Too bad you couldn't go on wearing it; you might have managed Vera."

Clement's teeth worried at the lower lip. Like a rabbit, thought Mary; she'd like to shake some spunk into him!

"No," he said. "You'd have to have all the bands playing, for a uniform to count. Weren't we the idealistic young fools? Making the world safe for democracy. Sounds pretty silly now, doesn't it? They'll have to think up better slogans for this generation. They know all the answers. Or worse, they know there aren't any answers." Clement slowed for construction signs; a laborer with a flag waved him into a bumpy detour.

"Half slave and half free," said Mary, as she jounced.

"What? I'm sorry—be out of this in a minute."

(A slogan good enough for her father. She'd never thought of it quite that way; her father as a boy, seeking a land where a man could be free, finding a slogan. . . . And his children after him.)

"There." Clement relaxed a little, having reached smooth pavement. "What was I saying? Oh, slogans. Well, this isn't our war. Let them have it out. Look, back in the seventies, when the Prussians got to Paris, you didn't worry about it, did you? It's this damned radio stuff, calling off the scores as if it was a game in the Yankee Stadium. Keeps us in a state of nerves."

Mary's head jerked forward; she slid down in her seat, her hands folded over her wide, soft body. When Clem got started in that light, monotonous voice, quotation marks humming like bees among his words— She would have said she did not sleep, but her mind dropped a few stitches, and picked up its knitting again as the car stopped.

"Here we are," said Clem, gently. "Feel tired?"

"He's nice," Mary thought, warmly. He meant well. His shoulder was a fulcrum, to pry herself out of the car; but as she stood up, her feet firmly on the grass, she brushed him away. "I can walk," she said. "I'm just stiff."

"Sitting so long." Clement was anxiously animated. "Good trip—not much over an hour. Old bus comes right along. Now where's Vera?"

Mary went slowly along the flagged walk to the front door, a gracious door

If she can't take a tip—she'll surely lose her job

Why risk offending? Use Mum every day. Be sure underarms are always fresh!

NANCY couldn't believe her eyes! Yet there, plain as day, was the note that told what her fellow workers thought.

Carelessness of this sort... the merest hint of underarm odor...can pull you down so quickly! That's why smart girls make a daily habit of Mum.

For Mum makes your daintiness sure. Just smooth it on and you're safe from underarm odor for a full day or evening. Never forget Mum for a single day, for even daily baths can't prevent risk of offending. Underarms always need Mum's sure protection.

More women use Mum than any other deodorant because:

MUM IS SPEEDY! Thirty seconds is all it takes to apply a touch of Mum.

MUM IS SURE! Without attempting to stop perspiration, Mum *prevents* underarm odor all day long.

MUM IS SAFE! Can't irritate your skin... can't harm clothes. Mum has the seal of approval of the American Institute of Laundering. Get a jar of Mum at your druggist's today. Use it every day... be sure you're always sweet.

SMART GIRLS MAKE A HABIT OF MUM!

TIME COUNTS WHEN I DRESS FOR THE OFFICE, AND MUM TAKES ONLY 30 SECONDS!

TO HERSELF: STEPPING OUT AGAIN WITH HARRY! I'M GETTING A RUSH... SINCE I LEARNED ABOUT MUM

MUM

BRISTOL-MYERS CO. NEW YORK, N.Y.

For Sanitary Napkins

More and more women who want no worries about daintiness are using Mum for this important purpose. And Mum is so gentle, so safe.

MUM

TAKES THE ODOR OUT OF PERSPIRATION

From the Confidential Notebook of Mr. F---

Muffed two important sales today. Had no pep — just couldn't get going! Wonder if I hadn't better take a laxative - been putting it off too long.

Harry said I ought to try Ex-Lax. Took some before I went to bed. Say, this Ex-Lax taste is a new one on me - just like chocolate!

Felt like a million when I got up this morning. Ex-Lax worked fine - didn't upset me a bit. Just watch me go after those birds today!

The action of Ex-Lax is thorough, yet *gentle!* No shock. No strain. No weakening after-effects. Just an easy, comfortable bowel movement that brings blessed relief. Try Ex-Lax next time you need a laxative. It's good for *every* member of the family.

10¢ and 25¢

with fanlights. The house, which represented Vera's successful attempt to spend a great deal of money (in the late twenties), now looked down at the heel. The shrubbery massed against the gray stone of the first story needed clipping; the white clapboards above had rain stains from the faded shutters. But the shadow of trees lay crisp on the cropped lawn, and there was pleasant color in the garden around the small pool down the slope of the hill. Clem followed her with some of the luggage. "Ring the bell, will you, Mother? Where's everybody?"

A PLUMP, elderly woman opened the door. "How do you do, Mr. Lawmen—and Mrs. Briscoll. Mrs. Lawmen is out. She left word she had to go to this bridge tournament—it's for the Red Cross. No, Mr. Lawmen, the young people are out; I couldn't say where they are."

"That's a nice note," said Clem mildly. "Walking out on us! Where's the girl, what's her name—Anna?"

"It's her afternoon out, Mr. Lawmen. That is, Thursday is her afternoon; but with the plumbers and all, she couldn't take it. We did have quite a time with the plumbers."

"So I heard. A nice kind of welcome for you, Mother." Clem's eyelids twitched. "Everybody gone but the cook."

"That's good," said Mary. "I don't have to talk to anybody. Good as a hotel." It wasn't, really. At a hotel, as weary as she was, she'd go to bed and no one would disturb her until she rang. A long sigh for independence lost lifted her breast. Clem said: "Which room, Effie? You take those bags, will you? I'll get the rest of the stuff."

"Mind your step," said Effie. "It's Mr. William's things from college. He said he'd be back to see to them; I wasn't to touch them." She started up the wide stairs, and Mary stood for a moment, hand on the mahogany rail, gathering determination for the ascent and looking over her grandson's college deposit. Tennis-rackets in a press, a musical instrument in a black case on the carved Italian chest; skiis, boots, a radio, a pile of records, leather coat, bulging laundry bag, suitcases. Bill, home from college. Mary hadn't seen much of her grandson since he had been a little boy. Preparatory school, summer camps, college. He'd been a funny little boy. She began to climb, her heart creaking as she lifted her weight from step to step. When she got up, she'd stay!

"Did you see all that junk?" Clem was at her heels. "That's what my money goes for. If I say a word, I'm a brute. When I was his age, I knew what I wanted to do!"

"Well," said Mary shortly, "you didn't do it, did you?" She was sorry she had said it, Clem looked so suddenly deflated.

"At least I did something," he said with dignity. "Effie!" He raised his voice. "Which room is it?"

"It's here, Mr. Lawmen." And Effie appeared at a doorway. "Right here."

Mary looked about with the experienced eye of a traveler. "This used to be the nursery," she said.

"Did it, Mrs. Briscoll? Mrs. Lawmen thought it would be the quietest room for you, with the young people running in and out the way they do."

"Don't you like it, Mother?" Clem peered at chintz curtains and silver-striped wall-paper. "If you don't, speak up. Plenty of others."

"It's all right." Mary settled into an armchair. Vera knew she liked a double bed, but probably there wasn't one in the house. That shade of lavender in bedspread and rugs was one she despised. Vera had no doubt picked it especially for her, something appropriate to age.

"What would you like? A spot of sherry? Tea? That's it! Effie, bring Mrs. Briscoll some tea." Clem balanced uneasily in the doorway. "Want a paper to read?"

"No," said Mary. "I have to unpack."

"Well, I can't help you with that." Clem teetered a moment. "Take it easy. Vera ought to be home any minute." He turned to go.

"Clem!" Mary's voice halted him. "I needn't have said that."

"Oh, I know. I ought to do something—take steps—instead of grousing." He glanced at her. "I don't know how anything's coming out. I wake up at night in a cold sweat. I thought if I could give them a start—the children— But what are they to start *at,* in a world like this? And you know, they aren't even happy! You'll see." His newspapers slipped from his elbow and crackled about his feet. He stooped for them, and as he straightened, automatically read the leaders across the sheets. "Look at that! If Paris falls, that'll fix the market all right." On the stairs sounded Effie's deliberate step. "Here comes your tea. Do you more good than my ranting." His quick smile was apologetic. "You know what Vera thinks? She thinks if she ignores the war long enough, it will come to an end from chagrin. Little boys showing off, and no one looking at them."

"Known as the ostrich technique," said Mary. "Have some tea?"

Clem didn't drink tea, or coffee either. He had this pain in his stomach; the doctor couldn't find anything; he thought he'd worry less if they could find something definite, no matter what.

"Ticker-tape-worm," said Mary. "That's what ails you."

"What? Oh, yes. Yes." Clem's lips jerked into a smile.

"Go read your market reports. Tea would do you less harm."

Clem edged away. "I'll be on the terrace, in case you want me."

MARY drank her tea. . . . "When I was his age," Clem had said, and Mary had jumped on him because it might have been Will Briscoll talking about Tom, their son. Only, Will bellowed when he was angry. "When I was your age," he had roared, "I had to work my way through college. I tended furnaces for a corner of a cellar to sleep in, and I cooked my own food, what I had." Mary had tried to defend her son: he was just a boy; Will didn't want him working himself to death the way he had— Not skiis and radios and cars in those days; what had it been? Girls, even as early as that. Frat parties. Liquor. The same words, "When I was your age." How we repeat ourselves, she thought! There must be an archetype for all we say; the pattern repeats itself endlessly. Tom had gone back to college on probation, his senior

year; and before Christmas he had enlisted. Perhaps, after he finally came home, he had used his wounds as an excuse—Will always thought so, and Will had died before Tom, so he hadn't known. "Such a pity they sewed me together again. A gold star would be much less annoying." Dear God, the same thing her father had said! "If I had died, I would have been a hero."

She wished Tom hadn't died. She would like to talk to him. He always made her laugh. Her eyelids lifted in long folds; she felt a mild astonishment to see this unfamiliar room around her. She ought to unpack some of her dresses, instead of prowling through the past. Queer the way the past kept pushing aside the present, and dead voices sounded louder in her mind than those that spoke today. Almost as if she were searching for something, knowing neither its shape nor color. "But when I find it, I'll know," she thought, nodding softly; "I'll know."

VERA'S voice preceded her as she hurried along the hall. "Oh, Mother, I'm so sorry I wasn't here when you came." At the door she stopped. "Mother! You aren't sick again?"

Mary cocked her head forward from the pillows. "No. I'm not. I'm just comfortable." Vera leaned over the bed, investigatory fingers on Mary's forehead before she kissed her cheek, the brim of the wide hat clipping Mary on the head.

"You don't feel feverish," said Vera.

"I'm not. You look very smart."

"I picked it up at a sale at the city." Vera's fingers brushed the heavy white silk. "Good, isn't it? But why are you in bed if—"

"Well, I'll tell you. It was accidental." Mary pushed the full, fine lawn sleeves of her nightgown up from her hands. "I started to unpack. I laid out my toilet-case. I thought I'd take off my dress so I could rest a little; and first thing I knew, here I was, all ready for bed." She chuckled. "So I just went to bed."

"I suppose the trip tired you."

"I was thinking about something else," said Mary.

"Heaven knows, I'm dead!" Vera drew a chair near the bed. "What an afternoon! Really, some of the women I played with! Bridge, you know. For the Red Cross. Anyone could come, just by paying, and *anyone* certainly did! You know, women who don't belong to the Country Club. They wanted to see the inside of it, I suppose, and the members. Awful people!"

"What's wrong with them?" Mary's tone was innocent enough.

"Why, you know! Simply common. Why, at one table—" Vera stopped, at a sniff from her mother. "Of course," she went on hastily, "we did clear quite a nice sum. And Mrs. Poole—you know, *the* Pooles—asked me to serve on her committee to organize a stronger chapter. We've got to get women knitting again, and rolling bandages—"

"It's awful," said Mary, "to think what common folks may wear them."

Vera made a startled grimace and then laughed uneasily. "Now, don't be difficult, Mother. You know perfectly well what I mean." She got to her feet. "You're sure you won't come down for dinner? Peter Willowford's coming in,

MISS *Mary Steele*

New York debutante says: "My date-to-date existence calls for a sparkling complexion. So before going out, I take a Woodbury Facial Cocktail. I pat on a rich lather of Woodbury Soap and when I've rinsed with cold water, my skin is clear of soiled make-up and soft as satin."

What gives Debs Date Appeal? This Woodbury Facial Cocktail

Cholly Knickerbocker

America's Ace Society Commentator says:

"If you'd turn temptress in a hurry, I commend you to this beauty trick. Society buds find their pre-date facial with Woodbury Soap scores 'May-I-see-you-agains' from eligible beaux."

DEBUTANTES, who hasten heart-beats, turn to Woodbury Facial Soap for skin allure. Intended for the *skin*, Woodbury is made of finest beauty oils. It's specially blended to bring you tip-to-toe skin charm. Try Woodbury Soap for just ten days to start. Have the smooth, fresh skin that flatters.

10¢

FOR THE SKIN YOU LOVE TO TOUCH

LOVELY DEB CHARMS WITH HER PETAL-SMOOTH SKIN

Dazzling doings every day for Mary. Engagement showers for sister debs, tea dances, polo dates.

Time out for a Facial Cocktail with Woodbury Soap. "Wonderful, the difference in my skin!"

Men grow lyrical over her beauty. Mary smiles in secret praise of her Woodbury Facial Cocktail.

New *under-arm*
Cream Deodorant
safely
Stops Perspiration

1. Does not harm dresses—does not irritate skin.
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quite informally. I wanted you to meet him; I thought you might help me with Hilda. She's beginning to be reasonable, I think. He's just enough older and more experienced. As I told Hilda, after all the advantages we've given her, she's not going to be content—"

"Willowford?" asked Mary. "Is he the divorced one?"

"Just incompatibility. After all, he'd know better what he wanted the next time, wouldn't he?" Vera stopped and listened. From the lower hall rose the sound of discussion, Clem's voice, and another voice like Clem's, but more impassioned. "Bill's home. He simply must clear away that litter from the hall; it looks like an annex to a sporting-goods store." Vera moved with determined haste from the room, pulling the door shut after her.

"Now, she did that on purpose," thought Mary, "so I couldn't hear." Vera had got around Hilda and her poor little love-affair. Talked her down. "Oh, my," thought Mary, "I can't be bothered with them! I'm too old. All I want is a little peace." Peace? *I came not to send peace, but a sword.* And a man's foes shall be those of his own household. She couldn't remember how the sonorous phrases continued. *His terrible swift sword.* Transformed now into bombers and tanks. Vera tired her with her jittery talk. After all, Hilda was old enough to decide for herself. Or was she? Certainly no one could have pried Mary away from Will Briscoll. She couldn't remember why she had been so sure; the beginning of love was overlaid with all their years together; did a tree remember the seed from which it grew? If Will were here today, he would be troubled too. Perhaps he would know what she was searching for. He might give her the word to set in order the kaleidoscopic jumble of thoughts and recollections which had beset her all day.

She reached impatiently for a book, face down under the scarlet afghan across her knees, and looked at the corpse that sprawled on the bright jacket of the book. "The Case of the Missing Surplice." A waste of time, when she had so little left, reading mysteries. Let's see, she had decided the minister hadn't committed the murder; the author was too obvious about him. She was so absorbed that a knock on the door, and Hilda's entrance, left her not a second to hide the book.

"HELLO, Grand-Mary," said Hilda, darting toward her, the skirt of her evening frock swinging around her slim waist. "Aren't you the lazy one?" She touched her finger-tips to her scarlet lips and brushed them over Mary's cheek. "Promise of a kiss. Don't want to smear you all up." She perched on the edge of the bed, arms locked around a knee. "Look at the gore!"

"At my age, too!" Mary mimicked Vera's reproachful voice. "How nice you look." She'd forgotten how beautiful young bodies were! Skin with a tinge of gold, like pollen over the smooth surface, fitting so perfectly over fine bones, exquisite in their articulation; that hollow at the base of the throat, the spring of shoulder-blades like hints of wings; delicate flow of young, firm muscles down to the elbows, down to the narrow wrists. "That dress is a starched petticoat and not much else!"

"Um." Hilda looked at her arms against the stiff whiteness. "I ought to be a darker shade of tan, to be effective. But the sun-lamp blew out all the fuses, and the man hasn't come to fix it."

"Even your sunlight isn't real," said Mary. "Synthetic sunburn."

"Why not?" Hilda looked at her grandmother, a wary restiveness in her face. "You can turn it on and off yourself. At least, you can after the electrician comes. And what do you mean, *even?*"

"Figure it out," Mary said. She could feel resistance in the girl's body, a harder thrust of foot on the floor.

"YOU mean me, I suppose. Mother's been talking, hasn't she? Did she tell you about the wonderful Peter Willowford?" Hilda crossed the room to a window, and one hand swished the long curtain against the floor. "You know what he's like, Grand-Mary? A ripe banana, soft and plump and just that color; and his clothes fit him elegantly, like the peel. Rich as mud. Squashy." She jerked at the curtain. "Here I had my mind all made up— You have to be practical, don't you? What's unreal about that? Oh, I didn't want to come in to see you; you always find out about things."

"My goodness," said Mary, "why did that get under your skin?"

Hilda turned, her slight body held rigid. "Because it's true. It's what he said—John."

"John who?" asked Mary. "I never heard of any John."

"He said I was selfish and spoiled and afraid of reality. I wish you'd tell me why, when it's something unpleasant, like being poor, people call it real; but having money or position isn't real at all. After all, Peter Willowford's quite important. He's in a bank, and everything."

("She's not talking to me," thought Mary. "She's wrestling with herself. All I need to do is keep still.")

"It will be years before John gets anywhere. He's a doctor—that is, he's an interne now. He's perfectly unreasonable; he says if I got a job and helped support us now, he'd take care of me when I got to be an old lady. That's not when I want things; I want them now. It's much better, anyway, if you aren't too crazy about a man, isn't it? You can manage him better. Peter's mad about me, and so he does everything I want him to. But John—" Her face had sharpened; it was like the face of a girl drowning, seen through still clear water, thought Mary. "Oh, well, I'll get over him. I won't go on feeling this way. Anyway, look at the people who fall in love and get married, and what happens to them? Look at Mother; she was in love, wasn't she? I mean, she's fond of Father, of course, but—"

"The trouble with your mother is that Clem never asked enough of her. She managed him, the way you think you'll manage this Peter. You're setting out to be just like her, a taker and not a giver. That's death for a woman, dry rot. He who would save his life must first lose it. In love, above all else! Love of a man, or a country." (A land where a man can

be free, and his children after him!) "You're afraid you'll lose yourself, your hard little comfort-loving pinpoint of a self!"

Hilda looked at her grandmother with strangely expressionless eyes. Through the window burst the notes of a French horn.

"Peter," said Hilda. "In his chariot. Coming for to carry me home." She stood beside the bed, digging a finger into the soft wool of the afghan, twisting it round and round. "You and John ought to get together. You'd have a wonderful time. If that's the way I am, why, that's the way I am, isn't it?"

"Not quite," said Mary quietly. "Not quite. You're scared, but you're still breathing."

"Just a mess!" Hilda drew herself erect with a shiver as something crashed against the door. "Maybe we all are in this house! That's my darling little brother you hear! He's another." She moved quickly to fling open the door. Skiis tumbled in past her, and Bill on his knees frowned up and went on picking up bits of phonograph records. "What *are* you doing?"

"What the heck d'you open that door for, just when I leaned my skiis there? Smashing my best pieces, lugging my traps out of your way, and why? Because that louse of a Peter—"

"You make it delightful for Grand-Mary," said Hilda sharply.

"GEE, I didn't know you were in this room!" Bill brushed Hilda aside and strolled in, dropping the broken disks on a chair. His face was surprisingly young, looking down from his tall, loose body; his grin was ingenuous and ingratiating. "Hi, Gramma, what'd they put you to bed for? I was just going to stow my gear in here. Changing things around like this! How are you, Gramma?"

"She was all right," said Hilda, "till you knocked down her door."

"Say, beat it, woman! Your boy-friend's champing around below!"

"You can't come to dinner looking like that!" And Hilda disappeared.

"The fuss they make about this droop Willowford!" said Bill. "I thought Christmas-time Hilda'd ditched him. You can't tell about women, can you? Of course he's lined with money. But Hilda's a good kid—I dunno— Well, we all could use a little. Money, I mean."

"Sit down," said Mary. "You're up so high I can't see your face." He was restless, in a hurry to be off. He had to speak to her, but he really didn't see her; she was just an old woman, labeled Grand-Mary. There might be traces in his face of the child who had liked her, in the shape of the head, the long dark lashes over the blue eyes; but his affection now was nothing but a recollected form.

"Well, I can't stay, see? I got a lot of things to do." He drew a chair near her and folded himself down upon it, hands dangling. "You—you staying long?"

"I don't know."

"I just noticed you hadn't unpacked."

"I just came this afternoon." What was he leading up to, meeting her eyes with quick, speculative glances?

"You haven't got a radio, have you? How about me setting mine up in here? I could get along without it."

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**Name on request.*

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"I don't want it." Mary smiled. "What is it you want, Bill?"

"Gee, I was just thinking it's lucky for me you're here. You'd understand if a fellow asked a favor, wouldn't you?" He dropped his voice into husky confidence. "Here I come home, no kick at all. Do I get any credit? Dad lands on me the minute he sees me. Why, half the fellows flunked the same courses I did! But while he's sore like that is no time to be trying to collect a bill, now, is it? This guy says he won't wait any longer; tonight's the dead-line. I wouldn't speak of it, only it's an emergency, see? I was driving this other fellow's father's car—" Bill rolled his eyes toward the door, his furrowed forehead flushed; even the parting of his crisp brown hair was scarlet.

"Whose father's car?" Vera frowned at the clasp of a bracelet she was fastening. "What car?"

"I was just telling Grand-Mary a little story." Bill scrambled to his feet. "See you later, gotta rush now."

"You might hurry," Vera called after him. "Your father's cross enough already." She vibrated a moment in the doorway. "Was he asking you for money? You mustn't give him any. He's so cute, the way he tries to get around you." She sighed. "Clem's furious at him; I told him he was just a boy. The trouble is just that Clem is upset. You'd think Paris was his home town, the way he's taking it. Of course it's the market that worries him. He got it on the radio."

"Got what?" asked Mary. "The way you jump around!"

"I said very plainly that they were evacuating Paris." Vera spoke with dignity. "I don't jump, although I might, the way everything piles up. I don't know where Hilda's gone. I heard her on the telephone, but I can't find her. If she's going to be difficult again about Peter! Goodness, I envy you! I'll have Anna bring up a tray; do you eat a heavy dinner at night?"

"Yes, I do," said Mary with emphasis. "I'm hungry."

Vera sighed, slid her bracelets up her thin arms with a nervous gesture, and went quickly away, trailing gray chiffon.

MARY settled into the pillows, her eyes closed. Her heart seemed to have slipped down so that it was beating in her stomach, each thud loud and disturbing. The trip had tired her; the family had tired her; she was glad the twilight was deep enough now so that her eyelids could shut her into darkness. Her heartbeats seemed very far apart, and in between them was silence and darkness, and all the recollections, the impressions, the images of the long day rolling at last together into the meaning she had sought.

"A land where a man can be free, and his children after him," she thought. "Free? We have thought the world was run for us, that we could go on turning always in these narrow, petty, selfish cells. We are losing them again, peace, freedom. We had them only as a promise. My father, my sons, and now these children. They have lost them, having no dream to hold them safe, to strive to keep them. They are blind and empty, passionless—I must tell them this. Perhaps Hilda heard me; it may not be too late." She thought: "It all begins again, the old struggle." She could not lift her eyelids; her heart climbed up into her throat; it floated away like a bright and burning word. When you have the word, it is too late to speak. It all begins again.

A MAN'S DAILY BREAD

(Continued from page 35)

"I put you first, though, William," Ruth said to him when they were alone. "If you want to go, we'll go, and Father can hire somebody."

"Let's stay for a while, anyway," he said reasonably. "Maybe I can work here as well as anywhere."

She had never looked so beautiful, nor been so content. Out of her content her body had blossomed until sometimes he could not bear its beauty. He must woo her even sometimes when he came upon her in the day. Their marriage began again. He discovered her deeply passionate. And then she conceived her first child.

It was by now spring of their second year together. Without saying that they would stay, he knew now that for the sake of their love he would never take her away from this house and this land. She was nourished here to her fullest being. At the work she loved best, she grew so beautiful, so rich, that he could not disturb that sacred growth.

"Selfishly," he thought. "It suits me to have her perfection. I ought to be able to work, out of perfection!"

SHE bore three children quickly, one after another; then he declared it enough. Children, he discovered, were little to him. He saw her enriched by them, her beauty new again in the midst of the three small creatures. He painted her thus once, and was surprised when the critics failed to see improvement in his work.

"It's the best thing I have ever done," he said to Ruth with anger.

"It is, too," she agreed warmly. "But those people think everything has to be done in New York or it's no good."

"Right," he said, secretly surprised by her shrewdness.

He resolved, in his wrath, that he would show them what he would do. He would live in this quiet spot and paint such pictures that everybody would come to see them. He painted diligently, and each year he exhibited his pictures in the village Masonic hall. Country school children were brought to see them, and the village newspaper wrote loyally of them every year. Usually a few newspaper men came from Philadelphia. But once he read, as he might have read his own obituary, a column by a great critic in a New York newspaper, deploring his loss. "William Braton's promise, so strikingly begun, has not fulfilled itself," the article had said. He read his own death, or so it seemed, that day. He had burned the paper so that Ruth would never see it, but he could not burn his brain to ashes, and his brain held the words, unforgotten.

They had their use. Whenever he felt himself growing lax and ceasing to find inspiration, he remembered them and began a fresh picture. Eight hours a day, he told people who asked him, was his minimum. "I work regularly," he said, "because it is the only way to accomplishment." For twelve years he had painted steadily, and as steadily refused to believe that he was being each year more wholly forgotten. . . .

"Daddy!" Jill's voice upon the stair called him.

"Yes, dear?" he called from his room.

"Dinner's ready. I've done the brushes."

"All right, dear."

He combed his hair and rubbed a bit of paint from his shirt with the stopper of a small bottle of turpentine, which Ruth kept in his room. Jill was still on the stair.

"Can I come in?" she called with longing through the door.

"Of course," he said. She came into his room and stood watching him, not quite at ease and yet longing for ease with him. But he could not give it to her. By some curious freak of a mischievous nature, this child had exactly old Mr. Harnsberger's small gray eyes in her fresh face, and he saw every time he looked at his daughter the soul of the old man seated in her eyes. It was unreasonable, but there it was. Even though he saw her longing to love him, she looked at him through those eyes, and he was repelled.

"Daddy, are you going to do anything special this afternoon?"

He had not planned it; but when she asked him, he suddenly thought that it was time he went to see his parents. He did not go half often enough, now that they were so old.

"I'm thinking I ought to go to the city," he said.

"Oh," she replied, disappointed.

His heart reproached him. "Had you something in mind?" he asked.

"I thought maybe you'd think of something nice we could do," she said.

If she had made a dear plan of her own, he might have yielded to it. As it was, he thought a little impatiently that she had no imagination—and then that he longed to see his father.

"I think I ought to go and see my father," he said gently.

JILL did not answer, and he made amends by squeezing her shoulders in his arms as they went downstairs. He had taken the children one by one to see his parents, but it was never successful. The children, who looked only rosy and healthy at home, were bumpkins in his mother's drawing-rooms. Their manners were Ruth's making. "Yes ma'am," she had taught them to say, and "Pleased to meet you." He had not the heart even to tell her that these phrases were not what he had been taught, nor that when his children uttered them out of their anxiety to behave well, his mother's sharp handsome old face grew ironical, though she said nothing. He had taken none of them again since Hal last year had upset his grandfather's wineglass over the lace tablecloth, and his mother had said:

"Never mind—the child doesn't know any better!"

"Where's Hal?" he inquired at his own table, a few minutes later.

"He ran away," Ruth said. She pressed her beautiful full lips together as she dished out chicken stew rapidly upon the plates before her. "And William, I shall whip him when he comes home, for I told him he wa'n't to go till his work was done."

"Now, Ruth," he said, "I hate whipping."

She was about to speak, and did not. "Somebody's got to do something," she had been about to cry out. But silence she had learned. She glanced about the table to see that all was right, and she did not answer him.

IN his library old Mr. Braton examined carefully under a hand-glass the painting William had finished this morning. Upon an impulse of doubt, William had brought it with him. It was good, or perhaps it was not.

His father stepped back from it without speaking.

"A very American sort of landscape," William said uneasily.

"Ah," said his father. "Yes, it is."

A short silence fell.

"I had a curious thing happen to it," William said. "A butterfly flung itself against the paint. Its wing-dust stuck, and I had the feeling of painting it into the picture."

Mr. Braton looked at his son. He had put away his glass, and now he sat down to steady his legs. He was very old, and he had always dreaded speaking of anything unpleasant. But he and his wife had often talked about the question of speaking to William.

"It is no use," she had said firmly. Age had made her bitter and cold, and doubtful of good in anything. But age did that to women. Mr. Braton could not understand this, for he himself had grown gentler and warmer as he grew old—as men did.

He made up his mind suddenly at this moment after dinner when he was alone with his son that he would speak. For the end of age was death, and then there would be no more speaking.

"William," he said, "yours is a good talent. But at one time I thought it was perhaps genius."

He looked about the walls of his library, upon which he had hung the finest paintings he had been able to buy. Several times he had sold all he had bought because he had found better ones. Each time his taste, thus refined, had reached a new comprehension of what painting could be. He had reached his height ten years ago. The best hung here about him in what some people called the finest small collection of old and modern painting in America.

"I used to dream of the day when I would hang one of your pictures here," he said. "I used to think I would hang it over there, on that wall." He nodded toward a Corot. "I was going to make a ceremony of taking that one down and putting yours there instead."

William tried to laugh. "I never could be that good," he said.

"But why not?" the old critic asked. "Why not?"

"Mine is a secondary talent," William said ruthlessly, and bled beneath his own wounding.

"No," his father said, "no—a very superb talent, laid away in a napkin of content."

He looked at William's canvas. "Soil too rich," he said; "the green's too lush. The essential form is lost. When there is no form, there is no meaning. A fine technique, William—signifying nothing."

THIS YEAR AHEAD?

Are you facing this new year with calm and hope and confidence? Must we not, as parents, go confidently ahead with plans for the education of our children, believing that democracy and right will live? Shall we not give them this summer the great advantage of a truly American experience, the summer camp? Summer camps are America's contribution to education, and offer training in citizenship, for living, and the fuller enjoyment of life.

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"Speak out," William said steadily.

"I will," his father replied. "Go away somewhere alone, and then see if you can paint."

He rose, and without drama he turned the picture toward the wall.

"Thanks," William said slowly.

"Shall we return to your mother?" his father asked.

"Yes," William replied.

HE did not leave his father's house until late. His sister Louisa came in with her husband and two friends, a dark young woman and a man with her. The drawing-room became quietly gay. His mother came out of her taciturnity and drew talk from them all, good talk to which he listened with hunger. But on the whole the talk was too quick for him. He found himself twisted in its changes. His mother marked his silences.

"Ah, William, you should come out of your too-green retirement," his mother said with a flash of malice. She turned to the young woman. "My son is bucolic," she said; "he married a farmer's daughter, and paints whatever he sees out of her windows."

"Mother!" he begged her.

"Well, so you do, William," she retorted, "and you've grown intensely boring to everybody."

Her sharpness was tempered with the willful mischief of graceful old age, but he felt it. It made him self-doubtful, so that he was bitterly humble when the young woman spoke to him.

"You should come to Mexico. There is a life to paint there."

"I assure you I am entirely secondrate," he said, and smiled.

He could not stay long after this. The talk went away from him again and flitted about the world. He heard the names of places and of men in the swift narrative of the times that he had chosen not to share, without exactly knowing how he had done so. He rose and bade them good night, and drove himself homeward, feeling that the life that might have nourished him most deeply was escaping him.

"I wonder if Ruth would mind if I did go away for a while?" he thought. He suddenly felt the need of living very hardly. He wanted to go where crude people were suffering, and bathe himself in their pain. His morning's agitation over a butterfly now seemed ridiculous. He found himself thinking of the sternness of war, of deprivation and danger. Through these ways the spirit was forced upward. How else could the spirit rise?

Moving through the unlit darkness of a countryside already long asleep, he felt for his own soul. It lay in him untouched, like a sword not put to use. How could he put it to use? There must first be a reason, an emotion greater than himself. He felt suddenly, though he was forty-seven years old, that he was young and unused, immature in his work because he was immature in himself. His brain was unwhetted.

"If I were just to go out of Ruth's house, not knowing whether or not I would come back," he pondered, "then where would I go?"

THAT house now rose before him in the warm darkness. The windows in the kitchen were lighted. He put the car away and walked along the garden path which his feet knew by instinct. He opened the door to the kitchen.

Ruth was there. She held a whip across her body, its ends in her hands. Hal stood facing her against the table, leaning backward on his hands upon it. She was speaking when William came in, but she stopped. She turned her head to him.

"Go away, William," she said.

But he was sickened and cried out: "No, I won't, Ruth. You—this isn't the way to manage a boy!"

He saw her face grow sterner than he ever dreamed it could, and for the first time it was ugly to him.

"I'll have to do what I think's best, same as I've always done," she replied quietly.

Then before he could speak again or stop her, she stepped forward and with a swift fling of her hand she struck Hal three times across the back—three hard, cracking blows.

Hal shivered and bent his head.

"Ruth!" William shouted. He leaped forward and snatched the whip from her.

"You leave her alone," Hal said suddenly. He was not crying, but the tears of smarting pain stood in his eyes. "She said she'd whip me, and she had to."

"I can't bear it, anyway," William said shortly. He threw the whip to the floor. "And I don't understand you, Hal—taking it like that."

"I wouldn't, if it was anybody else," the boy retorted. Through his shirt a thin red stain appeared.

"Take off your shirt, son," Ruth said. "I'll see to your back."

"No," Hal said, "it's nothing."

But he took off his shirt, and Ruth fetched a basin of cold water and a soft bit of cloth and sponged the blue welt that had broken into bleeding.

"I had to do it hard, son," she said, "else it wouldn't have signified."

"I know it," Hal said. It was as though they had forgotten William. It was as though what Ruth had done had turned her son to her. He let her lave the wound until the blood stopped, and then he put on his shirt. "I'll have to sleep on my belly tonight, Mom," he said with a wry smile. "You sure have a strong right arm." He kissed her, and suddenly she hugged him about the waist.

"I've got to make a man out of you," she said.

"Sure," Hal said. "G'night, Dad."

He nodded toward William and went out, and they heard him going heavily upstairs to his room.

William picked up the whip and gave it back to her.

"I never want to see that again," he said.

She took it without answer and put it on top of a cupboard. Then she went through the small round of preparing for the night, and together they went upstairs, still without speaking.

HE watched her while she undressed and washed herself and put on her cotton nightgown. He was in bed before her, and he lay watching her loosen her long uncut hair and brush it before she braided. Her every movement fascinated him even after all these years, and in spite of what had happened tonight. It was not only that he loved her. She could be repulsive to him too, sometimes. He had never acknowledged this to himself before; but tonight when she was beating the boy, he knew she could be repulsive to him. A more delicate woman could not have lifted the whip so steadily for three times, nor let it fall so hard that it brought blood. He could never feel the same toward her again.

And yet he loved her because all she did was right and consistent with her being, and therefore was without pretence. He compared her with the slender black-eyed woman he had seen tonight in his mother's drawing-room, and knew that beside the reality of Ruth that woman was emptiness. Wherever Ruth stood she made reality. Thus the whole evening he had just spent became nothing; and this room, lit by the oil lamp, this big bed, the old-fashioned furniture, the white curtains fluttering at the windows, were the center of reality. She bent over the lamp to blow it out, and he saw the full smooth contours of her face suddenly clear and once more beautiful. It was wonderfully calm just now; and he compared it involuntarily with the way it had looked a little while ago when she had struck Hal. She could be incredibly hard, he thought, even cruel. Was that the base of her? Then the light was gone and she climbed into bed, and he felt the smooth firmness of her thigh against his. She slipped her arm under his head.

"Did you have a good time?" she asked, and her voice was as usual, in the darkness.

"There were some people there," he said evasively. He never told her of those disturbing visits to his home. She never asked, and he was glad, for he dreaded the long explanation that he must make if he were to try to make her understand their effect on him.

"Were your folks well?" she asked. Once years ago she had gone with him to see them, and then of her own wish she had never gone again.

"Your mother and I wouldn't get along," she had told him, and then she had added: "We're both proud of our own ways, and she wouldn't give in, and I wouldn't. So we're better apart."

"Yes, they're well," he replied.

She yawned, and they lay in silence a few minutes. She was healthily tired with her active day, and could have fallen instantly asleep. But her only sensitivity was toward him. He was always different when he had been to see his parents. He was different tonight. She could feel it in the way he lay beside her, his body against hers, and yet as though he did not know it.

It was too bad, she felt, that he had come in before she put Hal right. But it could not be helped. She turned, curving her pliant body to his. She loved him more than ever as years went on, better than anything. She was suddenly intensely jealous of his evening away from her.

"Ruth," he said, "my father thinks I ought to go away somewhere."

She could not answer for a second while she took this into her mind. Her body, stricken in its tenderness, grew stiff with terror. Now here was what she had always feared. If he left her, he would know all he had missed in being married to her. For without knowing what those things were, in her mind she had grown increasingly afraid of them as time went on, lest he find them out some day. She remembered jealously the look of his old home, and what she called its "style." She made fun of it: "I'd hate to have the cleaning of it," she had often said. "I'd hate to live there," she had said; "it's like a hotel." She always waited to hear him say carelessly: "I like this house better, too." Most of the time she believed him, because hers seemed the only right way to live, since it was the only way she had ever lived. But sometimes she remembered that he had grown up in that other house.

"Where would we go, and how could I get away, with threshers due here any day?" she asked, her throat dry.

"My father thinks I should go alone," he replied.

"What for?" she demanded, angered against his father.

"He thinks my work has gone stale and that I need something new," he said.

He could feel he was hurting her, but because of Hal, he was more able to hurt her tonight than he had ever been. He could not forget how resolutely she had lifted that whip three times while he stood in all the protest of his being, watching what he could not help. He could not yet forgive her, partly because she had gone on to do her own will against his, but mostly because she had shown him that she could be cruel.

"If you leave me, you'll never come back to me," she said.

"Yes, I will," he said; "of course I will."

"No, and I know it, already," she said. She had almost ceased to use her old Pennsylvania ways of speech, but when she was deeply disturbed, she went back to them, and he was a little touched.

"DON'T be silly, my dearest," he said gently.

"Everything I do is for you," she said. "I don't hardly care for anything else. If you've give up everything for me, so have I for you, William."

"Now, Ruth, you're making something very big out of nothing. Why, most artists travel everywhere, and their wives have a terrible time. I've been a very faithful fellow, I think." He tried to be playful.

He felt her quivering strangely, this steady, strong, middle-aged woman who was his wife.

"Why, my dear!" he cried; and turning, he took her in his arms, shocked into a tenderness which was unusual only because it was protective. She had never seemed to need protecting before.

"Why, my—my little girl!" he muttered. He had not called her that once before in his life.

And then suddenly she began to weep, and to pour out all he had never known of her soul.

"Oh, I know it's because of me you want to go! I'm not good enough for you. That's why your father wants you to go away. I knew when I married you, I oughtn't to have. I've always been afraid I oughtn't to have. I ought to have married somebody my own kind, as I could have helped and not hurt. I've spent myself trying to make it up to you, trying to have everything the way you wanted, and not so much as asking myself what I wanted. If you leave me, it'll all be no good!"

"Hush," he whispered, "hush, Ruth! The children will hear you."

"Oh, I don't care!" she cried. He let her cry, then, holding her, but strong enough not to say he would not go. He was deeply shaken, but he would not let her see how much. He did not indeed know how much. For his father had shaken him too, and which one the most, his father or Ruth, he did not yet know. The morning would tell, when alone he could walk up the hill and think for himself.

And when she had wept all she could, and waited for him to promise he would not go, and when he did not promise, she grew terrified. And out of her terror her passion clamored for possession of him in the deepest way she knew.

"Oh, love me," she whispered, "love me —love me—"

But he did not promise. He held doggedly to his determination that he would wait for the morning and only for the

morning. Even as he gazed at her, tender and beautiful to him now, he could not forget how she had looked when she had lifted the whip. For that one moment she had made herself alien to him, and hateful, and one moment was long enough for him to see himself separate from her.

Ruth lay awake long after he slept. He was different and she was frightened. She was always frightened when his mood varied in the slightest from what she knew best. She was easiest when he was beginning a new picture, because then he was happiest. He was always excited and hopeful when he was beginning a new one. Then he worked hard, and then the more he worked, the less hopeful he was, and she had come to dread the finishing of a picture. He was never satisfied at the end; and when he was not satisfied, he was restless. And then nothing she could say was any use.

"I don't see but what it's just as good as your others," she had said this morning. She couldn't, herself, see much difference in pictures.

"Oh, Ruth!" he had groaned; and then she knew she had said the wrong thing again. It was so hard to know what he wanted her to say.

His restlessness she could cure only by love. But now for the first time love had not been enough. She felt him still far from her; even in his sleep he was turned away from her.

Ruth lay thinking through her fears in her direct practical fashion.

"There was too many things coming together against him today: he finished his picture, and he went to see his folks, and then he come home—and he never can understand anything about Hal. I'll have to make it up to him somehow tomorrow." She turned carefully and put her arm over him. The late moon had risen and shone into the room, and she could see his shape in the pale light. She looked at it fondly. How she loved him! No woman could have loved him as she did. She had never known whether any other had loved him, for they never talked of such things. They lived together, day and night, and there was no need for much talk. And she did not want to know what had happened before she knew him.

"My dear," she whispered. He called her lovely names, but that was all she could say. When she said even so much, her heart swelled and she was suffocated with love.

IN the morning they waited at the breakfast-table for Hal. The girls, in fresh muslin dresses, were ready for Sunday school, and Ruth wore her tan linen, with an apron to keep it clean. William would never go to church. He loved his Sunday mornings in the farmhouse when the others were at Sunday school and church. This morning he had waked, instantly clear, to the decision awaiting him, and was grateful for the hours of loneliness ahead. This morning he would make up his mind. He faced quite calmly in himself a probability, growing with the rising of the sun, that he would take his father's advice and go away.

"If I am ever to be content any more with what I have," he thought, "then I must know what I can do."

Ruth had got up early and gone downstairs to the kitchen. He was alone in

THE BOSS IS A DIFFERENT MAN

since we changed to silence!

1 **"No!" bellowed the Boss,** when his wife suggested a new refrigerator. "Can't afford it in the first place. Besides—" "Can't afford *not* to have it," broke in his wife. "Our noisy old thing's not only hard on the nerves, but the repair bills are ruining our budget. But I know one that's different. Come and see!"

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their room, but the house was alive about him. He was fond of it, he realized. It was safe, comfortable, beautiful in its simplicity. The smell of bacon and coffee was its fragrance at this moment, and he heard the girls' voices, muted, until he appeared at the breakfast-table a few moments later.

"Where is that boy?" Ruth said impatiently. It was one of her little determinations that they must all sit down together at meals. "Families mustn't eat just anyhow," she always said.

"Mary, run upstairs and call him," she said.

"He's tired after last night," William said pointedly. She did not answer him or meet his eyes. "Why don't we let him sleep for once?" he continued.

"He didn't do anything yesterday to make him tired," Ruth retorted.

In a moment they heard Mary's shriek. "Mother!" she cried.

Ruth leaped to her feet and ran into the hall and up the stairs.

"What is it now?" William muttered. He rose and followed her, Jill at his heels. He could hear voices upstairs.

"He's not here!" Mary gasped.

"Nonsense!" Ruth said loudly.

They were in Hal's room when he reached them. The bed was untouched. Ruth threw open the door of the closet where Hal kept his clothes.

Now the closet was empty.

"He can't be so foolish!" she cried. But her face had gone the color of cream, and her lips were gray.

"I'll see if his bicycle's here," Jill cried, and raced downstairs. She was back almost at once while they waited.

"It's gone," she said.

"Oh, the silly boy!" Ruth groaned. Her eyes flew about the room, looking for a message from him. But there was none.

They went downstairs, and William tried to think what they should do.

"We ought to notify the police," he told Ruth.

But she had the farmer's fear of police and of public attention. Besides, she was growing angry at Hal as she comprehended what he had done.

"He'll be back by night," she said. "Mark my words—when he's hungry, he'll come back."

But she went upstairs and put on her old blue work-dress; and when the girls begged to stay at home, she let them.

They stayed together all day, working at desultory tasks. At last in mid-morning Ruth went upstairs to clean the attic, because from the high windows she could see a long way. William went with her, to look over the piles of old magazines. The girls prepared lunch and they ate it, and went back to the attic again.

He did not reproach her, knowing as though she could tell him in words, how she was reproaching herself. Her reproach was crushing her as the day drew on to twilight. He did not need to make it heavier. Her anger faded under it, and by night she was trembling with terror. He had never seen her as she was when at last the darkness had covered the road and the boy had not come home. She turned to him in the attic she had made spotless, and crept to his breast.

"I'm a wicked willful woman," she whispered. "I didn't whip him for his own good yesterday. I whipped him because I was so mad at him. God has taken him away to punish me."

He stripped his heart of everything except the great rush of new protecting love he felt for the cowering, clinging woman he now held in his arms.

"Nonsense, my darling," he said. He tried to comfort her, smoothing her hair, and laying his cheek against her forehead. "We haven't begun to try to find him yet."

No use to argue against God, he knew. All his easy rationalism had never disturbed Ruth's belief in a God relentlessly just.

"We'll call the police," he said. "They have all sorts of ways of finding lost persons."

He led her downstairs and left her in the big rocking-chair in the sitting-room. "Rest a little," he told her. "You've worked hard all day, and eaten almost nothing, and been so anxious." Then he went to telephone the police.

He was a good deal shaken when he had to tell them how Hal looked. He had never seen his son so clearly: "Tall for his age, reddish-brown hair and brown eyes, freckled across his nose, red cheeks, and his lips full—" ("Like his mother's," he all but added until he checked himself.)

He went back to Ruth with his own lips quivering.

She had the family Bible open on her knees and was staring at it.

"William!" she cried. "He's written in the Bible."

He strode to her and looked over her shoulder. And there in Hal's childish handwriting under the date of his birth were these words:

"Left Home August 13, 1910."

"I took up the book to find some help in it," Ruth sobbed, "and it turned to this!"

The heavy book slid to the floor and she wept aloud. And he knelt beside her and held her while she wept. He could never leave her now.

The third era in the earthly progress of these pilgrims William and Ruth, their children and grandchildren, is vividly pictured in the concluding chapters of Mrs. Buck's novel—which will appear, of course, in our forthcoming April issue.

NOT GUILTY—OF MUCH

(Continued from page 39)

womanhood. He wondered how on earth she'd got herself into this mess. He wished he'd listened to the charge, but then he never did—heard too much of it from the lawyers.

"Repeat the charge, please," he said.

The clerk repeated it. Kitty cried again.

"Guilty or not guilty?" asked the judge.

This was George's cue to step forward and start things, but he was a little slow, so Kitty in a small voice said; "We're not guilty of much—or of anything at all really. *Please* believe us and let us go."

The judge did believe her and wanted to let her go. He wanted to go with her, for that matter; but he said:

"Witness for the State."

Officer Milen told his story. It sounded, the way he put it, like an open-and-shut proposition. A car stolen; these girls were found driving it. They made excuses, sure—everybody makes excuses. The judge shook his head and frowned. This was bad. For a moment nobody said anything. The judge looked at George, who was standing very red in the face, and opening and closing his mouth.

"What's he?" asked the judge. "And what's he doing here?"

George had acute stage-fright. He had, as actors sometimes do, literally dried up in the throat, so he couldn't speak. He raised a hand in a dramatic gesture intended to convey the notion that he would speak soon, he hoped. Officer Milen looked at him; then he looked at the judge and shook his head and shrugged.

Kitty stepped forward.

"He's our lawyer," she said. "He—he's nervous. You see, this means so terribly much to us, and George is like our brother, really, so it means terribly much to him too."

"We call him Young Lincoln," said Mary Lou, not liking to be left out.

The judge quickly put his hand over his mouth and coughed. Officer Milen and the clerk looked away. Kitty put her hand on George's arm. She was so sorry for him that for a second she almost forgot her own trouble.

"It's all right, George," she said. She turned to the judge. "He didn't get any sleep. He worked all night, working up his case."

The judge nodded. He didn't trust himself to speak. The other people in the courtroom tittered. The clerk called for silence. Kitty squeezed George's arm and said again: "It's all right, George. Take it easy. We're right with you!"

As suddenly as it had come over him, George's stage-fright passed. He cleared his throat. He leaned one hand on the counsel table, and then, in a voice neither he nor the girls knew he possessed, he spoke.

"Your Honor,"—he turned, bowed to the few spectators,—"and citizens of the State of New York."

Kitty and Mary Lou exchanged bewildered looks. This didn't sound like George; it sounded like Clarence Darrow or Walter Hampden or Errol Flynn. It didn't really sound like Errol Flynn; the girls just used him for a standard of perfection. It was unquestionably a fine voice, but it didn't last. George lapsed into halting speech.

"I haven't prepared any case to defend these girls against this charge. It's a

question of their guilt or innocence. These kids have been preparing their own proof of innocence from the day they were born."

He paused. He didn't look silly now; he looked almost distinguished, because of the intense seriousness he put into his words.

Then he went on, simply and quietly, telling of Mary Lou and Kitty and Thelma Barday and of their lives from the time they first came to live in the flat beneath his. He told of their pleasures and their sorrows, of times when they had been out of work and of the joy when work came to them again. It should have been dull, but his simple way of telling it made it, instead, somehow dramatic. The judge, the clerk, Officer Milen, listened.

"Now," said George, "here we all are. The State has proved a car was stolen. It's proved these girls were in it. It hasn't proved they stole it. They'll tell you they mistook it for the car a friend had loaned them—an identical car. I have begged them to call this friend, to let him support their story. And they have refused, although they have everything to lose and nothing to gain."

Here George lapsed for the first time into vernacular, and it was effective.

"They have refused because their friend is married to a wife who is incapable of believing a man would lend his car to a pretty girl without strings tied to the offer, and who would probably sue him for divorce and wreck his life and nick him for a lot of alimony—and Mary Lou and Kitty aren't the sort of girls who'll let that happen to a friend!"

George took a deep breath; for one more second he was given the Patrick Henry voice. It surprised him too, this time.

"The car has been returned to its owner. No one, so far, has been damaged. I move this case be dismissed."

THERE was a silence, deep and pregnant, like the silence when the curtain has fallen on a homely play. Kitty, her lips trembling, looked at George.

"Whatever he says, you're a wonderful lawyer," she whispered. "Not half as bad as I thought you'd be."

The judge cleared his throat. He was smiling.

"Unless the owner is here and wishes to prosecute," he said. "I will dis—"

Kitty's heart had started beating wildly. It stopped when the judge stopped; and he stopped because at that instant Sammy Poulten, hatless, perspiring and making fast time for a fat man, came running loudly toward the bench. He should, of course, have been stopped; but when a judge is talking, nobody does anything they should.

"Kitty! Mary Lou! I've fixed everything. Am I in time?"

Kitty could have shot him right where he stood. Mary Lou looked at him once, her mouth pursed as though she'd tasted a bad persimmon. Then she looked away.

The judge rapped his gavel on the bench. He wasn't smiling now.

"You are in time," he said, "to keep me from dismissing this case and make me wish to go into it more fully. Just what do you mean, you've fixed every-

1. My husband's the best-natured man in the world, but he has some old-fashioned ideas about disciplining children. He feels he's got to be strict or our little boy, Billy, will be spoiled. We were always quarreling about it.

2. And yesterday, we had it out once and for all. Billy refused to take his laxative again and kicked up the usual fuss. So Ted immediately started to *force* the stuff down Billy. The child looked so scared I just flew at my husband!

3. "You and your strict ideas," I raged. "If anybody's spoiling that child, it's *you!* Look at the way he's trembling. You can't tell *me* it does any good to get a child so upset! I'm going to call the doctor and ask *him* about these laxative fights."

4. And, sure enough, the doctor said forcing a child to take a nasty-tasting laxative could shock his delicate nervous system. He said children should get a nice-tasting laxative they'd take willingly. One made especially for them—not an adult's.

5. The doctor recommended Fletcher's Castoria. He said it's thorough, yet it's always mild and *safe.* It works mostly in the lower bowel so it isn't likely to upset a youngster's digestion. And so Ted said O. K., he'd get a bottle just to keep peace in the house.

6. Well, Billy took Fletcher's Castoria—and *how* he took it! He *loved* it! He smacked his lips and winked at his daddy, and I knew our laxative troubles were over. From that moment on, I've been telling all the mothers I know about Fletcher's Castoria.

HERE IS THE MEDICAL BACKGROUND

Chief ingredient of Fletcher's Castoria is senna.

Medical literature says: **(1)** In most cases, senna does not disturb the appetite and digestion or cause nausea . . . **(2)** Senna works primarily in the lower bowel . . . **(3)** In regulated dosages, it produces easy elimination and has little tendency to cause irritation or constipation after use.

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Chas. H. Fletcher **CASTORIA**

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thing? People don't 'fix' anything in my court."

Sammy smiled blandly. Things like judges and spectators staring at him didn't disturb him in the least. All fat men get used to being conspicuous. He regretted his choice of words, but he was a fast thinker.

"Why," he said, smiling at the judge, "I just meant the car was all fixed. You see, I smashed a wheel yesterday on my way down to the Chatham to leave it for Kitty to pick up. I didn't get there. That's how they happened to take this other car by mistake. I just heard about it and came here quick as I could. Used antelope's wings."

THE judge frowned. Here was food for thought. Kitty trembled. Mary Lou glared. George, the mantle of oratory lifted from him, went back to looking like George and popping his Adam's apple. He felt licked.

"Did you bring your car with you?" asked the judge.

Kitty held her breath. If only he'd say no! Sammy's car was a phaeton and it was black.

"Why, yes," said Sammy. "Naturally."

"The court will adjourn to inspect evidence," said the judge.

He got up and led the way from the room. With heavy hearts, Kitty and Mary Lou and George followed him. This was, so far as they could see, the end of the world. Tom Dewey himself couldn't save them now. They walked out of the courthouse with their eyes actually closed. They couldn't bear to look. They were practically holding out their hands for Officer Milen to snap on the gyves.

Kitty opened her eyes first, just a little. Then they popped wide.

At the curb in front of the courthouse was Mr. Zant's beautiful big blue convertible cabriolet. Right behind it was another beautiful big blue convertible cabriolet. Two peas in a pod were no more similar. Kitty blinked. Mary Lou whistled through her teeth. The judge was looking from car to car and stroking his chin. He seemed deeply puzzled. He was. He addressed Sammy.

"You say this is your car?" he said.

Sammy nodded.

"Yes sir! I bought it recently. Bought it from a fella named Ackerbie. Still using his plates. · It's fast, too. Got antelope's wings."

The judge winced. That expression bothered him. This whole thing was beginning to bother him.

"Let me see your owner's license."

Sammy without a qualm handed it over. Kitty, Mary Lou, George, Officer Milen and the clerk of the court all peered over the judge's shoulder at it. The judge, as was his right, quickly moved away. He was staring at the date on the transfer. In their hurry, Ackerbie and Sammy had done the natural thing. They had dated it as of that morning. It told as plain as day just what Sammy had meant when he said he'd fix everything. He certainly had.

The judge could have kicked him for showing up. He didn't believe for a minute those girls had stolen a car. He hated to bring them to trial. That eerie-looking young lawyer, too—he was good; if he won his first case, he might go far. He stroked his chin hard. He could hear Kitty and Mary Lou panting in excitement behind him. He thought about his daughter, and hoped she didn't marry anybody who looked like George or this Sammy person. He started to turn back toward the courthouse. He heard Kitty's gasp of disappointment. He prayed, not so much for guidance, as for the Lord to show him a loophole.

SUDDENLY he thought he saw the whole thing. Looking as stern as he knew how, he drew Sammy and George and the girls to one side.

"Young man," he said, "are you married to a doubting wife?"

"Me?" Sammy's voice went way up high and cracked. "Me, married? Why, I want to marry Mary Lou, and I think maybe now that we've made up our fight about Grant and Lee, why, maybe she will. I—"

The judge's mouth twitched. He was almost sure now. He looked squarely at Kitty.

"Is Mr. Ackerbie married to a doubting wife?" he asked.

Kitty's eyes answered him.

"Case dismissed," he said. "Now get out of here." He looked at Kitty out of the corners of his eyes. "You bother me," he said.

He was even more bothered when, quite ignoring George, Sammy, Mary Lou, Officer Milen and the clerk of the court, Kitty kissed him.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY

(Continued from page 30)

No, again he had drawn a blank. But as he was very conscientious, he read another couple of pages.

All accepted manuscripts came back to him. He had to read them once more in proof. But he seemed to feel that those he rejected rose from the grave again and again. He mailed them to the authors, but they came back—from other authors. "The Mystery of a Woman's Heart" . . . had he not read it hundreds of times before? He had rejected that story a thousand times, and still it returned to him. The mystery always remained the same. For eight years he had been reading about this female heart and its mystery. Today he would reject the story once more. But he knew that the mail would bring it back tomorrow.

He still held the manuscript in his hand, overcome by the endless repetition that marked his labors in that room. The pile on his table . . . had it not always been there, a bottomless pile of hopeless pages?

"She expected that her long struggle would win the reward of love." It seemed far from promising. The stuff was poor that day. And sometimes he had to dig up a whole field to find anything fit for the harvester's basket.

OUTSIDE, the sun rose high. The vernal equinox . . . day and night sharing the twenty-four hours like good brothers. They might have begun to work the ground in the high dry places.

His brother Gustav, who now has the farm, is lifting the harrow over the stones in the field. In the track made by his wooden shoes the first wagtail hops, looking for worms in the dirt and wagging its tail feathers to proclaim its arrival.

The spring planting has begun. Gustav is harrowing. The sun beats down on the gable of the barn which gives forth the odor of last year's hay. From the wagon shed rises the smell of newly greased wheels, and in the courtyard the linen woven during the winter lies spread out to bleach.

And here Knut sat—the eldest son—reading one story after another from morning until night, either in manuscript or in proof. "The Mystery of a Woman's Heart." Again and again he read about this all too familiar mystery which constantly returned to him, day after day, year after year. And he was paid ten thousand a year, a lot of money. The livelihood of himself and his family was fully assured. Of course, there was not a single krona left at the end of the year, but there was no point in saving anything out of an annual income. Why bother, when next year will bring another? He read and read, and in one year earned almost enough to buy a small farm in his home district.

There he had sat for eight long years, at that table, in that room.

The sky of the March morning was deep blue. But he turned his eyes from the window, folded up "The Mystery of a Woman's Heart," and dropped it in the rejected heap. Slowly he picked out another manuscript from the big pile. He had to dig his way through that pile as he had done thousands of other mornings.

IT was a part of their established routine for the eighteenth of March, to dine out. Knut had reserved a table at the Atlantic, where it was the night for dancing. He and Aina arrived late so that they could stay for it.

They sat opposite each other at the specially set table, nursing old memories which the day brought back. They strove honestly to help each other evoke a festive mood. Yet both of them realized that they had not been brought there by any spontaneous impulse. They had dressed and gone out together to celebrate their wedding anniversary. The charm of sudden inspiration was lacking. It was more like a ritual, a program arranged in advance. In order to carry it through with dignity certain feelings had to be aroused and cherished.

Ten years had thoroughly worn off all novelty from their life together. They had no more surprises to offer each other, either good or bad. As a rule they lived side by side without friction. Quietly and peacefully they vegetated through the many monotonous days of each year. They had common ground in their two children, and in laboring jointly for them and for their home. Today they were trying to meet in a common past.

They missed the ardent feelings that had vanished. Expressions of love are cushions prepared by man and woman to coddle each other's vanity. But one day the cushions disappear, the man and woman reproach each other: "You are no longer what you used to be!" Yet neither one of them has changed at all. The real trouble is that they have proved incapable of change. And at such a time the man finds it harder to accept the necessity of resignation.

Aina Toring was one of those people who always manage to make the most of their station in life. For that reason she sat there with a mind full of almost childish expectation. They were not going to analyze each other or the past, but they were going to resurrect the great day of ten years ago—as far as the ruinous work of time would permit. As a wedding anniversary it might not amount to much but it would avoid the monotony of every day.

Knut tried to strike a tone of gayety. After two glasses of *brännvin* with the *smörgåsbord*, his words came without effort. When the fish was served, he raised his glass and said with a touch of mock solemnity:

"Here's to the bygone years! How many they are! My memory is not so good, you know."

He dwelt lightly on the cause of their celebration. His wife smiled and thought he had struck the right note. They touched glasses.

"To think I've been married ten years!" she said, leaning toward him across the table. "It is really horrible."

"I think it shows courage."

"In whom? In you?" She smiled, but there was seriousness in her searching glance.

"In both of us."

"You ought to be ashamed!"

"But why say there's anything horrible about those ten years?"

Aina's smile faded away.

"Because—anyone who has been married ten years can't be young any more."

"And you are thirty-three—how horrible!"

"Perhaps not so very horrible as far as age goes."

"A lot of people would say you were twenty-five."

"But I feel so old." Slowly and thoughtfully Aina sipped her glass of wine. "Perhaps it's because of the children," she added. "Karin has had her ninth birthday. Already she uses my powder secretly. It seems so strange. Now she is the young girl, not I."

They both fell silent while the waiter changed plates.

HE thought Aina placed too much weight on the inevitable fact that one grew older. But that was a woman's way, he supposed. To him the change was a different one, and far more fundamental. However . . . no dark thoughts must disturb their anniversary night.

They returned to their pleasant memories. But it was impossible to remember without making comparisons.

They talked of their first little apartment which they rented during a shortage of residential buildings. They had to wait for it a long time and their marriage had hung fire. For society is so constituted

How's your "Pep Appeal"? —by Williamson

Professor: Look here, you two, why didn't you attend my lecture? A fascinating subject: "The function of vitamin B_1 in the optimum dietary."

Dolly: But professor! We *know* our vitamins and all about "pep appeal"! Come join us for lunch and see!

Professor: What do you mean, *pep appeal?* It sounds like utter nonsense to me.

Sue: Why professor, you've said yourself we couldn't have pep without vitamins. You know, *pep, oomph, zip-zip, whiz!*

Dolly: There, professor, you have vitamins de luxe. In crisp, toasted curly flakes of wheat—that scrumptious cereal called KELLOGG'S PEP. Rich in the two vitamins that are least abundant and thus most needed in ordinary diets—vitamins B_1 and D.

Professor: But what a taste! What a flavor! And to think that all the textbooks in the library hadn't told me about KELLOGG'S PEP.

Professor: (sometime later) Well, I'll see tonight how your *pep appeal* idea works.

Dolly: You know what the philosopher said, professor: "Where there's pep there's hope!"

Vitamins for pep! Kellogg's Pep for vitamins!

Pep contains per serving: 4/5 to 1/5 the minimum daily need of vitamin B_1, according to age; 1/2 the daily need of vitamin D. For sources of other vitamins, see the Pep package.

MADE BY KELLOGG'S IN BATTLE CREEK COPYRIGHT, 1941, BY KELLOGG COMPANY

that the condition of the real-estate market hampered the fulfillment of their love.

The woman across the table, Aina, his wife . . . she roused a strong feeling of comradeship in him, and from her presence he derived the comfort of a gratified habit. But one cannot remember without making comparisons, and these prove an inescapable source of melancholy.

WHEN he prepared a home for her and himself—for Aina, his fiancée . . . was she not another woman? Her mere presence had warmed his heart and filled his soul with bliss. There had been something beautiful about their common struggle for a home that amounted to nothing but a single room with a kitchenette. During the day they worked apart, and at night they exchanged encouragement and praise. They had used all their strength to be able to live together. Everything not connected with this goal seemed strangely insignificant. A home and a life in common for ever and ever . . . that would end all troubles and solve all problems. And they would have laughed at whoever dared deny it.

They refused to draw on their happiness in advance. To Aina it was a foregone conclusion, and even if he held a somewhat different opinion, it was not emphatic enough to make him regard her attitude as old-fashioned. To possess each other beforehand would have robbed their marriage of some of that beauty in which he too believed. One's choice of the woman who was to fill one's life forever was made only once, and then decisively. Such was his underlying belief. And the romance of that choice must be preserved. Consequently he expressed only a fear that the world might perish before they found an apartment and could get married.

Their first apartment never knew a minute that had to be killed: every hour was equally welcome. Here they savored the joy of conquest that sprang from every new piece of equipment—the table in the hallway, the bookcase, the lampshade, the sofa-cover. There was no elevator in the building; every night he ran up the stairs, breathing heavily. Aina was already at home, her day's work at the office done. Puffing and panting, he put the key in the lock . . . but he could seldom open the door before Aina was there to meet him. As soon as she heard the first faint scraping of the key, she flew to the door from the kitchenette in that adorable apron of hers, like a captive bird released from its cage. And to him it was a joy to find her standing there when the door opened. He wanted nothing more than to have his eyes see her first when he entered their common home.

Through the veins of both ran that happy desire which is never fully satisfied . . . the desire which leads to the richest fulfillment to be had on this earth . . . the blessed desire that is wholly turned in a single direction. But when that vanished, tragedy drew near.

Knut began to lack words because he was full of thoughts not suited to the festive board. And since those thoughts could not take shape in words, he spoke carefully before he addressed Aina.

Ten years contained more than three thousand days—more than enough, indeed, even for an insatiable love.

And at last he had turned to others in quest of what was lost. He searched deeply in the eyes of women. He was haunted by images representing the thing he sought. He must find it. He must experience it once more. It was the fate of man never to be satisfied. It was the fate of man to ask for more, and ever more. He was convinced that love had something to offer beyond what he himself knew and the thought of it was more than he could bear. There must be nothing which he did not experience. "I, just I, myself, have a right to everything," he told himself. And with that he plunged into the pursuit of those images.

Then came a morning . . . a bad one. He had to force himself to meet his wife's eyes. He had been unfaithful to her. To hide it from her was his simple duty. She must be spared. She must never suffer the pain of his deceit. It had happened—but Aina did not know. He struggled and he suffered. But a woman's intuition is like a sensitive plant, and she began to feel that he was turning from her. Then came accusations, but no proofs, for he lied. He lied and disgust tormented him.

They were living in another and larger apartment. He came up the stairs late one night and without haste. He no longer wanted Aina to run to the door to meet him. Nor did she, and for this he was grateful. For that night someone else had hurried to meet him at another door.

He had been lured by another woman, but it had brought no refreshment. Desperately he resumed his pursuit, only to become more deeply disappointed. And at last enlightenment came to him. The simple truth is that everything new must grow old. Satisfaction of the senses is not sufficient in the end. He had sought the unattainable in women, and he had strayed far afield without finding what he sought. He had only been chasing a mirage.

Just one woman had stood the test of everyday wear and tear, and to her he returned, for all else was a delusion. He returned to Aina and to his former faith which revealed everything, and he hoped that harmony would be restored. But his wife had suffered too much humiliation. Her lost faith in him was slow to revive. And slow was the process of making peace with his own conscience. He had paid a high price for a mere delusion, but perhaps the truth could not have been learned for less.

HIS wife continued to eye him searchingly across the table.

"What are you thinking of?"

"I?"

"You grew silent so suddenly," his wife said.

"Oh. . . . I was thinking—how small our first home was."

Yes, it was small, very tiny, Aina assented eagerly. There was hardly space enough for both of them in the hallway. But they never noticed in those days how small it was. And they needed no larger a place until Karin was born. Then the situation changed. Besides the location was too far out of town. . . .

"Skoal!" he said.

"Skoal!"

A light now came into Aina's eyes. She recalled how they arranged that first room of theirs. It had taken her a long time to get up the curtains. She wanted everything in the place to have a personal touch. Long after they had moved in she was still hemstitching and embroidering. Did he remember? Yes, indeed, he remembered. He could see her night after night making stitches by the thousand. That hemstitching took an awful lot of time. She would work until her eyes ached, and she would prick herself with the needle until little drops of blood oozed from her finger tips. Then he would go over and kiss it away. And she would tell him that they must have nice embroidered curtains for their windows because it was the proper thing.

Their task was great, but they knew that it was nearing completion and that soon it would be finished.

And now he sat gazing idly at the fingers that had made all those stitches in the curtains . . . at the finger tips which she had wounded with the needle. They were the finger tips of Aina, his wife.

"Yes, the curtains were difficult," she said at last. "But I believe—things not finished too quickly are worth more."

A shadow of seriousness darkened her eyes for a moment. It would be better, she thought, never quite to finish a task.

SINCE her great humiliation Aina had raised a wall of silent pride around herself. Within it she guarded what was particularly her own . . . her dignity and her inviolate self-respect. In this fortress her existence found a new equilibrium.

Her husband had come back to her, but the man who has broken faith is no longer in love, and she was inclined to believe that he had ceased to love her long ago. This he had never confessed openly, of course, but men are too cowardly to make frank and honest acknowledgment when their feelings change. Then cowardice in matters of love knows no bounds. She, on the other hand, had been prepared to leave her husband. In the end, however, Knut had mastered enough courage to confess his futile search. He had dared to show her what he scorned most in himself: his own cowardice which made him prefer evasion. His belated frankness had brought them closer together again. And she knew that the guilty party could not have escaped his share of suffering.

Nor was her own love the same as before. The flame of naïve exacting desire had lost its glow. Yet her feelings had stood the ordeal better than his. She still needed to receive and bestow tenderness.

The man opposite her was thinking, too. Had Aina never broken her faith? Had she never sought revenge? Those questions were impossible to answer. Yet he knew the reply in his innermost mind: his knowledge of her pride convinced him. She would never give herself to one man merely to revenge herself on another. That price for vengeance seemed too high. And he was happy in the confidence he felt in her. To have one human being whom you could trust fully—that was enough to make life more worth living. And he needed his faith in Aina sorely.

Aina, his wife—what he treasured most of all was her womanly pride.

When, in spite of this, an eternal "why" pursued him in regard to their

marriage, he could find only one answer —"because." Marriage implied their home, their children, their shared experiences. Perhaps it could not be otherwise because the purpose of such a union was not their own selfish gratification. Only the pressing needs of existence tied married couples together. Emotions faded and altered, but the tie created by those needs remained. In two little beings, Rune and Karin, he and Aina had achieved the unity which love itself denies to man and woman. This unity was worth living for, and life could be endured when one knew that no other unity was attainable. In addition, the joys and sorrows they had shared created another tie between them. They had—reckoning from the day of their first meeting—given each other twelve years. They had given each other almost the whole portion of youth. And what they had experienced in common could not be divided. It was not something either of them could pick up and carry part of away. The ownership must be shared—or lost. And he did not wish to lose it.

That was the answer to the "why" of marriage. The maturing man had found it. Ten years of marriage—a restaurant dinner for two—and marital musings that could not be expressed in words.

"ANYTHING more?"

The waiter hovered expectantly beside the table.

"I had forgotten."

"Yes," Aina laughed, "you were far away."

Knut brought his mind back to his duties.

He ordered wine for the dessert, and asked Aina to select a fine cordial to go with the coffee, for she knew more about such matters than he. Without hesitation she chose yellow chartreuse. She was born in the city, and its abundance did not intimidate her as it did him.

Little by little the place had filled up with guests, and the dancing began while they were still having coffee. They danced, too—once, several times. The dancers moved in a huddle on a central square of modest size. They needed little space. The modern dance had adapted itself to the limitations of the big city.

One member of the orchestra sang the refrain. The rhythm was nervous, violent, and yet without gayety. The people on the floor melted into a circular mass, forming a gigantic centipede with joints made up of dancing couples. This centipede curled itself into many little rings within the larger one. Then it moved slowly around and around on hundreds of feet shuffling in time.

Aina became animated. Knut danced until he perspired. He could feel the silk shirt sticking to his skin. The place was poorly ventilated. The tobacco smoke made his eyes smart. He longed for air that had no poison and that other people had not breathed.

"Knut!" Aina's glance sparkled at him as they walked back to their table. "You and I are pretty happy after all."

"After all?" His tone was waggishly inquisitive.

"I mean that we have been far more unhappy."

In another moment she wished that she had not uttered the last words. Out of mutual consideration they generally passed over their previous conflicts and sufferings in silence. What was the use of touching a barely healed wound that they both had suffered? It could only hurt them equally.

"We have been through a lot of things, you and I," Knut replied in the same tone as before, and thus the danger spot was passed.

IN the car on their way home later Aina instinctively leaned her head toward her husband. With closed eyes she called for his kiss. Her mouth came close to his. She ignored the ten years and the ravages of time. She knew how to make the most of what remained.

Tenderly Knut put his arm around his wife's shoulders as he kissed her. The mutual attraction of their bodies remained. It had not slackened. It reasserted itself. Again and again they would seek each other.

In addition he nourished a burning desire to be capable of such self-deception as would wipe out ten whole years and restore their wedding day in its original splendor. He must shake himself out of all this introspection. He must stop asking "why" and looking for motives. He caressed his wife. He asked for her . . . he wanted her. But why? Did he really love her? Was he true or false to her? why? . . . No, he would not try to answer those questions. He would evade them, for that night at least. Man had a sentimental need to transform reality. Perhaps the need was a legitimate one, of which neither of them had reason to feel ashamed. . . . Yes, evasion was the proper thing.

They drove back to their home. Beyond the windows of the car lay the silent wonder of the night. With a gentle swishing as of tenderly whispered words the wheels rolled along the asphalt.

LUCKY LETTER

(Continued from page 31)

from the envelope. She wondered why so small a sheet of paper should have been sent in so large an envelope, and examined the faded handwriting. There was only a line or two above a signature dimmer than the rest, but the words stirred recollections of conversations long ago overheard and vaguely understood. She was so absorbed in trying to piece it all together that she did not hear the door open. Ken almost bumped into her.

"Sorry," he said. "Guess I must have been thinking about something else too. Don't wait supper for me. I'm going down to the place. Thought I might as well take a last look around there, and straighten things up the best I can. Won't be much chance tomorrow when those birds we've been doing business with get word that we're through and come swarming in to snatch their bit. I —That's right, don't bother about me. Go right ahead and read your mail."

"Oh, Ken," said Joan. "I was listening, and you know very well I was; but I was thinking about this letter of Aunt Matey's too. It was written in 1860, and it just occurred to me that— Why, Ken, what's the matter?"

"Matter!" said Ken. "In 1860? Did you say 1860? . . . . Why, that's what Charley Burns was telling me about the other day. If it was mailed in 1860, it might have one of those— Hey, let me see that envelope." He took the envelope and examined it carefully. "Yes sir," he said. "It's him, all right enough, and it's green. It must be the one. It—well, anyhow, say a prayer, honey: I'm going to see Charley!"

THINGS were happening so fast that Joan had difficulty keeping up with them. She sat on the edge of the open trunk and wondered what had got into Ken. Then, although by now she knew the words by heart, she looked again at the sheet of paper.

"Dear Miss Matey," she read. *"My heart is sad, but since it is your wish there is no alternative. Under this same seal I am returning your letters. Regretfully and respectfully yours—"*

Joan could not decipher the signature, but all the rest was clear now. She sat there remembering the long-ago-overheard idle wonderings as to why Aunt Matey, "who must have been a beauty when she was young," never had married. The book was open on her lap. She picked it up and looked again at the verse on the page where the letter had been. She still was looking at it and thinking about it, when Ken returned, smiling as he had not smiled for a month, and insisted upon dancing her up and down the hall.

"Yes sir, Joanie," she heard him jubilating, "Charley collects stamps, and he was telling me at lunch the other day about some of them. Particularly he was telling me about one which was green, with Thomas Jefferson's picture on it, and came out in 1860. He said that even though the stamps were only ten-centers when they were issued, they were so rare now that a lot of people would pay big money for them. So when you said 1860, it came to me like a flash, and I grabbed that envelope, and—"

Ken halted to breathe and to gaze triumphantly at the world.

"And well, sir," he resumed, "it sure was lucky, that with ordinary letters costing only three cents then, just the way they do now, she happened to save that one. Because I went to see Charley, and Charley took me to see that big expert, and he said the stamp was a green Jefferson sure enough, and we're going to get four hundred dollars for it, and that will save the business and leave us something extra besides, and—" He looked at her, surprised. "Hey," he said, "snap out of it! Don't you know that with a break like this you ought to be glad too?"

Joan had been thinking about how strange it was that something which had been so sad long ago could be converted into such good fortune now.

"Why, of course I'm glad, Ken," she said. . . . She knew that Aunt Matey would understand.

YOU CAN'T BEAT BEAUTY

(Continued from page 51)

fenses; and when the cop stepped up, he found that it was a cinch. Mason felt a sort of universal velvet—black velvet—drop down from the sky and blot out hearing, seeing, touch, taste and smell. He was alone in nowhere.

AT the same time, in Parkens' office, the stage was being set for another violent operation. Neither Rosebelle nor Mason had thought of finding out about Bart's hours off. He was, as a matter of fact, off duty between three and six, when he was expected to reappear at the *bistro* and play music until three o'clock in the morning. He had assured himself about Parkens, and this was the afternoon he had chosen.

He rode to the elaborate offices by bus. He went up in the elevator. There was an unnoticeable bulge under his right arm. He told the receptionist that he had come to see Mr. Parkens.

"I'm sorry," she said, "but he's busy."

"I'll wait."

"He's in conference."

"Do you want me to tear the place up —or will you go in and tell him I'm here?"

Parkens was in a bland mood. He was also in conference—with Kittertree and some other men. The other men were new clients, brought by the Merrybridge executive. One of them was just finishing a little speech, such as advertising men make in an hour and a quarter or so: "In consequence, Parkens, we all feel that we will entrust this whole thing to you. That Merrybridge job was a smash—as Kittertree has said. Best campaign of the year. And now—for our new campaign—"

The receptionist came in. "There's a 'Bart' here to see you. Mr. Parkens—"

"Bart? Bart? Bart?"

Kittertree rose, chuckling. "We'll run along. The contracts will come through tomorrow, I imagine."

"What does he look like?" Parkens asked the girl.

"Oh—handsome, young—but wild, sort of. A sharp face and reddish hair and eyes like a leopard—"

One of the advertising men smiled. "Probably the son of a college chum, looking for work. I get dozens. Often wish my classmates had stayed bachelors!" He went out on that note of glee, followed by the others.

Parkens said to the waiting girl: "Well —send the boy in!"

Bart shut the door behind himself. He turned. He stared at the smiling man behind the large, natural-wood desk. "Parkens?"

"Mm! What can I do for you?" Then Parkens saw Bart's face—the taut lips, the bared teeth, the opaque eyes, which seemed to be spinning. Parkens' smile foundered.

Bart's arm flicked into his coat and came out with a pistol. "Jes' set still," he said. "Ah'm goin' to kill you!"

Parkens reached for his button battery.

Bart said: "Sit still! An' don't ring nuthin'." Without budging his eyes, he slid a chair under him and slowly sat down.

Parkens became hypnotized by the direct point of the gun—by the inflexibility of that point. It didn't wabble or waver. It aimed at his forehead as steadily as if it were in a vise. A man bent on murder, Parkens thought esoterically, ought to tremble. If he didn't tremble, it meant that he was sure to kill. Parkens discovered his voice: "I—I don't even know you!"

"No. But you know Jen Narbey."

The picture began to clear. This was a mountain boy—a swain of Jen's, come all the way from West Virginia, like the idol in the play—to get revenge.

Most people would have called Parkens a nice man. They would have said that he conducted a top-notch business, and that he was a good tennis-player. They would not have thought of him as a brave man. Parkens would not have thought of himself as brave, either. But now that his life was suspended on the finger of a maniacal mountaineer, he found himself fairly calm. He met Bart eye to eye and said, with increasing vigor: "Have you talked to Jen lately?"

"Ah aint seen little Jen. Ah don' propose to. See here, mistah: You took Jen an' Susannah away from her folks. Away from Stumpneyville. Away from me. Ah was a-fixin' to marry thet gel. Ah seen a whole lot about how you Nawth'ners live, now, though, an' Ah don' intend to marry Jen no moah. Ah come here to shoot you —an' you better begin a-prayin'."

PARKENS tried to think of something. "But—Jen wanted to come! She'll go back soon—with enough money to educate her brothers and sisters! She's a good girl—er—Bart!"

"She won' never come back to me! Ah seen these New Yorkers—with their fine feathers an' fuhbelows! Cain't a one of 'em do a day's plowin' with a mule! Start a-prayin'!"

"If you pull that trigger," Parkens went on, with increasing calm, "they'll rush in. You won't get out of the building."

"Ah—kin shoot mah way out!"

Parkens was stunned. "Kill a lot of innocent people!"

"In New York—they aint no innocent people! Ah'm a-countin' to ten. One—"

"Couldn't we talk this over? Don't you feel you ought to see Jen before you do something that will get you electrocuted?"

"Two." A long silence. "Three."

Parkens glanced over the things on his desk. If there was some object he could grab and throw! The rigidity of the gun discouraged that idea.

"Four . . . five!" said Bart.

And then Parkens went into action—action that was measured and small, at the start. He leaned forward. An expression of utter astonishment crossed his face. He gazed at Bart with a sagging chin. "Lord!" he whispered.

"Seven," said Bart. "What's eatin' you?"

"Man! Man—oh, man! What a profile you must have! It's cock-eyed, us sitting here like this! But—after all, I'm an artist! You know—tens of thousands of girls apply here every year, and thousands of men. But we see a face like yours—once every blue moon! I—well, I guess I do understand it. The old English stock populated your mountains, eh? Darned near three centuries ago—"

"Hunh?" Bart said. . . . "Eight!"

Parkens' voice trembled with emotion. He seemed to have forgotten that he had only two counts left. "Do you know, Bart, you're the living, spitting image of Sir Walter Raleigh?"

"Who's he?"

"Raleigh! Yes sir! You've heard of Raleigh! England's most chivalrous hero? The greatest fighting man England ever produced? Greatest explorer—" Parkens was weaving his head from side to side, studying his man. Bart was gawping—half-pleased and half-skeptical. He started to say, *"Nine,"* but held the word in reserve. After all, his man was still sitting there, a few feet away, where he could shoot him whenever he wanted to.

"And," Parkens continued with a hushed incredulity, "your build! I'll bet you're within a pound of Raleigh! He was one of the best men with sword and rapier England ever had, too! A fighter! To the teeth! So handsome, the Queen forgot her throne for him. What a career you could have! And you're about to knock it over with that—pop-gun! The pity of it!"

"Ah don' get it," Bart said.

Parkens shook his head sadly. "I mean —you've got one of those Viking faces. Lean, hard, courageous—the face of a man of principle. Character. Hands like —like clamps. Power in 'em. A build—well, I don't know what the movies would offer for it. But I do know that it ought to be printed on every magazine—displayed fifty feet high on billboards, illuminated with electric signs. A sort of—ideal—for all young men to shoot at! Copy, I mean! Can you do anything besides? I mean—play any games, or ride, or maybe go through trees like Tarzan?"

"I play in a orchestra," Bart said perplexedly. "Traps—"

Parkens pressed his palm—slippery with sweat—against his brow. "Look here, my boy. I don't want to interfere with justice. I'm a just man. I think you're mistaken, but I'm willing to—go—if it's my turn. Only, I hate to think of you, with all you've got, rotting away in some—electric chair. Let me say something, before you pull that trigger and the lights go out for me. Just this: I could pick up that phone. I could call in camera-men, tailors, fitters, sports-equipment dealers. I could get you fifty rifles—special models, worth a thousand dollars apiece—gifts, from the firms you would advertise! I could dress you like a millionaire. You'd be the talk of the city—of the nation! There'd be movie contracts, no doubt. Look at the faces on these walls! Movie stars—men and women who got their start here! And if you'd only sacrifice a few days—for yourself, for the public. . . . Well—I'm a simple man. You know where I work, where I live. You could shoot me any time."

BART'S eyes were far-away—and shining. He mumbled to himself for a moment. And then, abruptly, he returned the gun to its holster.

"Mr. Parkens," he said, "what's the proposition?"

Parkens got on the phone. He began to order camera-men, a studio, light men, tailors. "I've got the greatest potential star at this business I've ever seen," he kept shouting. "No! Not a woman! A man! A new type of Gable! Hurry!" Secretaries and assistants were already pouring in to measure and study Bart.

Somewhere in the hurly-burly the door pushed open, and Sigrid—the real Sigrid—burst into the room. Parkens glanced at her and said: "Glad you're back from lunch. Got a new man for you to work with." Then he saw Bart's eye fall on the girl. Bart started to reach for his gun. "Hey!" Parkens shouted. "That's not Jen! That's Sigrid! The girl I hired Jen to impersonate! She was in Norway—the Nazis held her for a while, and she just got back!"

Sigrid was staring too. Staring at Bart. She saw six feet of human fever and energy, crystallized in a body like spliced rope, with eyes like hot wire. Sigrid was Scandinavian—an icy girl; but somehow she knew that this mountain Nordic had what her kind of woman wanted.

"He's cute," she said to Parkens, with her rich wintry accent.

Bart stopped reaching for his gun. He stepped over toward Sigrid. "You aren't Jen," he said slowly. "But you sure do look like her!" He made a motion—as if to slap her hard with the back of his hand. "You better stop a-callin' me cute—right this minnit!"

Her large eyes, sub-polar blue, were moist with fear, respect and other qualities. "Yes," she said humbly.

Nobody had ever heard Sigrid say an unqualified "Yes" to a man, before. She kept looking at Bart, but she spoke to Parkens. "Say! Park! I almost forgot. The reason I popped back here was to tell you that I got some guy in a mess. Name of Mason—or something. He thought I was this—" Whatever she had intended to say about Jen remained unspoken because of a leering frown from Bart. "The girl who impersonated me. They put him in jail."

"Mason Marsfield," Parkens said, giving the detail a moment of his attention. He spoke an aside, *sotto voce*, to a photographer. "Is he going to be any good at all? I mean—he's gotta be!" The camera-man made a circle of his thumb and index finger—meaning that Bart was a better-than-passable subject for the lens. Parkens sighed and went on: "In jail, eh? Well—it's a good place for him. I'll do something about him later—if I remember. Right now, I'm launching the career of—of— We'll find a good name for him!"

Work was resumed. Bart asked Sigrid what she was doing for dinner; Sigrid said she had a date—and Bart told her to cancel it. She agreed.

TOWARD six o'clock the telephone in the Tolfrith suite at the hotel rang musically. Susannah answered. She had been humming to herself—humming and packing. "Yes?"

There was a dolorous voice. "This—is Mason."

"Well! How's Cold-feet?"

"May I please—talk to Jen?"

"She's getting the tickets. Not here.

Said the Lady in the Other Bed . . .

"I've had 3 and I know—
BABIES TAKE TO CLAPP'S!"

"DON'T YOU WORRY! When the time comes for strained vegetables, there's no *need* to have those ructions your friends have been telling you about. Just you take my advice and try Clapp's—they really taste good! Babies just naturally seem to love 'em!"

Think of the way you like vegetables—with a good, our-own-garden flavor and careful, savory seasoning—then you'll know why Clapp's appeal so much to babies. For Clapp's are cooked as soon as they come from nearby truck gardens, and they're delicately salted the way doctors advise. Textures, too, are adapted to a baby's tongue—smoothly strained, but not too liquid.

Menus for babies have changed and grown a lot in the 20 years since Clapp's offered the first strained baby foods. Now Clapp's has 17 varieties of Strained Foods—every one chosen and developed after numberless talks with doctors and mothers. Did you know that Clapp's has always made baby foods and *nothing but* baby foods?

17 VARIETIES OF STRAINED FOODS

Soups—Vegetable Soup • Beef Broth • Liver Soup • Vegetables with Beef • Vegetables with Lamb • **Vegetables**—Asparagus • Spinach Peas • Beets • Carrots • Green Beans Mixed Greens • **Fruits**—Apricots Prunes • Applesauce • Pears-and-Peaches • **Cereal**—Baby Cereal.

Time to change to coarser foods? Your baby will take it in stride—if you avoid abrupt changes in taste and texture. Clapp's Junior Foods are ready and waiting—coarsely chopped, but uniformly even, with the same pleasant flavors as the Strained.

Clapp's Strained Foods

OKAYED BY DOCTORS AND BABIES

We're leaving for Stumpneyville on the seven-ten."

Mason groaned. "Leaving!"

"Yes, Mason. Jen's pretty sick of the city—and everything. The real Sigrid came back today—"

"I found that out," he said with extreme acerbity.

"And Jen told Mr. Parkens she was going to go. He paid her—all he'd promised—for months of work she hasn't done. So we're started for the mountains. We're going to build a real house, right in the middle of Zeekerville—with a cardroom!"

"She's—" he stammered and continued hollowly: "She's pretty sore—at me?"

"Jen's that mad at you, she'd gladly pen you up with a skunk."

"That's what I thought."

"But if you don't show up at the station, she'll get *really* mad!" Susannah laughed—and hung up.

MASON wandered toward the train gate unevenly. People bumped him. He felt weak, listless. The crowd, the lights, the noise—and his headache. He had no hat on. No hat was big enough to include the bandages on his skull. His face, too, looked as if there were prunes set here and there on it. A boxed corsage of orchids dangled from his little finger, bumping his legs.

At the gate, Jen and her great-aunt waited. Jen was dressed in one of the autumn season's most fetching travel suits. But Susannah was wearing a Stumpneyville costume. She thought it would be more fun to "break" her new wardrobe on her old cronies little by little. The old lady saw Mason in the distance. She nudged Jen, nearly knocking her over. "There he is!"

Jen looked up from the newspaper she had been reading. Her face became alabaster white, spotted with scarlet. "Susannah! He's been in jail! He—he—grabbed—Sigrid! Thinking it was me! He knocked out two taxi-drivers! It's all over the front page!" She gazed. "Look at him! Covered with gauze! Black and blue!"

Mason had not yet spotted them. His vision was temporarily uncertain. Susannah pushed Jen again. "Go on! I guess you know he loves you, now—don't you, you moron!"

"He's got to tell me—himself," Jen replied wistfully and bitterly. "I know it—but he's got to say so! He grabbed Sigrid—not me! And if he doesn't speak—well, I'll stay in the hills till I die!"

Mason saw, wheeled, and came up. His face flushed, so far as it could. He was using the football play on no more women. Not in public, anyway. And he was scared. "I—I brought a flower," he said vaguely.

"Oh." Jen murmured. "That was sweet!" She looked at him hopefully.

Perhaps he had expected her to charge into his arms—a move that would have been physically painful to him, but spiritually satisfactory. But Jen showed no signs of charging.

"I—" he began. He saw the newspaper, and flushed redder. She was probably disgusted. He tried a smile. It split his lip wider. "I hope you have a nice trip—"

The train gate clanged open. Lightning struck among the clouds that rolled inside Jen. She took the flowers—acrimoniously. "Oh! We're sure to! And—good-by! It was nice to know you."

She held out her hand. He shook it.

"Come, Susannah!"

Mason stared at them as they started down the steps. "I must run after her," he thought. "She's leaving." But—a man can't just rush along a platform—in the wake of a girl!

People were closing in around Jenneth and her great-aunt. Soon, only Susannah's hat was visible. A local milliner's handiwork—a thing of size and decoration—a concoction of flowers, plumes, ribbon, and birds. Birds! Mason looked at the birds and began moving through the gate himself. There was one—a warbler, a little yellow chap with orange and green tipping on his wings. Mason had never seen or heard of that warbler. Some boy had shot it, perhaps. A local taxidermist had mounted it. The Zeekerville milliner had put it on Susannah's hat. It was incredible, but self-evident. There, riding on an old lady's hat, was a new species! An event in science! The first creature that would bear the sub-name, *"Masona."* Mason charged—banging people about.

Jen looked back once, from the Pullman steps. She saw him coming. This time, her face lighted. The storm rolled on. She was the right girl to be at Mason's side at formal dinners—and the right one to be there when he plowed through Amazon jungles. She knew it. Evidently he did too. It was about time! Mason saw her arms reaching out. He forgot the bird entirely.

IN the end, they didn't call it the *Masona.* They named it *Jennethia.* The term *"Masona"* was given to a South American finch, several months later, during their honeymoon.

It was a wonderful honeymoon, full of exciting discoveries. And they made one more discovery on their return—from the deck of the South American boat as it was warped toward its berth in New York City. On shore, cutting off a segment of the elevated highway, was a mighty sign—an advertisement showing a boy, a girl and a large mechanism. The gadget looked cool and efficient, but the persons who had posed for the sign were not faking their expression of rapturous warmth. It was real. An asterisk a foot in diameter led the eye to a credit-line on the billboard. *"Posed," it said, "by Sigrid, the Merrybridge Girl, and Hamlet Lebrave, the Appalachian Adonis."*

THE END

THE VISIT

(Continued from page 55)

"Say," said Ned, struggling up from the table a little later and stretching his arms in the air. "I'll put the kids to bed now if you two have some business you want to talk over. Take him out and show him your garden, Jane." He grinned at Dan. "Here—kiss your dad good night, kids."

"Good night, Dad."

"Good night, Dad."

And they pecked Dan lightly on the chin.

HE felt foolish and thwarted as he took a walk around the yard with his ex-wife. She had led him into the living-room first, and then, after a strange look about her, had hurried out through the side door into the garden.

"The yellow roses are beautiful at this time of year, don't you think?" she said, waving her hand toward them in the half-light.

He came closer, to see them, and she moved away from him, her heels biting sharply at the stone walk. "We have loads of baby's-breath, too. It's lovely in July and August."

"Jane," said Dan, "do you ever write any more?"

"No," she answered. He thought of the dirty old typewriter they both had used, and of the table it sat on. Jane would kick the table-leg whenever she got to the exciting parts, and that day they sold the furniture to a dealer, the fellow had called the little mahogany thing kindling wood and gave them only seventy-five cents for it.

"I saw Chuck the other day," said Dan. "He and Helen broke up, you know, and he's living with a little Polish girl down on the waterfront some place."

"Oh," said Jane.

"It was just the same," he went on after a moment, leaning against the fence. "The old gang at the table by the window—most of them—a few new ones. We sat and argued and sang at each other nearly all night—just like we used to. Molly's a little fatter," he said, "and Joe's gone over to another paper. Sal's written another novel—but they haven't changed much." He crushed out a cigarette, and watched her carefully. "The phonograph was whining in the corner, and we all sat there and sort of shouted over it through the smoke. They played old ones mostly—'Whispering'—"

"Do you like the house?" Jane asked him. "We've done a lot with it, you know. It was just an old rundown cottage in the first place, and we've built on and painted. I papered a whole bedroom myself."

"Do you ever get up to New York, Jane?" asked Dan, breaking in.

"No," she hesitated. "There's not much time, you know—I have the children and the house, and in the mornings I usually work in the garden." She looked around her. "And there's church every Sunday, and prayer-meeting Wednesday nights. That's fun, you know. Things go on at school, and there's a missionary society that I'm treasurer of, which means keeping accounts. Lots of things happen all the time—maybe you wouldn't think so." She turned away from him. "Why, tomorrow night the first-grade mothers are giving a bazaar at the Methodist Church. And next week our Sunday-school class is having a big picnic at the amusement park—"

Suddenly Jane wasn't talking any more. The buzz of the evening throbbed in Dan's ears. "Oh, it's great fun, you know," she said, and when he turned to look at her,

she was crying quietly, leaning against the garden fence with her hands over her face.

"Hey, you two," called Ned from the other side of the garden, and his footsteps squashed down the walk toward them. "Look, honey, I got dressed up for you. I'm not a dirty old farmer any more." His hair was slicked back now, and a neat blue suit hung on him loosely.

"Come on," he said, reaching for Jane's hand, "let's go down and take a look at this new colt. He'll make a fine horse some day."

In the morning Dan took his children off for a walk in the woods. Things were better now—he had given them their presents at breakfast, and they had those to talk about. He sat on a stump and let them build tunnels around him. He studied their faces and the way they played, and tried to remember himself as a child.

"Look at the ants, Marg—should I step on them?"

"Don't you dare, Hugh! It'll rain sure as anything."

Once during the morning, after Margaret had taken a fall on the pine needles, she climbed blindly into Dan's lap to be comforted. Dan sat there for some time on the sharp stump with his daughter warm in his arms, and thought of many things.

On the way home, Hugh suddenly threw his shoulders back and spat widely, for no good reason.

"I wouldn't do that," said Dan. He would, of course, but it seemed natural to protest.

"Ned does," said Hugh firmly and finally, and they walked on.

It was decided after some argument that the children might go with them when Ned drove Dan to the station. They were very happy about it, and sat waiting patiently in the back seat while Dan said good-by to Jane.

"I'm glad you could come down and see the children," she said.

"I'm glad too," said Dan, looking at Ned. He hesitated a moment.

"I don't know how long I'll be in New York, but when I come back or when they're a little older, I'd like to have them on a visit some time."

"That would be lovely," said Jane vaguely.

"Good-by." He climbed into the car and waved at her. "I'll be seeing you," he called tritely. He wanted to make her meet his eyes, to show him the truth. But she had turned and was going quickly up the front steps.

"There's something I think I ought to tell you," said Ned, when they were out on the highway with the wind blowing through the windows and the children quarreling casually on the back seat. "You know that money you send every month for the kids? Well, a couple of years ago when there was a big corn surplus on the market, I borrowed some of it." He stopped, waiting.

"I'm glad it came in handy," Dan told him.

"Oh, it's all paid back now," said Ned quickly. "*With* interest. It'll be mighty nice to have," he added, "when it comes time for us to send these kids to college."

Dan took out a cigarette and lit it. "Alfalfa," he thought; "I'll bet that's alfalfa in that field."

"Did Jane tell you our news?" Ned asked him a little shyly as they drove up to the station a while later.

"No." It was odd—it hadn't struck him before, but that was it, of course.

"We're planning on a child of our own in the spring," said Ned; he climbed out of the car and beamed with proud eyes at the handful of people on the platform.

When Dan was on the train, he put his bag up right away so that he'd have plenty of time to wave at the two little figures standing fondly watching the big wheels and the smoke and the fat engine. But when he looked out, they were already trotting away with Ned. Each of them held one of his hands, and Margaret's mouth was going very fast. As Dan watched them, Hugh suddenly took a few steps ahead, and hopped into the car in front of the others.

Dan sat back in his seat and looked about him at the other passengers. He saw that their cool eyes were following the little boy and girl, and wanted suddenly to tell one or two of them that these were his children. Perhaps he could manage it a little later. In the meantime he bought a package of mints and a *New Yorker* from the candy butcher and stretched his feet comfortably in front of him. As he spread the magazine out in his lap, he looked down at his knee, and finding a ring of brown sand where Margaret's feet had lain against him, he brushed it carefully clean.

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THE CASE OF THE METAL RING

(Continued from page 23)

"Maybe you're right," said McBride. "Will you drive?"

"Yes."

"Then I'd check the time it takes."

"I will. Train schedules will be simple. I'll also put some of the boys on checking any plane landings around Zanesville or Sonella, but I think your feeling about an airplane is out. There isn't an open place the size of a pancake where a plane could land within miles of here. You know that as well as I do."

"We'll know better how we stand about that after you've been to Cleveland."

"All right."

"There's one other thing you might be able to do if there's any opening for it. That sorrel tree where Rempson was killed is the only one in the district. Rempson planted it himself. A leaf from it might be pressed in the muck under the insteps of a pair of boots."

"Pretty slim."

"Yes, very slim."

McBride got back to the camp soon after nine on Sunday morning. He joined Starr at breakfast, which Lola made for them. Lola wouldn't eat anything. She was full of black coffee. She was shaky, and cold, and nervous as a cat, and had spent the night mentally dramatizing the trial, her farewell to Luke, Luke's execution, and her subsequent suicide upon the fresh earth of his grave. She had looked upon Starr's attempts to cheer her up as eyewash, and she thought his ideas about the case made him a dope.

McBride said to Starr: "I went to the Chranron house on Euclid Avenue. The old man had had some sort of a stroke during the afternoon and was in bed; his son Jasper was sitting up with him. Jasper is quite a lad."

"Yes, I've discussed Jasper with Lola. He had been here a couple of times with Rempson."

"Yes, Jasper said that straight out. He also went through the regular routine of being properly shocked and surprised and grieved about Rempson's death. He said that he and his old man had known Rempson for years and considered him one of their warmest friends. Now, this fits in with your ideas, but it don't mean a thing, so you can forget it."

"Forget what?"

"I did some checking with the local boys before going out to the Chranron house. Jasper has had two cases of woman-trouble which he managed to hush up and keep from the old man. He is also an aviation enthusiast. He's one of those what you call 4-M ratings. That lets him fly any crate weighing up to twenty-five thousand pounds, which covers about everything but the outsize ocean clippers."

"I gather that he does own his own plane."

"Yes, but as I said, you can forget it. Even if there was a landing-field right outside this door, he couldn't use it, because what he's got is a seaplane; and if there's any stretch of water around here large enough for one of those babies, I'll drink it."

"He could have access to other planes."

"I know that, but he also has an alibi that's so foolproof it's silly."

"What is it?"

"Well, you figured Rempson died around six o'clock yesterday morning. Saturday. Now get a load of Jasper: On Friday night at nine o'clock Jasper had three men out to play poker. That wasn't at the Euclid Avenue house, but at a joint of his own which is on Lake Erie. That's about twelve or so miles out from Cleveland. He parks the seaplane there and calls the joint a lodge. Two of the men were the Stevens boys. They're the sons of J. J. Stevens, who made his pile in rubber. The third man was Glenn Herreth. He's about forty, about ten years older than Jasper, and is the treasurer of the Chranron packing plant. He has no use for the ladies, but he has a lot of use for the ponies. I know you'll put the finger on him next, but wait."

"I'll wait."

"First about the alibi for son Jasper: The poker-game didn't break up until half-past three on Saturday morning. The Stevens boys gave Herreth a lift home. Herreth also has a lakeside lodge about halfway to Cleveland. Jasper says he, Jasper, was good and tight and went right to bed, which I'll admit could not be proved outside of a crystal-gazer. But he can prove he woke up at seven in the morning and yelled for his man Moffatt and a ton of bromo. There was no bromo in the joint, so he chased Moffatt to Manhattan Beach to buy some. Furthermore, the newsboy came along on his bicycle right after Moffatt had left and almost hit Jasper on the nose with a Morning *News,* as Jasper was out front in his pajamas breathing up some fresh air. And that is why Jasper could not have been here one hour earlier, and shooting Rempson, because it's a two-hour trek from here to a car or a train or any field where a plane could land, and it's about a hundred and fifty miles to Cleveland from then by road, or about a hundred miles by air. Am I right, Doctor?"

"Sheriff, you are quite right."

McBride looked fleetingly suspicious, and then went on: "I even got a break on any sorrel-leaves. Jasper, as I told you, was in the Euclid Avenue house with his old man, and Moffatt had taken the night off and was away from the lodge and looking at a movie in Manhattan Beach. Jasper does own hunting-boots, but they were clean; and what is more, they were filmed with dust and probably hadn't been moved from the closet for months. I even took a look around the insides of the seaplane, and there were no leaves and no muck. The local lad was having repressed blood-pressure and fits while I was doing all this."

"What about the ledgers and the report?"

"You've got that plant treasurer guy Herreth still on your mind. Let me repeat that that's out. The ledgers were clean and the report was clean. Rempson gave the Chranron plant an absolutely clear slate. And the report *was* written on the portable typewriter Rempson used out here, and Rempson's signature has been checked and O. K.'d by two experts. Satisfied?"

"No."

McBride made sounds expressive of exasperation. He said: "I don't get it, Doctor. Why aren't you?"

"I'd like to meet Jasper Chranron."

"Well if that's all you want, you're going to."

Starr experienced a swift surge of interest, a sense of confirmation to some conviction of which, paradoxically, he had not been quite convinced.

"Is Chranron coming here?"

"No; but he's going to Rempson's funeral. His old man can't come because of his stroke, but he wants Jasper to be one of the pallbearers because he, the old man, and Rempson were such lifelong buddies and warm, close friends. The funeral's set for tomorrow morning in Laurel Falls, at the Episcopal Church, at eleven. You're down for one of the pallbearers too. If you want Jasper out here, maybe we can persuade him to come after it's over."

Starr said thoughtfully: "No, it's better that way. Much better. The funeral will do."

The Chranrons, starting with the late grandfather, William, had always done things well, and their floral tribute for Rempson's funeral was impressively in line. It was a superb blanket of orchids and gardenias. It covered the casket and wagon, and trailed on the floor.

Dr. Packburn (his asthma was reasonably under control) officiated. His ascetic features and film of silver-spun hair faced the crowded triforum arcades of the church. The pews were filled to suffocation both with Rempson's friends and with the inevitable horde of curiosity-seekers who are morbidly drawn to the funeral of a murdered man.

The six pallbearers occupied the foremost central pew, and Starr arranged to find himself beside Jasper Chranron. Directly behind him was Lola, dressed as blackly as possible, and with a bright paint job grimly flaunted on her hard little face as a protective mask. Peg, Starr knew, was outside near the entrance, waiting, patient, puzzled, very flat on the ground.

A synopsized version of the magnificent *missa pro dejunctis* of Cherubini served to get everyone settled; then the coughs, rustlings and murmurs subsided into a heady smell of flowers and hot wax.

Starr observed with thoughtful glances Jasper Chranron's profile as the beautiful and solemn service went on. The face was one that should have been strong, but was not, with a third-generation patina to its skin. Fullish lips were flat and drawn; and his blue eyes showed strain beneath a careful cap of thinning mouse-colored hair.

Starr thought:

"Rempson will understand that there is no sense of desecration in what I am about to do. He'll know that if ever his death is to be avenged, it's surer to do it this way. Not that he'd want it to be avenged; but we, his friends, do."

Starr waited until the choir were involved with Ellerton's stately *"Now the Laborer's Task Is O'er."* Then he said quietly under cover of the music: "Did you know that a metal ring was found beneath some ashes? Rather near the scene of the crime."

CHRANRON'S full lips pressed, and his eyes glanced swiftly sidewise at Starr. He too held his voice to a whisper.

"Really, Doctor? What of it?"

"I thought it might interest you."

"Why?"

Starr gestured discreetly that the hymn was drawing to a close. He stared ahead with the melancholy, fixed expression that sets like plaster on such occasions. Dr. Packburn's 'cello tones rolled sonorously from the pulpit, extolling with appropriate generalities the good qualities of the deceased. The flower-scents, the candle-smell, the emotional concentration of the moment, all (Starr knew) were getting in their work, fallowing Chranron's nerves to a receptivity far more fruitful than under normal circumstances.

While the choir's soprano launched into Bickersteth's *"Peace, Perfect Peace,"* he whispered: "It occurred to us that the ring might have come from a parachute. Might have been pressed beneath the ashes after the parachute had been burned."

" 'Us'?"

"The sheriff, Mr. Chranron, and myself."

"What an odd idea!"

"There are others. Perhaps equally odd."

"Interesting." Chranron concentrated on the music. "Beautiful thing, this. Resourceful."

"Resourceful?"

"Yes. Different, I mean. 'Rock of Ages,' 'Lead, Kindly Light,'—they're beautiful too, but don't you think they're somewhat done to death?"

He stopped abruptly, his voice sliced off into silence by the word. The word *death.*

Starr said: "We wondered at first how the camp could be located from the air, because of its isolation and concealment in a large forest of trees. Then we thought that smoke from the kitchen fire could be seen and would serve as an excellent marker. There aren't any other chimneys, as you know, for miles around."

"I dare say it could, Doctor. I happen to be rather interested in aviation myself."

"Yes, we know."

"Look here—"

Starr murmured a *"sh-h-h-h,"* and Dr. Packburn started the ever-stirring and lovely service for the dead, with its negation of all things past and its curiously convincing emphasis on all things which were to come. Then the organist moved into Chopin.

The undertaker nodded significantly, and the pallbearers rose. . . .

The cemetery lay on a hillside above the town, surrounded by a natural park of fine white oaks, facing the lovely aspect of the valley, of the Onega River. The day had turned sullen with the onset of a storm, which darkened the sky and sent fallen leaves in brittle panic among the monuments and headstones. The crush around the grave was large. Starr stayed beside Chranron at the farther end of the opening from where Dr. Packburn stood. Near them on the right was Lola, her hard little face rigid with prim defiance, her nice eyes sick with worry and grief. Peg lay at Lola's feet, her nose pointed close to the open grave.

Starr was electrically aware of the tension of the man beside him. He thought: "I know the proper moment. It's the proper words I'll want. I can't be wrong. He'll snap."

Dr. Packburn's voice was vague with sounds that were whipped from his lips by the rising wind, and Chranron's gray-gloved hands were clenched, held rigidly at his sides.

(*"Ashes to ashes—"*)

"Rempson falsified the report," Starr said quietly, "because he knew your father's health would never sustain the shock."

Dr. Packburn plucked petals from a rose and failed, because of the wind, to make them flutter down into the grave.

(*"Dust to dust—"*)

"The shock," Starr said, "of discovering his son to be a thief."

DR. PACKBURN plucked more petals, and with a faint frown, stooped. This time he managed to get a few to flutter in, all eyes on him, hoping for him and the petals, urgently wanting no blemish to mar this service at the grave. Starr found himself wishing so too, forgetful for an instant of Chranron, and then

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realizing suddenly that Chranron was gone. He thought: "It worked! He's bolted!"

Dr. Packburn straightened up. His tired, saintlike eyes rested for a puzzled moment on the odd sight of one of the pallbearers sprinting across burial lots toward the encircling fringe of white oak trees.

Mr. Packburn started to speak. He faltered. (Was the man mad?) Then others turned and watched too. Watched the incredible performance of that rich young man running, blindly stumbling, nearing the trees: the only moving figure in a tableau stricken stiff with astonishment.

The shot rode crisp and clear over the noise of the wind.

Chranron checked and seemed to lift from his feet, while his arms flayed in amazement. Then he fell. A man stood for a second at the fringe of the trees. A gun was in his hand. Starr heard Lola draw her breath in sharply, heard her say in stunned bewilderment: "That man's Glenn Herreth. He's just shot Jasper Chranron." Then Herreth vanished into the trees.

Still no one moved. . . . Just Peg.

THE small supper party was a success. Windlass arranged an excellent job, with a clear soup, stuffed jumbo squabs, cottage-fried potatoes, raised biscuits, greens, and her unquenchable first love: a chestnut soufflé. As a special arrangement for Peg, she concocted a wholesome mess of hamburgers-with-milk, announcing to Myrtle and Etheldyne: "That hound-dog positively will want something flavory, if only to get the taste of that old double-killer white-trash Herreth-man out of her sweet jaws!"

Martinis brought them to the dining-table. Starr placed Lola and Luke on either side, with McBride across. He talked exclusively with McBride. Luke and Lola were stricken dumb, just staring across the table with that full-up look. Because, even after twenty years, they were so crazy about each other still.

Starr said: "I suppose the parachute idea came to them from reading the war tactics of dropping spies and *saboteurs* behind the enemy lines. It's funny how the old alchemist's dream does persist. Not for gold, in these enlightened days, but for the perfect crime."

"Yes, Herreth even admitted that. They'd had it rubbed into them by the war news for weeks, and it seemed a cinch. You had the right angle, too, on their knowing that Luke was stone deaf, and that Lola would be swamped in her usual hang—" McBride flushed, coughed, glanced at Lola. "I certainly wish, Doctor, that Mrs. McBride could make biscuits like these."

"The recipe calls, I believe, for a pinch of voodoo. —You were saying—"

"Well, they knew that neither Luke nor Lola would hear the sound of the plane. I'll hand it to them that the timing was neat."

"Did Herreth use a car or a train to get back to Cleveland?"

"A car. He drove it to Zanesville on Friday afternoon and stored it overnight in the Mansion House garage. Then, as soon as he'd stored it, he took the Pennsy back to Cleveland and got to his lakeside lodge in plenty of time to be picked up by the Stevens boys,—who had nothing whatever to do with his schemes,—and driven to the poker date at Jasper's at nine. After the Stevenses gave him a lift home at half-past three on Saturday morning, sonny Jasper trailed right along and drove him back to the seaplane, and they shoved off. Herreth bailed out as soon as Jasper located the camp from the smoke from the cabin chimney, which was about a quarter after five. That gave Jasper plenty of time to hop back to Lake Erie, tie up the seaplane, get into bed and yell for Moffatt at seven."

"While Herreth burned the parachute, and trekked to Zanesville, and picked up his car," Starr mused.

McBride nodded.

"They were fancy there too, because Herreth pushed through fast enough to Cleveland to be there in time for both him and Jasper to show up at a business luncheon at one. Herreth spoke on 'Where Are We Heading To?' Well! As for this morning's rumpus at the cemetery, Herreth had the wind up about letting Jasper loose around these parts. He had a feeling that something might happen, and that Jasper would crack, so when he saw Jasper make a break from the services at the grave, he went screwy and let Jasper have it. He says everything went black. Boy, will I be glad to watch him fry! Listen, Doctor!"

"Yes?"

"You were perfectly right about Rempson agreeing to falsify the report so that the old man wouldn't get a shock and peg out. I know you doped that out from Rempson's stewing and worrying at the camp over a report that read clear. What I don't get is this: Rempson had *agreed* to make out a false report, so why did they shoot him?"

"Look at it like this, Sheriff. Take any man who has done something wrong. He tries to cover it up, and feels sure, at first, that he's got away with it. After a while he's bound to begin to doubt. He gets into a nervous condition and frightens himself out of his own common sense. You can picture Chranron and Herreth in Cleveland, with Rempson off there in the camp. You can picture them wondering whether Rempson would, after all, go through with it."

"But he *said* he would."

"That doesn't matter. Every law of psychology was against their standing the strain under a situation like that. They were bound to work themselves up into a state where they would decide the chance wasn't worth it. I'd bet on the fact that Herreth went into the cabin and took a look at the report after he had killed Rempson. He would have destroyed it if it hadn't been favorable, probably, the ledgers too. It wasn't much of a chance to take. Luke, here, was in the kitchen, cooking. Luke is deaf. Lola was in bed with a—well, we've gone into that. And Peg was temporarily unconscious after Herreth had struck her on the head."

"You're perfectly right, Doctor. That's just what Herreth said he did."

AT this moment the dining-room door opened and Starr's secretary, Miss Wadsworth, came in.

She said: "I'm terribly sorry, Doctor, but Mrs. Woodberry is on the wire. She said that Junior has an attack of colic, and I recalled the note you left for me on Saturday, and said I was sure it wasn't colic but upholstery buttons, and now she's upset—I don't know what could have come over me—but if you wouldn't mind soothing her—"

Starr smiled. He excused himself to McBride and to the two happy waxworks flanking him. He rose and said to Miss Wadsworth: "I'll take care of it. And it's good to be back to normalcy again."

OUR NEW ARMY

(Continued from page 56)

military police, aided by special "morality officers," attend to the behavior of the boys when they are off duty. Each regiment has its own chaplain, and in addition general services are held every Sunday by the Post chaplains, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish.

WHAT of the training? Are they turning civilians into proper soldiers?

Perhaps it would appear from my emphasis here that an extraordinary amount to effort is spent upon the entertainment and recreation of the men. But this is for the very reason that I stated: It is futile to begin the military training of men until the pattern of their existence as human beings is clearly organized. (And for the benefit of the old-timers, I remind them of the immense variety of vaudeville talent which swarmed through the cantonments—and even of the entertainers who followed them to France, no less.)

The training itself proceeds in a precise plan, a program laid down for all encampments by the General Staff at Washington. Beginning with his oath of allegiance, the recruit is taken through the thirteen weeks of primary instruction. The teachers are the officers of the division, the former National Guard officers, with a small staff of Regular Army officers as overseers.

The purposes of the thirteen weeks are simple: Teach the recruit how to take care of himself in close contact with so many others like him, to watch his health, to learn the fundamentals of drill, obedience and military courtesy, to become acquainted with his weapons. And, curious as it may seem, to walk.

For despite the introduction of truck transport and motorized columns, the European war has taught us that the final measure of a soldier is his ability to keep slogging along through darkness or mud or heat or rain. And our American male youth, blood-brothers to the jalopy, have almost forgotten the use of their legs.

There is very little close-order, parade-ground drill in the modern training—not much of squads right or right-front-into-line double-time. The emphasis is rather upon mobility, swift and certain move-

ment over ground, and self-protection. Whether working with rifles and bayonets, grenades, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, machine-guns or field-pieces, the men are taught to move toward their objectives in open formation, each squad self-reliant, recognizing cover when they see it, avoiding unnecessary exposure. Such tactics have altogether superseded the glamorous charge, regiment front and all flags flying.

The actual military equipment at the camps is much more plentiful than I had expected to find it, much more varied than we have been led to believe. Every man has a rifle, not a broomstick, I can assure you. And there are enough mortars, rapid-fire guns and field-pieces of every category for the instruction of recruits.

The men are taken slowly, at first. Perhaps a little softly. They follow, naturally, the rigid routine of the encampment:

REVEILLE sounds at five-forty-five A.M. Johnny has fifteen minutes to wash, dress, and appear in the assembly-line with his rifle. He is done with breakfast at seven, spends the next half-hour answering sick call or making down his bunk and quarters, and at seven-thirty he is in the line at attention, ready for drill.

After four hours of work in the field, he is back at his quarters, with fifteen minutes in which to relax before dinner. At twelve-thirty,—dinner over,—he is back in formation again, ready for four more hours on the training-grounds.

When that is done, he has forty minutes to rest before he stands retreat and goes to supper. The meal is at five-thirty, and as soon as he has eaten it, he is a free man. He has no further duties until the next reveille (unless he is on guard mount or other special duty), and he can loaf, play on the reservation, go to the movies or be off to the nearest town, as he wishes. He does not have to sleep the night in quarters unless he wants to. His only requirement is to be heads up, front and center when morning Assembly sounds.

Thus there are eight hours of training a day. But Wednesday afternoons are given over to organized sports, and Saturday afternoons as well as Sundays are holidays.

So the recruit works at the special job of soldiering, for the familiar American forty-hours-a-week.

During the earlier half of his training, he is led along rather easily. If he gets too tired, he can drop out of line to rest. If he gets too cold or too wet, he can go off and get himself comfortable. But as he toughens, the rules get a little stiffer. And soon he is off on night marches, long daylight hikes—slogging, slogging, slogging—proving that he has learned the antique art of walking, once again.

There are differences from the 1917-'18 method. Johnny's pack weighs fifty-one pounds, not seventy as it did then; and on any considerable march, it is hauled by truck. This is not to save his back muscles, but to increase his mobility. Perhaps more significant, the rules of military formality are vastly simplified. Soldiers nowadays do not salute every time they see the reflection of a shave-tail's shoulder-bar. Indeed, they do very little saluting at all. The occasion must definitely call for it.

All of that bleak etiquette which required the enlisted man to speak to the officer in the third person, as if he were a godlike creature not to be addressed in simple English, has been abandoned. "Does the Captain wish so-and-so, sir?" and "May I have permission to address the Lieutenant, sir?" are no more. Soldiers are ordered to speak to their officers in ordinary, everyday language—not wasting time on idle chatter or wisecracks, of course—but to get the matter at hand disposed of as simply and quickly as possible.

We have not yet reached the democratic level of the British Army, which often presents the sight of a captain and a private strolling the street arm in arm, and turning together into a pub for a pint of beer. But the wall between officers and enlisted men in America is lower than it ever has been before.

NOW what happens to the recruit when he has finished his thirteen weeks, and is thereby turned into a soldier? That depends. It depends upon the most important and certainly the most admirable phase of our defense program. I refer to the classification system now in full operation.

We had a classification system Last Time, of course. Everybody filled out a yellow slip saying what he could do, and liked to do. The slip was then put safely into a file. This could be the course of events: Joe Doughboy had filed in as motor mechanic. So he was made a cook.

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YOU CAN'T BEAT IT!
Old Drum Brand BLENDED WHISKEY: 90 and 86 Proof—75% Grain Neutral Spirits. Calvert Distillers Corp., New York City

When it was discovered that he could not fry an egg, he was tossed back to be a simple rifleman in the rear rank. One day the truck in which his squad was riding broke down. Joe was the only boy who could fix it. When the sergeant reported this, if he did at all, Joe was hailed as a find and promptly assigned to the truck maintenance and repair crew.

That could not happen in this man's Army. The system of classification is the apotheosis of everything the insurance actuaries, the research engineers, and the statistical-system manufacturers have ever thought up.

AFTER passing his physical examination, every recruit is given an intelligence test. In this he gets a rating, from 1 to 5—3 being the average, 1 the superior man, 5 the dumbbell.

Thereafter he is given a strictly private examination by an experienced interviewer, a non-com who in civilian life was probably in the personnel department of a corporation. This confidential interview takes about an hour and a half to complete. During its course, the examiner writes down on a large, complex card, everything he can find out about the soldier. His education and his trade or business goes down, his previous military experience, languages, second-best and third-best occupations, the highest position of leadership he has ever held, his hobbies and his sports and his talent for furnishing entertainment, what he would really like to do in the Army, and at least a dozen other facts about his experience and personality.

That is just a written record, of course. But you know the magic which the card-index people can do with a cubic million of such records. The card has holes punched around its edges, to correspond with the written answers. And if the time should come when the call from headquarters is for four left-handed piccolo-players, a clerk would simply insert little rods into the filing cabinets, pull a lever, and lo! the cards of a hundred left-handed piccolo players would rise up. And the cards would show, too, whether each of these strange experts was No. 1—Genius, or No. 5—Dumbbell.

Whether the demand be for jockey-weights who can ride a motorcycle or for blacksmiths of Finnish extraction, the answer of the cards is the same: instantaneous and accurate. Of course you see what this means: By next June, when the whole draft is called up and classified, General Staff will have the most exhaustive analysis of 1,400,000 potential soldiers, their trades and talents and brains, that has ever been heard of.

So you understand me when I say that the soldier's destiny, after his thirteen weeks, depends upon his card. Having learned the fundamentals of military life, having been toughened by its exigencies, he will be put where he can do the most good. And the remaining months of his year of service will be devoted to the turning of his special abilities, whatever they may be, into the uses of Defense.

WHAT of the men? What soldiers will they make?

I think they are pretty good men, and that they will make a pretty good Army. They will be better men before they are done with their year.

Physically, they are sound material to work on. Temperamentally, they are eager to learn, eager to show that they can take it. But they are confused by the four great hazards which confront them:

(1) The fact that there is no war to whip their enthusiasm and ambition, no atmosphere of adventure to encourage strutting in a uniform before a best girl.

(2) The ancient tradition of the easy life in our country: the tradition that a man who has neither car nor radio nor three meals a day after his own peculiar appetite, is somehow deplorably misused.

(3) The newer tradition that war is a pretty silly business. Nobody's bothering us, so why the hell should we go to all this fuss, anyway?

(4) The articulate worrying of the mothers, who do not as a rule try to keep their concern beneath a stiff upper lip, and who do much, unconsciously, to encourage the other three hazards.

I HAVE spent days in the camps and have talked to hundreds of these lads. And so I feel justified in reporting that they progress. They are living a healthy life, and they are learning the art almost lost in our country in late years, the art of taking care of oneself. I believe that we shall be able to depend upon them, if the Day ever comes. Not because they are to be men of storied courage. Courage is not the essence of a great army in these times, for it is a rather generally shared attribute among the peoples of the world. We shall be able to depend upon them, because every man will be put into his proper slot, and his training will enable him to fit that slot. Every man will be doing something he knows how to do.

An army organized in such a fashion as that will take a deal of beating before it is through.

IF JAPAN FIGHTS

(Continued from page 25)

taken no more seriously than Pearl Harbor. On the contrary, the Aleutian base is considered less formidable. Indeed, far from considering its war-aim in the Pacific as merely the clearing of American shipping from that great expanse of water, Tokyo is determined to push on until Haushofer's prophecy of Japan's hegemony over what he calls the Japanese sphere of influence in the United States will have been fulfilled. That sphere, according to some geopolitical charts, extends as far east as Buffalo.

Although the geopolitical Pacific war-plans may not have appeared quite as convincing, in the light of America's recent defense program, as they did some seventeen months ago, Tokyo implicitly believed in them. Its confidence that Hitler would succeed in producing a propitious set of circumstances for the launching of its irresistible Pacific expansion remained unimpaired—until something happened. That something was the upset of Hitler's war time-table in Europe.

FOR the Tokyo-Berlin Pacific plans were based on Great Britain's collapse. In the original plans Japan was to move only after the power of the British Empire had been crushed by the German-Italian part of the Axis. In other words, the Pacific war was to have been the continuation of the Nazi-Fascist campaign for world domination; it was to take place *after* the European war had been successfully concluded.

All this is changed today. Berlin wants Tokyo to move immediately, in order to create a diversion in the Pacific which will disturb Britain and immobilize American help to England. But Japan hesitates. Appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, Tokyo is afraid to take the plunge.

It was Berlin, and not Tokyo, which decided to make public the Japanese-German-Italian military pact in September, 1940. Actually the pact had been secretly signed and delivered more than a year before. The announcement had been delayed on the insistence of Tokyo. The military leaders of Japan, with but few exceptions, did not believe the time was ripe for a showdown with the United States. For one thing, the war with China was not going according to schedule. Begun in 1937 as a punitive expedition that was to teach Chiang Kai-shek a lesson in three months' time, it had already lasted over three years. The Chinese war against a partially untrained and poorly equipped army was, if anything, extending on a continually wider front without gaining much advantage anywhere. This conflict had cost Japan tens of thousands of soldiers and a substantial number of specially trained officers. Besides, it required more than five hundred million yen per month—and Japanese business income from exports was alarmingly on the decline.

Tokyo did not care to risk bringing the war of nerves in the Pacific to a climax by announcing its military pact with Berlin. There was no need for it. On the contrary, it would be much easier, calculated the statesmen of the Land of the Rising Sun, to pick up the pieces of the French and Dutch empires in Asia quietly and without fanfare. But Hitler was more concerned with applying the political pincer movement to the United States than with realistically advancing Tokyo's ambitions in the Pacific. All the Fuehrer of the Nazis wanted was to halt, or at least to curtail, American help to Great Britain. The announcement of Tokyo's sphere of influence in the Pacific was primarily intended to jolt American public opinion.

HITLER hoped to create a wide rift among the political leaders of this country. He hoped to encourage that group which maintains that our assistance to England jeopardizes our position in the Pacific. And so Von Ribbentrop refused to listen to the pleadings of Tokyo's emissary, Naotaka Sato, who late last summer spent anxious weeks in Berlin trying to convince the Wilhelmstrasse

that Japanese expansionist action in the Pacific should precede the formal announcement of the Tokyo-Berlin military pact.

BY authoritative private sources I am told that the Sato-Ribbentrop conversations were quite vehement. The former Foreign Minister of Japan is said to have pointed out to the former champagne salesman of Germany that Nippon's historical record for timing its expansionist moves had heretofore been rather successful. When, in 1904, Japan tackled imperial Russia, she made sure that St. Petersburg was unprepared for war and unaware of the extensive Japanese preparations for the armed conflict. And Mr. Sato might also have reminded Mr. Ribbentrop of Japan's perfect timing when she joined the Allies in 1914. She had known quite well that the small armed colonial forces of the Germans in Tsing-tao and the Pacific islands would be a mere push-over. In the fall of 1931, once more, Japan expertly timed her armed adventure in Manchuria (now Manchukuo), and subjugated the entire province, more than twice the size of Germany, in a few short months. It was really Japan which, in that grabbing expedition, set the precedent for a modern blitzkrieg. Why then, Sato stubbornly wanted to know, should Berlin dictate to Tokyo the timing of its present moves in the Pacific?

Besides, the most important matter still remained to be settled before Tokyo would care to face the possible wrath of the United States, which it feared might express itself in an economic blockade of Nippon. That was an iron-clad Soviet-Japanese pact which would guarantee Japan's rear in the event of hostilities with the United States. Hitler had promised to deliver this pact, but now he was stalling. Apparently he believed that a little pincer movement against his own ally might be helpful in persuading Tokyo to make the Berlin-dictated moves in the Pacific when he—and not the Japanese war leaders—decreed it.

Amazing and incredible as it may have appeared to Tokyo, Hitler has been using Russia and Japan against each other to maintain Germany's upper hand in the diplomatic pincer game that he has been playing with both.

Japan is not happy.

Notwithstanding her arrogant and aggressive diplomatic façade, Japan does not feel confident. For the first time in its history Tokyo is playing a game at which it is a novice. Instead of following its usual policy of moving secretly and confronting the world with the *fait accompli* of its actions, it is permitting Berlin to use it as a political foghorn to warn off the United States. The Elder Statesmen of Japan, of whom none are left now, did not believe in such bombastic pronouncements as "Greater East Asia" and Japan's "sacred mission" in the Pacific. Prince Kimmochi Saionji, for instance, one of the builders of the modern Japanese State, who died only last November, was the last influential adviser of the Emperor who dared to oppose the Nazi-Fascist-influenced military leaders. As a result of his adherence to the old school of diplomacy, he was marked for assassination in 1936, and soon after his narrow escape he was relegated to the background.

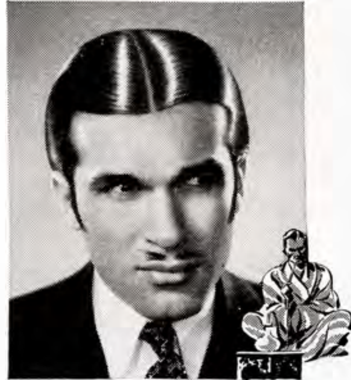
The vocabulary which Japan's foreign policy spokesmen use today is wholly made in Germany. Very often it has no relationship whatsoever to conditions prevalent in Nippon. It is told, that some Nazi-influenced leaders believe in the Hitler-Goebbels slogans as mystic formulas for success, and came to the conclusion that the rich collection of Berlin's anti-Semitic epigrams would help their cause too. So the Japanese newspapers began to feature streaming headlines warning the masses against Jewish conspiracies in the Far East. One day, however, some realist pointed out to the enthusiastic writers of anti-Semitic phrases that this approach seemed a bit far-fetched in Japan, since that country has only two thousand Jews in a total population of ninety-seven million. Whereupon, it is said, a group of young military patriots cabled to Hitler: "Ship ten thousand Jews immediately or anti-Semitic campaign here will collapse."

Whether the story of the cable has any basis in truth, I do not know. That it could have happened in the Japan of today I do not doubt.

NOT only did Hitler miscalculate the power of resistance of the British Isles; he also failed to foresee the reaction of the American Government to Tokyo's warlike gestures. The strategists of the Military Academy at Berlin considered only two eventualities when they in-

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

THE HOTTENTOT. Doesn't know that soaking his hair to comb it is taboo. Water dries out natural oils—makes hair wild, woolly. Kreml civilizes Hottentot hair and helps correct dryness.



THE BEDOUIN SHEIK. But that sticky mat of plastered hair gets no place with girls. Non-greasy Kreml not only brings out the natural good looks of hair—it also removes ugly dandruff scales.

THE TIBETAN. Hides his hairlessness in a lamaserai. But even prayer can't bring hair back, once it's gone. Kreml and proper care might have helped him keep his hair. Too bad it's too late!

"NATURALIZED" CITIZEN. His hair looks *naturally* well-groomed and lustrous with Kreml—the trusted dressing-tonic. Beneficial oils in Kreml keep your hair "just right" in softness and appearance.

USE Kreml every day as so many men do. Your hair will be *greaselessly* well-groomed.

You'll be helping your hair with Kreml, too. For Kreml actually checks excessive falling hair. It also removes dandruff scales, relieves itching scalp.

Women say Kreml works wonders for coiffures. It conditions hair *before* a permanent—keeps it lovely and lustrous *after* a permanent.

Ask for Kreml at your drugstore and barber shop.

And Kreml Hair Tonic has a co-worker to keep your hair handsome. Try Kreml Shampoo. Its 80% olive oil base leaves your hair more thoroughly cleansed, more easily manageable.

KREML

REMOVES DANDRUFF SCALES

CHECKS EXCESSIVE FALLING HAIR

NOT GREASY — MAKES THE HAIR BEHAVE

structed Japan to advertise her determination to brook no interference with her plans for establishing the Greater East Asia:

The first possibility they envisaged was this: That the people of the United States would take the Japanese challenge so seriously that they would forget all about assistance to England. If Washington had taken this course, Hitler would have scored heavily.

THE other eventuality with which the Nazi war leaders reckoned, also would have spelled a decided advantage for Hitler in his plans for breaking the back of the British Empire: If America should fail to turn her face to the Far East, she would disregard entirely Japan's southward march against European-controlled outposts in the Pacific. In this event Tokyo was not only to grab French Indo-China, Siam and the Netherlands Indies, but also to attempt to smash Singapore. If Japan succeeded—and Berlin believes that without the United States Navy Britain cannot stop Tokyo's domination of the Pacific area—then the Japanese arm of the Axis would begin to play an important rôle in the Near East. Its navy could then advance through the Red Sea and help in the attack on the Suez Canal from the south.

This second alternative simply meant that Germany, Italy and Japan would jointly attack the lifeline of Great Britain in the Near East and Africa. *Axis reunion in the Near East* is what the geopoliticians call this possible phase of the present war.

America's decision to protect her interests in the East and West simultaneously stunned Herr Hitler and his advisers. Here was a third alternative with which the Axis planners had not reckoned.

But even more than that: Washington's policy punctured—at least temporarily—Haushofer's pet theory that the United States would have to declare itself either a Pacific or an Atlantic power. It could not be both, according to the geopolitical doctrine, which bestows this versatility only on the German World Empire.

President Roosevelt, in his fireside chat of December 29, 1940, unequivocally served notice to Berlin and Tokyo that "it is a matter of most vital concern to us that European and Asiatic war-makers should not gain control of the oceans which lead to this hemisphere." And to eliminate any possible misunderstanding, the Chief Executive, in the same address, emphasized: "In the Pacific Ocean is our fleet . . . while a free Britain remains our most powerful naval neighbor in the Atlantic."

In other words, the President made it unmistakably clear that nothing would deter the United States from pursuing a joint policy of defense with Great Britain against the Axis, and that America interprets the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo pact as a direct threat against its security.

Today Tokyo is fully aware of its exposed position. Its spokesmen, who continue to speak arrogantly about Japan's Monroe Doctrine of the Pacific, are but whistling in the dark. They realize that, for the first time since the Axis embarked on its adventure of world redivision, a democratic power has outplayed it.

NO worse time could have been chosen for Tokyo to provoke Washington into ultra-preparedness on the Pacific. But it is too late now for the belligerent army clique which controls the destinies of the Land of the Rising Sun to reverse its policy and postpone action. Having picked Germany as her partner, Japan must play Hitler's game and protect the Fuehrer's European stake, even at the risk of going down in her own waters.

Tokyo's huge army of agents and spies in the United States reports home virtually every hour on America's defense preparations for possible hostilities in the Pacific. Every shipment of arms to any spot in the Pacific, the slightest movement of the United States Navy, is instantly flashed to the Military Council in Tokyo, which sits uninterruptedly in twenty-four-hour session, listening in and weighing every new order from Washington's naval and defense leaders.

Japanese admirals, dressed as civilians, are touring the Philippines, British North Borneo and the Netherlands Indies, checking incessantly on American and British preparedness to defend the present *status quo* in the Pacific. A desperate attempt is being made by Tokyo to end the Chinese war.

Will Tokyo continue, extending its grab of French Indo-China to other European-controlled spots on the Pacific? And will Washington, notwithstanding its strong diplomatic language and defense preparations, let Japan do this?

It would almost seem so.

In any case, Berlin and Tokyo will, before venturing too far, explore to what extent President Roosevelt's actions will keep step with his strong verbiage. Incidents will be created in the Pacific to test the consistency of Washington's policy. The report that twelve German vessels have been armed by the Japanese for raiding activities in the Pacific is but one illustration of what we may expect. There can be no question that Washington's patience and nerves will be taxed to the utmost by Berlin and Tokyo in the near future.

Meanwhile Berlin and Rome are watching intently. Hitler and Mussolini know that if Japan does not succeed in monopolizing America's defense program, Axis-power politics in Europe and the Near East will collapse like a house of cards caught in a typhoon. Stalin's eyes are glued on the Pacific area. A Japanese fiasco would affect the Soviet Union's policy toward Berlin no little.

BEFORE the winter is over, Tokyo will either have emerged as the strongest member of the German-Italian-Japanese Axis—or it will have become the first victim of Hitler's contempt for the democratic statesmanship of the Western Hemisphere.

OUR READERS SPEAK

(Continued from page 7)

REDBOOK says she is in Hollywood, working in a picture. That's good news to me, but it sounds like bad news for the glamour girls.

John Stewart,
Long Island City, New York.

The Impetus to Write

Dear Sir:

I have just finished "Curious Challenge" by Edward Havill, and it makes me realize more than ever the wealth of story material that each individual has, not only within him, but around him at his very finger-tips.

I have always thought of writing of all that lies around me, and such a story gives me the impetus to try. To picture the casual and common, and make it vivid and graphic, is a rare gift indeed. Such a story takes all the lethargy from a reader, and suddenly makes him notice things that heretofore he has taken for granted.

Ellen Dick,
Tucson, Arizona.

Mr. Churchill Takes a Bow

Dear Sir:

I wish to congratulate you and Douglas W. Churchill upon the way you present REDBOOK's Picture of the Month.

A Hollywood-made picture but not set forth in the Hollywood publicity manner. The review is an educational, interesting, dignified description and a critical opinion.

Although you give the story, it does not deter the reader from seeing the picture. On the contrary, it stirs his curiosity to compare the screen version with REDBOOK's written word.

Hilda Holland,
New York, New York.

A Letter about a Very Gallant Lady

Dear Sir:

This is a letter about a letter. I mean the one you received from a woman in England which was published in the January issue of REDBOOK.

I would like to know her better who can sit down in the midst of the terror of war and write such a stirring letter, even a bit on the humorous side. I think it is a tribute to REDBOOK (and rightly deserved) to have received her letter. Aren't you proud? I would be.

Rose Robinson,
Council Bluffs, Iowa.

EDITORS' NOTE: *The letter in question came from Coventry, England. It was written a few weeks before that city was subjected to a merciless bombardment by the Nazi raiders. We have not heard from the writer since.*

"We Just Haven't Time to Take Cover"

Dear Sir:

As a regular reader of REDBOOK I feel that I must pass on to you the enclosed copy of a letter received from my niece in London.

Esther R. Collin,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

My own darling Auntie:

I am writing to you from my First Aid Post, where I am on duty for the night again, and a jollier assembly of people it would be hard to find. I thoroughly enjoy myself even though it does mean losing almost a night's sleep—but I mustn't chatter about trivialities.

Mummy and Daddy are as wonderful as usual, and both keep going as if war were miles away. Air-raid warnings go and we continue our routine. We just haven't time to take cover during the daytime, and business as usual is the order of the day.

By the way, here is something to tell your press—*no,* we are not starving yet, or anything like that; but after December, pure silk stockings will not be sold. We women are going to wear lisle or socks, and I understand fashion predicts stockings the same color as frocks, so look out for gay reds and checks.

Everybody is more cheerful than in peacetime, and in *England* we still have the right to voice our grumbles freely, and it is still a greater cause for pride to say that very few of us take advantage of that freedom. Never before have I felt so proud to be living in England and I wouldn't leave her now, even to come to America; though I would love to see you once again.

Myrtle.

FAME IS THE SPUR

(Continued from page 62)

hold, as Tom Hannaway was clogged with golden guineas. From the old boneyard in Ancoats they had set out together, and this was as far as they would come.

Leaning over the balustrade, he saw Lady Lostwithiel coming up the stair, a white-gloved hand holding her skirt clear of her twinkling shoes.

"Well, my dear!"

He could say that easily now, and she as easily could smile back at him and lay a hand affectionately on his arm. They passed on together; and if here and there a knowing smile was exchanged, an insinuating wink flashed from eye to eye, that did not disturb them. They were happy and comfortable together: they had come from poles apart to a common ground of humanity.

They went in to supper, and in the crush at the door brushed shoulders with Fuentavera. He was quickly swept apart from them, but as he went, he turned his head to say: "Ah, dear Lady Lostwithiel, let me be the first to commiserate with you."

"That man has a genius for smelling out disaster," she said. "I didn't think it was known, but Castle Hereward's in the market."

Hamer felt as though he had been struck a bitter personal blow. Castle Hereward, the house which had been the incarnation of all he had sworn to destroy; Castle Hereward, where he had been but a few months ago a guest; Castle Hereward, that, in one form or another, had stood with its feet dug into the Yorkshire soil since before the Normans came: Castle Hereward was in the market!

"But how on earth—" he began.

She smiled, and seemed little disturbed. "We sha'n't starve, you know," she said.

"I can't believe it!" he protested. "It seems monstrous."

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Write to **REDBOOK MAGAZINE**
McCall Street Dayton, Ohio

She laughed outright at his solemn face. "We should have been a bit more patriotic," she said. "But Lostwithiel got very nervous about the state of England under a Labor government. When you first came in—in 1924—he began to shift investments to America. Well,"—and she shrugged,—"you know what happened to investments in America."

Hamer pushed the hair back from his forehead and said: "Rich and poor alike, the knife is at our throats. Rich and poor alike, we shall have to make a stand. We are spending more than we earn, and I tremble to think what the consequences of that will be on our credit abroad, if it goes on much longer."

"My dear," she said, "you know I'm a non-political woman. You must not make speeches to me. But if your little speech means that you think party strife is folly, do, for God's sake, make it in the proper quarter."

HE had no heart for lingering at Tom Hannaway's jamboree. He went home early, profoundly depressed. It was a late summer night in 1931. London lay under the soft bloomy dark that he had come to love. The trees were full-leafed against the violet shining of the lamps, and as he glanced through the window of the car, everything looked normal, solid and reassuring. But he knew that all this was only a seeming, a crust of prosperity spread upon chaos. . . .

In Piccadilly he stopped the car so that he might walk the rest of the way home.

He turned into Half Moon Street, pondering Lettice Lostwithiel's remark: "For God's sake, make it in the proper quarter," when he saw Arnold Ryerson coming, on the other side of the road, from the direction of his house. Arnold was walking head-down, sunk in thought; and he started when Hamer, crossing the street swiftly, accosted him: "Well, Arnold!"

They stood confronted for a moment, ill-assorted: Arnold, wearing an old alpaca jacket against the summer warmth, and with a cap on his head—shortish, stout and uneasy; Hamer tall and debonair, his light open overcoat showing the splendor of his raiment. Then their hands met, and for a time remained warmly clasped.

"I hope you've got an hour to spare, Arnold," Hamer said. "Come along home with me."

Arnold swung round, and they walked up the road together.

Hamer put Arnold into the study while he went upstairs. He came back, having shed his coat and the jewel of the Order, wearing a black silk dressing-gown. "I've just been visiting an old friend of yours, Arnold—Tom Hannaway."

Arnold, with a match at his pipe, grunted: "Him! D'you know what I think, Hamer? A chap that can give away two millions without feeling it ought not to be honored: he ought to be impeached."

Hamer laughed. "Poor Tom! I wonder what he'd say if he knew that you despised him and I pitied him?"

"I don't care what he'd say," said Arnold. "There's too much else to think about. What the hell *is* going to happen to this country, Hamer? You ought to know. Down in the Rhondda they're desperate, going Bolshie hand over fist. I reckon any Communist candidate down there today could rake in ten thousand votes. That's something to make you think, lad. If that sort of thing goes on, it may do more to break down the Labor Party than anything the Liberals and Tories have ever done between 'em."

"The Labor Party will break down, anyway," said Hamer. "The Labor Party, Arnold, is finished—at least for a long time to come. It may have a resurrection, but I don't imagine that you and I are going to live to see it."

Arnold looked at him, dumfounded. "No Labor Party! Then what in hell are we going to live for, Hamer—you and I? Why, good God, lad, we made it! It's been the breath of our beings."

It was a cry from the heart. There would be many such. Hamer had no illusions on that score. This old friend was a touchstone of the millions like him: the men who had fought without heeding the wounds, labored without counting the cost.

"The Party will not be killed," he explained carefully. "All I am saying is that we cannot expect it to survive in its present strength. We made a force of it, Arnold, a tremendous force. Well, it will remain a living thing, a thing that will continue to demand all we can give it; but as an individual force it will go, as the Liberal Party will go. There is enormous virtue in the Labor Party, and that virtue must—"

Arnold broke in brusquely: "For God's sake! You needn't go on. Don't practice out election speeches on me. Before I'd sign myself 'National Labor,' or whatever fancy name you invent, I'd cut my throat. And I'd think that a better action than to cut the throat of my lifelong principles."

A heavy silence fell between them. Suddenly they were worlds apart. This quietly gorgeous room, this elegant little clock that tinkled through the warm summer air the news that it was eleven o'clock, the deep carpets and the splendid curtains, seemed active agents, the summary of all that had grown bit by bit into the chasm that could not be leaped, the gulf that separated the two who long ago had walked so closely side by side.

It was Arnold who broke the silence. His pipe had gone cold. He got up and knocked out the dottle against the bars of the empty grate. Then he turned to Hamer. "Well, lad," he said, and Hamer was keenly moved to hear the old familiar appellation. "Well, lad, there's not overmuch time left for either of us. I'm hard on seventy, and you're not all that younger. I suppose I've got set in my ways. I'm an old dog and can't learn new tricks. Alice'd like me to go Bolshie, and you'd like me to go summat pretty near Tory. Well—" And as with Pen in moments of stress, the old Northern accent came out: "Ah'm not saying there's virtue in bein' an old stick-in-t'muck, but that's how Ah'm made. Such wits as God gave me made me believe t'Labor Party were t'right party for me. If the earth were crumblin' Ah'd still think as our Party were best to stop t'rot. Maybe, tha's been converted, lad. But wi' me, Ah wouldn't be a convert. Ah'd be a renegade. An' if Ah were that, Ah couldn't think on Pen again."

Arnold paused, his voice caught on a tremble at Pen's name. He cleared his throat and went on: "Pen were all right. They starved her an' drowned her an' blinded her, but she were Pen all t' time. They couldn't take an inch off the height of her. And, with apologies to you, lad, when it comes to a question like this, Ah'd rather follow Pen than follow thee. An' Ah know what road Pen'd take now. So that's my road too."

He held out his large, fleshy, blunt-nailed hand, the hand that had knocked together Hamer's first bookcases, that had rummaged with his for twopenny bargains in Suddaby's basement. "So Ah reckon it's good-by, lad."

Hamer got up. They stood confronted for a moment, their hands clasped. They were both in the grip of a deep emotion. Hamer said: "Arnold, I'd like to tell you something that Ann once said about you. She said that for a man like you, even defeat would have the quality of victory."

As soon as Arnold was out of sight, Hamer went back to his study and called Pendleton. "Bring me some coffee, and go to bed." He sat down at once at his desk, lit a pipe, and began to write: "*Some immediate considerations that call for the formation of a National Government.*" Early in the morning he hurried round to 10 Downing Street. Two months later, it was all over.

When, on the morning of October 29th, he sat with the newspapers before him at the breakfast-table, there was one headline to which his eyes were drawn again and again: "The Cyclone Passes."

To all intents and purposes, the Liberal and Labor parties were destroyed. The Government might as well sit with no Opposition at all. It counted 551 members against 57. Of the 551, 470 were Tories, but they bore the blessed tag of National Conservatives; and so Hamer Shawcross, who had come through safely in St. Swithin's, could sit down happily with them, for he too carried the blessed tag of National Labor.

Hamer took up his pen. "*Dear Ramsay: My congratulations on your stirring personal victory in Seaham, and on the stirring victory throughout the country as a whole. While the fight was in progress I did not wish to trouble you with a matter which is the reason for this present letter. When you are called upon to form your new Cabinet, do not consider me as eligible for any office. Perhaps there will be other ways—perhaps there will be some other sphere—in which I can serve the Party and the country; but I have made up my mind not to accept office again.*"

PENDLETON tapped on the door. "Are you able to see Mr. Newboult, sir?"

"Bring him in."

Jimmy's eyes were tired. He had fought and lost. He was one of the multitude for whom Arnold Ryerson had spoken: "I'd rather cut my throat." His long jaws were twitching with emotion. His pale eyes were misty with pain. His fair aggressive eyebrows jutted out in perplexity and dismay. At last he said: "Why did you do it? If it had to be done, why did *you* do it?"

"If it had to be done, Jimmy," Hamer said gently, "why should I not do it? It was necessary."

"And necessity knows no law," Jimmy bitterly replied, clinging to a *cliché* to the last.

"Necessity *is* law," said Hamer. "There is no other law."

That was too much for Jimmy Newboult. He suddenly burst out: "You stand there uttering clever sayings when England from top to bottom is littered with the men and women you have slain! Yes, slain! Aren't they dead when all they stood for is dead? Does a man go on living when his hope is blown out, and his faith is betrayed, and every principle he ever worked for is trodden in the mud by the very boots he would have blacked, the very feet he would have kissed? Why, man, there was a time when I worshiped you, and up to the last I admired and respected you. I'd have run to the ends of the earth at your bidding. And now the sight of you makes me sick. I wouldn't want an honest man to see me in your company."

He stood trembling whitely for a moment, his fists clenching and unclenching; then suddenly he sat down, almost collapsed, upon the couch and buried his face in his hands. His shoulders heaved. "There's nothing left," he said in a stifled voice. "The beauty and the glory—they are gone."

The beauty and the glory. Hamer had never expected to hear such words from Jimmy Newboult. They moved him as he had not thought anything could move him now. This was Jimmy's youth breaking up through the crust the years had laid upon him. This was not the shabby man, trembling on the couch: this was the boy in his pride, bearing the sword, announcing the liberator.

Hamer looked down for a moment at the broken figure, abandoned there amid the shards of hope; then he laid his hand lightly on Jimmy's shoulder. At the touch, Jimmy winced like a galled horse and leaped to his feet. "Don't do that!" he shouted. "You touched me on the shoulder once, and I'd have followed you to kingdom come. And now I find I was following a bloody Judas. You're a traitor to the men and women who made you. They won't even want to tell you that. They'll shun you like poison. So I'm doing it for them. You've sold us all. You've betrayed us."

Jimmy's voice had risen to a harsh excited pitch. He stopped, and stood there shaking, then said in flat tones: "That's all." He kept his pale eyes lowered. He did not look at Hamer again, but turned mechanically and went out of the room.

NOW a man could rest a little; now a man could look about, and think, and read, and not be always worried by the thought: So much to do! True, there was still St. Swithin's to be represented in the House, but after such years as Hamer had lived, that was a little thing, and even that would not be there to worry him much longer. He felt like a man taking a holiday in an Indian summer. And, also, he had time now to feel lonely, and therefore he saw more of Lizzie Lightowler than he had done for a long time.

Hamer always took her home after the theater, and sometimes went in for a bite and a chat in the house that was so closely knit up with Ann and Charles and the old days of hope and striving.

Lizzie liked to fuss over him; she had always had someone to fuss till Alice went away, and now she wrapped herself round Hamer. She liked to see him sitting by her fireside smoking one of the good

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cigars she kept for him, and drinking a glass of the weak toddy that she concocted with whisky, hot water, lemon and sugar.

So they sat one night when that December of 1931 was halfway through. They had dined at a restaurant and then gone to a cheerful play; and when they came out, the snow was falling. North Street, so quietly tucked away in the midst of the city's turmoil, seemed an enchanted place, with the flakes falling quietly through the golden haloes of the lamps. The church roof at the end of the street was a cold even white under the gray of the sky. The roadway was dumb with the snow.

"You go home to bed," Hamer said to Chesser. "I'll come along in a taxi."

Ten minutes later he was cozy beside Lizzie's fire, with the cigar lit and the toddy in his hand. On the other side of the fireplace she sat stirring the tea in her pot. She liked some "body" in it, she said. Her skirts were drawn back to let the warmth get at her stout old legs. Hamer contemplated her with the warm affection in which there was always a tincture of amusement. The old warhorse! Out to grass at last.

She poured herself a cup of tea and looked across at him sharply with the eyes that were almost black, and so looked startling under the white mass of her hair. "I still like snow," she said. "I'm romantic enough for that. It's a damned nuisance to all concerned, especially if you've got leaky boots and an empty belly; but I like it all the same. It snowed the day you and Ann were married. D'you remember that? Yes; the boys were tobogganing down the roadway in Ackroyd Park that night."

She reached across for the decanter, and poured a little whisky into her tea. "Old Hawley, you know, was a bit tight. When you and Ann went, he wouldn't come in. He stood in the porch looking at your footsteps in the snow, winding away through the laurel bushes. He kept on saying: 'Poor li'l footsteps! Poor li'l footsteps! I wonder where they'll end up, those poor li'l footsteps in the snow?' I had to take him by the arm and drag him in. 'I'll tell you where they'll end up, old son,' I said. 'They'll end up in the House of Commons. No argument about that.'"

"You were wrong, Liz," Hamer said. "They'll end up in the House of Lords."

"What's that?" said Lizzie. "House of Lords? What are you doing: guessing or telling me?"

"I'm telling you," Hamer answered. "But keep it to yourself. Look out for the New Year honors."

LIZZIE got up from her chair and kissed him. "There!" she said. "You've gone the whole way. You've gone as far as it's possible to go."

"That's exactly how I feel about it myself, Liz, but there's this: at one time I thought it would be possible to go a long way further. It was Parnell, wasn't it, who said no man had the right to fix a boundary to the march of a nation. Well, there's no need to fix boundaries: they're there all the time, not only to nations but to all men. *Homo sapiens* is a circumscribed species, Liz. That's the chief thing I've learned in life."

"That's very far-fetched," said Lizzie, "but I think I see what you mean."

Hamer got up. "I have a feeling, my old dear, that before this decade is out, a great many people will see what I mean. Well, I must go and look for a taxi."

Lizzie heaved herself to her feet, finished off her tea at a gulp, and said: "I still keep the rooms, you know, as those two poor young things had them."

"Alice wouldn't thank you to call her a poor young thing," Hamer laughed. "She's a very self-sufficient young woman."

"No, she's not. She's no more self-sufficient than the rest of us. She was as dependent on Charles as Charles was on her. Well, there you are, you see," she added, throwing open a door on the landing. "That's their sitting-room: the room you and Ann used to have. They've altered it a bit. It's ready for them when they want it. They'll come back, all right."

He let himself out. She waited till she heard the front door bang, and hard upon that came deep-throated Big Ben chiming the hour, and following that with one sonorous stroke. She did not feel a bit like sleep, though her large body was physically tired. She dragged it back to Charles' and Alice's sitting-room, and wandered about heavily, touching this and that. "The dear children," she murmured. "The dear children. I must be here when they come back."

Liz, who had arranged so much in her time, could not arrange that. As it happened, that night out with Hamer was the last night out they were to have together. She rang him up on the first of January and congratulated him on his viscountcy, then made public. "It's a terrible thing you've done to Alice," she wheezed into the telephone. "Charles will be the second viscount, and Alice will be a viscountess. She'll never forgive you."

"Oh, I don't know," Hamer laughed back. "She's been in Russia a long time now. That's a pretty good cure for Bolshevist notions. And what's the matter with you, Liz? You sound like a leaky bellows."

"Well, I'm in bed, you know. The doctor's keeping me here. Bronchitis, or something, I suppose. He doesn't say much."

"Now, that's a plague, old dear. I was going to take you out tonight. We ought to celebrate the hop into Debrett."

"I'm terribly sorry. Get someone else. It's high time you did: someone nice, and ten years younger than yourself. You ought to have married again long ago. You can't conceive how thrilling and vital you look."

"Fie, Liz! I had no idea you were such a wicked old woman." He could imagine the humorous sparks crackling in her old black eyes. "No, no. It's you or no one. On an occasion like this, I realize I'm a pretty lonely man."

"Well, come and see me, then, if it's as bad as that. I feel exceedingly reminiscent. And I don't have a viscount to talk to every day of my life."

He put down the telephone, smiling. But there was nothing to smile about when he got to North Street that night. Lizzie's maid said the doctor was with her, and Hamer waited in the warm little sitting-room where, of late, they had had so many homely talks. Presently the doctor came in: a young man, looking very serious and worried. He knew at once who this tall impressive white-haired man was who got up on his entrance, and he had evidently read the day's newspapers. "Mrs. Lightowler is gravely ill, My Lord," he said.

"Not too ill for me to see her, I hope?"

"I am afraid so. She is in a very high feverish state. I—I'm afraid of pneumonia.

Hamer didn't see Liz again. He saw the coffin sliding slowly on the rollers toward the big metal doors inscribed *"Mors Janua Vitæ."* He saw the doors open, the coffin disappear, the doors close. His heart was uncomforted. The gaping doors seemed like the maw of death itself, visibly opening and swallowing its prey. His last memory of Ann, he felt, would be tenderer. "Into the breast that gave the rose." Old Horst had quoted that. Somehow, though all that was Ann would long ago have disintegrated and decayed, he could think of her still as lying at peace beside the willows, as he would never be able to think of Liz at peace after this fiery end.

She had been lonely at the last. Only a scattered handful of people attended at the crematorium. As Hamer came out of the church into the bleak January afternoon, he saw ahead of him Arnold Ryerson making off swiftly, as though he did not wish to be overtaken.

Chapter Twenty-two

IN December of 1935, on the day when Viscount Shawcross was seventy years old, a large gilded basket of red carnations was delivered at his door in Half Moon Street early in the morning. The card tucked into the flowers said: "How beautifully you stand up to the years. *Sic semper tyrannis.* —Lettice."

Pendleton, very old and white, stood the basket on the breakfast-table. He looked to the fire, switched on the table light, for it was a drear morning, and then listened for Hamer's footsteps. They came, as he knew they would, punctually at eight.

"Good morning, My Lord. Many happy returns of the day."

"Thank you, Pendleton, thank you. Ha! Flowers?"

It was still the old enchanting voice, still the tall, unstooping figure, the hale face, the clear eye. He sat down to the table and pulled the card out from among the flowers. Yes: he had known they would be from Lettice. He was eager to ring her up and thank her at once, but glanced at the clock and desisted. He pulled one of the flowers out of the basket and put it in his buttonhole. "You shouldn't do it, you know. You can't really afford it." But he was very glad, very glad, that she had done it.

It was a bit extravagant, perhaps, to say she couldn't afford it. But she hadn't the money to fling about that she once had had. Her world had gone upside down. Her only daughter run off with a dago prince and sickened of him in six months. He had demanded a fortune before he would consent to a divorce, and Lostwithiel had paid it; then he had gone to fetch the girl home from Antibes. She insisted on driving him herself, in a racing-car in which she had terrorized the

countryside. Something of old Buck's lunacy was in this girl's blood; and perhaps, as Lostwithiel roared along the country roads toward Paris at his daughter's side, he remembered the far-off night when he had sent the grooms to wait with stretchers beneath the bridge at Castle Hereward. So Buck's father had driven down the road to Brighton; so Buck himself had driven; and so Buck's granddaughter drove now.

"I'm gettin' very bored with this, Daddy," she had shouted in his ear. "You'll have to buy me an airplane—something that really *moves.*"

THEY died together. No one saw what happened. In the morning they were found beneath the car at the foot of an embankment. In the last extremity of his love, Lostwithiel had got his arm about her neck; her wild unruly face was pulled close to his. . . .

That was two years ago. When Lostwithiel's complicated affairs were straightened out, his widow found herself poorer than she had expected. But she was nevertheless a very rich woman. If she gave up the mansion in Belgrave Square and took a small house in Green Street, that was only because she did not want any longer to be bothered with the estate; and if, when she went north, she did not live even in the dower house at Castle Hereward but in a house that had belonged to the bailiff, she did that for the same reason.

"I'm just an old widow, my dear, whose days are nearly done," she said once to Hamer. "I won't be worried with big places and lots of servants. I've never felt my soul was my own so much as I do now. If my hopes are gone, so are my illusions, and that's the great thing, after all."

Yes, it was the most utter nonsense for him to say that she couldn't afford a bunch of carnations! But it pleased him to imagine that she would have made that small sacrifice for him if necessary. He knew that she would. They had never seen more of each other than they did now; they had never understood one another better. She never omitted him from the small, unpolitical dinner-parties that she liked to give in Green Street, and occasionally they had a dinner *tête-à-tête*, there or in Half Moon Street. Each felt there was something wrong with the week which had not brought a meeting.

Pendleton came in with a telegram. "MANY HAPPY RETURNS. I'M COMING TO LUNCH. ALICE."

He got up from the table with a quizzical smile. "What do you think of that, Pendleton?" he said. "A man can live in this world for seventy years and have only two greetings on his birthday: one from a countess and one from a Bolshevist. What d'you make of that?"

"Well, My Lord," said Pendleton, with a brave attempt at humor, "it seems to me like making the best of both worlds, as one might say."

"My dear, you look radiant," he said when Alice came. "I didn't know you were in London. Did you come over specially for my birthday?"

She kissed him with real affection. "I'm forty years of age," she said. "Reserve your flattery for infants."

"Forty? Good God!"

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It was incredible. He did not feel old himself except in those moments when he realized the age of people whom he had known as children. Alice was forty! He looked at her keenly, holding her by both hands at arm's-length. There was a gray strand or two in her dark hair. Around the eyes, black as onyx, creases were deepening their channels. Charles, then, was thirty-eight, he thought; and he said: "The most radiant forty I've ever seen."

"And you're a fine mellow old seventy," laughed Alice. "'Mellow old seventy.' Sounds like the name of a ripe port. You rather look like that, you know."

He laughed too, as they went in to lunch. "Well," he asked, "how's Russia?"

"A country of human beings, like any other."

"Ha! Now there's an admission! You're the first Bolshevist I've met who's admitted that a Bolshevist could sin. We differ from the beasts in being able to sin and in knowing that we are sinning."

"Whenever we meet," said Alice, "you treat me to a sermon."

"You forget that I was once a local preacher."

"Yes, you've been that too, haven't you? You've been everything: politician, author, traveler, preacher, linguist, proletarian and peer. You really are a rather remarkable person."

"Now you see one of the advantages of being forty. Your eyes are beginning to open."

"Well, go on. Give me the sermon. I can see you're dying to do it. But keep to the headlines."

"WELL," he said, rising from the table and leading her into his study, "come and sit down here and tell me all about yourself. I'm willing to let politics look after themselves for an hour or two if you'll do the same. What's your happiest news?"

"I've heard from Charles," she said.

He stood arrested, with a lighted match burning down toward his fingers. He threw the match into the fire. "Where is he? How is he?"

"He's in South America, and he seems to be happy."

"Well—well—" he exclaimed impatiently. "Go on."

He held a light to her cigarette, and she saw that his fingers were a little unsteady. She was glad of that. She would not have liked news of Charles to be coldly received.

"I got his first letter about a year ago," she said.

"What a woman you are! Why on earth didn't you let me know?"

"Because Charles asked me not to let anyone know. You yourself once described the root of Charles' trouble. He's been surrounded by too many successes. You were a success at your own game. I was a success at mine. I suppose Charles' mother and Auntie Lizzie were successes too, in their way: they had learned to live successfully. After his one little burst, Charles was a failure among all of us shamelessly successful people. I think perhaps the little burst with 'Fit for Heroes' was the most unfortunate thing of all. Charles knew what we were all enjoying. He'd tasted it, and he couldn't get a second helping."

"Yes, I see that," said Hamer. "Well?"

"Well, in the first letter he wrote to me he was contrite about running away, and burning with shame for what he'd said to me before he went. You never heard what that was, and there's no reason why you should. I knew it was just lunacy, that he didn't in his heart believe a word of it; but it was the sort of lunacy that haunts the person who utters it, rather than the person who hears it. Though I did not for a moment believe he meant it, yet through all these years he'd thought I did."

"Yes, yes. I understand."

ALICE moved up closer to him on the couch. He took her hand and held it, and looked at the rings: the wedding-ring and the diamond engagement ring. "I've never met anyone," she said, "who *understands* so much."

"Ah, my dear," he thought, "if only that were true!" This engagement ring: how he had hated the thought of Charles' association with Alice! How little he had understood then!

"Well," he said, "I suppose what made him write was that he was beginning to find success coming his way at last in whatever it was he took up."

"Yes, and would you believe what it was! Airplanes!"

"What? Is he flying?"

"He wasn't when he first wrote. He was just finding his feet as a representative in South America for an English firm of airplane manufacturers. That was the very first thing he wrote about: he was doing well in the job, and he was full of hope. What he'd been doing before that I don't know. Having a thin time, I should think; but anyway, he'd learned Spanish. Then his letters became more frequent. I don't know how on earth one sells airplanes, but he was doing it with increasing success. His firm gave him a wider and wider commission, and now he's going from one South American state to another, selling to private companies and to governments. He mentions his first big success in selling to a government in the last letter I got."

She took the letter out of her bag. "'If you're ever in London, you can tell my father. I don't know who the supreme chief of our show is in London, but whoever he is, he seems to like me. It's almost as though there's some influence at work pushing me on. Anyhow, there it is. I'm on my feet—on my foot, anyhow. The one thing that's missing doesn't matter on this job. I can fly without it. I'm working for my pilot's ticket now. You'll see me soon, my dear, showing War Ministers over the Andes and selling them consignments of buses soon afterwards.'"

Alice folded the letter again.

Hamer got up. "Extraordinary!" he said. "To think that his talent, after all, was a sort of commercial-*cum*-diplomatic mix-up."

He patted her hand. "Now I know why you're radiant. This has made me too very happy, my dear. Tell me—what is the name of Charles' firm? Do you know?"

"No. But their airplanes all have fancy starry names: Pleiades and Capricorns and Orions and so forth. Why, are you going to hunt down Charles' benefactor? I think it's a myth. He's succeeding because he's found his job. That's all there is to it."

"No. I was just interested," Hamer said vaguely. But when she was gone, he sat for a time by the fire.

He could not say it to her, but he hated the whole thing. He detested airplanes, whether for civil or military use. He considered them the major curse of all man's meddling inventions. He remembered the letter which John Galsworthy had written to the newspapers after the last war, urging the nations to destroy once for all, and for all purposes, this thing that they had made. He was convinced to the bone and marrow that there had spoken the voice of wisdom.

Presently he took up the telephone and called up an address in the City. In two minutes he knew what he wanted to know.

Then, with a succession of calls, he ran Sir Thomas Hannaway to earth at his club at four o'clock in the afternoon.

"Look here, Hannaway, I just want to say a word of thanks about what you're doing for that boy of mine."

Sir Thomas was in a jovial mood. He laughed huskily into the telephone. "Eh! Tha's rumbled me at last, lad," he said, doing his best Lancashire imitation. Then he became the responsible man of the world. "There's no reason why the boy should know anything about it, Shawcross."

"He doesn't. I made a lucky guess."

"Well, you know, by the merest fluke I found that he was doing some little bits and pieces for our people out there, and I told 'em to give 'im 'is 'ead. That's all."

"It was good of you."

"Well," said Tom, "I don't forget things, you know, Shawcross. The old lettuces, eh? There's a lot between us two. And that night you turned up in Eaton Square. You were a Cabinet Minister then, and that meant something to me. Why should I deny it? I'm a simple man. I don't forget those things."

"You mean to say that influenced you with Charles? Good Lord, Hannaway! You're a caution."

"I 'ope I'm a Christian," said Tom with simple dignity.

"I hope you are," Hamer thought as he hung up and returned to the fireside.

Chapter Twenty-three

HAMER was very tired: more tired than he cared to admit. He laid down the book, his spectacles upon it, and closed his eyes. He was dozing off when a knock brought him upright. Pendleton put his head round the door and said in a subdued voice which he kept for the bedroom:

"Mr. Charles is here, My Lord."

Instantly Hamer was wide awake. "Here? Mr. Charles?"

"Yes, My Lord. Downstairs."

"Then bring him up. Bring him up at once."

Charles did not wait to be fetched. He came into the room as Pendleton was turning from the door.

"My dear boy, my dear boy!" said Hamer. He stretched out both his hands, and Charles took them. For a long moment they held one another in a close scrutiny; then Hamer said: "You're looking well. You're looking fine, Charles."

"You're looking better than ever, Father," Charles said, and Hamer was pleased. The bed-light was falling full on his white hair and ruddy healthy face. He was glad that he could stand his son's critical inspection.

"I'm as good as most at seventy-three," he boasted. "But you look magnificent, Charles. You've grown up. You've filled out. Pull up a chair. Sit down. I think I ought to get up."

"No, no," Charles protested. "Please stay where you are."

Charles brought a chair to the bedside. He was brown, tough and wiry. He had grown a mustache, clipped in close military fashion. His blue eyes were harder, mature. He was wearing a gray chalk-striped lounge suit that fitted him perfectly. He looked altogether like a lean young subaltern in mufti. He did not look his forty years.

"What about dinner?" said Hamer. "Ring for Pendleton."

"I've had dinner. It was not easy, believe me, to get dinner in London tonight, but I managed it."

Hamer eyed him fondly. "You know, Charles, you look as if you *do* manage things now. Well, what about a drink?"

"No sir, thank you. I never touch it."

"Neither did I till that villainous Lizzie Lightowler got me into the way of it. And damn it, I'll have one now. You'll join me in a cigar?"

"I'd love to."

THEY smoked in silence for a while; then Hamer said: "Well, what are your plans? Have you got a long leave? Are you going out to join Alice, or is she coming over here, or what? She ought to give up that Russian job now for good. And you could get fixed up here in your firm's London office. I should think something could be arranged," he said, thinking of Sir Thomas Hannaway. "It would be very nice, you know, my boy, if we could all be together again. There aren't many of us left now." He blew out a spiral of smoke and considered it attentively. "Precious few. Precious few."

Charles did not reply for a long time. Then he said: "That would be very nice, Father. In many ways, I'd like that as much as you would, and perhaps some day it will be possible. But it isn't possible now."

"What—you're going back?"

"No. Alice and I have both resigned our jobs. She's traveling home now. We're going to Spain together."

Neither spoke for a moment. Hamer finished his toddy, and put down the glass with a steady hand. But his heart was not steady. He felt as though an uncovenanted blessing had appeared suddenly within his reach, and then been snatched away.

It was Charles who at last broke the uneasy silence. He said: "There doesn't seem to be anything else for it, believing as we do—Alice and I."

"What exactly do you believe?" Hamer asked. "About the contest in Spain, I mean—a country that has always been seething with political unrest, whoever happened at a particular moment to be in power. You and Alice will go out, of course, because you are Communists. Supposing your side wins: what do you think the outcome will be?"

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"I can't say what Alice would answer to that. As for me, I don't know and I don't care, except that here is clearly a case of right against wrong, and if I have helped the right to win, I am ready to let it settle its own fashion of exploiting the victory. What is your view?"

"Simply this: when somebody wins, and whoever that may be, the common people —the people in whose name both sides are fighting—will say, 'Thank God that's over,' and, a good deal poorer and sadder, they'll settle down till another savior comes along to ruin them. If I could be sure of having one prayer answered, I would pray for this: that for fifty years, throughout the whole world, politicians of all breeds would leave the people alone. We might then have a better world. We couldn't have a worse one."

Charles got up and began to walk restlessly about the room. Hamer watched him for a while, thinking he did not now look so assured and confident as he did a few moments ago. "I believe, Charles," he said, "that there are too many damned reformers in the world, too many people who are certain they know what life's all about, and are prepared to tear the world to pieces just to show how nicely they can put it together again."

"I must confess, Father," Charles said, "that I still find it a bit difficult to follow a man who once demanded the millennium and now says he'll make do with pleasant Sunday afternoons."

"Go on demanding the millennium, my boy," said Hamer. "God help us when we cease to do that! But don't expect to get it, and above all things, don't try to shove it down other people's throats. If the millennium pays a penny in the pound, you'll be lucky. Now, tell me what you've been doing, and what you're going to do. How long have I got you for?"

"Only for a few days, I'm afraid. Alice is going straight through to Cwmdulais to see her father. He hasn't been well for a long time. Then, when I hear from her, I shall join her in Cardiff. I believe we sail from there. We are going on a cargo-boat."

Hamer lay back on the pillow, and Charles ran on. Once launched, he had plenty to say. Hamer was glad to hear the voice which for so long had not spoken to him at all, and for so long before that had spoken only in tones of estrangement. But of all the things that Charles said, only two remained in his mind after his son had wished him good-night and put out the light: Charles was staying for but a few days, and Arnold was ill. Arnold would be seventy-six. If Arnold went, no one but Tom Hannaway would be left, and somehow Tom Hannaway did not count. . . . There would be no tie at all with those days that seemed at once incredibly remote and so near that he felt he could reach out his hand and put it confidingly into the hand of Gordon Stansfield. He passed to sleep through a turmoil of vague confused thought in which he hardly knew whether he was on the pallet bed in Broadbent Street with the Old Warrior's saber on the wall, or in Half Moon Street.

IN the front bedroom at Horeb Terrace, where sunshine fell through the window all day long, Arnold Ryerson sat up in bed, the bed he had shared with Pen that night long ago when they had come down from the north and sat shyly in the parlor, listening to Ap Rhondda singing in the kitchen as Nell scrubbed his back. Nothing seemed changed in the little house: there was still no bathroom; there was still no gas up here on the bedroom floor; but it was not the same house to Arnold: it was a place enriched with living and suffering, with birth and death. Almost as much as his body, it was his earthly tabernacle.

His body had let him down at last: the tabernacle was in dissolution. He had never given it much thought. It had become gross and heavy, and now had suddenly fallen away, slack, flaccid. He sat with the pillows piled behind his head and shoulders, and the face that looked down into the valley was ashen-gray and shrunk. The big purposeful hands had gone white, blue-veined. The eyes were large and brooding. From time to time he muttered to himself: "Ah'm tired." "Ah can't be bothered." But he was not speaking to anyone in particular, or about anything in particular. His mind was rambling, already half-absent from the cumbering flesh.

Dai Richards came quietly into the room: Pen's nephew, Ianto's son: Dr. David Richards, with the long string of degrees after his name, with the Rolls-Royce car and the Rolls-Royce manner.

Dai rubbed his hands together in his hearty O Death-where-is-thy-sting manner. "Well, uncle, it's a grand day for the journey. Look at that sunshine! 'Healing is in his wings!'"

ARNOLD did not turn his head. He gazed dully through the open window. "Ah'm not going. Ah can't be bothered," he said.

Dai, rather portly, superbly dressed, with a thin gold chain across his stomach, looked down at the shrunken husk of the old fighter. "No one's going to bother you," he said. "You'll travel like a prince. Think of the most comfortable journey you ever had, and then you can bet your boots this will be easier. Well, I'll be back soon."

He went out, the fairy godfather who was going to conjure up the pumpkin coach; and in the darkness deepening through the recesses of Arnold's mind, there stirred a train of thought that Dai's sprightly words had called into being. The most comfortable journey you ever had. . . . That night driving home from Bingley with Ann. . . . The tall shapes of the beech-trees wavered like somber banners against the darkness of his mind; the *clippety-clop* of the horse's hoofs, the jingle of brassy decoration on the harness, sounded faint, far-off, like something heard and not heard as ears strain in the night. Ann, Pen, Hamer—they were the three great names that had been trumpets to his ears, lamps to his feet; and now they came back, but only as a dying echo, a just-seen glimmer over the edge of extinction.

The glimmer strengthened, and suddenly with the clarity of a picture seen in a small mirror, his mind focused round the moment when he had shaken hands with Hamer Shawcross and said good-by. He saw again the tall handsome man, felt again the surge of mingled admiration, love and regret which, in their latter years,

had always filled him in that presence. "Defeat which would have the quality of victory." So, Hamer said, Ann had summed the matter up. Well, it was defeat, all right. His cloudy mind, which for weeks had been brooding over the valley, had no doubt about that; but by heck!—as Pen would have said—by heck, it needn't be a craven end! He struggled up and shouted powerfully: "Dai! Dai!" and when David Richards came running, he said simply: "Ah'm ready to go, lad. Ah want to go."

Dai did not understand that the small avowal was a victory.

Do you remember the day, Arnold—it was a hot summer day and there was a war on—when you heard that Pen was hurt and you and Hamer Shawcross waited in this house for the taxi to come? And the colliers were standing outside the house to say: "Good luck, boy-o. Bring back good news."

It's your turn now, Arnold, and Dai Richards and Alice are waiting for the big cream-colored ambulance with the balloon tires that Dai is having sent from Cardiff. He's a good-hearted man, is Dai, though perhaps a bit bumptious, and he can't leave you here any longer.

There was a time, Arnold, when you and Pen were boy and girl in Thursley Road, and Dai was a baby-in-arms in this very house in Cwmdulais. You could laugh then at the thought that Dai could mean anything to you, one way or the other, and now here you are, a log, a hulk, and Dai must make the decisions.

Give him the thanks that are his due. The rooms in his private nursing-home cost ten guineas a week, and he's going to give you one for nothing, and take you there on balloon tires. The big cream-colored ambulance is even now climbing the hill to Horeb: the hill that you will not climb again. And that won't matter much to you now, because it's all over: old Richard Richards is gone, and Ianto is gone, and Pen is gone; and when you are gone too, Alice will not come back here any more. She will bang the door and walk down the hill to the station, and perhaps in this little old house someone else will start a new story. But your story is finished, Arnold; there is no more room in the Rhondda for you or the job you tried to do.

The miners are at the door again, as they were when you waited here with Hamer Shawcross. They see the two big male nurses carry you down, wrapped in blankets, on a stretcher; they see the stretcher slide into the handsome ambulance, but you now know nothing about this. The somber banners that were moving in your dark mind have melted into the blackness of oblivion. You do not see Alice watching the doors of the ambulance close upon you, as you yourself not so long ago watched the doors closing upon the coffin of old Lizzie Lightowler. *Mors Janua Vitæ.* Well, it may be so, Arnold. It may be that somewhere Pen is waiting with a golden trumpet, and if she is, by heck, she'll blow a blast, because she won't be disappointed in you. Perhaps, in that place, they'll give her back her eyes; and if they don't, she'll want no better guide than you to the city that stands four-square: as four-square as you are yourself, Arnold. . . .

All the preparations for the voyage had been left in Alice's hands. Charles moved like an automaton, with nothing to do but follow. He knew that they were to go to Valencia. There they would meet other English men and women who had offered their arms and their lives to the government of Spain. He was a good air-pilot, cool and efficient. Here was the service in which his metal leg would be no hindrance. . . . Alice did not know what she would do. The circumstances must decide. She was a capable nurse, a good cook, and she could drive a lorry. With these talents, she would find something.

They lunched with Idris Howells. "It's all influence, you see," Alice laughed. "Idris wouldn't refuse me a thing, would you, Idris?"

Charles found himself shaking hands with a short, tough, bearded man in a blue suit and a bowler hat. He might have been any age up to sixty, but it appeared he was just as old as Alice herself. They had gone to an infants' school together at Cwmdulais, and Idris had stayed in Cwmdulais long enough to have much the same political views as had Alice. Clearly, he was one of her great admirers. The Communist candidate and the author of Gabrielle Minto's novels were alike wonderful in his eyes. Idris had been apprenticed early to the sea, and was now master of the *Mary Marriner*, loaded with a miscellaneous cargo for Valencia, and ready to sail that night from one of the Cardiff docks. She would go out on the tide just before midnight.

They parted from Idris Howells after lunch, and spent a strange wandering day, a day of sunshine and cool airs, visiting the places that Alice wanted to see again, and wanted Charles to see with her: the school she had attended, the parks she had played in, the noble group of white municipal buildings with domes and towers reaching into the blue sky, and the spring green of the trees about them rushing into ecstatic life. They sat there for a long time: it was the loveliest place in all the city to sit.

When the light was going, they got up and went to a café in Duke Street, and after they had eaten, they went to a cinema, winding up the inconsequent day with the wildest of all inconsequences. At a quarter to ten Alice said, "Come now," and Charles' heart gave a leap, for he knew that with those words the inconsequence was ended, and that, as they stumbled over the feet of embracing lovers, they were leaving that somnolent and stifling air for the harsh wind of reality.

It seemed prosaic to be meeting Idris Howells by appointment on the corner of St. Mary Street. There he was: dark, reserved, uncommunicative as he had been at lunch, but emanating nevertheless a sense of loyalty, a sense of a man who would be stanch and dependable at need. Prosaic to be climbing into the electric tram, to hear the *ting* of the ticket-punch as though they were passengers bound on some pennyworth of unromantic travel, not mixed with concerns of life and death.

The *Mary Marriner* was lying at a dock wall under the long darkness of a warehouse. A light or two was burning aboard her, but she had an abandoned lifeless look. A few specters flitted about her deck; at the head of the gangway a man

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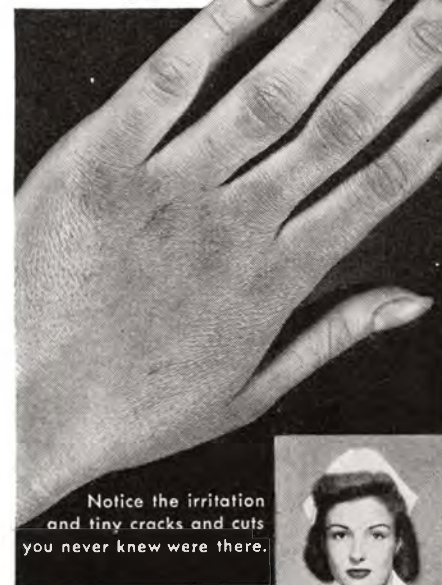

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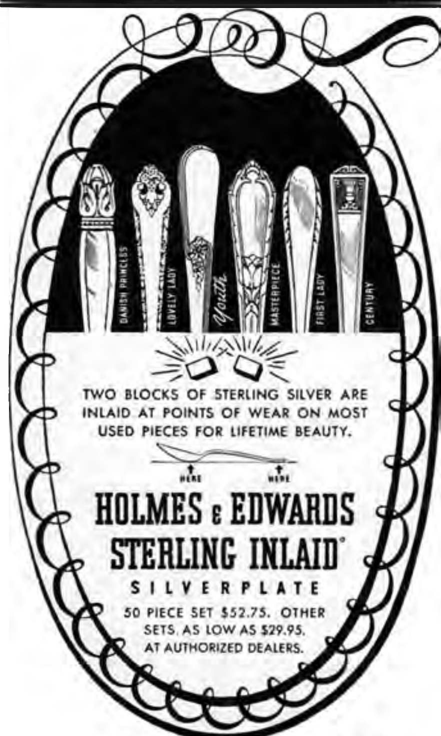

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loomed to life out of the shadows and said, "Good evening, sir," to Idris Howells. Idris nodded without speaking, and Charles and Alice followed at his heels along the deck. He took them to a small cabin with two berths, one above the other, a wash-basin let into the wall, a small chest of drawers, a screwed-down swivel-chair, and nothing else. "This'll do, I suppose," he said. "There's your things. I had them all collected this afternoon. Keep out of the way now till we're at sea. I must go." He went, shutting the door after him. He sounded brusque and impatient; but Charles and Alice, sitting side by side on the lower berth, knew the shy solicitude behind his words.

Alice always remembered that it was a lovely voyage. Heaven at least granted her that. Years of separation, but only days of love renewed. But they were days to treasure in memory forever. Not a moment of them but was lovely, from their waking up to the first light of morning on the dancing sea, to the last moment of all, which also was in the morning, virginal and lovely.

They might have been going on a honeymoon too long delayed. Charles, indeed, said so, standing right aft that first morning, looking over the stern of the *Mary Marriner* at the glister of sunrise on the wake. A hopeful morning of May, fresh and sane, with the men going about their simple tasks as God and commonsense intended men to do. And soon, said Charles, this would be all over. The task to which they had put their hands would be completed; after that, with no home in Cwmdulais, no home in North Street, they would begin as he wished they had begun long ago, with a home of their own, and long years yet before them.

So Charles spoke in the keen fresh morning, with the wind playing through his hair and whipping with its salt sting Alice's eager face. He stood with his arm about her, all the doubts and premonitions of the night blown away like darkness when a shutter is opened on the sun.

ONLY once again did Charles see England; a far-off cloudy glimpse of the country about Land's End, a white house or two, a glint of green fields, the last lonely outposts looking westward across the Atlantic. He was young and happy, and Alice knew that he had no real understanding of the hazards before him. He had fought in a great war, with half the world embattled, and his mind conceived the affair in Spain as a parochial brawl that would soon be over.

She did not utter what was in her heart, but accepted his mood, and she was to be glad that she did so. Only once did a moment of darkness deepen over the serenity of those days. He was in the cabin, and she had come down to find a scarf, for the evening was cool. She lifted the scarf out of a trunk, and Charles saw, before she could prevent his seeing, that it was wrapped round a revolver.

"Hallo!" he cried. "What on earth is that for?"

Alice tried to pass the matter off with a laugh. "Well, if we get short of food, I can shoot pigeons," she said.

Charles had taken up the revolver and was examining it expertly. "A useful thing," he said. "I'd like to have this myself. I don't imagine either of us will want it, but I'm more likely to do so than you are."

"No—please—let me have it," insisted Alice.

"You bloodthirsty Bolshie," Charles bantered, slipping the revolver into his pocket. "I don't believe you know a thing about revolvers. You're not to be trusted with it. You'd be a public danger."

"Charles!" said Alice, so sharply that he looked at her in surprise, to see that her face was white. "I could hardly miss with the barrel at my own head," she said, and then threw herself on the bunk, trembling.

He knelt at her side, his arms about her, instantly filled with contrition. "My darling," he said. "My darling!"

"Oh, Charles!" she sobbed. "You're still such a child. I don't think you know the world you're living in. It's a filthy world, full of filthy things. Things that men have grown out of have come sneaking back—dirty beastly things like torture. Torture is again a part of the technique of governments and armies. I could stand most things, Charles, but *that* I could not stand. . . . Give me the revolver."

He gave it to her, and hurried out on deck, feeling sick.

EVEN the Bay of Biscay was kind to them. They met none of its traditional evil weather. Day followed placid day, with the little *Mary Marriner* chugging happily through temperate seas. They ate their meals with Idris Howells, the first officer and the chief engineer. For the rest, they lazed in the sun all day, went to bed early, and got up late. They passed Gibraltar and steamed north, with Spain's eastern coast on their port, and the sunny Mediterranean sea dividing with hardly a ripple before their bows.

They were leaning over the starboard rail that night, facing the full moon rising out of the sea, when Idris Howells, who had been pacing the deck, stopped behind them. "Well," he said, "we'll have you there tomorrow. I reckon we should make Valencia about noon."

They swung round from the rail. "Thank you, Idris," Alice said. "You've been a good friend."

Idris took the pipe out of his bearded jaws and looked thoughtfully at the glowing tobacco. "Well, Alice gel," he said, "I dunno that there's anything to thank me for. You've got to find that out yet, haven't you?"

She put her hand impulsively on his. "Idris, don't let that worry you," she begged him. "Whatever happens—you understand, *whatever* happens—we wanted most dearly to come, and you must have no regrets."

"All right, gel," he said gruffly. And resuming his quiet pacing, he added over his shoulder: "Not that we're there yet, mind you."

Alice turned to Charles, and with a little gesture of clenched fists she said: "I feel excited! For the first time since we started, I feel excited. Spain! That is Spain!"

They crossed the deck to the port side and looked over the intervening moonwashed sea at the faint loom of the coast. That is Spain! That is the new Holy Land. Tomorrow there will be another, and another the day after that.

"I wonder what will happen to us?" Charles said with the simple wistfulness of a child. "You know, we'll have to separate."

Alice looked toward the land with her dark eyes shining. "Who knows what will happen to us?" she said. "God—or whatever you like to call it—thundered into my ears from the time I could think, that there was a job for me to do, and that I must get on with it, helping to clean up the greedy makeshift mess that halfwits call civilization." She turned to him, laughing. "D'you think that's too tall an order for a little girl from the Rhondda?"

"Well," said Charles, like a good boy repeating a lesson, "we must do our best. But you know my father—"

Alice laid a hand on his arm. She turned and leaned against the rail, with the white light of the moon falling full on her face. "Yes," she said. "I know his views. They're an old man's views, and as such, I can tolerate them and even respect them. But remember, Charles, there's an impulsive wisdom of youth as well as a cautious wisdom of age. The views he's been giving you weren't his views when he was as young as we are now. Those were the high romantic days when he carried the saber. I wonder whether he was ever anything but a romantic at heart? I think that would explain him better than anything else."

She remained pensive for a moment, then said: "There's no job now for romantics. We, on our side, have got to be as dispassionate as a sanitary squad, cleaning up a dirty smell. And we've got to be quick, because it's spreading, and soon it'll poison and suffocate every decent thing and instinct. Stay there a moment," she added, and broke from him and ran to the cabin.

When she came back, Charles saw to his surprise the glint of moonlight on steel. "This is it," she said. "This is the saber of Peterloo."

She stood for a moment looking at the light playing on the curved blade that had known so many vicissitudes: the blade that had slashed the life out of the girl Emma in a Manchester street, that the Old Warrior had maundered over, that Ellen had polished with bath-brick, that Hamer Shawcross had used to carve his way to the notice and the applause of the people, that Jimmy Newboult had worshiped, and that Lady Lostwithiel had embalmed in velvet. Alice stood looking down ironically at the gleaming length as the *Mary Marriner* sighed and gently rolled through the placid moonlit water off the coast of Spain. "I wondered why I brought it," she said. "But now I know. The world is face to face with reality. It is time to make an end of romantic gestures."

She stood away from Charles, whirled the saber in a shining circle once round her head, then hurled it far out into the radiance of the moonlight. Silently, as if spellbound, they watched the silver splash of its fall, an Excalibur that no hand was lifted to receive.

For a moment neither spoke; then Charles said quietly: "That was the most romantic gesture I have ever seen."

IDRIS HOWELLS himself came banging at the cabin door early the next morning. He carried two mugs of hot oversweetened tea, which he put down on the chest of drawers. "Get this into you," he said, "and then come up on deck. This'll be your last chance this trip to see the dawn over the Mediterranean."

They climbed, yawning, out of their bunks, drank the tea, and pulled on dressing-gowns. They pulled overcoats on top of the gowns and went out into the fresh air that seemed to smack their faces, so stuffy the little cabin was, with its still-odious smell of new paint.

THE eastern sky was trembling with a pearly suffusion that, as yet, could hardly be called light: a blue-gray-pink of such delicate loveliness that Alice held her breath. The sea was carpeted with a woolly texture of mist, a carpet that swayed and lifted, wove itself into ropy patterns that twisted and dissolved. It reached away infinitely like a smoke of milk.

From the sea-floor to the zenith was a miracle of insubstantial form and color, and even as they watched, it faded like a cockcrow phantom. The gray and blue drained out of the sky. The pink deepened to red—red banners flung out suddenly like breaking standards, and the forehead of the sun peeped over the rim of the water. The mist rose quickly, hurrying to nothingness like a million ghosts caught out too late, and soon there was only the Mediterranean sun burning down on the blue Mediterranean sea and falling in rays of long level light upon the eastward face of Spain.

"Well," said Idris, who had remained silently smoking at their side, "that's God's idea, gel, of how to start a day. And I wish to God I was in Valencia, because hereabouts are people whose ideas are not so lovely."

He swung on his heel and walked to the bridge, leaving disenchantment in both their hearts. Charles gave a short ironical laugh. "He does well to remind us that it isn't a honeymoon," he said; and Alice: "Yes. It's grim, isn't it, when we must tell God Himself that the day of romantic gestures is ended."

They went to the cabin and dressed, and then they began to pack their things. Charles was kneeling at the task; and Alice, sitting on the edge of the bunk, began to stroke the close crisp curls of his hair. Remaining on his knees, he looked up at her smiling, his blue eyes full of that faith and confidence and surety that he seemed to know most deeply when with her.

"Charles, my love," she said, "you're quite sure about this, aren't you? You wanted to come? You believe in what we're doing?"

"I believe in *you*," he said. "So long as you're living in Spain, I'll live and fight there happily; and if you die in Spain, then, by God, I feel I should want to soak the place in blood for having robbed me of the chance to redeem all those years when I was a fool."

She took his head between her hands and pulled it onto her lap, and sat there stroking his hair and gazing before her at the blue emptiness drifting by the porthole.

It was while they sat thus, close together, their bodies touching and their minds resting confidently each in the love of the other, that the torpedo struck the

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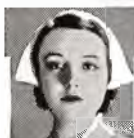

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Mary Marriner amidships, below the water-line. The little boat stumbled and staggered.

Alice pulled Charles to his feet, and they ran out to the deck. The morning was as placid as ever, but already they could feel that the deck was at a tilt beneath them. Idris Howells was on the bridge, shouting down the tube to the engine-room. Even as they watched him, clinging to one another, he got his answer. A rumble in the bowels of the *Mary Marriner* roared swiftly to climax, an explosion that blew a great rent in her from engine-room to daylight. A rush of scalding steam screamed into the air, and with it came a shrapnel-burst of flying metal bits.

There were two men in the engine-room. Both were killed. So was Charles. When Idris Howells came running down from the bridge, which was blown crazily askew, he found Alice squatting on the deck with Charles' head again on her lap. Her lap was dark with the blood draining from a hole drilled into his temple by a flashing steel bolt. Only a few seconds had passed since the ship was struck. Charles and Alice had not exchanged a word since those last words in the cabin.

Chapter Twenty-four

OUT on the moor it was very dark, and the wind was rushing there with shrieks and howls. It sounded as though the world were about to founder in chaos.

The clock with the silvery chime struck nine. It was up here now at the Hut. London didn't see much of the Viscount Shawcross, and though he still kept the house in Half Moon Street, he had taken his most treasured possessions north. Axel Horst's picture of Ann was over the mantelpiece, and striking what a stranger might have thought an incongruous note, there stood in a place of honor a fretwork model of the House of Commons, with Big Ben in the tower, all complete. Old Pendleton was dead; his wife had gone to end her days with some young relatives; and the clock was found when their rooms were being rearranged for Chesser.

And now here Chesser was, with the nightly glass of hot toddy. He placed the tray on the table alongside Hamer's chair: a table which already contained a box of cigars, Marcus Aurelius, the *Observer* and the Sunday *Times*. The papers were of that day's date: Sunday, December 3rd, 1939.

The old man got up from his chair while Chesser was mending the fire. He was thinner; his hair, long and fine, had the glister of white silk. He stooped a little, with his hand in the small of his back. "It is a great satisfaction to note from the papers, Chesser," he said, "that Japan deplores the Russian invasion of Finland. A Japanese newspaper thinks it an inexcusable crime, and in the next column I see it is reported that two Chinese cities have been heavily bombed by Japanese airmen. You know, Chesser, the most extraordinary thing about this world that you are living in and that I am dying in, is that nations are not aware of the wickedness of their own hearts. They really *do* believe that a ghastly crime committed by someone else is a permissible national gesture when committed by them."

"Yes, My Lord, I suppose that is so," said Chesser. He got up from the hearth, pierced a cigar, gave it to Hamer, and held him a light. He was used to these little speeches. For weeks on end, he was the old man's only audience.

There was not so much power and resonance now in the famous voice. It had gone thin and silvery, like his hair, like the chimes of the clock.

"Things are being done today, Chesser, by the governments of great nations, that their ancestors of two hundred, three hundred, years ago would have thought beyond the barbarous reach of cannibals. You think you've got the laugh of me, young man, because you're stepping on to the scene and I'm sliding off. But by God, I don't envy you. No, Chesser, I don't envy you."

He let himself down carefully among his cushions and stretched his long legs toward the fire. "That's better. I get stiff—just a bit stiff, you know, Chesser, sitting here."

"Is there anything I can get you, sir, before I go?"

"Yes. You can get me that big book over there. The Bible Designed to be Read as Literature, they call it. Though it seems to me a matter of common sense that the Bible was designed to be read as the Bible. You read the Bible, Chesser, and Marcus Aurelius, with an occasional dip into Shakespeare, and you won't hurt."

"Yes, My Lord."

"And I shall be sleeping in the Hut tonight."

He smiled when Chesser was gone. He liked the fellow, and he liked being fussed. It was lonely without Alice, and he hoped she wouldn't be long away. She wouldn't. No, she wouldn't. He knew that—not with young Gordon here in the house.

It was extraordinary, he reflected, how the coming of another generation blew on the sparks of dying hope. Because of that child, not yet two years old, sleeping up there where Charles used to sleep, the world seemed worth saving.

LETTY LOSTWITHIEL had driven over that afternoon from the bailiff's house she lived in at Castle Hereward. Like Hamer, she was not in London much nowadays.

The child's nurse had said it was too blowy to take him out on the moor, and they had gone up and looked at him lying in his cot: this child of Alice and Charles, grandson of Pen and Arnold, as well as of himself and Ann, this child who carried the Christian name of Gordon Stansfield. So much seemed to meet and to be embodied in this bit of flesh.

They had tea in Hamer's study, which was already darkening, with the pines and firs lashing in the blast beyond the windows.

"You're a lucky man, my dear," Lettice had said. "You used to think, didn't you, that Castle Hereward and the name of Lostwithiel were almost eternal things that even you could hardly blow out of existence. Now you know how frail such things are. It's worked out like that: I am an end; you are a beginning."

He hadn't thought of it like that before, but there it was. England had seen the last of the Earls of Lostwithiel, but upstairs was the second Viscount Shawcross, with a world of sorts in front of him. Not that the title mattered, but the hope of

an immortality of the flesh was, irrationally, a comforting thing.

He and Lettice Lostwithiel had not discussed the state of the world. For the last few years the tempo of its Gadarene rush had accelerated, and now here they were at war again, all furnished with Gadarene snouts to put on, and with holes in the ground to run to like foxes. But he and she were so far beyond surprise that they could leave all that aside and be happy in talk of personal trivialities. In their own now restricted circle, they were the only two survivors of an age. It was an age in which no good had seemed impossible, and now they accepted the age in which no evil, no bestiality, no treason or treachery seemed incredible.

THIS was the age of which Gordon Shawcross, aged one year and nine months. was the heir; and sitting there after Chesser was gone, Hamer found the age more tolerable in contemplation because Gordon would inherit it. It was the old fallacy of human hope. He knew that well enough. "While there's life, there's hope." And that was true not only of each man's life, but of the life of man. He remembered something that Arnold Ryerson had told him long ago: Arnold whose photograph, with Keir Hardie's and Pen's and Ann's and Letty's and Lizzie's, stood on the mantelpiece under the Axel Horst portrait: a sort of "Who's Who in the Life of Hamer Shawcross."

Arnold had said that one night in Bradford, when he went out—his first venture—to speak to the factory girls, they had rushed on him and Pen under the streetlamp in the rain, and had torn and gashed them, stripping away their clothes and their skin. And Arnold had said despairingly when it was over, "They're not worth saving," and to that Pen had answered: "Men and women—they're all we've got to work with. 'Appen they're all God Almighty's got to work with, come to that."

Well, He hadn't got far with His work. With whimsical blasphemy, Hamer reflected that if his own life's work, entered on with such high hopes, with such banners and trumpets, had been a failure,—and he admitted that it was,—he need not feel unduly cast down since God, with all eternity to scheme in, had not been more successful. Never had the idea of God been more widespread. You couldn't sink a drain, or launch a cruiser, or go into battle without the ever-present priest. But old Marcus Aurelius had, as usual, got pithily to the root of the matter: "The gods had much rather that mankind should resemble than flatter them." The flattery of imitation was not yet widespread.

Young Gordon Shawcross was sleeping upstairs—a puny and insufficient cause for hope, in all conscience. Yet as each generation was launched from the womb of time, men would go on hoping that it might be the ultimate wave, the final undermining surge to loosen the strong bastions of evil and bring them crashing down.

But they would not come crashing down. Three things were immortal: good and evil and the hope in men's hearts that evil would be overcome by good. There would always be the battle, with the promise of unachievable victory swaying this way in one generation, and in another generation that way. For himself, he was not sorry that his own part in the everlasting warfare was nearly done. Disillusions and despairs went at last the same way as dreams and desires. One came in the end to an equipoise, to an acceptance of all that life could do or give or take away.

He put down the dead cigar and leaned back, looking at the portrait of Ann, glowing as brightly as on the day when Axel Horst painted it. He was glad that Ann died when she did. It was still possible, then, to believe in faith between man and man, in reason going its slow patient way, building with its small but well-laid bricks.

The picture took his mind back to those days in the sunshine of the Harz mountains. Even then—even then—the premonition of the world's Calvary was present in old Horst's cry: "Where now are our dreams?"

Such dreams there had been! Dreams of Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land, and extending therefrom to the uttermost coasts. . . . The solidarity of Labor! The old man's face twisted with a weary smile. What was solid now? All the earth was quagmire because no longer were men's words their bond. Faith was gone, snuffed out like a candle in a hurricane, and with it hope and charity were gone, too. From the western coasts of Europe, eastward through Russia and the waste places, even unto China and Japan, the world was embattled, and the ancient foundations were crumbling. The statesmen with their childish diction talked of the grave deterioration of international relationships; and so grave, indeed, so shocking to all decency and good human feeling was the present state of the world, that it was easy to fly for refuge to the belief that God Himself was afflicting mankind. Rather, mankind was afflicting God, afflicting the Godhead in the human soul; for if one thing was so certain as to need no demonstration, it was this: that a good or a bad state in human relationships was the consequence of the actions of good men doing good things, or of bad men doing bad things, and of nothing else.

IN the silence, above the crying of the winter trees around the house, he heard the drone of airplanes: deep, resonant, like mighty harpstrings vibrating in the sky. They seemed to him the very voice of a world in which he had lingered too long: the vainglorious voice of Satan's host sweeping to a new revolt against the majesty and the authority and the peace of God.

He got up a little unsteadily from the chair, and stood listening, supporting himself with his hands on the arm. From upstairs he heard a whimper, rising to a cry, and while the throbbing of the airplanes was still there for all to hear, he ceased to hear it, all his being concentrated suddenly on listening to the voice of the child.

The child had been born in this house. The house already was becoming an historic place. Here his mother had died; here he himself soon must die; here his son had been born, and his grandson. . . .

Alice did not so much as land in Spain. The small crew of the *Mary Marriner*, all packed into one boat, rowed away as

(Continued on page 112)

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YOU YOURSELF

by ANGELO PATRI

A GROUP of seniors were discussing plans for the future when one of their number said, in the most matter-of-fact tone imaginable: "I am going to be a country doctor." There was an instant of complete silence, broken by the impulsive one who said: "You're crazy."

"You couldn't," said the cautious one. "No hospitals, no equipment, no stimulating associates, no patients to pay you."

"Anyway, there's nothing doing in the country," said the quick bright one. Then confidentially to me: "Is there?"

I laughed. I remembered the day, not long past, when the whole village and about half the nation were in active coöperation with our doctor to save the life of Aunt Elly. "She's real bad, Doctor. Come as fast as you can. She seems to be choking, like," said the neighbor-nurse.

When the doctor reached his patient, he found her in a bad way. The infection had made headway, and the throat was slowly and surely closing.

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"Good work," said the doctor, and we all heaved a sigh of relief, secure in the faith that Aunt Elly would soon be about as usual.

It isn't the country, nor the city; it isn't even the equipment and the stimulating associations, that make one successful. It is you, yourself, young people: It is your own consecrated purpose, your disciplined spirit, your understanding. Given that spirit and that understanding, you can live on the desert's edge, yet draw life's richest rewards—content, the affectionate respect of men and their willing service to your cause.

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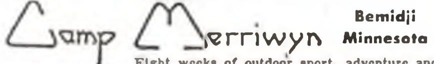

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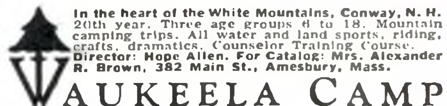

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(Continued from page 107)

the little ship settled down in the water through which, but lately, she had been plowing her way. The three dead men went down with her: so swiftly Hamer's son followed Hamer's sword to the deep oblivion in which all gestures, romantic or realist or springing from whatsoever part of the restless spirit of man, are done with forever.

A British steamer, homeward bound from Valencia, picked them up at noon. Hamer met Alice at a London dock and took her home to Half Moon Street. Soon afterward, she knew that the child would be born; and then they went to Baildon, and they had rarely been out of it since. Alice had little to say of politics during those years, and little of Charles. She was a quiet aging woman. She went on writing her novels.

Rarely—very rarely—she mentioned affairs in Russia, with a growing doubt, a deepening apprehension. That morning she had left the Hut to travel by the Sunday train to London in order to keep an appointment early on Monday morning. She said nothing when she read the Sunday papers with their tale of Russia's blow at Finland. It was not till the car was at the door waiting to take her to the station, and she was saying good-by to Hamer in the hall, that she exclaimed bitterly: "It is nice of them to be so frank. They have at least left me in no doubt what Charles died for."

"My dear, my dear!" he said, the old silvery man bending over the grizzled head that he had known so black and smooth; but she would not wait to be comforted. She rushed from the house; the car door banged; and she was gone.

WHO sees his dream fulfilled, he wondered, sitting back in his chair when the crying of the child ceased, and the airplanes had passed over, and nothing could be heard but the wind lamenting in the loneliness. Perhaps only a fool. Not Ann; not Pen nor Arnold; not himself nor Alice. Tom Hannaway, perhaps.

It was time for bed. He got up and walked out into the hall where Chesser was sitting by the fire reading. Chesser looked at him reproachfully. This business of sleeping in the Hut was something he could not understand. It was not the old Hut any longer. It had been renovated out of recognition. It was dry and weather-proof, electrically lit and warm. But still it answered some need in Hamer's mind. When Chesser had wrapped him up in an overcoat and muffler and lighted him down the path and seen him comfortably settled and had then gone away, Hamer gave a sigh of relief. Now he was alone, and with a little imagination, it was the old Hut. The deal table and chair and the rough bookshelves were untouched, and this was the old stove, though polished and more safely housed.

If his dreams were dead, here at least he could be near their ghosts. He did not need even to shut his eyes to call them up, for they were within him. They were an indissoluble part of him. They had made so much of him that he was already, he thought with a smile, three parts ghost. What scenes he had haunted! What hopes he had known, what triumphs and what despairs!

(Continued on page 115)

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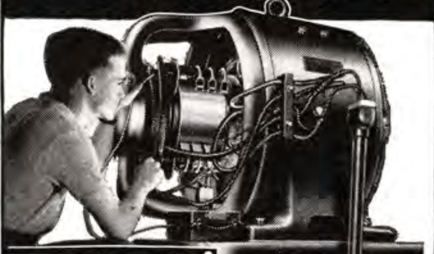

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Department of Education
Redbook Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York

(Continued from page 112)

Here, in this little room, they were all about him: this little room to which he had come with Ann so long ago. He switched off the light and lay back listening to the wind beckoning hungrily about the world. "A little light," he had said to Ann, "is enough to love by." O little light! Come to the world! Come to the world that is so full of wind and darkness!

He fell asleep there where he had known his love that night when the snow fell upon the roof pitilessly, relentlessly, like the falling of the years which give so much, that in the end they may take all away.

THE END

REDBOOK'S PICTURE OF THE MONTH

(Continued from page 11)

is confronted by the girl, and by *Norton* and the forces he represents.

It is a sensitive and engrossing comedy drama done as only Capra can do such fables. Every scene is carefully formed and highly polished. No element in the tale is ever out of focus, and while in this synopsis the love-story appears to be negligible, it is not. The lanky, shy Cooper and the spirited and lovely Miss Stanwyck give adequate emphasis to this phase in spite of the fact that they are busy crusading.

One of the most engaging characters in the film is Brennan as Cooper's buddy of the brake-rods. Through him Riskin utters some entertaining philosophy and makes a colorful contribution to the American language through the creation of the word *heelot.*

Now a *heelot* is not to be confused with a *helot,* a serf of Sparta. A *heelot,* in the Riskin sense, is quite a different person, and he abounds in unlimited numbers in America. Brennan is eternally warning Cooper that the heelots will get him if he is not careful.

Brennan explains it something like this: "If you haven't a dime in the world, you can walk down the street and nobody pays any attention to you. You are happy and alone. But supposing you've got a few dollars. Supposing you have enough for the down payment on a car. Then they're all after you. They won't leave you alone. If you make the first payment on the car, then you've got to get a job to keep up the installments. And you've got to pay taxes. And you get pinched for speeding, and a judge gets you in his clutches, and you never have a minute's peace again. The heelots have you."

Briefly, heelots are just a lot of heels.

"Meet John Doe" is embellished by a superlative cast of players. In addition to the principals, there are Spring Byington, Gene Lockhart, Rod LaRocque, Irving Bacon, Regis Toomey, J. Farrell McDonald, Warren Hymer, Harry Holman, Sterling Holloway and a host of others.

And while it is excellent entertainment, it is an alarming story. Although entirely fictional, it does show how easy it would be for a resourceful man to switch America into the totalitarian column. All he would need would be a bank-roll and a clever rabble-rouser. *D. B. Norton* almost proves that it can happen here.

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REDBOOK'S NOVEL OF THE MONTH
N or M?
by
AGATHA CHRISTIE

N or M?

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

OMMY BAREFORD removed his overcoat in the hall of the flat. He hung it up with some care, taking time over it. His hat went carefully on the next peg. He squared his shoulders, affixed a resolute smile to his face and walked into the sitting-room where his wife sat knitting a Balaclava helmet in khaki wool.

Mrs. Bareford gave him a quick glance and then busied herself by knitting at a furious rate. She said after a minute or two:

"Any news in the evening paper?"

"The Blitzkrieg is coming, hurray, hurray! Things look bad in France, Tuppence," replied Tommy.

Tuppence said: "It's a depressing world at the moment."

There was a pause, and then Tommy said:

"Well, why don't you ask? No need to be so damned tactful."

"I know," admitted Tuppence. "There is something about conscious tact that is very irritating. But then it irritates you if I do ask. And anyway, I don't *need* to ask. It's written all over you."

"I wasn't conscious of looking a Dismal Desmond."

"No, darling," said Tuppence. "You had a kind of nailed-to-the-mast smile which was one of the most heart-rending things I have ever seen."

Tommy said with a grin:

"No! Was it really as bad as all that?"

"And more! Well, out with it! Nothing doing?"

"Nothing doing. They don't want me in any capacity. I tell you, Tuppence, it's pretty thick when a man of forty-six is made to feel like a doddering grandfather. Army, Navy, Air Force, Foreign Office, one and all say the same thing—I'm too old. I *may* be required later."

Tuppence said:

"Well, it's the same for me. They don't want people of my age for nursing—no, thank you. Nor for anything else. They'd rather have a fluffy chit who's never seen a wound, or sterilized a dressing, than they would have me—who worked for three years, 1915 to 1918, in various capacities, nurse in the surgical ward and operating theater, driver of a trade-delivery van and later of a general. This, that and the other—all, I assert firmly, with conspicuous success. And now I'm a poor pushing tiresome middle-aged woman who won't sit at home quietly and knit as she ought to do."

Tommy said gloomily: "This war is hell."

"It's bad enough having a war," said Tuppence; "but not being allowed to do anything in it, just puts the lid on."

Tommy said consolingly: "Well, at any rate Deborah has got a job."

Deborah's mother said: "Oh, she's all right. I expect she's good at it, too. But I still think, Tommy, that I could hold my own with Deborah."

Tommy grinned. "She wouldn't think so."

Tuppence said: "Daughters can be very trying. Especially when they *will* be so kind to you."

Tommy murmured: "The way young Derek makes allowances for me is sometimes rather hard to bear. That 'poor old Dad' look in his eye!"

"In fact," said Tuppence, "our children, although quite adorable, are also quite maddening."

But at the mention of the twins, Derek and Deborah, her eyes were very tender.

"I suppose," said Tommy thoughtfully, "that it's always hard for people themselves to realize that they're getting middle-aged and past doing things."

Tuppence gave a snort of rage, tossed her glossy dark head and sent her ball of khaki wool spinning from her lap.

"Are we past doing things? *Are* we? Or is it only that everyone keeps insinuating that we are? Sometimes I feel that we never were any use."

"Quite likely," said Tommy.

"Perhaps so. But at any rate we did once feel important. And now I'm beginning to feel that all that never really happened. Did it happen, Tommy? Is it true that you were once crashed on the head and kidnaped by German agents? Is it true that we once tracked down a dangerous criminal—and got him? Is it true that we rescued a girl and got hold of important secret papers, and were practically thanked by a grateful country? Us! You and me! Despised, unwanted Mr. and Mrs. Bareford!"

"Now, dry up, darling. All this does no good."

"All the same," said Tuppence, blinking back a tear, "I'm disappointed in our Mr. Carter."

"Well, he's out of it all nowadays. Like us. He's quite old. Lives in Scotland, and fishes."

Tuppence said wistfully: "They might have let us do *something* in the Intelligence. It's rotten when one has so much time to think."

Her eyes rested just for a minute on the photograph of the very young man in Air Force uniform, with the wide grinning smile so like Tommy's.

Tommy said: "It's worse for a man. Women can knit, after all—and do up parcels and help at canteens."

Tuppence said: "I can do all that twenty years from now. I'm not old enough to be content with that. I'm neither one thing nor the other."

The front door-bell rang. Tuppence got up. The flat was a small service one. She opened the door to find a broad-shouldered man with a big fair mustache and a cheerful red face, standing on the mat. His glance, a quick one, took her in as he asked in a pleasant voice:

"Are you Mrs. Bareford?"

"Yes."

"My name's Grant. I'm a friend of Lord Easthampton's. He suggested I should look you and your husband up."

"Oh, how nice! Do come in."

She preceded him into the sitting-room.

"My husband—er—Mr. Grant. —He's a friend of Mr. Car—of Lord Easthampton's."

The old *nom de guerre* of the former Chief of the Intelligence, "Mr. Carter," always came more easily to her lips than their old friend's proper title.

For a few minutes the three talked happily together. Presently Tuppence left the room. She returned with sherry and some glasses. After a few minutes, when a pause came, Mr. Grant said to Tommy:

"I hear you're looking for a job, Bareford?"

An eager light came into Tommy's eye.

"Yes, indeed. You don't mean—"

Grant laughed, and shook his head.

"Oh, nothing of that kind. No, I'm afraid that has to be left to the young active men—or to those who've been at it for years. The only things I can suggest are rather stodgy, I'm afraid. Office work—filing papers, tying them up in red tape, pigeonholing them. That sort of thing."

This novel, like all other novels printed in Redbook, is purely fiction and intended as such. It does not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

Tommy's face fell. "Oh, I see!"

Grant said encouragingly:

"Oh, well, it's better than nothing. Anyway, come and see me at my office one day. Ministry of Requirements. Room 22. We'll fix you up with something."

The telephone rang. Tuppence picked up the receiver.

"Hullo. . . . Yes. . . . *What?*" And as a squeaky voice spoke agitatedly at the other end, Tuppence's face changed. "When? Oh, my dear! Of course. . . . I'll come over right away. . . ."

She put back the receiver. She said to Tommy:

"That was Maureen."

"I thought so—I recognized her voice from here."

Tuppence explained breathlessly:

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Grant. But I must go round to this friend of mine. She's fallen and twisted her ankle, and there's no one with her but her little girl, so I must go round and fix up things for her, and get hold of someone to come in and look after her. Do forgive me."

"Of course, Mrs. Bareford; I quite understand."

Tuppence smiled at him, picked up a coat which had been lying over the sofa, slipped her arms into it and hurried out. The hall door banged.

Tommy poured out another glass of sherry for his guest.

"Don't go yet," he said.

"Thank you." The other accepted the glass. He sipped it for a moment in silence. Then he said: "In a way, you know, your wife's being called away is a fortunate occurrence. It will save time."

Tommy stared. "I don't understand."

Grant said deliberately: "You see, Bareford, if you had come to see me at the Ministry, I was empowered to put a certain proposition before you."

The color came slowly up in Tommy's freckled face. "You don't mean—"

Grant nodded. "Easthampton suggested you," he said. "He told us you were the man for the job."

Tommy gave a deep sigh. "Tell me," he said.

"This is strictly confidential, of course."

Tommy nodded.

"Not even your wife must know. You understand?"

"Very well—if you say so. But we worked together before."

"Yes, I know. But this proposition is solely for you."

"I see. All right."

"Ostensibly you will be offered work—as I said just now—office work, in a branch of the Ministry functioning in Scotland—in a prohibited area where your wife cannot accompany you. Actually, you will be somewhere very different."

Tommy merely waited.

Grant said: "You've read in the newspapers of the Fifth Column? You know, roughly at any rate, just what that term implies."

Tommy murmured: "The enemy within."

"Exactly. This war, Bareford, started in an optimistic spirit. Oh, I don't mean the people who really knew—we've known all along what we were up against: the efficiency of the enemy, his aërial strength, his deadly determination, and the coördination of his well-planned war-machine. I mean the people as a whole. The good-hearted, muddle-headed democratic fellow who believes what he wants to believe—that Germany will crack up, that she's on the verge of revolution, that her weapons of war are made of tin, and that her men are so underfed that they'll fall down if they try to march—all that sort of stuff. Wishful thinking, as the saying goes.

"Well, the war didn't go that way. It started badly and it went on worse. The men were all right—the men on the battleships and in the planes and in the dugouts. But there was mismanagement and unpreparedness—the defects, perhaps, of our qualities. We don't want war, weren't good at preparing for it.

"The worst of that is over. We've corrected our mistakes; we're slowly getting the right men in the right place. We're beginning to run the war as it should be run, and we can win the war,—make no mistake about that,—but only if we don't lose it first. And the danger of losing it comes, not from outside—not from the might of Germany's bombers, not from her seizure of neutral countries and fresh vantage-points from which to attack—but from within. Our danger is the danger of Troy—the wooden horse within our walls. Call it the Fifth Column if you like. It is here, among us. Men and women, some of them highly placed, some of them obscure, but all believing genuinely in the Nazi aims and the Nazi creed, and desiring to substitute that creed for the muddled easy-going liberty of our democratic institutions."

Grant leaned forward. He said, still in that same pleasant unemotional voice:

"And we don't know who they are."

Tommy said: "But surely—"

Grant said with a touch of impatience:

"Oh, we can round up the small fry. That's easy enough. But it's the others. We know about them. We know that there are at least two highly placed somewhere. We know that, because it must be so from the way things have happened. The leakage of information shows us that."

Tommy said helplessly, his pleasant face perplexed:

"But what good should I be to you? I don't know any of these people."

Grant nodded. "Exactly. You don't know any of them *—and they don't know you."*

He paused to let it sink in, and then went on.

"These people, these high-up people, know most of our lot. Information can't be very well refused to them. I was at my wits' end. I went to Easthampton. He's out of it all now, a sick man; but his brain's the best I've ever known. He thought of you. Nearly twenty years, since you worked for the Department. Name quite unconnected with it. Your face not known. What do you say—will you take it on?"

Tommy's face was almost split in two by the magnitude of his ecstatic grin.

"Take it on? You bet I'll take it on! Though I can't see how I can be of any use. I'm just a blasted amateur."

"My dear Bareford, amateur status is just what is needed; the professional is handicapped here. You'll take on in place of the best man we had or are likely to have."

Tommy looked a question. Grant nodded.

"Yes. Died in St. Bridget's Hospital last Tuesday. Run down by a lorry—only lived a few hours. Accident case—but it wasn't an accident."

Tommy said slowly: "I see."

GRANT said quietly: "That's why we have reason to believe that Farquhar was on to something—that he was getting somewhere at last. By his death, that wasn't an accident. But unfortunately, we know next to nothing of what he had discovered. Farquhar had been methodically following up one line after another. Most of them led nowhere. He was unconscious until a few minutes before he died. Then he tried to say something. What he said was this: *'N. or M. Song Susie'."*

"That," said Tommy, "doesn't seem very illuminating."

Grant smiled.

"A little more so than you might think. N. or M., you see, refers to two most important and trusted German agents. N., we know, is a man. M. is a woman. All we know about them is that these two are Hitler's most highly trusted agents, and that in a code message we managed to decipher toward the beginning of the war there occurred this phrase—*'Suggest N. or M. for England. Full powers—'* "

"I see. And Farquhar—"

"As I see it, Farquhar must have got on the track of one or the other of them. Unfortunately we don't know which. *Song Susie* sounds very cryptic—but Farquhar hadn't a high-class French accent! There was a return ticket to Leahampton in his pocket, which is suggestive. Leahampton is on the south coast—a budding Bournemouth or Torquay. Lots of private hotels and guest-houses. Amongst them is one called *Sans Souci—"*

"Song Susie—Sans Souci—I see."

Grant said: "Do you?"

"The idea is," Tommy said, "that I should go there and —well, ferret round."

"That *is* the idea."

Tommy's smile broke out again.

"A bit vague, isn't it?" he asked. "I don't even know what I'm looking for."

"And I can't tell you. I don't know. It's up to you."

Tommy considered a minute or two. Then he said:

"About this place Sans Souci—"

"Just like any other of these places. There are rows of them. Old ladies, old colonels, unimpeachable spinsters, dubious customers, fishy customers, a foreigner or two. In fact, a mixed bag."

Tommy said doubtfully: "And N. or M. amongst them?"

"Not necessarily. Somebody, perhaps, who's in touch with N. or M. But it's quite likely to be N. or M. himself. It's an inconspicuous sort of place, a boarding-house at a seaside resort."

"You've no idea whether it's a man or a woman I've to look for?"

Grant shook his head.

Tommy said: "Well, I can but try."

"Good luck to trying, Bareford! Now—to details—"

WHEN Tuppence broke in, half an hour later, panting and eager with curiosity, Tommy was alone; he was sitting in an armchair whistling, with a doubtful expression on his face.

"Well?" demanded Tuppence, throwing an infinity of feeling into the monosyllable.

"Well," said Tommy with a somewhat doubtful air, "I've got a job—of kinds."

"What kind?"

Tommy made a suitable grimace.

"Office work in the wilds of Scotland. Hush-hush and all that, but doesn't sound very thrilling."

"Both of us, or only you?"

"Only me, I'm afraid."

"Oh, how *could* our Mr. Carter be so mean?"

"I imagine they segregate the sexes in these jobs. Otherwise too distracting for the mind."

"Is it coding—or code-breaking? Is it like Deborah's job? Do be careful, Tommy! Can I come too—not to work but just as a wife: Slippers in front of the fire and a hot meal at the end of the day?"

Tommy looked uncomfortable. "Sorry, old thing. I *am* sorry. I hate leaving you—"

He felt definitely very unhappy. Tuppence, however, was a Spartan and played up well, admitting freely that of course he had to take the job and that it didn't *really* matter about her. . . .

Tommy departed for Aberdeen three days later. Tuppence saw him off at the station. Her eyes were bright and she blinked once or twice, but she kept resolutely cheerful.

Only as the train drew out of the station and Tommy saw the forlorn little figure walking away down the platform did he feel a lump in his own throat. War or no war, he felt he was deserting Tuppence. . . . He pulled himself together with an effort. Orders were orders.

Having duly arrived in Scotland, he took a train the next day to Manchester. On the third day a train deposited him at Leahampton. Here he went to the principal hotel and on the following day made a tour of various private hotels and guest-houses, seeing rooms and inquiring terms for a long stay.

Sans Souci was a dark red Victorian villa, set on the side of a hill with a good view over the sea from its upper windows. There was a slight smell of dust and cooking in the hall, and the carpet was worn, but it compared quite favorably with some of the other establishments Tommy had seen. He interviewed the proprietress, Mrs. Perenna, in her office, a small untidy room with a large desk covered with loose papers.

Mrs. Perenna herself was rather untidy-looking, a woman of middle-age with a large mop of fiercely curling black hair, some vaguely applied make-up and a determined smile showing a lot of very white teeth.

Tommy murmured a mention of his elderly cousin, Miss Meadowes, who had stayed at Sans Souci two years ago. Mrs. Perenna remembered Miss Meadowes quite well—such a dear old lady—at least perhaps not really old—very active and such a sense of humor. And how was she?

Tommy explained sadly that Miss Meadowes was no more, and Mrs. Perenna put on a correct mourning face.

She was soon talking volubly again. She had, she was sure, just the room that would suit Mr. Meadowes. A lovely sea view. She thought Mr. Meadowes was so right to want to get out of London. Very depressing nowadays, so she understood, and of course, after such a bad go of influenza—

Still talking, Mrs. Perenna led Tommy upstairs and showed him various bedrooms. She mentioned a weekly sum. Tommy displayed dismay. Mrs. Perenna explained that prices had risen so appallingly. Tommy explained that his income had unfortunately decreased, and what with taxation and one thing and another—

Mrs. Perenna said that as Mr. Meadowes was a relation of Miss Meadowes, she would make it half a guinea less.

Tommy then beat a retreat with the promise to think it over, and Mrs. Perenna pursued him to the gate, talking more volubly than ever and displaying an archness that Tommy found most alarming. She was, he admitted, quite a handsome woman in her way. He found himself wondering what her nationality was. Surely not quite English? The name was Spanish or Portuguese, but that would be her husband's nationality, not hers. She might, he thought, be Irish, though she had no brogue. But it would account for the vitality and the exuberance.

It was finally settled that Mr. Meadowes should move in the following day.

Tommy timed his arrival for six o'clock. Mrs. Perenna came out into the hall to greet him, and led him into what she called the lounge.

"I always introduce my guests," said Mrs. Perenna, beaming determinedly at the suspicious glares of five people. "This is our new arrival, Mr. Meadowes—Mrs. O'Rourke." A terrifying mountain of a woman with beady eyes and a mustache gave him a beaming smile.

"Major Bletchley." Major Bletchley eyed Tommy appraisingly and made a stiff inclination of the head.

"Mr. Von Deinim." A young man, very stiff, fair-haired and blue-eyed, got up and bowed.

"Miss Minton." An elderly woman with a lot of beads, knitting with khaki wool, smiled and tittered.

"And Mrs. Blenkensop." More knitting—and an untidy dark head which lifted from an absorbed contemplation of a Balaclava helmet.

Tommy held his breath; the room spun round.

Mrs. Blenkensop! Tuppence! By all that was impossible and unbelievable—Tuppence, calmly knitting in the lounge of Sans Souci.

Her eyes met him—polite uninterested stranger's eyes. His admiration rose. Tuppence!

Chapter Two

HOW Tommy got through that evening he never quite knew. He dared not let his eyes stray too often in the direction of Mrs. Blenkensop. At dinner three more habitués of Sans Souci appeared—a middle-aged couple, Mr. and Mrs. Cabely, and a young woman, Mrs. Sprot, who had come down with her baby girl from London and was clearly much bored by her enforced stay at Leahampton. She was placed next to Tommy, and at intervals fixed him with a pair of pale gooseberry eyes and in a slightly adenoidal voice asked: "Don't you think it's really quite safe now? Everyone's going back, aren't they?"

Before Tommy could reply to these artless queries, his neighbor on the other side, the beaded lady, struck in: "What I say is one mustn't risk anything with children. Your sweet little Betty! You'd never forgive yourself, and you know that Hitler has said the Blitzkrieg on England is coming quite soon now—and quite a new kind of gas, I believe."

Major Bletchley cut in sharply:

"Lot of nonsense talked about gas. The fellows won't waste time fiddling round with gas. High-explosive and incendiary bombs. That's what was done in Spain."

The whole table plunged into the argument with gusto. Tuppence's voice, high-pitched and a bit fatuous, piped out:

"My son Douglas says—"

"Douglas, indeed!" thought Tommy. "Why *Douglas*, I should like to know."

After dinner, a pretentious meal of several meager courses, all of which were equally tasteless, everyone drifted into the lounge. Knitting was resumed, and Tommy was compelled to hear a long and boring account of Major Bletchley's experiences on the Northwest Frontier.

The fair young man with the bright blue eyes went out, executing a little bow on the threshold of the room.

Major Bletchley broke off his narrative and administered a kind of dig in the ribs to Tommy.

"That fellow who's just gone out, he's a refugee. Got out of Germany about a month before the war."

"He's a German?"

"Yes. Not a Jew, either. His father got into trouble for criticizing the Nazi régime. Two of his brothers are

in concentration-camps over there. This fellow got out just in time."

At this moment Tommy was taken possession of by Mrs. Cabely, who told him at interminable length all about her health. So absorbing was the subject to the narrator that it was close upon bedtime before he could escape.

ON the following morning he rose early and strolled down to the front. He walked briskly to the pier, and was returning along the esplanade when he spied a familiar figure coming toward him. Tommy raised his hat.

"Good morning," he said pleasantly. "Er—Mrs. Blenkensop, isn't it?"

There was no one within earshot. Tuppence replied:

"Dr. Livingstone, to you."

"How on earth did you get here, Tuppence?" murmured Tommy. "It's a miracle—an absolute miracle."

"It's not a miracle at all—just brains."

"Your brains, I suppose?"

"You suppose rightly. You and your uppish Mr. Grant! I hope this will teach him a lesson."

"It certainly ought to," said Tommy. "Come on, Tuppence, tell me how you managed it."

"It was quite simple. The moment Grant spoke of our Mr. Carter, I guessed what was up. I knew it wouldn't be just some miserable office job. But his saying so showed me that I wasn't going to be allowed in on this. So I resolved to go one better. I went to fetch some sherry, and when I did, I nipped down to the Browns' flat and rang up Maureen. Told her to ring me up and what to say. She played up loyally—nice high squeaky voice—you could hear what she was saying all over the room. I did my stuff, registered annoyance, compulsion, distressed friend, and rushed off with every sign of vexation. Banged the hall door, carefully remaining inside it, and slipped into the bedroom and eased open the communicating door that's hidden by the tallboy."

"And you heard everything?"

"Everything," said Tuppence complacently.

Tommy said reproachfully: "And you never let on."

"Certainly not. I wished to teach you a lesson. You and your Mr. Grant!"

"He's not exactly my Mr. Grant, and I should say you have taught him a lesson."

"Mr. Carter wouldn't have treated me so shabbily," said Tuppence. "I don't think the Intelligence is anything like what it was in our day."

Tommy said gravely: "It will attain its former brilliance now we're back in it. But why 'Blenkensop'?"

"Why not?"

"It seems such an odd name to choose."

"It was the first one I thought of, and it's handy for underclothes."

"What do you mean, Tuppence?"

"*B*, you idiot. *B.* for *Bareford*, *B.* for *Blenkensop*. Embroidered on my cami-knickers. Patricia Blenkensop. Prudence Bareford. Why did you choose Meadowes?"

"To begin with," said Tommy, "I don't have large *B's* embroidered on my pants. And to continue, I didn't choose it. I was told to call myself Meadowes. Mr. Meadowes is a gentleman with a respectable past—all of which I've learned by heart."

"Very nice," said Tuppence. "Are you married or single?"

"I'm a widower," said Tommy with dignity. "My wife died ten years ago at Singapore."

"Why at Singapore?"

"We've all got to die somewhere. What's wrong with Singapore?"

"Oh, nothing. It's probably a most suitable place to die. . . . As for me, I'm a widow."

"Where did your husband die?"

"Does it matter? Probably in a nursing-home. I rather fancy he died of cirrhosis of the liver."

"I see. A painful subject. And what about your son Douglas?"

"Douglas is in the Navy."

"So I heard last night."

"And I've got two other sons. Raymond is in the Air Force, and Cyril, my baby, is in the Territorials."

"And suppose someone takes the trouble to check up on these imaginary Blenkensops?"

"They're not Blenkensops. Blenkensop was my second husband. My first husband's name was Hill. There are three pages of Hills in the telephone-book. You cou check up on all the Hills if you tried."

"It's the old trouble with you, Tuppence. You u overdo things. Two husbands and three sons. It's to much. You'll contradict yourself over the details."

"No, I sha'n't. And I rather fancy the sons may come in useful. I'm not under orders, remember. I'm a free lance. I'm in this to enjoy myself and I'm going to do it."

"So it seems," said Tommy. He added gloomily: "If you ask me, the whole thing's a farce."

"Why do you say that?"

"Well, you've been at Sans Souci longer than I have. Can you honestly say you think any of those people who were there last night could be a dangerous enemy agent?"

Tuppence said thoughtfully:

"It does seem a little incredible. But now what about us? I mean, how are we going to coöperate?"

Tommy said thoughtfully:

"We mustn't be seen about too much together."

"No, it would be fatal to suggest we know each other better than we appear to do. What we want to decide is the attitude. I think pursuit is the best angle."

"Pursuit?"

"Exactly. I pursue you. You do your best to escape, but being a mere chivalrous male, don't always succeed. I've had two husbands, and I'm on the look-out for a third. You act the part of the hunted widower. Every now and then I pin you down somewhere, pen you in a café, catch you walking on the front. Everyone sniggers and thinks it very funny."

Tommy gripped her arm suddenly.

"Look," he said. "Look ahead of you."

By the corner of one of the shelters a young man stood talking to a girl. They were both very earnest, very wrapped up in what they were saying.

Tuppence said softly: "Carl von Deinim. Who's the girl, I wonder?"

"She's remarkably good-looking, whoever she is."

Tuppence nodded. Her eyes dwelt thoughtfully on the dark passionate face, and on the tight-fitting pullover that revealed the lines of the girl's figure. She was talking earnestly; Carl von Deinim was listening to her.

Tuppence murmured: "I think this is where you leave me."

"Right," agreed Tommy.

He turned and strolled in the opposite direction.

AT the end of the promenade he encountered Major Bletchley. The latter peered at him suspiciously and then grunted out: "Good morning."

"Good morning."

"See you're like me, an early riser," remarked Bletchley.

Tommy said: "One gets in the habit of it out East. Of course, that's many years ago now, but I still wake early."

"Quite right, too," said Major Bletchley with approval. "God, these young fellows nowadays make me sick. Hot baths—coming down to breakfast at ten o'clock or later. No wonder the Germans have been putting it over on us. No stamina! Soft lot of young pups. Army's not what it was, anyway. Coddle 'em, that's what they do nowadays."

Mr. Meadowes hazarded the opinion that things were very different from what they had been.

"It's all this democracy," said Major Bletchley gloomily. "You can overdo anything. In my opinion they're overdoing the democracy business. Mixing up the officers and the men, feeding together in restaurants—paugh! The men don't like it, Meadowes. The troops know. The troops always know."

"Of course," said Mr. Meadowes, "I have no real knowledge of Army matters myself—"

The Major interrupted him, with a quick glance.

"In the show in the last war?"

"Oh, yes."

"Thought so. Saw you'd been drilled. Shoulders. What regiment?"

"Fifth Corfeshires." Tommy remembered to produce Meadowes' military record.

"Ah, yes, Salonika! I was in Mespot." Bletchley went on wrathfully:

"And will they make use of me now? No! 'Too old.' Too old be damned! I could teach one or two of these young cubs something about war."

"Even if it's only what not to do?" suggested Tommy.

"Eh, what's that?"

A sense of humor was clearly not Major Bletchley's strong suit. He peered suspiciously at his companion. Tommy hastened to change the conversation:

"Know anything about that Mrs.—Blenkensop, I think her name is?"

"That's right. Blenkensop. Not a bad-looking woman —bit long in the tooth—talks too much. Nice woman, but foolish. No, I don't know her. She's only been at Sans Souci a couple of days. Why do you ask?"

Tommy explained: "Happened to meet her just now. Wondered if she was always out as early as this."

"Don't know, I'm sure. Women aren't usually given to walking before breakfast—thank God," he added.

"Amen," said Tommy. He went on: "I'm not much good at making polite conversation before breakfast. Hope I wasn't rude to the woman, but I wanted my exercise."

Major Bletchley displayed instant sympathy. "Better be careful, old man. She's a widow, you know."

"Is she?"

The Major dug him cheerfully in the ribs.

"*We* know what widows are. She's buried two husbands, and if you ask me she's on the look-out for number three. Keep a very wary eye open, Meadowes. A wary eye. That's my advice."

And in high good humor Major Bletchley wheeled about at the end of the parade and set the pace for a smart walk back to breakfast at Sans Souci.

IN the meantime, Tuppence had gently continued her walk along the esplanade, passing quite close to the shelter and the young couple talking there. As she passed, she caught a few words. It was the girl speaking.

"But you must be careful, Carl. The very least suspicion—"

Tuppence was out of earshot. Suggestive words? Yes, but capable of any number of harmless interpretations. Unobtrusively she turned and again passed the two. Again words floated to her: "Smug, detestable English—"

The eyebrows of Mrs. Blenkensop rose ever so slightly.

Hardly, she thought, a very wise conversation. Carl von Deinim was a refugee from Nazi persecution, given asylum and shelter by England. Neither wise nor grateful to listen assentingly to such words.

Again Tuppence turned. But this time, before she reached the shelter, the couple had parted abruptly, the girl to cross the road leaving the sea front, Carl von Deinim to come along in Tuppence's direction.

He would not, perhaps, have recognized her but for her own pause and hesitation. Then quickly, he brought his heels together and bowed.

Tuppence twittered at him: "Good morning, Mr. Von Deinim, isn't it? Such a lovely morning."

"Ah, yes. The weather is fine."

Tuppence ran on: "It quite tempted me. I don't often come out before breakfast. But this morning, what with not sleeping very well—"

"You go back to Sans Souci now? If you permit, I will walk with you." He walked gravely by her side.

Tuppence said: "You also are out to get an appetite?"

Gravely, he shook his head.

"Oh, no. My breakfast, I have already had it. I am on my way to work."

"Work?"

"I am a research chemist."

"So that's what you are," thought Tuppence.

They walked in silence for some moments. Two men passed them. One of them shot a quick glance at Carl. She heard him mutter to his companion:

"Bet you that fellow is a German."

Tuppence saw the color rise in Carl von Deinim's cheeks.

Suddenly he lost command of himself. That tide of hidden emotion came to the surface. He stammered:

"You heard—you heard—that is what they say—I—"

"My dear boy!" Tuppence reverted abruptly to her real self. Her voice was crisp and compelling. "Don't be an idiot. You can't have it both ways."

He turned his head and stared at her.

"What do you mean?"

"You're a refugee. You have to take the rough with the smooth. You're alive, that's the main thing. Alive and free. For the other—realize that it's inevitable. This country's at war. You're a German." She smiled suddenly. "You can't expect the mere man in the street—literally the man in the street—to distinguish between bad Germans and good Germans, if I may put it so crudely."

He still stared at her. His eyes, so very blue, were poignant with suppressed feeling. Then suddenly, he too smiled. "To be a good German, I must be on time at my work. Please. Good morning."

Again that stiff bow. Tuppence stared after his retreating figure. She said to herself:

"Mrs. Blenkensop, you had a lapse then. Strict attention to business in future! Now for breakfast." . . . .

The hall door of Sans Souci was open. Inside, Mrs. Perenna was conducting a vigorous conversation with someone.

"And you'll tell him what I think of that last lot of margarine. Get the cooked ham at Quillers; and—"

She broke off as Tuppence entered.

"Oh, good morning, Mrs. Blenkensop. You are an early bird. You haven't had breakfast yet. It's all ready in the dining-room." She added, indicating her companion: "My daughter Sheila. You haven't met her. She's been away, and only came home last night."

Tuppence looked with interest at the vivid, handsome face. No longer full of tragic energy, but bored now, and resentful. "My daughter Sheila. Sheila Perenna."

Tuppence murmured a few pleasant words and went into the dining-room. There were three people breakfasting—Mrs. Sprot and her baby girl, and big Mrs. O'Rourke. Tuppence said good morning, and Mrs. O'Rourke replied with a hearty "Top of the morning to you!" that quite drowned Mrs. Sprot's more anemic salutation.

The old woman stared at Tuppence with a kind of devouring interest.

" 'Tis a fine thing to be out walking before breakfast," she observed. "A grand appetite it gives you."

Mrs. Sprot said to her offspring, "*Nice* bread and milk, darling," and endeavoured to insinuate a spoonful into Miss Betty Sprot's mouth.

The latter cleverly circumvented this endeavor by an adroit movement of her head, and continued to stare at Tuppence with large round eyes. She pointed a milky finger at the newcomer, gave her a dazzling smile and observed in gurgling tones: *"Ga—ga bouch."*

"She likes you," cried Mrs. Sprot, beaming on Tuppence as on one marked out for favor. "Sometimes she's so shy with strangers."

With her head on one side, Betty made a cooing noise at Tuppence.

"She has taken to you, Mrs. Blenkensop," said Mrs. Sprot.

There was a slight jealous chill, Tuppence fancied, in her voice. Tuppence hastened to adjust matters. "They always like a new face, don't they?" she said easily.

The door opened, and Major Bletchley and Tommy appeared. Tuppence became arch.

"Ah, Mr. Meadowes," she called out. "I've beaten you, you see. First past the post. But I've left you just a *little* breakfast!"

She indicated with the faintest of gestures the seat beside her.

Tommy, muttering vaguely, "Oh—er—rather—thanks," and hurriedly sat down at the other end of the table.

Betty Sprot said *"Putch!"* with a fine splutter of milk at Major Bletchley, whose face instantly assumed a sheepish but delighted expression.

"And how's little Miss Bo Peep this morning?" he asked.

Betty crowed with delight.

Serious misgivings shook Tuppence. She thought:

"There *must* be some mistake. There *can't* be anything going on here. There simply can't!"

ON the sheltered terrace outside, Miss Minton was knitting. Miss Minton was thin and angular; her neck was stringy. She wore pale sky blue jumpers, and chains or bead necklaces. Her skirts were tweedy and had a depressed droop at the back. She greeted Tuppence with alacrity.

"Good morning, Mrs. Blenkensop. I do hope you slept well."

Mrs. Blenkensop confessed that she never slept very well the first night or two in a strange bed. Miss Minton said now, wasn't that curious? It was exactly the same with *her*. She cast an expert eye at Mrs. Blenkensop's khaki mass. Gently she pointed out just what had gone wrong.

"I'm afraid I've never done any before this dreadful war," confessed Tuppence. "But one feels so terribly, doesn't one, that one must do *something.*"

"Oh, yes, indeed. And you actually have a boy in the Navy, I think I heard you say last night?"

"Yes, my eldest boy. Such a splendid boy he is—though I suppose a mother shouldn't say so. Then I have a boy in the Air Force, and Cyril, my baby, is out in France."

"Oh, dear, dear, how terribly anxious you must be!"

Tuppence thought:

"Oh, Derek, my darling Derek—out in the hell and mess. And here I am playing the fool—acting the thing I'm really feeling!"

She said in her most righteous voice:

"We must all be brave, mustn't we? Let's hope it will all be over soon. I was told the other day on very high authority indeed that the Germans can't possibly last out more than another two months."

"What's this? What's all this?"

Mr. and Mrs. Cabely came out on the terrace, Mr. Cabely putting his questions fretfully. He settled himself in a chair, and his wife, an anxious-faced woman, laid a rug over his knees. He repeated fretfully:

"What's that you are saying?"

"We're saying," said Miss Minton, "that it will all be over by autumn."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Cabely. "This war is going to last at least six years."

"Oh, Mr. Cabely," protested Tuppence. "You don't really think so?"

Mr. Cabely said irritably:

"You dear ladies are just indulging in what we call wishful thinking. Now, I know Germany. I may say I know Germany extremely well. In the course of my business before I retired I used to be constantly to and fro. Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, I know them all. I can assure you that Germany can hold out practically indefinitely. With Russia behind her—"

Mr. Cabely plunged triumphantly on, his voice rising and falling in pleasurably melancholy cadences, only interrupted when he paused to receive the silk muffler his wife brought him, and wind it round his throat.

Mrs. Sprot brought out Betty, and plumped her down with a small woolen dog that lacked an ear, and a woolly doll's jacket.

"There, Betty," she said. "You dress up Bonzo ready for his walk while Mummy gets ready to go out."

Mr. Cabely's voice droned on, reciting statistics and figures, all of a depressing character. The monologue was punctuated by a cheerful twittering from Betty, talking busily to Bonzo in her own language. Then as a bird alighted near her, she remarked clearly: "Dicky!"

"That child is learning to talk in the most wonderful way," said Miss Minton. "Say 'Ta-ta,' Betty. 'Ta-ta.' "

Mr. Cabely, finding attention diverted from his explanation of Germany's methods of substitution of raw materials, looked put out and coughed aggressively.

Mrs. Sprot came in with her hat on, and picked up Betty.

Tuppence turned to Mrs. Cabely, and asked:

"What do you think about the war, Mrs. Cabely?"

Mrs. Cabely jumped. "Oh, what do I think? What—what do you mean?"

"Do you think it will last as long as six years?"

"Oh, I don't know. It's difficult to say, isn't it?"

Tuppence felt a wave of exasperation. The chirruping Miss Minton, the dictatorial Mr. Cabely, the nitwitted Mrs. Cabely—were these people really typical of her fellow-countrymen? Was Mrs. Sprot any better, with her slightly vacant face and boiled-gooseberry eyes? What could she, Tuppence, ever find out here? Not one of these people, surely—

Her thought was checked. She was aware of a shadow. Someone behind her, who stood between her and the sun. She turned her head. Mrs. Perenna was standing on the terrace, her eyes on the group. And something in those eyes—scorn, was it? Tuppence thought:

"I must find out more about Mrs. Perenna."

TOMMY was establishing the happiest of relationships with Major Bletchley.

"Brought down some golf-clubs with you, didn't you, Meadowes?"

Tommy pleaded guilty.

"Ha! I can tell you, *my* eyes don't miss much. Splendid! We must have a game together. Ever played on the links here?"

Tommy replied in the negative.

"They're not bad—not bad at all. Bit on the short side, perhaps, but lovely view over the sea, and all that. And never very crowded. Look here, what about coming along with me this morning? We might have a game."

"Thanks very much. I'd like it."

"Must say I'm glad you've arrived," remarked Bletchley as they were trudging up the hill. "Too many women in that place. Gets on one's nerves. Glad I've got another fellow to keep me in countenance. You can't count Cabely—the man's a walking chemist's shop. Only other male in the place is Von Deinim; and to tell you the truth, Meadowes, I'm not too easy in my mind about him."

"No?" said Tommy.

"No. You take my word for it, this refugee business is dangerous. If I had my way, I'd intern the lot of them. Safety first."

"A bit drastic, perhaps."

"Not at all. War's war. And I've got my suspicions of Master Carl. He came over here just a month—only a month, mind you, before war broke out. That's a bit suspicious."

Tommy said invitingly: "Then you think—"

"*Spying*—that's his little game!"

"But surely there's nothing of great military or naval importance hereabouts?"

"Ah, old man, that's where the artfulness comes in! If he were anywhere near Plymouth or Portsmouth, he'd be under supervision. In a sleepy place like this, nobody bothers. But it's on the coast, isn't it? The truth of it is, the Government is a great deal too easy with these enemy aliens!"

Further conversation was brought to an end, for they had arrived at the clubhouse.

Tommy was a mediocre golfer. He was glad to find that his standard of play was just about right for his new friend. The Major won by two up and one to play, a very happy state of events.

"Good match, Meadowes, very good. . . . Come along, and I'll introduce you to some of the fellows. Nice lot on the whole, some of them inclined to be rather old women, if you know what I mean? Ah, here's Haydock—you'll like Haydock. Retired naval wallah. Has that house on the cliff next door to us. He's our local A.R.P. warden."

COMMANDER HAYDOCK was a big hearty man with a weather-beaten face, and intensely blue eyes. He greeted Tommy with friendliness.

"So you're going to keep Bletchley countenance at Sans Souci? He'll be glad of another man. Rather swamped by female society, eh, Bletchley?"

"I'm not much of a ladies' man," said Major Bletchley.

"Nonsense," said Haydock. "Not your type of lady, my boy, that's it. Old boarding-house pussies. Nothing to do but gossip and knit."

"You're forgetting Miss Perenna," said Bletchley.

"Ah, Sheila—she's an attractive girl, all right. Regular beauty, if you ask me."

"I'm a bit worried about her," said Bletchley. "That German chap: She's seeing too much of him."

"Getting sweet on him, you mean? It won't do, Bletchley. We can't have that sort of thing. Trading with the enemy; that's what it amounts to. These girls—where's their proper spirit? Plenty of decent young English fellows about." And the Commander glanced at his watch.

"About time for the news. We'd better go in and listen to it."

The news was meager that day, little more in it than had been already in the morning papers. After commenting with approval on the latest exploits of the Air Force—first-rate chaps, brave as lions—the Commander went on to develop his own pet theory: that sooner or later the Germans would attempt a landing at Leahampton itself, his argument being that it was such an unimportant spot.

"Not an anti-aircraft gun in the place! Disgraceful!"

The argument was not developed, for Tommy and the Major had to hurry back to lunch at Sans Souci. Haydock extended a cordial invitation to Tommy to come and see his little place, Smugglers' Rest. "Marvelous view—my own beach—every kind of handy gadget in the house. Bring him along, Bletchley."

It was settled that Tommy and Major Bletchley should come in for drinks on the evening of the following day.

After lunch was a peaceful time at Sans Souci. Mr. Cabely went to have his "rest," with the devoted Mrs. Cabely in attendance. Mrs. Blenkensop was conducted by Miss Minton to a depot to pack and address parcels for the soldiers. Mr. Meadowes strolled gently out into Leahampton and along the front. He bought a few cigarettes, stopped at Smith's to purchase the latest number of *Punch,* then after a few minutes of apparent irresolution, he entered a bus bearing the legend, OLD PIER.

THE old pier was at the extreme end of the promenade. There was no one on it now but some children running up and down and screaming in voices that matched quite accurately the screaming of the gulls, and one solitary man sitting on the end, fishing.

Mr. Meadowes strolled to the end and gazed down into the water. Then he asked gently: "Caught anything?"

The fisherman shook his head. "Don't often get a bite." Mr. Grant reeled in his line a bit. He said without turning his head: "What about you, Meadowes?"

Tommy sat on an adjacent bollard, so placed that he commanded the length of the pier. Then he began:

"I've gone down quite all right, I think. I gather you've already got a list of the people there?" Grant nodded. "There's nothing to report as yet. I've struck up a friendship with Major Bletchley. We played golf this morning. He seems the ordinary type of retired officer. If anything, a shade too typical. Cabely seems a genuine hypochondriacal invalid. That, again, would be an easy part to act. He has, by his own admission, been a good deal in Germany during the last few years."

"A point," said Grant, laconically.

"Then there's Von Deinim."

"Yes. I don't need to tell you, Meadowes, that Von Deinim's the one I'm most interested in."

"You think he's N.?"

Grant shook his head. "No, I don't. As I see it, N. couldn't afford to be openly a German."

"Not a refugee from Nazi persecution, even?"

"Not even that. We watch, and they know we watch, all the enemy aliens in this country. Moreover—this is in confidence, Bareford—very shortly all enemy aliens between sixteen and sixty will be interned. Whether our adversaries are aware of that fact or not, they can at any rate anticipate that such a thing might happen. They would never risk the head of their organization being interned. N. therefore must be either a neutral, or else he is—apparently—an Englishman. The same, of course, applies to M. No, my meaning about Von Deinim is this: He may be a link in the chain. N. or M. may not be at Sans Souci; it may be Carl von Deinim who is there, and through him we may be led to our objective. That does seem to me highly possible—the more so, as I cannot very well see that any of the other inmates of Sans Souci are likely to be the person we are seeking."

"You've had them more or less vetted, I suppose, sir?"

Grant sighed—a sharp quick sigh of vexation.

"No, that's just what it's impossible for me to do. I could have them looked up by the department easily enough—*but I can't risk it,* Bareford. One hint that I've got my eye on Sans Souci for any reason, and the organization may be put wise. That's where *you* come in, the outsider. I daren't risk alarming them. There's only one person I've been able to check upon."

"Who's that, sir?"

Grant smiled. "Carl Von Deinim himself. That's easy enough. Routine. I can have him looked up—not from the Sans Souci angle, but from the enemy-alien angle."

Tommy asked curiously: "And the result?"

"Master Carl is exactly what he says he is. His father was indiscreet, was arrested and died in a concentration-camp. Carl's elder brothers are in camps. His mother died in great distress of mind a year ago. He escaped to England a month before war broke out. Von Deinim has professed himself anxious to help this country. His work in a chemical research laboratory has been excellent, and most helpful on the problem of immunizing certain gases and in general decontamination experiments."

Tommy said: "Then he's all right?"

"Not necessarily. Our German friends are notorious for their thoroughness. There are two possibilities: The whole Von Deinim family may be parties to the arrangement—not improbable, under the painstaking Nazi régime. Or else this is not really Carl von Deinim, but *a man playing the part of Carl von Deinim.*"

Tommy said slowly: "I see." He added inconsequently: "He seems an awfully nice young fellow."

Sighing, Grant said: "They are—they nearly always are. It's an odd life, this service of ours. We respect our adversaries, and they respect us. You usually like your opposite number, you know—even when you're doing your best to down him."

There was a silence as Tommy thought over the strange anomaly of war. Grant's voice broke into his musings.

"But there are those for whom we've neither respect nor liking—and those are the traitors within our own ranks, the men who are willing to betray their country and accept office and promotion from the foreigner who has conquered it."

Tommy said with feeling: "My God, I'm with you, sir. That's a skunk's trick."

"And deserves a skunk's end."

The man with the fishing-line turned and looked full at his subordinate for a minute or two, taking in anew the quiet resolute line of the jaw. He said quietly:

"Good man."

He went on: "What about the women in this place? Anything strike you as suspicious there?"

"I think there's something odd about the woman who runs it."

"Mrs. Perenna?"

"Yes. You don't—know anything about her?"

Grant said slowly: "I might see what I could do about checking her antecedents; but as I told you, it's risky."

"Yes, better not take any chances. She's the only one who strikes me as suspicious in any way. There's a young mother, a fussy spinster, the hypochondriac's brainless wife, and a rather fearsome-looking old Irishwoman. All seem harmless enough on the face of it."

"That's the lot, is it?"

"There's a Mrs. Blenkensop—arrived three days ago."

"Well?"

Tommy said: "Mrs. Blenkensop is my wife."

"What?"

In the surprise of the announcement, Grant's voice was raised. He spun round, sharp anger in his gaze. "I thought I told you, Bareford, not to breathe a word to your wife!"

"Quite right, sir, and I didn't. If you'll just listen—"

Succinctly, Tommy narrated what had occurred. He did not dare look at the other. He carefully kept out of his voice the pride that he secretly felt.

There was a silence when he brought the story to an end. Then Grant laughed. He said:

"I take my hat off to her. She's one in a thousand!"

"I agree," said Tommy.

"Easthampton will laugh when I tell him this. He warned me not to leave her out. Said she'd get the better of me if I did. I wouldn't listen to him."

He was silent for a minute; then he said:

"Tell her from me, will you, that I eat dirt?"

"And I suppose, now, she's in on this?"

Mr. Grant made an expressive grimace.

"She's in on it whether we like it or not. Tell her the department will esteem it an honor if she will condescend to work with us over the matter."

"I'll tell her," said Tommy with a faint grin.

Chapter Three

WHEN Tuppence entered the lounge at Sans Souci just before dinner, the only occupant of the room was the monumental Mrs. O'Rourke, who was sitting by the window looking like some gigantic Buddha. She greeted Tuppence with a lot of geniality.

"Ah, now, if it isn't Mrs. Blenkensop! You are like myself: it pleases you to be down in time and get a quiet minute or two here before going into the dining-room. Sit here now, Mrs. Blenkensop, and tell me how you like Leahampton."

There was something about Mrs. O'Rourke that had an unholy fascination for Tuppence. She was rather like an ogress dimly remembered from early fairy tales. Tuppence replied that she thought she was going to like Leahampton very much, and be happy there.

"That is," she added in a melancholy voice, "as happy as I can be anywhere with this terrible anxiety weighing on me all the time."

"Ah, now, don't you be worrying yourself," Mrs. O'Rourke advised comfortably. "Those fine boys of yours will come back to you safe and sound. Not a doubt of it. One of them's in the Air Force, so I think you said?"

"Yes—Raymond."

"And is he in France now, or in England?"

"He's in Egypt at the moment; but from what he said in his last letter—not exactly *said,* but we have a little private code, if you know what I mean—certain sentences mean certain things. I think that's justified, don't you?"

Mrs. O'Rourke replied promptly:

"Indeed, and I do. 'Tis a mother's privilege. And your other boy, the one in the Navy?"

Tuppence entered obligingly upon a saga of Douglas.

"You see," she ended, "I feel so lost without my three boys. They've never been all away together from me before. They're all so sweet to me."

("What a pestilential woman I sound," thought Tuppence to herself.)

She went on aloud: "And really I didn't know quite *what* to do or *where* to go. The lease of my house in London was up, and I thought if I came somewhere quiet—"

Again the Buddha nodded.

"I agree with you entirely. London is no place at the present. Ah, the gloom of it! I've lived there myself for many a year now. I'm by way of being an antique-dealer, you know. You may know my shop in Cornaby Street, Chelsea? Kate Kelly's the name over the door. Lovely stuff I had there, too—oh, lovely stuff, mostly glass — Waterford, Cork — beautiful. Chandeliers and lustres and punchbowls and all the rest of it. Foreign glass, too. But when there's a war on, all that goes west. I'm lucky to be out of it with as little loss as I've had."

A faint memory flickered through Tuppence's mind. A shop filled with glass, a compelling massive woman. Yes, surely, she had been in that shop.

Mrs. O'Rourke went on: "I'm not one of those that like to be always complaining—not like some that's in this house. Mr. Cabely, for one, with his muffler and his shawls and his moans about his business going to pieces. Then there's that little Mrs. Sprot, always fussing about her husband."

"Is he out at the front?"

"Not he. He's a tuppenny-halfpenny clerk in an insurance office, that's all, and so terrified of air-raids he's had his wife down here since the beginning of the war. Mind you, I think that's right where the child's concerned—and a nice wee mite she is; but Mrs. Sprot, she frets, for all that her husband comes down whenever he can."

Tuppence murmured: "I'm terribly sorry for all these mothers. If you let your children go away without you, you never stop worrying. And if you go with them, it's hard on the husbands being left."

"Ah, yes, and it comes expensive, running two establishments."

"This place seems quite reasonable," said Tuppence.

"Yes, I'd say you get your money's worth. Mrs. Perenna's a good manager. There's a queer woman now!"

"In what way?" asked Tuppence.

Mrs. O'Rourke said with a twinkle:

"You'll be thinking I'm a terrible talker. It's true. I'm interested in all my fellow-creatures; that's why I sit in this chair so often. I see who goes in and who goes out. . . . But what were we talking of now? Ah, yes, Mrs. Perenna, and the queerness of her. There's been a grand drama in that woman's life, or I'm much mistaken."

"Do you really think so?"

"I do, now. And the mystery she makes of herself! 'And where might you come from in Ireland?' I asked her. And would you believe it, she held out on me, declaring she was not from Ireland at all."

"You think she is Irish?"

"Of course she's Irish. I know my own countrywomen. I could name you the county she comes from. But there! 'I'm English,' she says. 'And my husband was a Spaniard—' "

Mrs. O'Rourke broke off abruptly as Mrs. Sprot came in, closely followed by Tommy.

Tuppence immediately assumed a sprightly manner.

"Good evening, Mr. Meadowes. You look very brisk this evening."

Tommy said: "Plenty of exercise; that's the secret. A round of golf this morning, and a walk along the front this afternoon."

Millicent Sprot said:

"I took baby down to the beach this afternoon. She wanted to paddle, but I really thought it was rather cold. I was helping her build a castle, and a dog ran off with my knitting and pulled out yards of it. So annoying, and so difficult picking up all the stitches again. I'm such a bad knitter."

"You're getting along fine with that helmet, Mrs. Blenkensop," remarked Mrs. O'Rourke suddenly, to Tuppence. "You've been just racing along. I thought Miss Minton said that you were an inexperienced knitter."

Tuppence flushed faintly. Mrs. O'Rourke's eyes were sharp. With a slightly vexed air, Tuppence said:

"I have really done quite a lot of knitting. I told Miss Minton so. But I think she likes teaching people."

Everybody laughed in agreement; soon the rest of the party—except Von Deinim—came in, and the gong sounded.

The conversation during the meal turned on the absorbing subject of spies. It was a very normal conversation, of the kind that may be heard almost every day; nevertheless Tuppence watched keenly the faces and demeanor of the people as they talked, striving to catch some telltale expression or word. But there was nothing. Sheila Perenna alone took no part in the conversation. She only spoke once toward the end of dinner. Mrs. Sprot had just said in her thin fluting voice:

"Where I do think the Germans made such a mistake in the last war was to shoot Nurse Cavell. It turned everybody against them."

It was then that Sheila, flinging back her head, demanded in her fierce young voice: "Why shouldn't they shoot her? She was a spy, wasn't she?"

"Oh, no, not a spy."

"She helped English people to escape—in an enemy country. That's the same thing."

"Oh, but shooting a woman—and a nurse."

Sheila got up. "I think the Germans were quite right," she said.

She went out of the window into the garden. Everyone else rose and adjourned to the lounge for coffee.

ONLY Tommy unobtrusively betook himself to the garden. He found Sheila Perenna leaning over the terrace wall, staring out at the sea.

By her hurried, quick breathing he knew that something had upset her badly. He said: "Lovely night."

In a low intense voice the girl answered:

"It could be—"

Tommy looked at her doubtfully. He felt, suddenly, the attraction and the vitality of this girl. There was a tumultuous life in her, a kind of compelling power.

"If it weren't for the war, you mean?" he said.

"I don't mean that at all. I hate the war."

"So do we all."

"Not in the way I mean. I hate the cant about it, the smugness—the horrible, horrible patriotism."

"Patriotism?" Tommy was startled.

"Yes, I hate patriotism, do you understand? All this *country, country, country!* Betraying your country—dying for your country—serving your country. My country doesn't mean anything to me at all."

"Some day," said Tommy, "you'll be surprised to find that it does."

"No. Never. I've suffered—I've seen—"

She broke off—then turned suddenly and impetuously upon him:

"Do you know who my father was?"

"No?" Tommy's interest quickened.

"His name was Patrick Maguire. He—he was a follower of Casement in the last war. He was shot as a traitor! All for nothing! For an idea! He worked himself up with those other Irishmen. Why couldn't he just stay at home quietly and mind his own business? He's a martyr to some people, and a traitor to others. I think he was just —*stupid!*"

Tommy could hear the note of pent-up rebellion coming out into the open. He said:

"So that's the shadow you've grown up with?"

"Shadow's right. Mother changed her name. We lived in Spain for some years. She always says that my father was half a Spaniard. We always tell lies, wherever we

go. We've been all over the Continent. Finally we came here and started this place. I think this is quite the most hateful thing we've done yet." Sheila was silent for a moment, then said slowly: "I—I don't know why I've been telling you this. I got worked up. Where did it start?"

"A discussion on Edith Cavell."

"Oh, yes—patriotism. I said I hated it."

"Aren't you forgetting Nurse Cavell's own words—before she died? Don't you know what she said?" He repeated the words:

"Patriotism is not enough. . . . I must have no hatred in my heart."

"Oh." She stood there stricken for a moment.

Then, turning quickly, she wheeled away into the shadow of the garden.

"SO you see, Tuppence, it would all fit in."

Tuppence nodded thoughtfully. The beach near them was empty. She herself leaned against a breakwater; Tommy sat above her, on the breakwater itself, from which post he could see anyone who approached along the esplanade. The rendezvous seemed a casual meeting.

Tuppence said: "Mrs. Perenna?"

"Yes. M., not N. She satisfies the requirements."

Tuppence nodded with complete understanding.

"Yes. She's Irish—as spotted by Mrs. O'Rourke—won't admit the fact. Has done a good deal of coming and going on the Continent. Changed her name to Perenna, came here and started this boarding-house. Yes, it fits. Is the girl in it too, do you think?"

Tommy said finally: "Definitely not. She'd never have told me all this, otherwise. I—I feel a bit of a cad."

Tuppence nodded with complete understanding.

"Yes, one does. In a way, it's a foul job, this."

"But very necessary."

"Oh, of course."

Tommy said: "What do you think about the German boy?"

Tuppence said quickly: "If you ask me, I don't think he's got anything to do with it."

"Grant thinks he has."

"Your Mr. Grant!" Tuppence's mood changed. She chuckled. "How I'd like to have seen his face when you told him about me."

"At any rate, he's made the *amende honorable.* You're definitely on the job."

Tuppence nodded. "We've got a job. We're going to *do* that job. Let's get on with it. Have we found what we're looking for in Mrs. Perenna?"

"We can at least say that she's strongly indicated. There's no one else, is there, Tuppence, that you've got your eye on?"

Tuppence considered. "No, there isn't. Some of them seem impossible—Miss Minton for instance, the 'compleat' British spinster; Mrs. Sprot and her Betty; and the vacuous Mrs. Cabely."

"Yes, but nitwittishness can be assumed."

"Oh, quite; but the fussy spinster and the absorbed young mothers are parts that would be fatally easy to overdo—and these people are quite natural. Then, where Mrs. Sprot is concerned, there's the child."

"I suppose," said Tommy, "that even a secret agent might have a child."

"Not with her, on the job," said Tuppence. "It's not the kind of thing you'd bring a child into. I'm quite sure about that, Tommy. *I know."*

"I withdraw," said Tommy. "I'll give you Mrs. Sprot and Miss Minton; but there's Cabely. There might be something fishy about Cabely."

"Yes, there might. Then there's Mrs. O'Rourke."

"What do you feel about her?"

"I don't quite know. She's disturbing. She—notices things." She was remembering the remark about knitting.

"Then there's Bletchley," said Tommy.

"I've hardly spoken to him; he's definitely your chicken."

"I've tried a few experiments on him," said Tommy.

"What sort of thing? I've got some experiments in mind myself."

"Well—just gentle ordinary little traps, about dates and places—that sort of thing. So far he hasn't slipped up in any way."

"Yes, but I suppose *if* he was N., he *would* have his story quite pat."

"Oh, yes—the main outlines of it. But it's not so easy not to trip up on unimportant details."

"Now," said Tuppence. "I'll tell you some of my ideas." And she proceeded to do so. . . .

On her way home, Mrs. Blenkensop stopped at the post office. She bought stamps, and on her way out, went into one of the public call-boxes. There she rang up a certain number, asked for "Mr. Faraday," and held a short conversation with him. She came out smiling and walked slowly homeward.

It was a pleasant afternoon with a light breeze. Tuppence curbed the natural energy of her own brisk trot to that leisurely pace that accorded with her conception of the part of Mrs. Blenkensop, who had nothing on earth to do with herself except knit (not too well) and write letters to her boys. She was always writing letters to her boys; sometimes she left them lying about half-finished.

Tuppence came slowly up the hill toward Sans Souci. Since it was not a through road (it ended at Smugglers' Rest, Commander Haydock's house), there was never much traffic—a few tradesmen's vans in the morning.

It was as she came near Sans Souci that Tuppence became aware of a woman standing by the gate peering inside. There was something tense and vigilant about the figure. Almost unconsciously, Tuppence softened the sound of her own footsteps, stepping cautiously upon her toes. It was not until she was close behind her, that the woman heard her and turned. Turned with a start.

She was a tall woman, poorly, even meanly dressed, but her face was unusual. She was not young—probably between forty and fifty; but there was a contrast between her face and the way she was dressed. She was fair-haired, with wide cheekbones, and had been—indeed still was—beautiful. Just for a minute Tuppence had a feeling that the woman's face was somehow familiar to her, but the feeling faded.

THE woman was obviously startled, and the flash of alarm that flitted across her face was not lost on Tuppence. (Something odd here?)

Tuppence said: "Excuse me—are you looking for someone?"

The woman spoke in a slow foreign voice, pronouncing carefully as though she had learned the words by heart.

"This 'ouse is Sans Souci?"

"Yes. I live there. Did you want someone?"

There was an infinitesimal pause; then the woman said: "You tell me, please. There is a Mr. Rosenstein there, no?"

"Mr. Rosenstein?" Tuppence shook her head. "No. I'm afraid not. Perhaps he has been there and left. Shall I ask, for you?"

But the strange woman made a quick gesture of refusal. She said: "No—no. I make mistake. Excuse, please."

Then she turned and walked rapidly down the hill.

Tuppence hesitated a minute; then she started down the hill after the other. What she could only describe as a "hunch" made her want to follow the woman. Presently, however, she stopped. To follow, would be to draw attention to herself in a rather marked manner. She had clearly been on the point of entering Sans Souci when she spoke to the woman; to reappear on her trail would be to arouse suspicion that Mrs. Blenkensop was something other than appeared on the surface—that is to say, if this strange woman was indeed a member of an enemy plot. . . .

Tuppence turned and retraced her steps up the hill. She entered Sans Souci and paused in the hall. The house seemed deserted, as was usual early in the afternoon. Betty was having her nap; the elder members were either resting or had gone out. Then as Tuppence stood in the dim hall thinking over her recent encounter, a faint sound came to her ears. It was a sound she knew quite well—the faint echo of a *ting.*

The telephone at Sans Souci was in the hall. The sound that Tuppence had just heard was the sound made when the receiver of an extension is taken off or replaced. There was one extension in the house—in Mrs. Perenna's bedroom.

Tommy might have hesitated. Tuppence did not hesitate for a minute. Very gently and carefully she lifted off the receiver and put it to her ear. Someone was using the extension. It was a man's voice. Tuppence heard:

"—everything going well. On the fourth, then, as arranged."

A woman's voice said: "Yes, carry on."

There was a click as the receiver was replaced.

Tuppence stood there frowning. Was that Mrs. Perenna's voice? Difficult to say, with only those three words to go upon.

A shadow obscured the light from the door. Tuppence jumped and replaced the receiver as Mrs. Perenna spoke.

"Such a pleasant afternoon. Are you going out, Mrs. Blenkensop, or have you just come in?"

So it was not Mrs. Perenna who had been speaking from Mrs. Perenna's room. Tuppence murmured something about having had a pleasant walk, and moved to the staircase. Mrs. Perenna moved along the hall after her; she seemed bigger than usual.

Tuppence said, "I must get my things off," and hurried up the stairs. As she turned the corner of the landing, she collided with Mrs. O'Rourke, whose vast bulk barred the top of the stairs.

"Dear, dear, now, Mrs. Blenkensop, it's a great hurry you seem to be in."

She did not move aside, but just stood there smiling down at Tuppence just below her. There was, as always, a frightening quality about Mrs. O'Rourke's smile.

And suddenly, for no reason Tuppence felt afraid.

The big smiling Irishwoman, with her deep voice, barring her way, and below Mrs. Perenna closing in at the foot of the stairs!

And then suddenly the tension broke. A little figure darted along the top landing, uttering shrill squeals of mirth. Little Betty Sprot, in vest and knickers. Darting past Mrs. O'Rourke, shouting happily, "Peek boo!" as she flung herself on Tuppence.

The atmosphere had changed. Mrs. O'Rourke, a big genial figure, was crying out:

"Ah, the darlin'. It's a great girl she's getting."

Below, Mrs. Perenna had turned away to the door that led into the kitchen. Tuppence, Betty's hand clasped in hers, passed Mrs. O'Rourke and ran along the passage to where Mrs. Sprot was waiting to scold the truant.

Tuppence went in with the child. She felt a queer sense of relief at the domestic atmosphere—the child's clothes lying about, the woolly toys, the painted crib, the sheeplike and somewhat unattractive face of Mr. Sprot in its frame on the dressing-table, the burble of Mrs. Sprot's denunciation of laundry prices.

All so normal, so reassuring, so everyday. And yet just now—on the stairs—

"Nerves," said Tuppence to herself. "Just nerves!"

But had it been nerves? Someone *had* been telephoning from Mrs. Perenna's room.

"Everything going well. On the fourth as arranged."

It might mean nothing—or a good deal. The fourth. Was that a date? . . . . Impossible to know. . . . It might just conceivably mean the Forth Bridge. There had been an attempt to blow that up in the last war.

Did it mean anything at all? It might quite easily have been the confirmation of some perfectly ordinary appointment. . . . The quiet house, the feeling that there was something sinister, something evil—

"Stick to facts, Mrs. Blenkensop," said Tuppence sternly. "And get on with your job."

Chapter Four

COMMANDER HAYDOCK was a genial host. He welcomed Mr. Meadowes and Major Bletchley with enthusiasm and insisted on showing the former "all over my little place." Smuggler's Rest had been originally a couple of coast-guards' cottages on the cliff overlooking the sea. A small cove was below, but the access to it was perilous, only to be attempted by adventurous boys. Then the cottages had been bought by a London business man, who had thrown them into one and attempted half-heartedly to make a garden. He had come down occasionally for short periods in summer. After that, the cottages had remained empty for some years, being let with a modicum of furniture to summer visitors.

"Then in 1926," explained Haydock, "it was sold to a man called Hahn. He was a German; and if you ask me, he was neither more nor less than a spy."

Tommy's ears quickened. "That's interesting," he said, putting down his glass of sherry.

"Damned thorough fellows they are," said Haydock. "Getting ready even then for this show—at least, that is my opinion. Look at the situation of this place! Perfect for signaling out to sea. Cove below where you could land a motorboat. Completely isolated, owing to the contour of the cliff. Oh, yes, don't tell me that fellow Hahn wasn't a German agent."

Major Bletchley said: "Of course he was."

"What happened to him?" asked Tommy.

"Ah!" said Haydock. "Thereby hangs a tale. Hahn spent a lot of money on this place. He had a way cut down to the beach, for one thing—concrete steps, expensive business. Then he had the whole of the house done over—bathrooms, every expensive gadget you can imagine. And who did he set to do all this? Not local men. No, a firm from London, so it was said, but a lot of the men who came down were foreigners. Some of them *didn't speak a word of English.* Don't you agree with me that that sounds extremely fishy?"

"A little odd, certainly," agreed Tommy.

"I was in the neighborhood myself at the time, living in a bungalow, and I got interested in what this fellow was up to. I used to hang about to watch the workmen. Now I'll tell you this—they didn't like it; they didn't like it at all. Once or twice they were quite threatening about it!"

"Ought to have gone to the authorities," Bletchley said.

"Just what I did do, my dear fellow. Made a positive nuisance of myself pestering the police."

He poured himself out another drink.

"And what did I get for my pains? Polite inattention. Blind and deaf, that's what we were in this country. Another war with Germany was out of the question; there was peace in Europe, our relations with Germany were excellent. Natural sympathy between us nowadays. I was regarded as an old fossil, a war maniac, a die-hard old sailor. What was the good of pointing out to people that the Germans were building the finest air force in Europe, and not just to fly round and have picnics!"

Major Bletchley said explosively:

"Nobody believed it! Damned fools! 'Peace in our time.' 'Appeasement.' All a lot of blah!"

HAYDOCK said, his face redder than usual with suppressed anger: "A war-monger, that's what they called me. But I kept on badgering away at people."

"Stout fellow," said Bletchley appreciatively.

"And finally," said the Commander, "I began to make an impression. We had a new chief constable down here—retired soldier. And he had the sense to listen to me. His fellows began to nose around. Sure enough, Hahn decamped. Just slipped out and disappeared one fine night. The police went over this place with a search-warrant. In a safe which had been built in, in the dining-room, they found a wireless transmitter and some pretty damaging documents. Also a big store-place under the garage for petrol—great tanks. I can tell you I was cock-a-hoop over that. Fellows at the club used to rag me about my German-spy complex. They dried up after that! End of the story was, I bought the place when it came into the market. —Come and have a look round, Meadowes?"

"Thanks. I'd like to."

Haydock was as full of zest as a boy as he did the honors of the establishment, and told all over again how useful the whole lay- ut would be to an enemy in war-time.

Major Bletchley did not accompany the two men on their tour, but remained peacefully sipping his drink on the terrace. Tommy gathered that the Commander's spy hunt with its successful issue was that good gentleman's principal topic of conversation, and that his friends had heard it many times. In fact, Major Bletchley said as much when they were walking down to Sans Souci, later.

"Good fellow, Haydock," he said. "But we've heard all about that business again and again until we're sick of it. He's as proud of the whole bag of tricks up there as a cat of its kittens."

The simile was not too farfetched, and Tommy assented with a smile. More than ever now, Tommy felt, that when the dying Farquhar had mentioned Sans Souci he had been on the right track. Smuggler's Rest, that is to say, had represented sea communications. Its beach, inaccessible save for the path down from above, would lend itself admirably to the plan. But it was only a part of the whole.

Defeated on that part of the plan by Haydock, what had been the enemy's response? Might not he have fallen

back upon the next best thing—that is to say, Sans Souci. The exposure of Hahn had come about four years ago. Tommy had an idea, from what Sheila Perenna had said, that it was soon after that Mrs. Perenna had bought Sans Souci. The next move in the game?

At the right moment, as Tommy saw well enough, Smuggler's Rest could be seized and held, by a few stalwarts operating from Sans Souci. That moment was not yet, but it might be very near.

There was a stretch of flat agricultural country behind Leahampton, running inland. Pasture; suitable, therefore, for the landing of troop-carrying airplanes or of parachute troops. But that was true of many other places. There was also a big chemical works, where, it might be noted, Carl von Deinim was employed.

Carl von Deinim. How did he fit in? Only too well. He was not, as Grant had pointed out, the real head. A cog, only, in the machine. Liable to suspicion and internment at any moment, but in the meantime he might have accomplished what had been his task. He was working on decontamination problems and on the immunizing of certain gases. There were probabilities there—probabilities unpleasant to contemplate.

Carl, Tommy decided (a little reluctantly) was in it. A pity, because he rather liked the fellow. Well, he was working for his country—taking his life in his hands. But you knew that when you took on your job.

MRS. BLENKENSOP was reading a letter on thin foreign paper, stamped outside with the censor's mark.

"Dear Raymond," she murmured. "I was so happy about him out in Egypt; and now, it seems, there is a big change round. All *very* secret, of course, and he can't *say* anything—just that there really is a marvelous plan, and that I'm to be ready for some *big surprises* soon. I'm glad to know where he's being sent, but I—"

Bletchley grunted.

"Surely he's not allowed to tell you that?"

Tuppence gave a deprecating laugh and looked round the breakfast-table as she folded up her precious letter.

"Oh, we have our methods," she said archly. "Dear Raymond knows that if only I know where he is or where he's going, I don't worry quite so much. It's quite a simple way, too. Just a certain word, you know, and after it, the initial letters of the next words spell out the place. Of course it makes rather a funny sentence sometimes—but Raymond is really most ingenious. I'm sure *nobody* would notice."

Little murmurs arose round the table. The moment was well chosen; everybody happened to be at the breakfast-table together for once.

Bletchley, his face rather red, said:

"You'll excuse me, Mrs. Blenkensop, but that's a damned foolish thing to do. Movements of troops and air squadrons are just what the Germans want to know."

"Oh, but I never tell anyone," cried Tuppence. "I'm very, very careful."

"Letters can be read," said Bletchley.

"I'm very careful never to leave letters lying about," said Tuppence with an air of outraged dignity. "I always keep them locked up."

Bletchley shook his head doubtfully. . . .

It was a gray morning with the wind blowing coldly from the sea. Tuppence was alone at the far end of the beach. She took from her bag two letters that she had just called for at a small news-agent's in the town. She opened them.

Dearest Mother:

Lots of funny things I could tell you, only I mustn't. We're putting up a good show, I think. Five German planes before breakfast is today's market quotation. Bit of a mess at the moment and all that, but we'll get there all right in the end.

It's the way they machine-gun the poor civilian devils on the roads that gets me. It makes us all see red. Gus and Trundles want to be remembered to you. They're still going strong.

Don't worry about me. I'm all right. Wouldn't have missed this show for the world. Love to old Carrot-top—have the W. O. given him a job yet?

Yours ever—Derek.

Tuppence's eyes were very bright and shining as she read and re-read this. Then she opened the other letter.

Dearest Mum:

How's old Aunt Gracie? Going strong? I think you're wonderful to stick it. I couldn't.

No news. My job's very interesting, but so hush-hush I can't tell you about it. But I really do feel I'm doing something worth while. Don't fret about not getting any war work to do—it's so silly, all these elderly women rushing about wanting to do things. They only really want people who are young and efficient. I wonder how Carrots is getting on at his job up in Scotland? Just filling up forms, I suppose. Still, he'll be happy to feel he is doing something.

Lots of love,
Deborah.

Tuppence smiled. She folded the letters, smoothed them lovingly, and then under the shelter of a breakwater she struck a match and set them on fire. She waited until they were reduced to ashes. Taking out her fountain pen and a small writing-pad, she wrote rapidly.

Langherne,
Cornwall.

Dearest Deb:

It seems so remote from the war here that I can hardly believe there is a war going on. Very glad to get your letter and know that your work is interesting.

Aunt Gracie has grown much more feeble and very hazy in her mind. I think she is glad to have me here. She talks a good deal about the old days and sometimes, I think, confuses me with my own mother. They are growing more vegetables than usual—have turned the rose garden into potatoes. I help old Sikes a bit. It makes me feel I am doing something in the war. Your father seems a bit disgruntled but I think, as you say, he too is glad to be doing something.

Love from your
Tuppenny Mother.

She took a fresh sheet.

Darling Derek:

A great comfort to get your letter. Send field postcards often if you haven't time to write.

I've come down to be with Aunt Gracie a bit. She is very feeble. She will talk of you as though you were seven and gave me ten shillings yesterday to send you as a present.

I'm still on the shelf and nobody wants my invaluable services! Extraordinary! Your father, as I told you, has got a job in the Ministry of Requirements. He is up north somewhere. Better than nothing, but not what he wanted, poor old Carrot-top. Still I suppose we've got to be humble and take a back seat and leave the war to you young idiots.

I won't say "Take care of yourself," because I gather that the whole point is that you should do just the opposite. But don't go and be stupid.

Lots of love,
Tuppence.

She put the letters into envelopes, addressed and stamped them and posted them on her way back to Sans Souci. As she reached the bottom of the cliff her attention was caught by two figures standing talking a little way up. It was the same woman Tuppence had seen yesterday—and talking to her was Carl von Deinim.

Regretfully Tuppence noted the fact that there was no cover. She could not get near them unseen and overhear what was being said. Moreover, at that moment, the young German turned his head and saw her. Rather abruptly, the two figures parted. The woman came rapidly down the hill, crossing the road and passing Tuppence on the other side.

Carl von Deinim waited until Tuppence came up to him. Then, gravely and politely, he wished her good morning.

Tuppence said immediately: "What a very odd-looking woman that was to whom you were talking, Mr. von Deinim."

"Yes. It is a Central European type. She is a Czech."

"Really? A—a friend of yours?"

"Not at all," said Carl stiffly. "I never saw the woman before."

"Oh, really. I thought—" Tuppence paused artistically.

"She asked me if I knew a Mrs. Gottlieb near here. I do not, and she says she has, perhaps, got the name of the house wrong."

"I see," said Tuppence thoughtfully.

She stole a swift glance at Carl von Deinim. He was walking beside her with a set stiff face. Tuppence felt a definite suspicion of this strange woman. And Carl?

Carl and Sheila that morning. *"You must be careful—"*

Tuppence thought: "I hope—I hope these young things *aren't* in it!"

Soft, she told herself, middle-aged and soft! That's what she was. . . .

Tuppence went slowly upstairs to her bedroom, that evening, and before going to bed, she pulled out the long drawer of her bureau. At one side was a small japanned box with a flimsy cheap lock. Tuppence slipped on gloves, unlocked the box, and opened it. A pile of letters lay inside. On the top was the one received that morning from "Raymond." Tuppence unfolded it with due precautions.

Then her lips set grimly. There had been an eyelash in the fold of the paper this morning. The eyelash was not there now.

She went to the washstand. There was a little bottle labeled innocently, *"Gray powder"* with a dose. Adroitly Tuppence dusted a little of the powder onto the letter and onto the surface of the glossy japanned enamel of the box. There were no fingerprints on either of them.

Again Tuppence nodded with a certain grim satisfaction. *For there should have been fingerprints—her own.*

Mrs. Perenna? Sheila? Somebody, at least, who was interested in the movements of British armed forces.

Tuppence's plan of campaign had been simple in its outlines. First, a general sizing-up of probabilities and possibilities. Second, an experiment to determine whether there was or was not an inmate of Sans Souci who was interested in troop movements and anxious to conceal the fact. Third—who that person was?

It was concerning that third operation that Tuppence pondered as she lay in bed the following morning. Her train of thought was slightly hampered by Betty Sprot, who had pranced in at an early hour, preceding indeed the cup of somewhat tepid inky liquid known as morning tea. Betty was both active and voluble. She had taken a great attachment to Tuppence. She climbed up on the bed and thrust an extremely tattered picture-book under Tuppence's nose, commanding with brevity: "Wead."

Tuppence read obediently:

> "Goosey goosey gander, whither will you wander?
> Upstairs, downstairs, in my lady's chamber."

Betty rolled with mirth—repeating in an ecstasy:

"Uptares—uptares—uptares—" and then with a sudden climax, *"Down!"*—and proceeded to roll off the bed with a thump.

This proceeding was repeated several times until it palled. Then Betty crawled about the floor, playing with Tuppence's shoes and muttering: *"Ag da—putch—"*

RELEASED to fly back to its own perplexities, Tuppence's mind forgot the child. The words of the nursery rhyme seemed to mock at her: *"Goosey, goosey, gander, whither will ye wander?"*

Whither indeed? Goosey, that was her; Gander was Tommy. It was, at any rate, what they appeared to be! Tuppence had the heartiest contempt for Mrs. Blenkensop. Mr. Meadowes, she thought, was a little better—stolid, British, unimaginative, quite incredibly stupid. Both of them, she hoped, fitting nicely into the background of Sans Souci. Both such possible people to be there.

All the same, one must not relax—a slip was so easy. She had made one the other day—nothing that mattered, but just a sufficient indication to warn her to be careful. Such an easy approach to intimacy and good relations: an indifferent knitter asking for guidance. But she had forgotten that one evening; her fingers had slipped into their own practiced efficiency, the needles clicking busily with the even note of the experienced knitter. And Mrs. O'Rourke had noticed it. Since then, she had carefully struck a medium course—not so clumsy as she had been at first, but not so rapid as she could be.

Her next step, Tuppence thought, could be managed easily enough. That is to say, with the connivance of Tommy. She saw exactly how to do it. . . . Lying there planning, time slipped by.

Mrs. Sprot came in, breathless, to seek for Betty.

"Oh, here she is. I couldn't think where she had got to. Oh, Betty, you naughty girl. . . . Oh, dear, Mrs. Blenkensop, I am so sorry."

Tuppence sat up in bed. Betty, with an angelic face, was contemplating her handiwork. She had removed the laces from Tuppence's shoes, and had immersed them in a toothglass of water. She was prodding them now with a gleeful finger.

Tuppence laughed, cutting short Mrs. Sprot's apologies.

"How frightfully funny! Don't worry, Mrs. Sprot; they'll recover all right. It's my fault. I should have noticed what she was doing. She was rather quiet."

"I know." Mrs. Sprot sighed. "Whenever they're quiet, it's a bad sign. I'll get you some more laces this morning, Mrs. Blenkensop."

"Don't bother," said Tuppence. "They'll dry none the worse."

Mrs. Sprot bore Betty away, and Tuppence got up to put her plan into execution.

Chapter Five

TOMMY looked rather gingerly at the packet that Tuppence thrust upon him.

"Is this it?"

"Yes. Be careful. Don't get it over you."

Tommy took a delicate sniff at the packet and replied with energy:

"No, indeed. What is this frightful stuff?"

"Asafoetida," replied Tuppence. "A pinch of that, and you will wonder why your boy friend is no longer attentive, as the advertisements say."

Shortly after that, various incidents occurred: The first was the Smell in Mr. Meadowes' room. Mr. Meadowes, not a complaining man by nature, spoke about it mildly at first, then with increasing firmness. Mrs. Perenna was summoned into conclave. She had to admit that there was a pronounced and unpleasant smell.

Mr. Meadowes said with firmness that he thought the smell indicated at least a rat—and he added, still more firmly, that he was not going to sleep another night in the room until the matter had been seen to. He would ask Mrs. Perenna to change his room.

Mrs. Perenna said of course; she had just been about to suggest the same thing. She was afraid that the only room vacant was rather a small one, and unfortunately it had no sea view, but if Mr. Meadowes did not mind that—

Mr. Meadowes did not. His only wish was to get away from the smell. Mrs. Perenna thereupon had him moved to a small bedroom, the door of which happened to be opposite the door of Mrs. Blenkensop's room. She would, she explained, send for a man to take up the floor and search for the origin of the smell.

The second incident was Mr. Meadowes' hay-fever. That was what he called it at first. Later he admitted doubtfully that he might just possibly have caught cold. He sneezed a good deal, and his eyes ran. If there was a faint elusive suggestion of raw onion floating in the breeze in the vicinity of Mr. Meadowes' large silk handkerchief, nobody noticed the fact, and indeed a pungent amount of eau de cologne masked the more penetrating odor. Finally, defeated by incessant sneezing and nose-blowing, Mr. Meadowes retired to bed for the day.

It was on the morning of that day that Mrs. Blenkensop received a letter from her son Donald. So excited and thrilled was Mrs. Blenkensop, that everybody at Sans Souci heard about it. The letter had not been censored at all, she explained, because fortunately one of Donald's friends coming on leave had brought it, so for once Donald had been able to write quite fully.

"And it just shows," declared Mrs. Blenkensop, wagging her head sagely, "how little we know really of what is going on."

After breakfast she went upstairs to her room, opened the japanned box and put the letter away. Between the folded pages were some unnoticeable grains of rice powder. She closed the box again, pressing her fingers firmly on its surface.

As she left her room, she coughed; and from opposite came the sound of a highly histrionic sneeze. Tuppence smiled, and proceeded downstairs. She had already made known her intention of going up to London for the day—to see her lawyer on business, and to do some shopping.

Now she was given a good send-off by the assembled boarders and entrusted with various commissions—"only if you have time, of course."

Major Bletchley held himself aloof from this female chatter. He was reading his paper and uttering appropriate comments aloud. "Damned swines of Germans. Machine-gunning civilian refugees on the roads. Damned brutes! If I were our people—"

As Tuppence passed the garden, she came unexpectedly upon Carl von Deinim. He was standing, leaning on the wall. His hands were clenched, and as Tuppence approached, he turned on her, his usually impassive face convulsed with emotion. Tuppence paused involuntarily and asked:

"Is anything the matter?"

"Ach, yes, everything is the matter! It cannot go on; that is what I say. It cannot go on. It would be best, I think, to end everything."

"What do you mean?"

The young man said: "You have spoken kindly to me. You would, I think, understand. I fled from my own country because of injustice and cruelty. I came here to find freedom. I hated Nazi Germany. But alas, I am still a German. Nothing can alter that. Germany is still my country. When I read of German cities bombed, of German soldiers dying, of German airplanes brought down—they are my people who die. When that old fire-eating Major reads out from his paper, when he says 'those swine,' I am moved to fury—I cannot bear it."

He added quietly: "And so I think it would be best, perhaps, to end it all. Yes, to end it."

Tuppence took hold of him firmly by the arm.

"Nonsense!" she said robustly. "Of course you feel as you do. Anyone would. But you've got to stick it."

"I wish they would intern me. It would be easier so."

"Yes, probably it would. But in the meantime you're doing useful work—or so I've heard. Useful not only to England but to humanity. You're working on decontamination problems, aren't you?"

His face lit up slightly.

"Ah, yes, and I begin to have much success. A process very simple, easily made and not complicated to apply."

"Well," said Tuppence, "that's worth doing. Anything that mitigates suffering is worth while—and anything that's constructive and not destructive."

Carl von Deinim took her hand and kissed it. He said: "I thank you. I will have more fortitude."

"Oh, dear," thought Tuppence as she walked down the road into the town. "How very unfortunate that the person I like best in this place should be a German. It makes everything cockeyed!"

Tuppence was nothing if not thorough. Although she had no wish to go to London, she judged it wise to do exactly as she had said she was going to do. She purchased a third return and was just leaving the booking-office window when she ran into Sheila Perenna.

"Hullo," said Sheila. "Where are you off to? I just came to see about a parcel which seems to have gone astray."

Tuppence explained her plans.

"Oh, yes, of course," said Sheila carelessly. "I do remember you saying something about it, but I hadn't realized it was today you were going. I'll come and see you into the train."

After waving from the window and watching the girl's figure recede, Tuppence sat down in her corner seat again and gave herself up to serious meditation. Was it, she wondered, an accident that Sheila had happened to be at the station just at that time? Or was it a proof of enemy thoroughness? Did Mrs. Perenna want to make quite sure that the garrulous Mrs. Blenkensop really *had* gone to London? It looked very much like it.

IT was not until the next day that Tuppence was able to confer with Tommy. They had agreed not to attempt to communicate with each other under the roof of Sans Souci. Mrs. Blenkensop met Mr. Meadowes as the latter, his hay-fever somewhat abated, was taking a gentle stroll. They sat down on one of the promenade seats.

"Well?" said Tuppence.

Slowly, Tommy nodded. He looked rather unhappy.

"Yes," he said. "I got something. But Lord, what a day! Perpetually with an eye to the crack of the door. I've got quite a stiff neck."

"Never mind your neck," said Tuppence unfeelingly. "Tell me."

"Well, the maids went in to do the bed and the room, of course. And Mrs. Perenna went in—but that was when the maids were there, and she was just blowing them up about something. And the kid ran in once and came out with a woolly dog."

"Yes, yes. Anyone else?"

"One person," said Tommy slowly.

"Who?"

"Carl von Deinim."

"Oh!" Tuppence felt a swift pang. So, after all—

"When?" she asked.

"Lunch-time. He came out from the dining-room early, came up to his room, then sneaked across the passage into yours. He was there about a quarter of an hour."

He paused. "That settles it, I think?"

SHE nodded. . . . Yes, it settled it all right. Carl von Deinim could have had no reason for going into Mrs. Blenkensop's bedroom and remaining there for a quarter of an hour, save one. His complicity was proved. He must be, Tuppence thought, a marvelous actor.

"I'm sorry," she said slowly.

"So am I," said Tommy. "He's a good chap."

Tuppence said: "You and I might be doing the same thing in Germany."

Tommy nodded. Tuppence went on:

"Well, we know more or less where we are: Carl von Deinim working in with Sheila and her mother. Probably Mrs. Perenna is the big noise. Then there is that foreign woman who was talking to Carl yesterday. She's in it somehow."

"What do we do now?"

"We must go through Mrs. Perenna's room sometime. There might be something there that would give us a hint. And we must tail her—see where she goes and whom she meets. Tommy, let's get Albert down here."

Tommy considered the point. Some years ago Albert, a page-boy in a hotel, had joined forces with the young Barefords and shared their adventures. Afterward he had entered their service and been the sole domestic prop of the establishment. Some six years ago he had married, and was now the proud proprietor of a pub in South London.

Tuppence continued rapidly: "Albert will be thrilled. We'll get him down here. He can stay at that pub near the station, and he can shadow the Perennas for us—or anyone else."

"Yes, that's a good idea, Tuppence. Either of us following the woman about would be rather conspicuous. Albert will be perfect. Now, another thing: I think we ought to watch out for that so-called Czech woman who was talking to Carl and hanging about here. It seems to me that she probably represents the other end of the business—and that's what we're anxious to find."

"Oh, yes, I do agree. She comes here for orders, or to take messages. Next time we see her, one of us must follow her and find out more about her."

"What about looking through Mrs. Perenna's room—and Carl's too, I suppose?"

"I don't suppose you'll find anything in his. After all, as a German, the police are likely to search it, and so he'd be careful not to have anything suspicious. Mrs. Perenna is going to be difficult."

She paused. "Lunch-time is the best."

"Master Carl's time?"

"Exactly. I could have a headache and go to my room—no, someone might come up and want to minister to me. I know: I'll just come in quietly before lunch and go up to my room without telling anyone. Then, after lunch, I can say I had a headache."

"Hadn't I better do it? My hay-fever could recrudesce tomorrow."

"I think it had better be me. If I'm caught, I could always say I was looking for aspirin or something. One of the gentlemen boarders in Mrs. Perenna's room would cause far more speculation."

Tommy grinned. "Of a scandalous character."

Then the smile died. He looked grave and anxious.

"As soon as we can, old thing. The news is bad today. We must get on to something soon."

Tommy continued his walk, and presently entered the post office, where he put through a call to Mr. Grant, and

reported: "The recent operation was successful, and our friend *C.* is definitely involved."

Then he wrote a letter and posted it. It was addressed to Mr. Albert Barth.

Then he bought himself a weekly paper which professed to inform the English world of what was really going to happen, and strolled innocently back in the direction of Sans Souci.

Presently he was hailed by the hearty voice of Commander Haydock leaning from his two-seater car and shouting: "Hullo, Meadowes—want a lift?"

Tommy accepted a lift gratefully and got in.

"Hear you've been under the weather?" said Haydock.

"Just a touch of hay-fever. I get it about this time of year."

"Yes, of course. Never suffered from it myself, but I had a pal who did. Used to lay him out regularly every June. Feeling fit enough for a game of golf?"

Tommy said he'd like it very much.

"Right. What about tomorrow? Shall we have a round about six?"

"Thanks very much. I'd like to."

"Good. Then that's settled."

The Commander drew up at the gate of Sans Souci.

"How's the fair Sheila?" he asked.

"Quite well, I think. I haven't seen much of her."

Haydock gave his loud barking laugh.

"Not as much as you'd like to, I bet! Good-looking girl, that, but damned rude. She sees too much of that German fellow. Damned unpatriotic, I call it. Dare say she's got no use for old fogies like you or me, but there are plenty of nice lads going about in our own services. Why take up with a German? That sort of thing riles me."

The Commander let in his clutch with a jerk, and the car leaped forward up the hill to Smugglers' Rest.

TUPPENCE arrived at the gate of Sans Souci at twenty minutes to two. She turned off from the drive and went through the garden and into the house through the open drawing-room window. A smell of Irish stew and the clatter of plates and murmur of voices came from afar. Sans Souci was hard at work on its midday meal. Tuppence waited by the drawing-room door until Martha, the maid, had passed across the hall and into the dining-room; then she ran quickly up the stairs, shoeless.

She went into her room, put on her soft felt bedroom slippers, and then went along the landing and into Mrs. Perenna's room. Once inside, she looked around her and felt a certain distaste sweep over her. Not a nice job, this. Quite unpardonable if Mrs. Perenna was simply Mrs. Perenna. Prying into people's private affairs—

She went over to the dressing-table. Quick and deft in her movements, she had soon gone through the contents of the drawers there. In the tall bureau, one of the drawers was locked. That seemed more promising.

Tommy had been entrusted with certain tools and had received some brief instructions on the manipulation of them. These instructions he had passed on to Tuppence. A deft twist or two of the wrist, and the drawer yielded.

There was a cash-box containing twenty pounds in notes and some piles of silver—also a jewel case. And there were a heap of papers. These last were what interested Tuppence most. Rapidly she went through them.

Papers relating to a mortgage on Sans Souci, a bank-account, letters. Time flew past; Tuppence skimmed through the documents, concentrating furiously on anything that might bear a double meaning. Two letters from a friend in Italy, rambling discursive letters, seemingly quite harmless. At the bottom of the pile a letter in faded ink signed *Pat* and beginning *"This will be the last letter I'll be writing you, Eileen my darling—"*

No, not that! Tuppence could not bring herself to read that! She refolded it, tidied the letters on top of it and then, suddenly alert, pushed the drawer to—no time to re-lock it; and when the door opened and Mrs. Perenna came in, she was searching vaguely amongst the bottles on the washstand.

Mrs. Blenkensop turned a flustered but foolish face toward her hostess.

"Oh, Mrs. Perenna, do forgive me. I came in with such a blinding headache, and I thought I would lie down on my bed with a little aspirin, and I couldn't find mine, so I thought you wouldn't mind—I know you must have some because you offered it to Miss Minton the other day."

Mrs. Perenna swept into the room. There was a sharpness in her voice as she said:

"Why, of course, Mrs. Blenkensop. Why ever didn't you come and ask me?"

"Well, of course, yes, I should have done really. But I knew you were all at lunch, and I do so hate, you know, making a *fuss—*"

Passing Tuppence, Mrs. Perenna caught up the bottle of aspirin from the washstand.

"How many would you like?" she demanded crisply.

Mrs. Blenkensop accepted three. Escorted by Mrs. Perenna, she crossed to her own room and hastily demurred to the suggestion of a hot-water bottle.

Mrs. Perenna used her parting shot as she left the room.

"But you have some aspirin of your own, Mrs. Blenkensop. I've seen it."

Tuppence cried quickly:

"Oh, I know. I know I've got some somewhere, but, so stupid of me, I simply couldn't lay my hands on it."

Mrs. Perenna said with a flash of her big white teeth:

"Well, have a good rest until tea-time."

She went out, closing the door behind her. Tuppence drew a deep breath, lying on her bed rigidly lest Mrs. Perenna should return.

Had the other suspected anything?

She had appeared to accept Tuppence's presence in her bedroom quite naturally. But later she would find the bureau drawer unlocked. Would she suspect then? Or would she think she had left it unlocked herself by accident? One did do such things. Had Tuppence been able to replace the papers in such a way that they looked much the same as before?

But then, if Mrs. Perenna were the renowned German agent, M., she would be suspicious of counter-espionage.

Had anything in her bearing revealed undue alertness?

She had seemed natural enough—only that one sharply pointed remark about the aspirin.

Suddenly, Tuppence sat up on her bed. She remembered that her aspirin, together with some iodine and a bottle of soda mints, were all together at the back of the writing-table drawer, where she had shoved them when unpacking.

It would seem, therefore, that she was not the only person to snoop in other people's rooms.

Chapter Six

ON the following day Mrs. Sprot went up to London. A few tentative remarks on her part had led immediately to various offers on the part of the inhabitants of Sans Souci to look after Betty. When Mrs. Sprot, with many final adjurations to Betty to be a very good girl, had departed, Betty attached herself to Tuppence, who had elected to take morning duty.

"Play," said Betty. "Play hide seek."

Tuppence had intended taking her for a walk, but it was raining hard, so the two of them adjourned to the bedroom, and here Betty led the way to the bottom drawer of the bureau where her playthings were kept.

"Hide Bonzo, shall we?" asked Tuppence.

But Betty had changed her mind and demanded instead:

"Wead me story."

Tuppence pulled out a rather tattered book—to be interrupted by a squeal from Betty.

"No, no. Narsty. . . . Bad!"

Tuppence stared at her in surprise, and then down at the book, a colored version of "Little Jack Horner."

"Was Jack a bad boy?" she asked. "Because he pulled out a plum?"

Betty reiterated with emphasis:

"B-a-a-ad!" And with a terrific effort: "Dirrrty!"

She seized the book from Tuppence and replaced it in the line, then tugged out an identical book from the other end of the shelf, announcing with a beaming face:

"Clean ni-i-ce Jackorner!"

Tuppence realized that the dirty and worn books had been replaced by new and cleaner editions, and was rather amused. Mrs. Sprot was very much what Tuppence thought of as "the hygienic mother." Always terrified of germs, of impure food, or of the child sucking a soiled toy.

Tuppence, brought up in a free and easy rectory life, was always rather contemptuous of exaggerated hygiene, and had brought up her own two children to absorb what

she called a "reasonable amount" of dirt. However, she obediently took out the clean copy of Jack Horner and read it to the child with the comments proper to the occasion. They proceeded to "Goosey Goosey Gander" and "The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe," and so the morning passed rapidly away.

After lunch Betty had her rest, and it was then that Mrs. O'Rourke invited Tuppence into her room. Mrs. O'Rourke's room was very untidy; it smelled strongly of peppermint and stale cake with a faint odor of mothballs added. There were photographs on every table of Mrs. O'Rourke's children and grandchildren and nieces and nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews.

" 'Tis a grand way you have with children, Mrs. Blenkensop," observed Mrs. O'Rourke genially.

"Oh, well," said Tuppence, "with my own two—"

Mrs. O'Rourke cut in quickly:

"Two? It was three boys I understood you had?"

"Oh, yes, three. But two of them are very near in age, and I was thinking of the days spent with them."

"Ah! I see. Sit down now, Mrs. Blenkensop. Make yourself at home."

Tuppence sat down obediently.

"Tell me now," said Mrs. O'Rourke, "what do you think of Sans Souci?"

Tuppence began a somewhat gushing speech of eulogy, but Mrs. O'Rourke cut her short without ceremony.

"What I'd be asking you is if you don't feel there's something odd about the place?"

"Odd? No, I don't think so."

"Not about Mrs. Perenna? You're interested in her, you must allow. I've seen you watching her."

Tuppence flushed.

"She—she's an interesting woman."

"She is not, then," said Mrs. O'Rourke. "She's a commonplace woman enough—that is, if she's what she seems. But perhaps she isn't. Is that your idea?"

"Really, Mrs. O'Rourke, I don't know *what* you mean."

"Have you ever stopped to think that many of us are that way—different to what we seem on the surface? Mr. Meadowes, now. He's a puzzling kind of man. Sometimes I'd say he was a typical Englishman, stupid to the core; and there's other times I'll catch a look or a word that's not stupid at all. It's odd, that, don't you think so?"

Tuppence said firmly:

"Oh, I really think Mr. Meadowes is *very* typical."

And she turned away to the window. Queer how this old woman could affect her, spreading about her an atmosphere of unrest and fear! Tuppence thought: "It isn't all my fancy. I'm not a fanciful person. There is something, some focus of evil here. If I could see—"

Her thoughts broke off abruptly. At the bottom of the garden the bushes parted slightly. In the gap a face appeared, staring stealthily up at the house. It was the face of the foreign woman who had stood talking to Carl von Deinim in the road.

Turning abruptly from the window, Tuppence murmured something to Mrs. O'Rourke, hurried out of the room and ran downstairs and out of the front door.

Turning to the right, she ran down the side garden path to where she had seen the face. There was no one there now. She went through the shrubbery and out on to the road and looked up and down the hill. She could see no one. Where had the woman gone? She retraced her steps to the house with a vague feeling of foreboding—a queer formless dread of something about to happen.

NOW that the weather had cleared, Miss Minton was dressing Betty preparatory to taking her out for a walk. They set off to the town to buy a celluloid duck to sail in Betty's bath.

Two matches, left carelessly crossed on the marble table in the hall, informed Tuppence that Mr. Meadowes was spending the afternoon on the trail of Mrs. Perenna. Tuppence betook herself to the drawing-room and the company of Mr. and Mrs. Cabely.

Mr. Cabely was in a fretful mood. He had come to Leahampton, he explained, for absolute rest and quiet, and what quiet could there be with a child in the house? All day long it went on, screaming and running about, jumping up and down on the floors.

"Her mother should keep her quiet," said Mr. Cabely. "There are other people to consider. Invalids, people whose nerves need repose."

Adroitly, Tuppence changed the subject:

"I wish you would tell me," she said, "of your views on life in Germany. You told me you had traveled there a good deal in recent years. It would be interesting to have the point of view of an experienced man of the world like yourself. I can see you are the kind of man, quite unswayed by prejudice, who could really give a clear account of conditions there."

Mr. Cabely rose at once to the bait.

"As you say, dear lady, I am capable of taking a clear unprejudiced view. Now, in my opinion—"

What followed constituted a monologue. Tuppence, throwing in an occasional, "Now that's very interesting," or, "What a shrewd observer you are!" listened with an attention that was not assumed for the occasion. For Mr. Cabely, carried away by the sympathy of his listener, was displaying himself as a decided admirer of the Nazi system. How much better it would have been, he hinted, if did not say, for England and Germany to have allied themselves against the rest of Europe.

The return of Miss Minton and Betty, the celluloid duck duly obtained, broke in upon the monologue, which had extended unbroken for nearly two hours. Looking up, Tuppence caught rather a curious expression on Mrs. Cabely's face. She found it hard to define. It might be merely pardonable wifely jealousy at the monopoly of her husband's attention by another woman. It might be alarm at the fact that Mr. Cabely was being too outspoken in his political views. It certainly expressed dissatisfaction.

TEA was the next move, and hard on that came the return of Mrs. Sprot from London, exclaiming:

"I do hope Betty's been good and not troublesome? Have you been a good girl, Betty?"

Mrs. Sprot then sat down, drank several cups of tea, and plunged into a spirited narrative of her purchases in London, the crowd on the train, what a soldier recently returned from France had told the occupants of her carriage, and what a girl behind the stocking counter had told her of a recent air-raid in one of the suburbs.

The conversation was, in fact, completely normal. It was prolonged afterward on the terrace outside, for the sun was now shining, and the wet day a thing of the past. Betty rushed happily about, making mysterious expeditions into the bushes and returning with a laurel leaf, or a heap of pebbles which she placed in the lap of one of the grown-ups with a confused and unintelligible explanation of what it represented.

Never had there been an evening more typical of Sans Souci at its most harmless. Chatter, gossip, speculations as to the course of the war—could France rally? What was Russia likely to do? Could Hitler invade England if he tried?

Suddenly, with a start, Mrs. Sprot glanced at her watch.

"Goodness, it's nearly seven. I ought to have put that child to bed an hour ago. —Betty—Betty!"

It was some time since Betty had been on the terrace, though no one had noticed her defection. Mrs. Sprot called:

"Betty! I want you."

There was no answer, and Mrs. Sprot rose impatiently.

"I suppose I must go and look for her. I wonder where she can be?"

Miss Minton suggested that she was hiding somewhere, and Tuppence, with memories of her own childhood, suggested the kitchen. But Betty could not be found, either inside or outside the house.

Mrs. Sprot began to get annoyed.

"It's very naughty of her—very naughty indeed! Do you think she can have gone out on the road?"

Together she and Tuppence went out to the gate and looked up and down the hill. There was no one in sight except a tradesman's boy with a bicycle standing talking to a maid at the door of the church opposite. On Tuppence's suggestion, she and Mrs. Sprot crossed the road and the latter asked if either of them had noticed a little girl. They both shook their heads, and then the servant asked, with sudden recollection:

"A little girl in a green-checked gingham dress?"

Mrs. Sprot said eagerly: "That's right."

"I saw her about half an hour ago—going down the road with a woman."

Mrs. Sprot said with astonishment:

"With a woman? What sort of woman?"

The girl seemed slightly embarrassed.

"Well, what I'd call an odd-looking kind of woman. A foreigner, she was. Queer clothes. A kind of shawl thing and no hat, and a strange sort of face—queer-like, if you know what I mean."

In a flash Tuppence remembered the face she had seen that afternoon peering through the bushes, and the foreboding that had swept over her. But she had little time for speculation, for Mrs. Sprot almost collapsed against her.

"Oh, Betty, my little girl! She's been kidnaped! She— What did the woman look like—a gypsy?"

Tuppence shook her head energetically.

"No, she was fair, very fair, a broad face with high cheekbones and blue eyes set very far apart."

She saw Mrs. Sprot staring and hastened to explain.

"I saw the woman this afternoon—peering through the bushes at the bottom of the garden. And I've noticed her hanging about. Carl von Deinim was speaking to her one day. It must be the same woman."

"Oh, God!" moaned Mrs. Sprot. "What shall I do?"

Tuppence passed an arm round her.

"Come back to the house, have a little brandy and then we'll ring up the police. It's all right. We'll get her back."

Mrs. Sprot cried out weakly: "Some dreadful German woman, I expect. She'll kill my Betty."

"Nonsense," said Tuppence robustly. "It will be all right. I expect she's just some woman who's not quite right in her head." But she did not believe her own words—did not believe for one moment that that calm blonde woman was an irresponsible lunatic.

Carl! Had Carl something to do with this?

A few minutes later she was inclined to doubt it. Carl von Deinim, like the rest, seemed amazed, unbelieving, completely surprised. As soon as the facts were made plain, Major Bletchley assumed control.

"Now then, dear lady," he said to Mrs. Sprot, "sit down here—just drink a little drop of this. Brandy—it won't hurt you. I'll get straight on to the police station."

Mrs. Sprot murmured: "Wait a minute—there might be something—" She hurried up the stairs and along the passage to the room Betty shared with her.

A MINUTE or two later they heard her running wildly along the landing. She rushed downstairs like a demented woman, and clutched Major Bletchley's hand from the telephone receiver, as he was about to lift it.

"No, no!" she panted. "You mustn't—you mustn't—" And sobbing wildly, she collapsed into a chair.

They crowded round her. In a minute or two she recovered her composure. Sitting up, with Mrs. Cabely's arm round her, she held something out for them to see.

"I found this—on the floor of my room. It had been wrapped round a stone and thrown through the window. Look—look what it says."

It was a note, written in a queer stiff foreign handwriting, big and bold.

We have got your child in safe keeping. You will be told what to do in due course. If you go to the police your child will be killed. Say nothing. Wait for instructions. If not————X.

Mrs. Sprot was moaning faintly: "Betty—Betty—"

Everyone was talking at once. "The dirty murdering scoundrels!"—from Mrs. O'Rourke. "Brutes!"—from Sheila Perenna. "Fantastic, fantastic—I don't believe a word of it. Silly practical joke!"—from Mr. Cabely. "Oh, the dear wee mite!"—from Miss Minton. "I do not understand. It is incredible!"—from Carl von Deinim. And above everyone else the strenuous voice of Major Bletchley:

"Damned nonsense! Intimidation! We must inform the police at once. They'll soon get to the bottom of it."

Once more he moved toward the telephone. This time a scream of outraged motherhood from Mrs. Sprot stopped him. He said: "But my dear madam, it's *got* to be done! This is only a crude device to prevent you getting on the track of these scoundrels."

"They'll kill her."

"Nonsense. They wouldn't dare."

"I won't have it, I tell you. I'm her mother. It's for me to say."

"I know. I know. That's what they're counting on—your feeling like that. Very natural. But you must take it from me, a soldier and an experienced man of the world, the police are what we need."

"No!" cried Mrs. Sprot.

"Meadowes, you agree with me?" asked Bletchley.

Slowly Tommy nodded.

"Cabely? Look, Mrs. Sprot, both Meadowes and Cabely agree."

Mrs. Sprot said with sudden energy: "Ask the women!"

Tommy's eyes sought Tuppence. Tuppence said, her voice low and shaken:

"I—I agree with Mrs. Sprot."

She was thinking: "Deborah! Derek! If it were they, I'd feel like her. Tommy and the others are right, I've no doubt; but all the same, I couldn't do it. I couldn't risk it."

Mrs. O'Rourke was saying: "No mother alive could risk it, and that's a fact."

Mrs. Cabely murmured: "I do think, you know, that—well—" and tailed off into incoherence.

Miss Minton said tremulously: "Such awful things happen. We'd never forgive ourselves if anything happened to dear little Betty."

Tuppence said sharply: "You haven't said anything, Mr. von Deinim?"

Carl's blue eyes were very bright. His face was a mask. He said slowly and stiffly:

"I am a foreigner. I do not know your English police. How competent they are—how quick."

Someone had come into the hall. It was Mrs. Perenna. Her cheeks were flushed; evidently she had been hurrying up the hill. She said:

"What's all this?" And her voice was commanding, imperious, not the complaisant guest-house hostess, but a woman of force.

They told her—a confused tale told by too many people, but she grasped it quickly. And with her grasping of it, the whole thing seemed, in a way, to be passed up to her for judgment. She was the supreme court.

She held the hastily scrawled note a minute; then she handed it back. Her words came sharp and authoritative.

"The police? They'll be no good. You can't risk their blundering. Take the law into your own hands. Go after the child yourselves."

Bletchley said, shrugging:

"Very well. If you won't call in the police, it's the best thing to be done."

Tommy said: "They can't have got much of a start."

"Haydock," said Bletchley. "Haydock's the man to help us. He's got a car. The woman's unusual-looking, you say? And a foreigner? Ought to leave a trail that we can follow. Come on—there's no time to be lost. You'll come along, Meadowes?"

Mrs. Sprot got up. "I'm coming too."

"Now, my dear lady, leave it to us—"

"I'm coming too."

He gave in, murmuring something about the female of the species being deadlier than the male.

In the end Commander Haydock, taking in the situation with commendable Naval rapidity, drove the car; Tommy sat beside him, and behind were Bletchley, Mrs. Sprot and Tuppence. Not only did Mrs. Sprot cling to her, but Tuppence was the only one (with the exception of Carl von Deinim) who knew the mysterious kidnaper by sight.

The Commander was a good organizer and a quick worker. In next to no time he had filled up the car with petrol, tossed a map of the district and a larger scale map of Leahampton itself to Bletchley, and was ready to start off.

MRS. SPROT had run upstairs again, presumably to her room to get a coat. But when she got into the car and they had started down the hill, she disclosed to Tuppence something in her handbag. It was a small pistol.

She said quietly: "I got it from Major Bletchley's room. I remember his mentioning one day that he had one."

Tuppence looked a little dubious. "You don't think that—"

Mrs. Sprot said, her mouth a thin line:

"It may come in useful."

Tuppence sat marveling at the strange forces maternity will set loose in an ordinary commonplace young woman. She could visualize Mrs. Sprot, the kind of woman who would normally declare herself frightened to death of firearms, coolly shooting down any person who had harmed her child.

They drove first, on the Commander's suggestion, to the railway station. A train had left Leahampton about twenty minutes earlier, and it was possible that the fugitives had gone by it.

At the station they separated, the Commander taking the ticket-collector, Tommy the booking-office, and Bletchley the porters outside. Tuppence and Mrs. Sprot went into the ladies' room on the chance that the woman had gone in there to change her appearance before taking the train.

One and all drew blank. It was now more difficult to shape a course. In all probability, as Haydock pointed out, the kidnapers had had a car waiting; and once Betty had been persuaded to come away with the woman, they had made their get-away in that. It was here, as Bletchley pointed out once more, that the coöperation of the police was so vital. It needed an organization of that kind, who could send out messages all over the country, covering the different roads.

Mrs. Sprot merely shook her head, her lips pressed tightly together.

Tuppence said: "We must put ourselves in their places. Where would they have waited in the car? Somewhere as near Sans Souci as possible, but where a car wouldn't be noticed. Now let's *think.*"

AT that moment a small man, with a diffident manner and pince-nez, stepped up to them and said, stammering a little:

"Excuse me—no offense, I hope—but I c-c-couldn't help overhearing what you were asking the porter just now." He now directed his remarks to Major Bletchley. "I was not listening, of course—just come down to see about a parcel—and so, you see, I happened to overhear—"

Mrs. Sprot sprang forward. She seized him by the arm.

"You've seen her? You've seen my little girl?"

"Oh, really, your little girl, you say? Fancy that—"

Mrs. Sprot cried: "Tell me." And her fingers bit into the little man's arm so that he winced.

Tuppence said quickly: "Please tell us anything you have seen as quickly as you can. We shall be most grateful if you would."

"Oh, well, really, of course, it may be nothing at all. But the description fitted so well—"

Tuppence felt the woman beside her trembling, but she herself strove to keep her manner calm and unhurried. She knew the type with which they were dealing—fussy, muddle-headed, diffident, incapable of going straight to the point, and worse if hurried. She said:

"Please tell us."

"It was only—my name is Robbins, by the way, Edward Robbins—"

"Yes, Mr. Robbins?"

"I live at Whiteways, in Ernes Cliff Road, one of those new houses on the new road—most labor-saving, and really *every* convenience, and a beautiful view and the downs only a stone's-throw away."

Tuppence quelled Major Bletchley, who she saw was about to break out, with a glance, and said:

"And you saw the little girl we are looking for?"

"Yes, I really think it *must* be. A little girl with a foreign-looking woman, you said? It was really the woman I noticed. Because, of course, we are all on the look-out nowadays for Fifth Columnists, aren't we? A sharp look-out, that is what they say, and I always try to do so; and so, as I say, I noticed this woman. A nurse, I thought, or a maid—a lot of spies came over here in that capacity, and this woman was most unusual-looking, and walking up the road and on to the downs—with a little girl. And the little girl seemed tired and rather lagging, and half-past seven—well, most children go to bed then, so I looked at the woman pretty sharply. I think it flustered her. She hurried to the road, pulling the child after her, and finally picked her up and went on up the path out on to the cliff, which I thought *strange,* you know, because there are no houses there at all—nothing. I wondered if—"

Commander Haydock was back in the car and had started the engine. He said:

"Ernes Cliff Road, you say. That's right the other side of the town, isn't it?"

"Yes, you go along the esplanade and past the old town and then up—"

The others had jumped in, not listening further to Mr. Robbins. Tuppence called out: "Thank you, Mr. Robbins!"

They drove rapidly through the town, avoiding accidents more by good luck than by skill. But the luck held. They came out at last at a mass of straggling building development, somewhat marred by proximity to the gas-works. A series of little roads led up toward the downs, stopping abruptly a short way up the hill. Ernes Cliff Road was the third of these.

Commander Haydock turned smartly into it and drove up. At the end the road petered out on to bare hillside up which a footpath meandered.

"Better get out and walk here," said Bletchley.

Haydock said dubiously: "Could almost take the car up. Ground's firm enough. Bit bumpy, but I think she could do it."

Mrs. Sprot cried:

"Oh, yes, please, please. . . . We must be quick."

The car groaned uneasily as she plowed her way up over the rough ground. The gradient was severe, but the turf was short and springy. They came out without mishap on the top of the rise. Here the view was less interrupted till it rested in the distance on the curve of the bay.

Haydock said: "No signs of them, as far as I can see."

He was standing up holding some field-glasses he had thoughtfully brought with him to his eyes. Suddenly his figure became tense as he focused the glasses on two small moving dots.

"Got 'em, by Jove!"

He dropped into the driver's seat again, and the car bucketed forward. The chase was a short one now. Shot up in the air, tossed from side to side, the occupants of the car gained rapidly on those two small dots. They could be distinguished now—a tall figure and a short one. . . . Still nearer—yes, a child in a green gingham frock. Betty!

Mrs. Sprot gave a strangled cry.

"All right now, my dear," said Major Bletchley, patting her kindly. "We've got 'em."

They went on. Suddenly the woman turned and saw the car advancing toward her. With a cry she caught up the child in her arms and began running. She ran, not forward, but toward the edge of the cliff.

The car, after a few yards, could not follow—the ground was too uneven and blocked with big boulders. It stopped, and the occupants tumbled out.

MRS. SPROT was out first and running wildly after the two fugitives. The others followed her.

When they were within twenty yards, the other woman turned at bay. She was standing now at the very edge of the cliff. With a hoarse cry she clutched the child closer.

Haydock cried out: "My God, she's going to throw the kid over the cliff!"

The woman stood there, clutching Betty tightly. Her face was disfigured with a frenzy of hate. She uttered a long hoarse sentence that none of them understood. And still she held the child and looked from time to time at the drop below—not a yard from where she stood.

All of them stood there, dazed, terrified, unable to move for fear of precipitating a catastrophe.

Haydock was tugging at his pocket. He pulled out a service revolver. He shouted:

"Put that child down—or I fire."

The foreign woman laughed. She held the child closer to her breast. The two figures were molded into one.

Haydock muttered: "I daren't shoot. I'd hit the child."

Tommy said: "The woman's crazy. She'll jump over with the child in another moment."

Haydock said again, helplessly: "I daren't shoot—"

But at that moment a shot rang out. The woman swayed and fell, the child still clasped in her arms.

The men ran forward. Mrs. Sprot stood swaying, the smoking pistol in her hand, her eyes dilated. She took a few stiff steps forward.

Tommy was kneeling by the bodies. He turned them gently. He saw the woman's face—noted appreciatively its strange wild beauty. The eyes opened, looked at him, then went blank. With a little sigh, the woman died, shot through the head.

Unhurt, little Betty Sprot wriggled out and ran toward the woman standing like a statue.

Then, at last, Mrs. Sprot crumpled. She flung away the pistol and dropped down, clutching the child to her.

She cried: "She's safe—she's safe! Oh, Betty—*Betty.*" And then, in a low, awed whisper: "Did I—did I—kill her?"

Tuppence said firmly: "Don't think about it. Think about Betty. Just think about Betty."

Mrs. Sprot held the child close against her, sobbing.

Tuppence went forward to join the men.

Haydock murmured:

"Bloody miracle! I couldn't have brought off a shot like that. Don't believe the woman's ever handled a pistol before either—sheer instinct. A miracle, that's what it is."

Tuppence said:

"Thank God! It was a near thing!" And she looked down at the sheer drop to the sea below, and shuddered.

Chapter Seven

IT was not until some days later that Mrs. Blenkensop and Mr. Meadowes were able to meet and compare notes. The dead woman had been identified as Vanda Polonskà, a Polish refugee who had entered the country soon after the outbreak of war. Very little was known about her.

"So it's a blank wall as usual," said Tommy gloomily.

Tuppence nodded. "Yes. They seal up both ends, don't they? No papers, no hints of any kind as to who she had dealings with."

"Why kidnap that particular child? Who are the Sprots? They've no money—so it isn't ransom. They're neither of them employed by Government in any capacity."

"I know, Tommy. It just doesn't make any sense at all."

"Hasn't Mrs. Sprot any idea herself?"

"That woman," said Tuppence scornfully, "hasn't got the brains of a hen. She doesn't think at all. Just says it's the sort of thing the wicked Germans would do."

"Silly ass," said Tommy. "The Germans are efficient. If they send one of their agents to kidnap a brat, it's for some reason."

"I've a feeling, you know," said Tuppence, "that Mrs. Sprot could get at the reason if only she'd think about it. There must be something—some piece of information that she herself has inadvertently got hold of, perhaps without knowing what it is exactly."

"*'Say nothing. Wait for instructions.'*" Tommy quoted from the note found on Mrs. Sprot's bedroom floor. "Damn it all, that means something."

"Have you asked Mrs. Sprot to rack her brains a bit?"

"Yes, but the trouble is that she isn't really interested. All she cares about is getting Betty back—that, and having hysterics because she's shot someone—though the coroner exonerated her, all right."

"Naturally. By Jove, I wouldn't have risked firing when she did."

"Oh!" said Tuppence.

"What is it, old thing?"

"I don't quite know. When you said that, something twanged somewhere in my brain, and now it's gone again!"

"Very useful," said Tommy.

"Don't be scathing. That sort of thing does happen sometimes!" After a minute or two she went on: "You know, Tommy—about the note—that note Mrs. Sprot found on the floor in her room when Betty was kidnaped."

"Well?"

"All that about its being wrapped round a stone and thrown through the window is rubbish. It was put there by someone—ready for Mrs. Sprot to find—and I think it was Mrs. Perenna who put it there."

"Mrs. Perenna, Carl, Vanda Polonskà—all working together."

"Yes. Did you notice how Mrs. Perenna came in just at the critical moment and clinched things—not to ring up the police? She took command of the whole situation."

"So she's still your selection for M."

"Yes, isn't she yours?"

"I suppose so," said Tommy slowly.

"Why, Tommy, have you got another idea? Tell me."

"No, I'd rather not. I've nothing to go on—yet."

There was a car standing outside Sans Souci bearing the word *Police* on it. Absorbed in her own thoughts, Tuppence took little notice of that. She turned in at the drive, and entering the front door, went straight upstairs to her own room. She stopped, taken aback, on the threshold, as a tall figure turned away from the window.

"Dear me," said Tuppence. "Sheila?"

The girl came toward her, her face white and tragic.

Sheila said: "I'm glad you've come. I've been waiting for you."

"What's the matter?"

The girl's voice was quiet and devoid of emotion. She said: "They have arrested Carl!"

"Oh, dear," said Tuppence. She felt inadequate to the situation. Quiet as Sheila's voice had been, Tuppence was under no misapprehension as to what lay behind it. Whether they were fellow-conspirators or not, this girl loved Carl von Deinim, and Tuppence felt her heart aching in sympathy with this tragic young creature.

Sheila said, and her voice was like a mourning harp:

"They've taken him away. I shall never see him again." She cried out: "What shall I do? What shall I do?" And flinging herself down on her knees by the bed, she wept her heart out.

Tuppence stroked the dark head. She said presently, in a weak voice: "It—it may not be true. Perhaps they are only going to intern him. After all, he is an enemy alien, you know."

"That's not what they said. They're searching his room now."

Tuppence said slowly: "Well, if they find nothing—"

"They will find nothing, of course! What should they find?"

"I don't know. I thought perhaps you might."

"I?"

Her scorn, her amazement were too real to be feigned. Any suspicions Tuppence had had that Sheila Perenna was involved died at this moment.

Tuppence said: "If he is innocent—"

Sheila interrupted her: "What does that matter? The police will make a case against him. But I know Carl. I know his heart and his mind. He cares most for science—for his work, for the truth and the knowledge in it. He is grateful to England for letting him work here. Sometimes, when people say cruel things, he feels German and bitter. But he hates the Nazis always, and what they stand for—their denial of freedom."

Tuppence said: "He would say so, of course."

Sheila turned reproachful eyes upon her. "So you believe he is a spy?"

"I think it is"—Tuppence hesitated—"a possibility."

Sheila walked to the door. "I see. I'm sorry I came to ask you to help us."

"But what did you think I could do, dear child?"

"You know people. Your sons are in the Army and Navy, and I've heard you say more than once that they knew influential people. I thought perhaps you could get them to—to do—something?"

Tuppence thought of those mythical creatures, Douglas and Raymond and Cyril.

"I'm afraid," she said, "that they couldn't do anything."

Sheila flung her head up. She said passionately:

"Then there's no hope for us. They'll take him away and shut him up; and one day, early in the morning, they'll stand him against a wall and shoot him—and that will be the end."

She went out, shutting the door behind her.

THE fisherman on the end of the Old Pier cast in his line and then reeled it cautiously in.

"No doubt whatever, I'm afraid," he said.

"You know," said Tommy. "I'm sorry about it. He's—well, he's a nice chap."

"They are, my dear fellow; they usually are. It isn't the skunks and the rats of a land who volunteer to go to the enemy's country. It's the brave men. We know that well enough. But there it is; the case is proved."

"No doubt whatever, you say?"

"No doubt at all. Among his chemical formulæ was a list of people in the factory to be approached, as possible Fascist sympathizers. There was also a very clever scheme of sabotage, and a chemical process that, applied to fertilizers, would have devastated large areas of food stocks. All well up Master Carl's street. He's got a supply of secret ink, you know. That's a pretty good clinching test. And it wasn't obvious as it would have been if planted. It wasn't, *'The mixture to be taken when required,'* on the washstand or anything like that. In fact, it was damned ingenious. Only come across the method once before, and then it was waistcoat buttons. Steeped in the stuff, you know. When the fellow wants to use it, he soaks a button in water. Carl von Deinim's wasn't buttons. It was a shoelace. Pretty neat."

"Oh!" Something stirred vaguely in Tommy's mind.

Tuppence was quicker. As soon as he retailed the conversation to her, she seized on the salient point.

"A shoelace? Tommy, that explains it!"

"What?"
"Betty, you idiot! Don't you remember that funny thing she did in my room, taking out my laces and soaking them in water. I thought at the time it was a funny thing to think of doing. But of course, she'd seen Carl do it, and was imitating him. He couldn't risk her talking about it, and he arranged with that woman for her to be kidnaped."
Tommy said: "Then that's cleared up."
"Yes. It's nice when things begin to fall into shape. One can put them behind you and get on a bit."
"We need to get on."
Tuppence nodded.
The times were gloomy indeed. France had astonishingly and suddenly capitulated—to the bewilderment and dismay of her own people. The destination of the French Navy was in doubt. Now the coasts of France were entirely in the hands of Germany, and the talk of invasion was no longer a remote contingency.
Tommy said: "Carl von Deinim was only a link in the chain. Mrs. Perenna's the fountain-head."
"Yes, we've got to get the goods on her. But it won't be easy."
"No. After all, if she's the brains of the whole thing, one can't expect it to be."
"Well, I think we've got to go all out after Mrs. Perenna. Find out where she goes, whom she meets—everything. There must be a link somewhere. You'd better put Albert on to her this afternoon."
"You can do that. I'm busy."
"Why, what are you doing?"
Tommy said: "I'm playing golf."

Chapter Eight

SEEMS quite like old times, doesn't it, madam?" said Albert. He beamed happily. Though now in his middle years, and running somewhat to fat, Albert had still the romantic boy's heart which had first led him into associations with Tommy and Tuppence in their young and adventurous days.
"Remember how you first came across me?" demanded Albert. "Cleanin' of the brasses, I was, in those top-notch flats. Coo, wasn't that hall porter a nasty bit of goods? Always on to me, he was. And the day you come along and strung me a tale! Many's the adventure we had afore we all settled down, so to speak."
"Now I'll tell you, Albert," said Tuppence, "what we want you to do."

"HOW well do you know Bletchley?" asked Tommy as he stepped off the tee and watched with approval his ball leaping down the center of the fairway.
Commander Haydock, who had also done a good drive, had a pleased expression on his face as he shouldered his clubs and replied:
"Bletchley? Let me see. Oh—about nine months or so. He came here last autumn."
"Bit of a mystery man, I gather?"
"Mystery man? Old Bletchley?" He sounded frankly incredulous.
Tommy sighed inwardly. He supposed he was imagining things. He played his next shot—and topped it. Haydock had a good iron shot that stopped just short of the green. As he rejoined the other, he said:
"What on earth makes you call Bletchley a mystery man? I should have said he was a painfully prosaic chap—typical Army. Bit set in his ideas and all that—narrow life, an Army life. But mystery!"
Tommy said vaguely: "Oh, well, I just got the idea from something somebody said—"
They got down to the business of putting.
The Commander won the hole. "Three up and two to play," he remarked with satisfaction.
Then, as Tommy had hoped, his mind harked back to what Tommy had said.
"What sort of mystery do you mean?" he asked.
Tommy shrugged. "Oh, it was just that nobody seemed to know much about him."
"No need to be so cautious with me, Meadowes. I hear all sorts of rumors. You understand? Everyone comes to me. I'm known to be pretty keen on the subject. What's the idea—that Bletchley isn't what he seems to be?"
"It was only the merest suggestion."
"What do they think he is? A Hun? Nonsense, the man's as English as you and I."
"Oh, yes, I'm sure he's quite all right."
"Why, he's always yelling for more foreigners to be interned. Look how violent he was against that young German chap—and quite right too, it seems. They were just as dense about that fellow Hahn—"
Tommy had no intention of letting the Commander run ahead on the well-grooved track. He deliberately missed a putt.
"Hard lines," cried Haydock. He played a careful shot.
"My hole. A bit off your game today. What were we talking about?"
Tommy said firmly: "About Bletchley being perfectly all right."
"Of course. Of course. I wonder now—I did hear a rather funny story about him—didn't think anything of it at the time—"
Here, to Tommy's annoyance, they were hailed by two other men. The four returned to the clubhouse together and had drinks. After that, the Commander looked at his watch and remarked that he and Meadowes must be getting along. Tommy had accepted an invitation to supper with the Commander.
Smuggler's Rest was in its usual condition of apple-pie order. A tall middle-aged manservant waited on them with the professional deftness of a waiter. Such perfect service was unusual to find outside a London restaurant.
When the man had left the room, Tommy commented on the fact.
"Yes, I was lucky to get Appledore."
"How did you get hold of him?"
"He answered an advertisement, as a matter of fact. He had excellent references, was clearly far superior to any of the others who applied and asked remarkably low wages. I engaged him on the spot."
Tommy said with a laugh: "The war has certainly robbed us of most of our good restaurant service. Practically all good waiters were foreigners. It doesn't seem to come naturally to the Englishman."
"Bit too servile, that's why. Bowing and scraping doesn't come kindly to the English bulldog."
Sitting outside, sipping coffee, Tommy gently asked: "What was it you were going to say on the links? Something about a funny story—apropos of Bletchley."
"What was it, now? Hullo, did you see that? Light being shown out at sea. Where's my telescope?"
Tommy sighed. The stars in their courses seemed to be fighting against him. The Commander fussed into the house and out again, swept the horizon with his glass, outlined a whole system of signaling by the enemy to likely spots on shore, most of the evidence for which seemed to be non-existent, and proceeded to give a glooomy picture of a successful invasion in the near future.
"No organization, no proper coördination."
This was well-worn ground. It was Commander Haydock's pet grievance. The manservant brought out whisky and liqueurs while the Commander was still holding forth.
"—and we're still honeycombed with spies—riddled with 'em. It was the same in the last war—hairdressers, waiters—"
Tommy, leaning back, catching the profile of Appledore as the latter hovered deft-footed, thought: "Waiters? You could call that fellow Fritz easier than Appledore."
Well, why not? The fellow spoke perfect English, true, but then many Germans did. They had perfected their English by years in English restaurants. And the racial type was not unlike. Fair-haired, blue-eyed—often betrayed by the shape of the head. . . . Yes, the head—where had he seen a head lately—
He spoke on an impulse. The words fitted in appositely enough with what the Commander was just saying:
"All these damned forms to fill in. No good at all, Meadowes. Series of idiotic questions—"
Tommy said: "I know. Such as, 'What is your name? Answer N or M.' "

THERE was a swerve—a crash; Appledore, the perfect servant, had blundered. A stream of *crême de menthe* soaked over Tommy's cuff and hand.
The man stammered: "Sorry, sir."
Haydock blazed out in fury: "You damned clumsy fool! What the hell do you think you're doing?"

His usually red face was quite purple with anger. Tommy thought: "Talk of an Army temper—Navy beats it hollow!" Appledore was abject in apologies.

Haydock's wrath passed; he was his hearty self again. "Come along and have a wash. Beastly stuff. It would have to be the *crême de menthe!*"

Tommy followed him indoors and was soon in the sumptuous bathroom with the innumerable gadgets. He carefully washed off the sticky sweet stuff. The Commander spoke from the bedroom next door:

"Afraid I let myself go a bit. Poor old Appledore—he knows I let go a bit more than I mean always."

Tommy turned from the washbasin, drying his hands. He did not notice that a cake of soap had slipped onto the floor. He stepped on it. The linoleum was highly polished.

A moment later Tommy was doing a wild ballet-dancer step. He shot across the bathroom, arms outstretched. One came up against the right-hand tap of the bath; the other pushed heavily against the side of a small bathroom cabinet. It was an extravagant gesture never likely to be achieved except by some occurrence such as this.

His foot skidded heavily against the end panel of the bath. The thing happened like a conjuring trick. The bath slid out from the wall, turning on a concealed pivot. Tommy found himself looking into a dim recess. He had no doubt whatever as to what occupied that recess. It contained a transmitting wireless apparatus.

The Commander's voice had ceased. He appeared suddenly in the doorway. And with a click, several things fell into place in Tommy's brain.

Had he been blind up to now? That jovial florid face, the face of a "hearty Englishman," was only a mask. Why had he not seen it all along for what it was—the face of a bad-tempered overbearing Prussian officer.

And it all fitted in—it fitted in like magic. The double bluff. The enemy agent Hahn, sent first, preparing the place, employing foreign workmen, drawing attention to himself and proceeding finally to the next stage in the plan, his own unmasking by the gallant British sailor "Commander Haydock." And then how natural that the Englishman should buy the place and tell the story to everyone, boring them by constant repetition. And so, M. securely settled in his appointed place, with sea communications and his secret wireless and his staff officers at Sans Souci close at hand, N. is ready to carry out Germany's plan.

All this passed through Tommy's mind in a second. He knew, only too well, that he was, that he must necessarily be, in deadly peril. If only he could act the part of the credulous thick-headed Englishman well enough!

He turned to Haydock with what he hoped was a natural-sounding laugh.

"By Jove, one never stops getting surprises at your place. Was this another of Hahn's little gadgets? You didn't show me this the other day."

Haydock was standing very still. There was a tensity about his big body as it stood there blocking the door.

"More than a match for me," Tommy thought. "And there's that confounded servant, too."

For an instant Haydock stood as though molded in stone; then he relaxed. He said with a laugh:

"Damned funny, Meadowes. You went skating over the floor like a ballet dancer! Don't suppose a thing like that would happen once in a thousand times. Dry your hands and come along into the other room."

Tommy followed him out of the bathroom. He was alert and tense in every muscle. Somehow or other, he must get safely away from this house with his knowledge. Could he succeed in fooling Haydock? The latter's tone sounded natural enough.

"Look here, old boy, I've got something to say to you."

His voice was friendly, natural—just a shade embarrassed. He motioned to Tommy to sit down.

"It's a bit awkward," he said. "Upon my word, it's a bit awkward! Nothing for it, though, but to take you into my confidence. Only you'll have to keep dark about it, Meadowes. You understand that?"

Tommy endeavored to throw an expression of eager interest upon his face. Haydock sat down and drew his chair confidentially close.

"You see, Meadowes, it's like this: Nobody's supposed to know it, but I'm working on Intelligence. M.I.42 B.X.—that's my department. Ever heard of it?"

Tommy shook his head.

"Well, it's pretty secret. Kind of inner ring, if you know what I mean. We transmit certain information from here—but it would be absolutely fatal if that fact got out, you understand?"

"Of course, of course," said Mr. Meadowes. "Most interesting! Naturally, you can count on me not to say a word."

"Yes, that's absolutely vital. The whole thing is extremely confidential."

"I quite understand. Your work must be most thrilling. Really most thrilling. I should like so much to know more about it—but I suppose I mustn't ask that?"

"No, I'm afraid not. It's very secret, you see."

"Oh, yes, I see. I really do apologize—a most extraordinary accident."

He thought to himself: "Surely he can't be taken in? He can't imagine I'd fall for this stuff?" It seemed incredible to him. Then he reflected that vanity had been the undoing of many men. "Commander Haydock" was a clever man, a big fellow; this miserable chap Meadowes was a stupid Britisher, the sort of man who would believe anything! If only Haydock continued to think that!

Presently Mr. Meadowes rose. It was the supreme test.

"I really must be going now—getting quite late. Feel terribly apologetic, but can assure you I'll not say a word to anybody."

("It's now or never. Will he let me go, or not? I must be ready—a straight to his jaw would be best—")

Talking amiably and with pleasurable excitement, Mr. Meadowes edged toward the door. . . . He was in the hall. . . . He had opened the front door. . .

Through a door on the right he caught a glimpse of Appledore setting the breakfast-things ready on a tray for the morning. (The damned fool was going to let him get away with it!)

The two men stood in the porch, chatting—fixing up another match for next Saturday.

Tommy thought grimly: "There'll be no next Saturday for you, my boy."

Voices came from the road outside—two men returning from a tramp on the headland. They were men that both Tommy and the Commander knew slightly. Tommy hailed them. They stopped. Haydock and he exchanged a few words with them, all standing at the gate; then Tommy waved a genial farewell to his host and stepped off with the two men.

He heard Haydock go back to his house, go in and shut the door. Tommy tramped cheerfully down the hill with his two newfound friends. He could have shouted aloud. A stroke of providence that these two men had turned up just at that moment!

He said good-by to them at the gate of Sans Souci and turned in. He walked up the drive, whistling softly.

He had just turned the dark corner by the rhododendrons when something heavy descended on his head. He crashed forward, pitching into blackness and oblivion.

Chapter Nine

DID you say three spades, Mrs. Blenkensop?" Yes, Mrs. Blenkensop had said three spades. Mrs. Sprot, returning breathless from the telephone—"And they've changed the time of the A.R.P. exam. again; it's *too* bad!"—demanded to have the bidding again. Miss Minton, as usual, delayed things.

"Was it two clubs I said? Are you sure? I rather thought, you know, that it might have been one no trump— Oh, yes, of course, I remember now: Mrs. Cabely said one heart, didn't she? I was going to say one no trump although I hadn't quite got the count; but I do think one should play a plucky game."

"I passed, didn't I?" said Mrs. Sprot.

They looked at Mrs. Cabely, who was leaning forward listening.

"Oh, dear." She flushed. "I'm so sorry. I thought perhaps Mr. Cabely needed me. I hope he's all right out there on the terrace."

She looked from one to the other of them.

"Perhaps, if you don't mind, I'd better just go and *see*. I heard rather an odd noise. Perhaps he's dropped his book."

She fluttered out. Tuppence gave an exasperated sigh.

"She ought to have a string tied to her wrist," she said. "Then he could pull it when he wanted her."

The three women sat in silence for a minute or two.

"Where's Sheila tonight?" asked Miss Minton.

"She went to the pictures," said Mrs. Sprot.

"Where's Mrs. Perenna?" asked Tuppence.

"She said she was going to do accounts in her room," said Miss Minton. "Poor dear. So tiring, doing accounts."

"She's not been doing accounts all the evening," said Mrs. Sprot, "because she came in just now when I was telephoning in the hall. She was quite out of breath."

"I wonder where she'd been," said Miss Minton, whose life was taken up with such small wonderments. "Not to the pictures; they wouldn't be out yet."

Mrs. Cabely reappeared.

"Fancy!" she said. "Mr. Cabely has walked all round the garden by himself. He quite enjoyed it, he said. Such a mild night."

She sat down again. "Let me see—oh, do you think we could have the bidding over again?"

Tuppence suppressed a rebellious sigh. They had the bidding over again, and she was left to play three spades.

Mrs. Perenna came in just as they were cutting for the next deal.

"Did you enjoy your walk?" asked Miss Minton.

Mrs. Perenna stared at her. It was a fierce and unpleasant stare. She said: "I've not been out."

"Oh—I thought Mrs. Sprot said you'd come in just now."

Mrs. Perenna said: "I just went outside to look at the weather."

Her tone was disagreeable. She threw a hostile glance at the meek Mrs. Sprot, who flushed and looked frightened.

"Just fancy," said Mrs. Cabely, contributing her item of news. "Mr. Cabely walked all round the garden."

Mrs. Perenna said sharply: "Why did he do that?"

Mrs. Cabely said: "It is such a mild night. He hasn't even put on his second muffler, and he *still* doesn't want to come in. I do *hope* he won't get a chill."

Mrs. Perenna went out. The four bridge-players stared after her.

"She seems very *odd* tonight," said Mrs. Sprot.

"I think she's worried about something," said Mrs. Blenkensop. "Er—it's your call, Mrs. Sprot."

Mrs. Sprot looked at her hand vaguely; then she said: "Oh, one diamond, I *think.*"

The call went round. Mrs. Cabely led.

A deep genial voice said:

" 'Tis the curse of Scotland that you've played there!"

Mrs. O'Rourke stood in the window. She was breathing deeply—her eyes were sparkling. She looked sly and malicious. She advanced into the room.

"Just a nice quiet game of bridge, is it?"

"What's that in your hand?" asked Mrs. Sprot, with interest.

" 'Tis a hammer," said Mrs. O'Rourke amiably. "I found it lying in the drive. No doubt someone left it there."

"It's a funny place to leave a hammer," said Mrs. Sprot doubtfully.

"It is that," agreed Mrs. O'Rourke.

She seemed in a particularly good humor. Swinging the hammer by its handle, she went out into the hall.

"Let me see," said Miss Minton. "What's trumps?"

The game proceeded for five minutes without further interruption, and then Major Bletchley came in. He had been to the pictures, and proceeded to tell them in detail the plot of "Wandering Minstrel."

The rubber was not finished, for Mrs. Cabely, looking at her watch, discovered the lateness of the hour with shrill little cries of horror, and rushed out to Mr. Cabely. The latter, as a neglected invalid, enjoyed himself a great deal, coughing in a sepulchral manner, shivering dramatically and saying several times:

"Quite all right, my dear. I hope you enjoyed your game. It doesn't matter about *me* at all."

AT breakfast next morning Tuppence was aware of a certain tension in the atmosphere. Mrs. Perenna, her lips pursed very tightly together, was distinctly acrid in the few remarks she made, and she left the room with what could only be described as a flounce.

Major Bletchley, spreading marmalade thickly on his toast, gave vent to a deep chuckle.

"Touch of frost in the air," he remarked. "Well, well! Only to be expected, I suppose."

"Why, what has happened?" demanded Miss Minton, leaning forward eagerly, her thin neck twitching with pleasurable anticipation.

"Don't know that I ought to tell tales out of school," replied the Major irritatingly.

"Oh, Major Bletchley!"

"Do tell us," said Tuppence.

MAJOR BLETCHLEY looked thoughtfully at his audience: Miss Minton, Mrs. Blenkensop, Mrs. Cabely and Mrs. O'Rourke. Mrs. Sprot and Betty had just left. He decided to talk.

"It's Meadowes," he said. "Been out on the tiles all night. Hasn't come home yet."

"What?" exclaimed Tuppence.

Major Bletchley threw her a pleased and malicious glance. He enjoyed the designing widow's discomfiture.

"Bit of a gay dog, Meadowes," he chortled. "The Perenna's annoyed. Naturally."

"Oh, dear," said Miss Minton, flushing painfully. Mrs. Cabely looked shocked. Mrs. O'Rourke merely chuckled.

"Mrs. Perenna told me already," she said. "Ah, well, the boys will be the boys."

Miss Minton said eagerly: "Oh, but surely—perhaps Mr. Meadowes has met with an accident. In the blackout, you know. Been knocked down by a car, perhaps."

"That'll be his story, I expect," said the Major.

Tuppence, rising with an assumption of affronted dignity, got up and left the room.

Major Bletchley chuckled as the door closed behind her.

"Poor old Meadowes," he said. "The fair widow's annoyed about it. Thought she'd got her hooks into him."

"Oh, Major *Bletchley,"* bleated Miss Minton.

Major Bletchley winked. "Remember *Sam Weller. 'Beware of widders, Sammy!'* "

Tuppence was a little upset by Tommy's unannounced absence, but she tried to reassure herself. He might possibly have struck some hot trail and gone off upon it. The difficulties of communication with each other under such circumstances had been foreseen by them both, and they had agreed that the other one was not to be unduly perturbed by unexplained absences. They had arranged certain contrivances between them for such emergencies.

Mrs. Perenna had, according to Mrs. Sprot, been out last night. The vehemence of her own denial of the fact only made that absence of hers more interesting to speculate upon. It was possible that Tommy had trailed her on her secret errand and had found something worth following up. Doubtless he would communicate with Tuppence in his special way, or else turn up, very shortly. Nevertheless, Tuppence was unable to avoid a certain feeling of uneasiness. She decided that in her rôle of Mrs. Blenkensop it would be perfectly natural to display some curiosity and even anxiety. She went in search of Mrs. Perenna.

Mrs. Perenna was inclined to be short with her upon the subject. She made it clear that such conduct on the part of one of her lodgers was not to be condoned or glossed over.

Tuppence exclaimed breathlessly:

"Oh, but he may have met with an *accident.* I'm sure he *must* have. He's not at all that sort of man—not at all loose in his ideas, or *anything* of that kind. He must have been run down by a car or something."

"We shall probably soon hear, one way or another," said Mrs. Perenna. . . .

But the day wore on, and there was no sign of Mr. Meadowes. In the evening, Mrs. Perenna, urged on by the pleas of her boarders, agreed extremely reluctantly to ring up the police.

A sergeant called at the house with a notebook and took particulars. Certain facts were then elicited. Mr. Meadowes had left Commander Haydock's house at half-past ten. From there he had walked with a Mr. Walters and a Dr. Curtis as far as the gate of Sans Souci, where he had said good-by to them and turned into the drive. From that moment, Mr. Meadowes seemed to have disappeared into space.

In Tuppence's mind, two possibilities emerged:

When walking up the drive, Tommy may have seen Mrs. Perenna coming toward him, have slipped into the bushes and then have followed her. Having observed her rendezvous with some unknown person, he might then have followed the latter, whilst Mrs. Perenna returned to Sans Souci. In that case, he was probably busy on a trail.

The other possibility was not so pleasant. It resolved itself into two pictures: one that of Mrs. Perenna returning "quite out of breath"—the other, that of Mrs. O'Rourke standing smiling, holding a heavy hammer.

That hammer had horrible possibilities. For what should a hammer be doing, lying outside?

As to who had wielded it, that was most difficult. A good deal depended on the exact time when Mrs. Perenna had reëntered the house. It was certainly somewhere in the neighborhood of half-past ten, but none of the bridge party happened to have noted the time exactly. Mrs. Perenna had declared vehemently that she had not been out except just to look at the weather. But one does not get out of breath just looking at the weather. Clearly it was extremely vexing to her to have been seen by Mrs. Sprot. With ordinary luck, the four ladies might have been safely accounted for as busy playing bridge.

What had the time been exactly? Tuppence found everybody extremely vague on the subject.

If the time agreed, Mrs. Perenna was clearly the most likely suspect. But there were other possibilities. Of the inhabitants of Sans Souci, three had been out at the time of Tommy's return. Major Bletchley had been at the cinema, but he had been to it alone, and the way that he had insisted on retailing the whole picture so meticulously might suggest to a suspicious mind that he was deliberately establishing an alibi.

Then there was the valetudinarian Mr. Cabely, who had gone for a walk all round the garden. And there was Mrs. O'Rourke herself, swinging the hammer, and smiling.

"WHAT'S the matter, Deb? You're looking worried, my sweet."

Deborah Bareford started and then laughed, looking frankly into Tony Marsdon's sympathetic brown eyes. She liked Tony. He had brains—was one of the most brilliant beginners in the coding department, and was thought likely to go far.

Deborah enjoyed her job, though she found it made somewhat strenuous demands on her powers of concentration. It was tiring, but it was worth while, and it gave her a pleasant feeling of importance.

She said: "Oh, nothing. Just family! *You* know."

"Families *are* a bit trying. What's yours been up to?"

"It's my mother. To tell the truth, I'm just a bit worried about her."

"Why? What's happened?"

"Well, you see, she went down to Cornwall to a frightfully trying old aunt of mine. Seventy-eight and completely ga-ga."

"Sounds grim," said the young man sympathetically.

"Yes; it was really very noble of Mother. But she was rather hipped anyway, because nobody seemed to want her in this war. Of course, she nursed and did things in the last one, but it's all quite different now, and they don't want these middle-aged people. They want people who are young and on the spot. Well, as I say, Mother got a bit hipped over it all, and so she went off down to Cornwall to stay with Aunt Gracie, and she's been doing a bit in the garden, extra vegetable-growing and all that."

"Quite sound," commented Tony.

"I was quite happy about her—had a letter only two days ago sounding quite cheerful."

"What's the trouble, then?"

"The trouble is that I told Charles, who was going down to see his people in that part of the world, to go and look her up. And he did. And she wasn't there."

"Wasn't *there?*"

"No. And she hadn't been there, at all, apparently!"

Tony looked a little embarrassed.

"Rather odd," he murmured. "Where's—I mean—your father?"

"Carrot-top? Oh, he's in Scotland somewhere. In one of those dreadful Ministries where they file papers in triplicate all day long."

"Your mother hasn't gone to join him, perhaps?"

"She can't. He's in one of those area things where wives can't go."

"Oh—er—well, I suppose she's just sloped off somewhere."

Tony was decidedly embarrassed now—especially with Deborah's large worried eyes fixed plaintively upon him.

"Yes, but why? It's so *queer*. All her letters—talking about Aunt Gracie and the garden and everything."

"I know, I know," said Tony hastily. "Of course, she'd want you to think—I mean, nowadays—well, people *do* slope off now and again, if you know what I mean."

Deborah's gaze became suddenly wrathful.

"If you think Mother's just gone off week-ending with someone, you're absolutely wrong. Absolutely. Mother and father are devoted to each other—really devoted. It's quite a joke in the family. She'd never—"

Tony said hastily: "Of course not. Sorry. I really didn't mean—"

Deborah, her wrath appeased, creased her forehead.

"The odd thing is that someone the other day said they'd seen Mother in Leahampton, of all places, and of course I said it couldn't be her, because she was in Cornwall; but now I wonder—"

Tony, his match held to a cigarette, paused suddenly, and the match went out.

"Leahampton?" he said sharply.

"Yes. Just the last place you could imagine Mother going off to. Nothing to do, and all old colonels and maiden ladies."

"Doesn't sound a likely spot, certainly," said Tony.

He lit his cigarette and asked casually:

"What did your mother do in the last war?"

Deborah answered mechanically:

"Oh, nursed a bit and drove a general—army, I mean, not a bus. All the usual sort of things."

"Oh, I thought perhaps she'd been like you—in the Intelligence."

"Oh, Mother would never have had the head for this sort of work. I believe that after the war she and Father did do something in the sleuthing line. Secret papers and master spies—that sort of thing. Of course, the darlings exaggerate it all a good deal, and make it all sound as though it had been frightfully important. We don't really encourage them to talk about it much, because you know what one's family is—the same old story over and over again."

"Oh, rather," said Tony heartily. "I quite agree."

It was on the following day that Deborah, returning to her digs, was puzzled by something unfamiliar in the appearance of her room.

It took her a few minutes to fathom what it was. Then she rang the bell and demanded angrily of her landlady what had happened to the big photograph that always stood on the top of the chest of drawers.

Mrs. Rowley was aggrieved and resentful. She couldn't say, she was sure. She hadn't touched it herself. Maybe Gladys—

But Gladys also denied having removed it. The man had been about the gas, she said hopefully.

Deborah, however, declined to believe that an employee of the gas company would have taken a fancy to and removed the portrait of a middle-aged lady. Far more likely, in Deborah's opinion, that Gladys had smashed the photograph frame and had hastily removed all traces of the crime to the dustbin.

Deborah didn't make a fuss about it. Sometime or other she'd get her mother to send her another photo. She thought to herself with rising vexation:

"What's the old darling up to? She might tell me!"

Chapter Ten

IT was Tuppence's turn to talk to the fisherman on the end of the pier. She had hoped against hope that Mr. Grant might have some comfort for her. But her hopes were soon dashed. He stated definitely that no news of any kind had come from Tommy.

Tuppence said, trying her best to make her voice assured and businesslike:

"There's no reason to suppose that anything has—happened to him?"

"None whatever. But let's suppose it has. What about you?"

"Oh, I see. I—carry on, of course."

"That's the stuff. *There is time to weep after the battle.* We're in the thick of the battle now. And time is short. One piece of information you brought us has been proved correct. You overheard a reference to the *fourth.* The fourth referred to is the fourth of next month. It's the date fixed for the big attack on this country."

"You're sure?"
"Fairly sure. They're methodical people, our enemies. All their plans neatly made and worked out. Wish we could say the same of ourselves. Planning isn't our strong point. Yes, the fourth is the Day. All these raids aren't the real thing: they're mostly reconnaissance—testing our defences and our reflexes to air-attack. On the fourth comes the real thing."
"But if you know that—"
"We know the Day is fixed. We know, or think we know, roughly, *where*—though we may be wrong there. We're as ready as we can be—it's the old story of the siege of Troy. They knew, as we know, all about the forces without. It's the forces within we want to know about. We've *got* to have inside information in time."
Tuppence said despairingly: "I feel so futile—so inexperienced."
"Oh, you needn't worry about that. We've got experienced people working, all the experience and talent we've got, but when there's treachery within, we can't tell whom to trust. You and Bareford are the irregular forces. Nobody knows about you. That's why you've got a chance to succeed—that's why you *have* succeeded, up to a certain point."
"Can't you put some of your people on to Mrs. Perenna? There *must* be some of them you can trust absolutely!"
"Oh, we've done that. Working from 'information received that Mrs. Perenna is a member of the I.R.A. with anti-British sympathies.' That's true enough, by the way—but we can't get proof of anything further. Not of the vital facts we want. So stick to it, Mrs. Bareford. Go on, and do your darnedest."
"The fourth," said Tuppence. "That's barely a week ahead."
"It's a week exactly."
Tuppence clenched her hands. "We *must* get some*thing!* I say *we,* because I believe Tommy is on to something, and that that's why he hasn't come back. He's following up a lead. If I could only get something too. I wonder—"
She frowned, planning a new form of attack.

"You see, Albert, it's a possibility."
"I see what you mean, madam, of course. But I don't like the idea very much, I must say."
"I think it might work."
"Yes, madam; but it's exposing yourself to attack—that's what I don't like. And I'm sure the master wouldn't like it."
"We've tried all the usual ways. That is to say, we've done what we could, keeping under cover. It seems to me that now the only chance is to come out into the open."
"You are aware, madam, that thereby you may be sacrificing an advantage?"
"You're frightfully B.B.C. in your language this afternoon, Albert," said Tuppence, with some exasperation.
"Where's Captain Bareford? That's what I'd like to know."
"So should I," said Tuppence, with a pang.
"Don't seem natural, his disappearing without a word. He ought to have tipped you the wink by now. That's why—"
"Yes, Albert?"
"What I mean is, if *he's* come out in the open, perhaps *you'd* better not."
He paused to arrange his ideas and then went on:
"I mean, they've blown the gaff on *him,* but *they mayn't know about you*—and so it's up to you to keep under cover still."
"I wish I could make up my mind," sighed Tuppence.
"Which way were you thinking of managing it, madam?"
Tuppence murmured thoughtfully: "I thought I might lose a letter I'd written—make a lot of fuss about it, seem very upset. Then it would be found in the hall, and Beatrice would probably put it on the hall table. Then the right person would get a look at it."
"What would be in the letter?"
"Oh, roughly—that I'd been successful in discovering the *identity of the person in question,* and that I was to make a full report personally tomorrow. Then, you see, Albert, N. or M. would have to come out in the open and have a shot at eliminating me."
"Yes, and maybe they'd manage it, too."
"Not if I was on my guard. They'd have, I think, to decoy me away somewhere—some lonely spot. That's where *you'd* come in—because they don't know about you."
"I'd follow them up and catch them red-handed, so to speak?"
Tuppence nodded. "That's the idea. I must think it out carefully. I'll meet you tomorrow."

Tuppence was just emerging from the local lending library with what had been recommended to her as "a nice book" clasped under her arm, when she was startled by a voice saying:
"Mrs. Bareford."
She turned abruptly, to see a tall dark young man with an agreeable but slightly embarrassed smile.
He said: "Er—I'm afraid you don't remember me?"
Tuppence was thoroughly used to the formula. She could have predicted with accuracy the words that were coming next.
"I—er—came to the flat with Deborah one day."
Deborah's friends! So many of them; and all, to Tuppence, looking singularly alike! Some dark like this young man, some fair, an occasional red-haired one—but all cast in the same mold; pleasant, well-mannered.
Annoying to have run across and been recognized by one of Deborah's young men just now! However, she could probably soon shake him off.
"I'm Antony Marsdon," explained the young man.
Tuppence murmured mendaciously, "Oh, of course," and shook hands.
Tony Marsdon went on: "I'm awfully glad to have found you, Mrs. Bareford. You see, I'm working at the same job as Deborah, and as a matter of fact, something rather awkward has happened."
"Yes?" said Tuppence. "What is it?"
"Well, you see, Deborah's found out that you're not down in Cornwall as she thought, and that makes it a bit awkward, doesn't it, for you?"
"Oh, bother!" said Tuppence, concerned. "How did she find out?"
Tony Marsdon explained. He went on rather diffidently:
"Deborah, of course, has no idea of what you're really doing."
He paused discreetly, and then went on:
"It's important, I imagine, that she shouldn't know. My job, actually, is rather the same line. I'm supposed to be just a beginner in the Coding Department. Really my instructions are to express views that are mildly Fascist—admiration of the German system, insinuations that a working alliance with Hitler wouldn't be a bad thing, all that sort of thing—just to see what response I get. There's a good deal of rot going on, you see, and we want to find out who's at the bottom of it."
"Not everywhere," thought Tuppence.
"But as soon as Deb told me about you," continued the young man, "I thought I'd better come straight down and warn you, so that you could cook up a likely story. You see, I happen to know what you are doing, and that it's of vital importance. It would be fatal if any hint of who you are got about. I thought perhaps you could make it seem as though you'd joined Captain Bareford in Scotland or wherever he is. You might say that you'd been allowed to work with him there."
"I might do that, certainly," said Tuppence thoughtfully.
Tony Marsdon said anxiously: "You don't think I'm butting in?"
"No, no, I'm very grateful to you."
Tony said rather inconsequentially:
"I'm—well, you see, I'm rather fond of Deborah."
Tuppence flashed him an amused quick glance.
How far away it seemed, that world of attentive young men, and Deb with her rudeness to them that never seemed to put them off. This young man was, she thought, quite an attractive specimen. . . . She put aside what she called to herself "peacetime thoughts" and concentrated on the present situation. After a moment or two she said slowly:
"My husband isn't in Scotland."
"Isn't he?"
"No, he's down here with me. At least he was! Now—he's disappeared."
"I say, that's bad—or isn't it? Was he on to something?"
Tuppence nodded. "I think so. That's why I don't think that his disappearing like this is really a bad sign.

I think, sooner or later, he'll communicate with me—in his own way." She smiled a little.
Tony said, with some slight embarrassment:
"Of course, you know the game well, I expect. But you ought to be careful."
Tuppence nodded. "I know what you mean. Beautiful heroines in books are always easily decoyed away. But Tommy and I have our methods. We've got a slogan," she smiled. *"Penny plain and tuppence colored."*
"What?" The young man stared at her as though she had gone mad.
"I ought to explain that my family nickname is Tuppence."
"Oh, I see." The young man's brow cleared. "Ingenious—what?"
"I hope so."
"I don't want to butt in—but couldn't I help in any way?"
"Yes," said Tuppence thoughtfully. "I think perhaps you might."

Chapter Eleven

FTER long æons of unconsciousness, Tommy began to be aware of a fiery ball swimming in space. In the center of the fiery ball was a core of pain; the universe shrank; the fiery ball swung more slowly—he discovered suddenly that the nucleus of it was his own aching head.

Slowly he became aware of other things—of cold cramped limbs, of hunger, of an inability to move his lips.
Slower and slower swung the fiery ball. . . . It was now Thomas Bareford's head, and it was resting on solid ground. Very solid ground—something suspiciously like stone.
Yes, he was lying on hard stones, and he was in pain, unable to move, extremely hungry, cold, and uncomfortable. Surely, although Mrs. Perenna's beds had never been unduly soft, this could not be—
Of course! Haydock! The wireless! The German waiter! Turning in at the gates of Sans Souci—
Someone, creeping up behind him, had struck him down. That was the reason for his aching head; and he'd thought he'd got away with it all right! So Haydock, after all, hadn't been quite such a fool.
Haydock? Haydock had gone back into Smuggler's Rest, and closed the door. How had he managed to get down the hill and be waiting for Tommy in the grounds of Sans Souci?
It couldn't be done. Not without Tommy's seeing him. The manservant, then? Had he been sent ahead to lie in wait? But surely, as Tommy had crossed the hall, he had seen Appledore in the kitchen, of which the door was slightly ajar. Or did he only fancy he had seen him? Perhaps that was the explanation. . . . Anyway, it didn't matter. The thing to do was to find out where he was now.
His eyes, accustomed to the darkness, picked out a small rectangle of dim light—a window or small grating. The air smelled chill and musty. He was evidently lying in a cellar. His hands and feet were tied, and a gag in his mouth was secured by a bandage.
"Seems rather as though I'm for it," thought Tommy.
At that moment there was a faint creaking sound, and a door somewhere behind him was pushed open. A man with a candle came in. He set down the candle on the ground. Tommy recognized Appledore. The latter disappeared again, and returned carrying a tray on which was a jug of water, a glass and some bread and cheese.
Stooping down, he first tested the cords binding the other's limbs. He then touched the gag.
He said in a quiet level voice:
"I am about to take this off. You will then be able to eat and drink. If, however, you make the slightest sound, I shall replace it immediately."
Tommy tried to nod, but it proved impossible; so he opened and shut his eyes several times instead. Appledore, taking this for consent, unknotted the bandage.
His mouth freed, Tommy spent some few minutes easing his jaw. Appledore held the glass of water to his lips. He swallowed at first with difficulty, then more easily. The water did him a world of good. He murmured stiffly:
"That's better. I'm not quite so young as I was. Now for the eats, Fritz—or is it Franz?"
The man said quietly: "My name here is Appledore."
He held the slice of bread and cheese up, and Tommy bit at it hungrily. The meal washed down with some more water, he then asked.
"And what's the next part of the program?"
For answer, Appledore picked up the gag again.
Tommy said quickly: "I want to see Commander Haydock."
Appledore shook his head. Deftly he replaced the gag and went out. Tommy was left to meditate in darkness.
He was awaked from a confused sleep by sound of the door reopening. This time Haydock and Appledore came in together. The gag was removed, and the cords that held Tommy's arms were loosened so that he could sit up and stretch his arms.
Haydock had an automatic pistol with him.
Tommy, without much inward confidence, began to play his part. He said indignantly:
"Look here, Haydock, what's the meaning of all this? I've been set upon—kidnaped."
The Commander was gently shaking his head. He said:
"Don't waste your breath. It's not worth it."
"Just because you're a member of our secret service, you think you can—"
Again the other shook his head.
"No, no, Meadowes. You weren't taken in by that story. No need to keep up the pretense."
But Tommy showed no signs of discomfiture. He argued to himself that the other could not really be sure.
"Who the devil do you think you are?" he demanded. "However great your powers, you've no right to behave like this. I'm perfectly capable of holding my tongue about any of our vital secrets!"
The other said coldly: "You do your stuff very well, but I may tell you that it's immaterial to me whether you're a member of the British Intelligence, or merely a muddling amateur."
"Of all the damned cheek—"
Haydock thrust a ferocious face forward.
"Be quiet, damn you! Earlier on, it would have mattered to find out who you were and who sent you. Now it doesn't matter. The time's short, you see. And you didn't have the chance to report what you'd found out."
"The police will be looking for me as soon as I'm reported missing."
Haydock showed his teeth in a sudden gleam.
"I've had the police here this evening. Good fellows—both friends of mine. They asked me all about Mr. Meadowes. Very concerned about his disappearance—how he seemed that evening, what he said. They never dreamt—how should they?—that the man they were talking about was practically underneath their feet where they were sitting. It's quite clear, you see, that you left this house well and alive. They'd never dream of looking for you here."
"You can't keep me here forever," Tommy said vehemently.
Haydock said with a resumption of his most British manner:
"It won't be necessary, my dear fellow. Only until tomorrow night. There's a boat due in at my little cove, and we're thinking of sending you on a voyage for your health—though actually I don't think you'll be alive, or even on board, when they arrive at their destination."
"I wonder you didn't knock me on the head straight away."
"It's such hot weather, my dear fellow. Just occasionally our sea communications are interrupted, and if that were to be so—well, a dead body on the premises has a way of announcing its presence."
"I see," said Tommy.

HE did see. It was perfectly clear: He was to be kept alive until the boat arrived. Then he would be killed or drugged, and taken out to sea. Nothing would ever connect his body, when found, with Smuggler's Rest.
"I just came along," continued Haydock, speaking in the most natural manner, "to ask whether there is anything we could—er—do for you—afterward?"
Tommy reflected. Then he said:
"Thanks—but I won't ask you to take a lock of my hair to the little woman in St. John's Wood, or anything of that kind. She'll miss me when pay-day comes along—but I dare say she'll soon find a friend elsewhere."

At all costs, he felt, he must create the impression that he was playing a lone hand. So long as no suspicion attached itself to Tuppence, then the game might still be won through, though he was not there to play it.

"As you please," said Haydock. "If you did care to send a message to—your friend, we would see it was delivered."

So he was, after all, anxious to get a little information about this unknown Mr. Meadowes? Very well, then, Tommy would keep him guessing.

He shook his head. "Nothing doing," he said.

"Very well." With an appearance of the utmost indifference, Haydock nodded to Appledore. The latter replaced the bonds and the gag. The two men went out, locking the door behind them.

Left to his reflections, Tommy felt anything but cheerful. Not only was he faced with the prospect of rapidly approaching death, but he had no means of leaving any clue behind him as to the information he had discovered.

His body was completely helpless. His brain felt singularly inactive. Could he, he wondered, have utilized Haydock's suggestion of a message? Perhaps if his brain had been working better. . . .

Damn it all, if only he had been more on his guard!

There was a little light in the cellar. It came through the grating, which was high up in one corner. If only he could get his mouth free, could shout for help. Somebody might hear, though it was very unlikely.

For the next half-hour he busied himself straining at the cords that bound him, and trying to bite through the gag. It was all in vain, however. The people who had adjusted those things knew their business. . . . It was, he judged, late afternoon. Haydock, he fancied, had gone out, for there were no sounds from overhead. Confound it all, he was probably playing golf, speculating at the clubhouse over what could have happened to Meadowes!

"Dined with me night before last—seemed quite normal, then. Just vanished into the blue."

Tommy writhed with fury. If only Tuppence could have second sight! She might suspect. She had, sometimes, an uncanny insight. . . . What was that? He strained his ears listening to a far-off sound. . . .

Only some man humming a tune. And here he was, unable to make a sound to attract anyone's attention. . . . The humming came nearer. A most untuneful noise. But the tune, though mangled, was recognizable. It dated from the last war—had been revived for this one.

If you were the only girl in the world,
And I were the only boy—

How often he had hummed that in 1917!

Dash this fellow! Why couldn't he sing in tune?

Suddenly Tommy's body grew taut and rigid. Those particular lapses were strangely familiar. Surely there was only one person who always went wrong in that one particular place, and in that one particular way!

"Albert, by gosh!" thought Tommy.

Albert, prowling round Smuggler's Rest. Albert, quite close at hand; and here was he, trussed up, unable to move hand or foot, unable to make a sound. . . .

Wait a minute. Was he?

There was just one sound—not so easy with the mouth shut as with the mouth open, but it could be done.

Desperately Tommy began to snore. He kept his eyes closed, ready to feign a deep sleep if Appledore should come down, and he snored, he snored. . . .

Short snore, short snore, short snore—pause. Long snore, long snore, long snore—pause. Short snore, short snore, short snore. . . .

WHEN Tuppence had left Albert, he was deeply perturbed. With the advance of years he had become a person of slow mental processes, but those processes were tenacious. Albert was not given to the exercise of deep reasoning. Like most Englishmen, if he felt something strongly, he proceeded to muddle around until he had, somehow or other, cleared up the mess. Deciding that the master had got to be found, Albert, rather after the manner of a faithful dog, set out to find him.

In this case, the last thing known about Tommy was that he had dined with Commander Haydock at Smuggler's Rest, and had then returned to Sans Souci and been last seen turning in at the gate. Albert accordingly climbed the hill as far as the gate of Sans Souci, and spent some five minutes staring hopefully at the gate. Nothing of a scintillating character having occurred to him, he sighed and wandered slowly up the hill to Smuggler's Rest.

Albert paused to survey the neat white-painted gate of Smuggler's Rest. That was it, that was where the master had gone to dinner. He went up the hill a little farther and came out on the downs. Nothing here. Nothing but grass and a few sheep.

The gate of Smuggler's Rest swung open, and a car passed out. A big man in plus fours, with golf-clubs, drove out and down the hill.

"That would be Commander Haydock, that would," Albert deduced.

He wandered down again and stared at Smuggler's Rest. A tidy little place. Nice bit of garden. Nice view. He eyed it benignly.

"I would say such wonderful things to you," he hummed.

Through a side door of the house a man came out with a hoe, and passed out of sight through a little gate. . . .

Slowly Albert circled nearer and nearer the house. He looked at it hopefully, as though asking it to tell him something. As he went, he hummed softly to himself.

Hullo! So the Commander kept pigs, did he? Funny! A long-drawn grunt came to him. Funny—seemed almost as though it were underground. Funny place to keep pigs.

Couldn't be pigs. No, it was someone having a bit of shut-eye. Bit of shut-eye in the cellar, so it seemed. Right kind of day for a snooze, but funny place to go for it. Humming like a bumblebee, Albert approached nearer.

That's where it was coming from—through that little grating. *Grunt, grunt, grunt—snoooooooore, snoooooooore, snoooooooore—grunt, grunt, grunt.* Funny sort of snore—reminded him of something. . . .

"Coo!" said Albert. "That's what it is! S.O.S. Dot, dot, dot, dash, dash, dash, dot, dot, dot."

He looked round him with a quick glance.

Then, kneeling, he tapped a soft message on the iron grill of the little window of the cellar.

Chapter Twelve

LTHOUGH Tuppence went to bed in an optimistic frame of mind, she suffered a severe reaction in those waking hours of early dawn when human morale sinks to its lowest. On descending to breakfast, however, her spirits were raised by sight of a letter on her plate addressed in a painfully backhanded script.

This was no communication from Douglas, Raymond or Cyril, or any other of the camouflaged correspondence that arrived punctually for her, and which included this morning a brightly colored Bonzo postcard with a scrawled, *"Sorry I haven't written before. All well, Maudie"* on it.

Tuppence thrust this aside and opened the letter. It ran:

Dear Patricia,

Auntie Grace, is, I am afraid, much worse today. The doctors do not actually say she is sinking, but I am afraid that there cannot be much hope. If you want to see her before the end, I think it would be well to come today. If you will take the 10:20 train to Yarrow, a friend will meet you with his car.

Shall look forward to seeing you again, dear, in spite of the melancholy reason.

Yours ever,
Penelope Playne.

It was all Tuppence could do to restrain her jubilation. Good old Penny Plain!

With some difficulty she assumed a mourning expression—and sighed heavily as she laid the letter down. To the two sympathetic listeners present, Mrs. O'Rourke and Miss Minton, she imparted the contents of the letter, and enlarged freely on the personality of Aunt Gracie, her indomitable spirit, her indifference to air-raids and danger, and her vanquishment by illness.

After breakfast Tuppence rang up the tailor's and canceled a fitting of a coat and skirt for that afternoon, and then sought out Mrs. Perenna and explained that she might be away from home for a night or two. Mrs. Perenna expressed the usual conventional sentiments. She looked tired this morning, and had an anxious harassed expression.

"Still no news of Mr. Meadowes," she said. "It really is *most* odd, is it not?"

"I'm sure he must have met with an accident," sighed Mrs. Blenkensop. "I always said so."

"Oh, but surely, Mrs. Blenkensop, the accident would have been reported by this time."

"Well, what do you think?" asked Tuppence.

Mrs. Perenna shook her head.

"You know, Mrs. Blenkensop," she said, "we don't know very much *about* Mr. Meadowes, do we?"

Tuppence said sharply: "What do you mean?"

"Oh, please don't take me up so sharply. *I* don't believe it—not for a minute."

"Don't believe what?"

"Well, there was a suggestion, you know, that Mr. Meadowes might be an enemy agent—one of these dreadful Fifth Column people."

Tuppence put all she could of an outraged Mrs. Blenkensop into her indignant:

"I never *heard* of such an absurd idea!"

"No. I don't think there's anything in it. But of course Mr. Meadowes *was* seen about a good deal with that German boy, and I believe he asked a lot of questions about the chemical processes at the factory—so people think perhaps the two of them might have been working together."

Tuppence said: "*You* don't think there's any doubt about Carl, do you, Mrs. Perenna?"

She saw a quick spasm distort the other woman's face.

"I wish I *could* think it was not true."

Tuppence said gently: "Poor Sheila!"

Mrs. Perenna's eyes flashed. "Her heart's broken, the poor child. Why should it be that way? Why couldn't it be someone else she set her heart upon?"

Tuppence shook her head. "Things don't happen that way."

"You're right." The other spoke in a deep, bitter voice. "It's got to be the way things tear you to pieces. . . . I—"

A cough interrupted her—a deep, throaty cough. Mrs. O'Rourke was standing in the doorway.

"Am I interrupting now?" she demanded.

Like a sponge across a slate, all evidence of Mrs. Perenna's outburst vanished from her face, leaving in their wake only the mild worried face of the proprietress of a guest-house whose guests were causing trouble.

"No, indeed, Mrs. O'Rourke," she said. "We were just talking about what had become of Mr. Meadowes. It's amazing the police can find no trace of him."

"Ah, the police!" said Mrs. O'Rourke in tones of easy contempt. "What good would they be? No good at all, at all! Only fit for fining motorcars, and dropping on poor wretches who haven't taken out their dog-licenses."

"What's your theory, Mrs. O'Rourke?" asked Tuppence.

Mrs. O'Rourke smiled, her slow ferocious smile.

"I'm thinking the man is safe somewhere—quite safe."

Tuppence thought: "She might say that if she knew. . . . But he isn't where she thinks he is!"

She went up to her room to get ready. Betty Sprot came running out of the Cabelys' bedroom with a smile of mischievous and impish glee on her face.

"What have you been up to, minx?" demanded Tuppence.

Betty gurgled: "Goosey, goosey gander—"

Tuppence chanted: "Whither will you wander? *Upstairs!*" She snatched up Betty high over her head. "*Downstairs!*" She rolled her on the floor.

At this minute Mrs. Sprot appeared, and Betty was led off to be attired for her walk.

Tuppence went into her room, and donned her hat.

She left Penelope Playne's letter artistically on the dressing-table and went downstairs and out of the house.

It was ten o'clock as she turned out of the gate. Plenty of time. She looked up at the sky, and in doing so stepped into a dark puddle by the gatepost, but without apparently noticing it she went on.

Her heart was dancing wildly. Success—success—they were going to succeed!

YARROW was a small country station where the village was some distance from the railway. Outside the station a car was waiting. A good-looking young man was driving it. He touched his peaked cap to Tuppence, but the gesture seemed hardly natural.

Tuppence kicked the off-side tire dubiously.

"Isn't this rather flat?"

"We haven't far to go, madam."

She nodded and got in. They drove, not toward the village, but toward the downs. After winding up over a hill, they took a side track that dropped sharply into a deep cleft. From the shadow of a small copse of trees, a figure stepped out. The car stopped; and Tuppence, getting out, went to meet Antony Marsdon.

"Bareford's all right," he said quickly. "We located him yesterday. He's a prisoner—the other side got him; and for good reasons he's remaining put for another twelve hours. You see, there's a small boat due in at a certain spot—and we want to catch her badly. That's why Bareford's lying low—we don't want to give the show away until the last minute."

He looked at her anxiously. "You do understand?"

"Oh, yes!" Tuppence was staring at a curious tangled mass of canvas material half-hidden by the trees.

"He'll be absolutely all right," continued the young man earnestly.

"Of course Tommy will be all right," said Tuppence impatiently. "You needn't talk to me as though I were a child of two. We're both ready to run a few risks. What's that thing over there?"

"Well—" The young man hesitated. "That's just it. I've been ordered to put a certain proposition before you. But—but well, frankly, I don't like doing it. You see—"

Tuppence treated him to a cold stare.

"Why don't you like doing it?"

"Well—dash it, you're Deborah's mother. And I mean—what would Deb say to me if—if—"

"My dear boy, I know exactly how you feel. That it's all very well for you and Deborah and the young generally to run risks, but that the mere middle-aged must be shielded. All complete nonsense, because if anyone is going to be liquidated, it is much better it should be the middle-aged, who have had the best part of their lives. Anyway, stop looking upon me as that sacred object Deborah's mother, and just tell me what dangerous and unpleasant job there is for me to do."

"You know," said the young man with enthusiasm, "I think you're splendid, simply splendid."

"Cut out the compliments," said Tuppence. "I'm admiring myself a good deal, so there's no need for you to chime in. What exactly *is* the big idea?"

TONY indicated the mass of crumpled material with a gesture.

"That," he said, "is the remains of a parachute."

"Aha!" said Tuppence. Her eyes sparkled.

"There was just an isolated parachutist," went on Marsden. "Fortunately, the L.D.V.s around here are quite a bright lot. The descent was spotted, and they got her."

"*Her?*"

"Yes, *her!* Woman dressed as a hospital nurse."

"I'm sorry she wasn't a nun," said Tuppence. "There have been so many good stories going around about nuns paying their fares in buses with hairy muscular arms."

"Well, she wasn't a nun and she wasn't a man in disguise. She was a woman of medium height, middle-aged, with dark hair and of slight build."

"In fact," said Tuppence, "a woman not unlike me?"

"You've hit it exactly," said Tony.

"Well?" said Tuppence.

Marsdon said slowly: "The next part of it is up to you."

Tuppence smiled. She said:

"I'm *on*, all right. Where do I go, and what do I do?"

"The instructions are very meager, unfortunately. In the woman's pocket there was a piece of paper with these words on it in German: *'Walk to Leatherbarrow—due east from the stone cross. 14 St. Asalph's Rd. Dr. Binion.'*"

Tuppence looked up. On the hilltop near by was a stone cross.

"That's it," said Tony. "Signposts have been removed, of course. But Leatherbarrow's a biggish place, and walking due east from the cross, you're bound to strike it."

"How far?"

"Five miles at least."

Tuppence made a slight grimace.

"Healthy walking exercise before lunch," she commented. "I hope Dr. Binion offers me lunch when I get there."

"Do you know German, Mrs. Bareford?"

"Hotel variety only. I shall have to be firm about speaking English—say my instructions were to do so."

"It's an awful risk," said Marsden.

"Nonsense. Who's to imagine there's been a substitution? Or does everyone know for miles round that there's been a parachutist brought down?"

"The two L.D.V. men who reported it are being kept by the chief constable. Don't want to risk their telling their friends how clever they have been!"

"Somebody else may have seen it—or heard about it?"

Tony smiled. "My dear Mrs. Bareford, every single day, word goes round that one, two, three, four, up to a hundred parachutists have been seen!"

"That's probably quite true," agreed Tuppence. "Well, lead me to it."

Tony said: "We've got the kit here—and a policewoman who's an expert in the art of make-up. Come with me."

Just inside the copse there was a tumbledown shed. At the door of it was a competent-looking middle-aged woman. She looked at Tuppence and nodded approvingly.

Inside the shed, seated on an upturned packing-case, Tuppence submitted herself to expert ministrations. Finally the operator stood back, nodded in a satisfied manner, and remarked:

"There now; I think we've made a very nice job of it. What do you think, sir?"

"Very good indeed," said Tony.

Tuppence stretched out her hand and took the mirror the other woman held. She surveyed her own face earnestly, and could hardly repress a cry of surprise.

The eyebrows had been trimmed to an entirely different shape, altering the whole expression. Small pieces of adhesive plaster hidden by curls pulled forward over the ears had tightened the skin of the face and altered its contours. A small amount of nose-putty had altered the shape of the nose, giving Tuppence an unexpectedly beaklike profile. Skillful make-up had added several years to her age, with heavy lines running down each side of the mouth. The whole face had a complacent, rather foolish look.

"It's frightfully clever," said Tuppence admiringly. She touched her nose gingerly.

"You must be careful," the other woman warned her. She produced two slices of thin rubber. "Do you think you could bear to wear these in your cheeks?"

"I suppose I shall have to," said Tuppence gloomily.

She slipped them in and worked her jaws carefully.

"It's not really too uncomfortable," she had to admit.

Tony then discreetly left the shed, and Tuppence shed her own clothing and got into the nurse's kit. It was not too bad a fit, though inclined to strain a little over the shoulders. The dark-blue bonnet put the final touch to her new personality. She rejected, however, the stout square-toed shoes.

"If I've got to walk five miles," she said decidedly, "I do it in my own shoes."

They both agreed that this was reasonable—particularly as Tuppence's own shoes were dark blue brogues that went well with the uniform.

She looked with interest into the dark-blue handbag—powder, no lipstick, two pounds fourteen and sixpence in English money, a handkerchief and an identity card in the name of Freda Elton, of Manchester Road, Sheffield.

Tuppence transferred her own powder and lipstick, and stood up, prepared to set out.

Tony Marsdon turned his head away. He said gruffly:

"I feel a swine letting you do this."

"I know just how you feel."

"But, you see, it's absolutely vital that we should get some idea of just where and how the attack will come."

Tuppence patted him on the arm.

"Don't you worry, my child. Believe it or not, I'm enjoying myself."

Tony said: "I think you're simply wonderful!"

SOMEWHAT weary, Tuppence stood outside 14 St. Asalph's Road and noted that Dr. Binion was a dental surgeon and not a doctor. From the corner of her eye she noted Tony Marsdon. He was sitting in a racy-looking car outside a house farther down the street.

It had been judged necessary for Tuppence to walk to Leatherbarrow exactly as instructed, since if she had been driven there in a car, the fact might have been noted. It was certainly true that two enemy aircraft had passed over the downs, circling low before making off, and they could have noted the nurse's lonely figure walking across-country.

Tony, with the expert policewoman, had driven off in the opposite direction and had made a big detour before approaching Leatherbarrow and taking up his position in St. Asalph's Road. Everything was now set.

"The arena doors open," murmured Tuppence. "Enter one Christian *en route* for the lions. Oh, well, nobody can say I'm not seeing life."

She crossed the road and rang the bell, wondering as she did so, exactly how much Deborah liked that young man.

The door was opened by an elderly woman with a stolid peasant face—not an English face.

"Dr. Binion?" said Tuppence.

The woman looked her slowly up and down.

"You will be Nurse Elton, I suppose."

"Yes."

"Then you will come up to the Doctor's surgery."

She stood back; the door closed behind Tuppence, who found herself standing in a narrow linoleum-lined hall.

The maid preceded her upstairs and opened a door on the first floor.

"Please to wait. The Doctor will come to you."

She went out, shutting the door behind her.

A very ordinary dentist's surgery—the appointments somewhat old and shabby. Tuppence looked at the dentist's chair and smiled to think that for once it held none of the usual terrors. She had the "dentist feeling," all right—but from quite different causes. Presently the door would open and "Dr. Binion" would come in. Who would Dr. Binion be? A stranger? Or someone she had seen before? If it was the person she was half expecting to see—

The door opened. The man who entered was not at all the person Tuppence had half fancied she might see! It was someone she had never considered as a likely starter.

It was Commander Haydock.

Chapter Thirteen

A FLOOD of wild surmises as to the part Commander Haydock had played in Tommy's disappearance surged through Tuppence's brain, but she thrust them resolutely aside. This was a moment for keeping all her wits about her. Would or would not the Commander recognize her? It was an interesting question. She had so steeled herself beforehand to display no recognition or surprise herself, no matter whom she might see, that she felt reasonably sure that she herself had displayed no signs untoward to the situation.

She rose now to her feet and stood there, standing in a respectful attitude, as befitted a mere German woman in the presence of a lord of creation.

"So you have arrived!" said the Commander.

He spoke in English, and his manner was precisely the same as usual.

"Yes," said Tuppence, and added, as though presenting her credentials: "Nurse Elton."

Haydock smiled as though at a joke.

"Nurse Elton! Excellent."

He looked at her approvingly. "You look absolutely right," he said kindly.

Tuppence inclined her head, but said nothing. She was leaving the initiative to him.

"You know, I suppose, what you have to do?" went on Haydock. "Sit down, please."

Tuppence sat down obediently. She replied:

"I was to take detailed instructions from you."

"Very proper," said Haydock. There was a faint suggestion of mockery in his voice. He said:

"You know the day?"

Tuppence made a rapid decision.

"The fourth!"

Haydock looked startled. A heavy frown creased his forehead.

"So you know that, do you?" he muttered.

There was a pause; then Tuppence said:

"You will tell me, please, what I have to do?"

Haydock said: "All in good time, my dear."

He paused a minute and then asked:

"You have heard, no doubt, of Sans Souci?"

"No," said Tuppence.

There was a queer smile on Haydock's face. He said:

"So you haven't heard of Sans Souci? That surprises me very much—since I was under the impression, you know, *that you'd been living there for the last month.*"

There was a dead silence. The Commander said:

"What about that, Mrs. Blenkensop?"

"I don't know what you mean, Dr. Binion. I landed by parachute this morning."

Again Haydock smiled—definitely an unpleasant smile. He said: "A few yards of canvas thrust into a bush create a wonderful illusion. And I am not Dr. Binion, dear lady. Dr. Binion is, officially, my dentist—he is good enough to lend me his surgery now and again."

"Indeed?" said Tuppence.

"Indeed, Mrs. Blenkensop! Or perhaps you would prefer me to address you by your real name of Bareford?"

Again there was a poignant silence. Tuppence drew a deep breath.

Haydock nodded. "The game's up, you see. *'You've walked into my parlor,' said the spider to the fly.*"

There was a faint click, and a gleam of blue steel showed in his hand. His voice took on a grim note as he said:

"And I shouldn't advise you to make any noise or try to arouse the neighborhood! You'd be dead before you got so much as a yelp out; and even if you did manage to scream, it wouldn't arouse attention. Patients under gas, you know, often cry out."

Tuppence said composedly:

"You seem to have thought of everything. Has it occurred to you that I have friends who know where I am?"

"Ah! Still harping on the blue-eyed boy—actually brown-eyed! Young Antony Marsdon. I'm sorry, Mrs. Bareford, but young Antony happens to be one of our most stalwart supporters in this country. As I said just now, a few yards of canvas creates a wonderful effect. You swallowed the parachute idea quite easily."

"I don't see the point of all this rigmarole!"

"Don't you? We don't want your friends to trace you too easily, you see. *If* they pick up your trail, it will lead to Yarrow and to a man in a car. The fact that a hospital nurse, of quite different facial appearance, walked into Leatherbarrow between one and two, will hardly be connected with your disappearance."

"Very elaborate," said Tuppence.

Haydock said: "I admire your nerve, you know. I admire it very much. I'm sorry to have to coerce you—but it's vital that we should know just exactly how much you *did* discover at Sans Souci."

Tuppence did not answer.

Haydock said quietly: "I'd advise you, you know, to come clean. There are certain—possibilities, in a dentist's chair and instruments."

Tuppence merely threw him a scornful look.

Haydock leaned back in his chair. He said slowly:

"Yes—I dare say you've got a lot of fortitude—your type often has. But what about the other half of the picture?"

"What do you mean?"

"I'm talking about Thomas Bareford, your husband, who has lately been living at Sans Souci under the name of Mr. Meadowes, and who is now very conveniently trussed up in the cellar of my house."

Tuppence said sharply: "I don't believe it."

"Because of the Penelope Playne letter? Don't you realize that that was just a smart bit of work on the part of young Antony? You played into his hands nicely when you gave him the code."

Tuppence's voice trembled: "Then Tommy—then Tommy—"

"Tommy," said Commander Haydock, "is where he has been all along—completely in my power! It's up to you now. If you answer my questions satisfactorily, there's a chance for him. If you don't—well, the original plan holds. He'll be knocked on the head, taken out to sea and put overboard."

FOR a minute or two Tuppence was silent; then she said: "What do you want to know?"

"I want to know who employed you, what your means of communication with that person or persons are, what you have reported so far, and exactly what you know."

Tuppence shrugged. "I could tell you what lies I chose," she pointed out.

"No; because I shall proceed to test what you say." He drew his chair a little nearer. His manner was now definitely appealing. "My dear woman, I know just what you feel about it all; but do believe me when I say I really do admire both you and your husband immensely. You've got grit and pluck. If I have to give the order that ends your husband's life, I shall do it—it's my duty; but I shall feel really badly about having to do it! He's a fine fellow—quiet, unassuming, and clever. Let me impress upon you what so few people in this country seem to understand: Our Leader does not intend to conquer this country in the sense that you all think. He aims at creating a new Britain—a Britain strong in its own power, ruled over, *not* by Germans, but by *Englishmen*. And the best *type* of Englishmen—Englishmen with brains and breeding and courage. *A brave new world,* as Shakespeare puts it."

He leaned forward.

"We want to do away with muddling and inefficiency—with bribery and corruption, with self-seeking and money-grubbing. *And in this new state we want people like you and your husband*—brave and resourceful—enemies that have been, friends to be. You would be surprised if you knew how many there are in this country, as in others, who have sympathy with and belief in our aims. Between us all, we will create a new Europe—a Europe of peace and progress. Try and see it that way—because, I assure you, it *is* that way."

His voice was compelling, magnetic. Leaning forward, he looked the embodiment of a hearty British sailor.

Tuppence looked at him and searched her mind for a telling phrase. She was only able to find one that was both childish and rude:

"Goosey, goosey gander!" said Tuppence.

THE effect was so magical that she was quite taken aback.

Haydock jumped to his feet; his face went dark purple with rage, and in a second all likeness to a hearty British sailor had vanished. She saw what Tommy had once seen—an infuriated Prussian. He swore at her fluently in German. Then, changing to English, he shouted:

"You infernal little fool! Don't you realize you give yourself away completely, answering like that? You've done for yourself now, you and your precious husband."

Raising his voice, he called:

"Anna!"

The woman who had admitted Tuppence came into the room. Haydock thrust the pistol into her hand.

"Watch her. Shoot if necessary."

He stormed out of the room.

Tuppence looked appealingly at Anna, who stood in front of her with an impassive face.

"Would you really shoot me?" said Tuppence.

Anna answered quietly: "You need not try to get round me. In the last war my son was killed, my Otto. I was thirty-eight then—I am sixty-two now, but I have not forgotten."

Tuppence looked at the broad, impassive face. It reminded her of the Polish woman, Vanda Polonskà. That same frightening ferocity and singleness of purpose. Motherhood—unrelenting!

Something stirred in the recesses of Tuppence's brain—some nagging recollection, something that she had never succeeded in getting into the forefront of her mind. Solomon—Solomon came into it somewhere.

The door opened. Commander Haydock came back into the room. He howled out, beside himself with rage:

"Where is it? Where have you hidden it?"

Tuppence stared at him. She was completely taken aback. What he was saying did not make sense to her. She had taken nothing and hidden nothing.

Haydock said to Anna: "Get out."

The woman handed the pistol to him and left the room promptly. Haydock dropped into a chair and seemed to be striving to pull himself together. He said:

"You can't get away with it, you know. I've got you, and I've got ways of making people speak—not pretty ways. You'll have to tell the truth in the end. Now then, *what have you done with it?*"

Tuppence was quick to see that here, at least, was something that gave her the possibility of bargaining. If only she could find out what it was she was supposed to have in her possession. She said cautiously:

"How do you know I've got it?"

"From what you said, you damned little fool. You haven't got it on you—that we know, since you changed completely into this kit."

"Suppose I posted it to someone?" said Tuppence.

"Don't be a fool. Everything you posted since yesterday has been examined. You didn't post it. No, there's only one thing you *could* have done—hidden it in Sans

Souci before you left this morning. I give you just three minutes to tell me where that hiding-place is."

He put his watch down on the table.

"Three minutes, Mrs. Thomas Bareford."

The clock on the mantelpiece ticked. Tuppence sat quite still with a blank impassive face. It revealed nothing of the racing thoughts behind it.

In a flash of bewildering light she saw everything—saw the whole business revealed in terms of blinding clarity, and realized at last who was the center and pivot of the whole organization. It came quite as a shock to her when Haydock said:

"Ten seconds more—"

Like one in a dream she watched him, saw the pistol arm rise, heard him count:

"One, two, three, four, five—"

He had reached *"eight"* when the shot rang out and he collapsed forward on his chair, an expression of bewilderment on his broad red face. So intent had he been on watching his victim, that he had been unaware of the door behind him slowly opening.

In a flash Tuppence was on her feet. She pushed her way past the uniformed men in the doorway, and seized on a tweed-clad arm.

"Mr. Grant!"

"Yes, yes, my dear, it's all right now—you've been wonderful—"

Tuppence brushed aside these reassurances.

"Quick! There's no time to lose. You've a car here?"

"Yes." He stared.

"A fast one? We must get to Sans Souci *at once.* If only we're in time! Before they telephone here, and get no answer."

Two minutes later they were in the car, and it was threading its way through the streets of Leatherbarrow. Then they were out in the open country and the needle of the speedometer was rising.

Mr. Grant asked no questions. He was content to sit quietly whilst Tuppence watched the speedometer in an agony of apprehension. The chauffeur had been given his orders, and he drove with all the speed of which the car was capable.

Tuppence only spoke once. "Tommy?"

"Quite all right. Released half an hour ago."

She nodded.

Now, at last, they were nearing Leahampton. They darted and twisted through the town, up the hill. Tuppence jumped out, and she and Mr. Grant ran up the drive. The hall door, as usual, was open. There was no one in sight. Tuppence ran lightly up the stairs.

She just glanced inside her own room in passing, and noted the confusion of open drawers and disordered bed. She nodded and passed on, along the corridor and into the room occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Cabely. The room was empty; it looked peaceful and smelled slightly of medicines.

Tuppence ran across to the bed and pulled at the coverings. They fell to the floor and she ran her hand under the mattress. She turned triumphantly to Mr. Grant with a tattered child's picture-book in her hand.

"Here you are. It's all in here—"

"What on—"

They turned. Mrs. Sprot was standing in the doorway, staring.

"And now," said Tuppence, *"let me introduce you to M.!* Yes. *Mrs. Sprot!* I ought to have known it all along."

It was left to Mrs. Cabely arriving in the doorway a moment later, to introduce the appropriate anti-climax.

"Oh, *dear,"* said Mrs. Cabely, looking with dismay at her spouse's dismantled bed. "Whatever *will* Mr. Cabely say?"

Chapter Fourteen

I OUGHT to have known it all along," said Tuppence.

She was reviving her shattered nerves by a generous tot of old brandy, and was beaming alternately at Tommy and at Mr. Grant—and at Albert, who was sitting in front of a pint of beer and grinning from ear to ear.

"Tell us all about it, Tuppence," urged Tommy.

"You first," said Tuppence.

"There's not much for me to tell," said Tommy. "Sheer accident let me into the secret of the wireless transmitter. I thought I'd got away with it, but Haydock was too smart for me."

Tuppence nodded and said:

"He telephoned to Mrs. Sprot at once. And she ran out into the drive and lay in wait for you with the hammer. She was only away from the bridge table for about three minutes. I *did* notice she was a little out of breath, but I never suspected her."

"After that," said Tommy, "the credit belongs entirely to Albert. He came sniffing round like a faithful dog. I did some impassioned Morse snoring, and he caught on to it. He went off to Mr. Grant with the news, and the two of them came back late that night. More snoring! Result was, I agreed to remain put, so as to catch the sea forces when they arrived."

Mr. Grant added his quota.

"When Haydock went off this morning, our people took charge at Smuggler's Rest," he said. "We nabbed the boat this evening."

"AND now, Tuppence," said Tommy, "your story."

"Well, to begin, I've been the most frightful fool all along! I suspected everybody here except Mrs. Sprot! I *did* once have a terrible feeling of menace, as though I was in danger—that was after I overheard that telephone message about the fourth of the month. There were three people there at the time; I put down my feeling of apprehension to either Mrs. Perenna or Mrs. O'Rourke. Quite wrong—it was the colorless Mrs. Sprot who was the really dangerous personality.

"I went muddling on, as Tommy knows, until after he disappeared. Then I was just cooking up a plan with Albert, when suddenly, out of the blue, Antony Marsdon turned up. It seemed all right to begin with—the usual sort of young man that Deb often has in tow. But two things made me think a bit. First I became more and more sure, as I talked to him, that I *hadn't* seen him before, and that he never *had* been to the flat. The second was that, though he seemed to know all about *my* working at Leahampton, he assumed that *Tommy* was in Scotland. Now, that seemed all wrong. If he knew about anyone, it would be *Tommy* he knew about, since I was more or less unofficial. That struck me as very odd.

"Mr. Grant had told me that Fifth Columnists were everywhere—in the most unlikely places. So why shouldn't one of them be working in Deborah's show? I wasn't convinced, but I *was* suspicious enough to lay a trap for him. I told him that Tommy and I had fixed up a code for communicating with each other. Our real one, of course, was a Bonzo postcard, but I told Antony a fairy-tale about the 'penny plain and tuppence colored' saying.

"As I hoped, he rose to it beautifully! I got a letter this morning which gave him away completely.

"The arrangements had been all worked out beforehand. All I had to do was to ring up a tailor and cancel a fitting. That was an intimation that the fish had risen."

"Coo-er!" said Albert. "It didn't half give me a turn! I drove up with a baker's van, and we dumped a pool of stuff just outside the gate. Aniseed, it was—or smelt like it."

"And then—" Tuppence took up the tale. "I came out and walked in it. Of course it was easy for the baker's van to follow me to the station, and someone came up behind me and heard me book to Yarrow. It was after that that it might have been difficult."

"The dogs followed the scent well," said Mr. Grant. "They picked it up at Yarrow station, and again on the track the tire had made after you rubbed your shoe on it. It led us down to the copse, and up again to the stone cross, and after you where you had walked over the downs. The enemy had no idea we could follow you easily after they themselves had seen you start and driven off themselves."

"All the same," said Albert, "it give me a turn. Knowing you were in that house, and not knowing what might come to you. Got in a back window, we did, an' nabbed the foreign woman as she came down the stairs. Come in just in the nick of time, we did."

"I knew you'd come," said Tuppence. "The thing was for me to spin things out as long as I could. I'd have pretended to tell, if I hadn't seen the door opening. What was really exciting was the way I suddenly saw the whole thing and what a fool I'd been."

"How did you see it?" asked Tommy.

"Goosey, goosey, gander," said Tuppence promptly. "When I said that to Commander Haydock, he went abso-

lutely livid. And not just because it was silly and rude. No, I saw at once that it *meant* something to him. And then there was the expression on that woman's face—Anna—it was like the Polish woman's; and then, of course, I thought of Solomon, and I saw the whole thing."

Tommy gave a sigh of exasperation.

"Tuppence, if you say that once again, I'll shoot you myself. Saw all *what?* And what on earth has Solomon got to do with it?"

"Do you remember that two women came to Solomon with a baby, and each said it was hers, but Solomon said: 'Very well—cut it in two.' And the false mother said, 'All right.' But the real mother said: 'No, let the other woman have it.' You see, she couldn't face her child being killed. Well, that night that Mrs. Sprot shot the other woman, you all said what a miracle it was, and how easily she might have shot the child. Of course, it ought to have been quite plain then! If it *had* been her child, she *couldn't* have risked that shot for a minute. It meant that Betty *wasn't* her child. And that's why she absolutely *had* to shoot the other woman."

"Why?"

"Because, of course, the other woman was the child's *real* mother." Tuppence's voice shook a little.

"Poor thing—poor hunted thing! She came over, a penniless refugee, and gratefully agreed to let Mrs. Sprot adopt her baby."

"Why did Mrs. Sprot want to adopt the child?"

"Camouflage! Supreme psychological camouflage. You just can't conceive of a master spy dragging her kid into the business. That's the main reason why I never considered Mrs. Sprot seriously. Simply because of the child. But Betty's real mother had a terrible hankering for her baby, and she found out Mrs. Sprot's address and came down here. She hung about waiting for her chance, and at last she got it, and went off with the child.

"Mrs. Sprot, of course, was frantic. At all costs she didn't want the police. So she wrote that message and pretended she found it in her bedroom, and roped in Commander Haydock to help. Then, when we'd tracked down the wretched woman, she was taking no chances and shot her. Far from not knowing anything about firearms, she was a very fine shot! Yes, she killed that wretched woman—and because of that, I've no pity for her. She is bad through and through."

Tuppence paused; then she went on:

"Another thing that ought to have given me a hint was the likeness between Vanda Polonska and Betty. It was *Betty* the woman reminded me of, all along. And then the child's absurd play with my shoelaces. How much more likely that she'd seen her so-called mother do that—not Carl von Deinim! But as soon as Mrs. Sprot saw what the child was doing, she planted a lot of evidence in Carl's room for us to find, and added the master-touch of a shoelace dipped in secret ink."

"I'm glad that Carl wasn't in it," said Tommy. "I liked him."

"He's not been shot, has he?" asked Tuppence anxiously, noting the past tense.

MR. GRANT shook his head.

"He's all right," he said. "As a matter of fact, I've got a little surprise for you there."

Tuppence's face lit up as she said:

"I'm terribly glad—for Sheila's sake! Of course we were idiots to go on barking up the wrong tree after Mrs. Perenna."

"She was mixed up in some I.R.A. activities, nothing more," said Mr. Grant.

"I suspected Mrs. O'Rourke a little—and sometimes the Cabelys."

"And I suspected Bletchley," put in Tommy.

"And all the time," said Tuppence, "it was that milk-and-water creature we thought of as—Betty's mother."

"Hardly milk-and-water," said Mr. Grant. "A very dangerous woman, and a very clever actress. And, I'm sorry to say, English by birth."

Tuppence said: "Then I've no pity or admiration for her—it wasn't even her country she was working for." She looked with fresh curiosity at Mr. Grant. "You found what you wanted?"

Mr. Grant nodded. "It was all in that battered set of duplicate children's books."

"The ones Betty said were *'nasty,'"* Tuppence cried.

"They *were* nasty," said Mr. Grant dryly. " 'Little Jack Horner' contained very full details of our naval dispositions. 'Johnny Head in Air' did the same for the Air Force. Military matters were appropriately embodied in 'There Was a Little Man and He Had a Little Gun.' "

"And *Goosey, Goosey, Gander?"* asked Tuppence.

Mr. Grant said:

"Treated with the appropriate reagent, that book contains written in invisible ink a full list of all prominent personages who are pledged to assist an invasion of this country."

He added: "If you saw the list, you could realize that, with such persons to issue contradictory orders and confuse operations, the threatened invasion would have had every chance to succeed."

"And now?" said Tuppence.

Mr. Grant smiled. "And now," he said, *"let them come! We'll be ready for them!"*

Chapter Fifteen

"DARLING," said Deborah, "do you know I almost thought terrible things about you?"

"Did you," said Tuppence. "When?" Her eyes rested affectionately on her daughter.

"That time when you sloped off to Scotland to join Father, and I thought you were with Aunt Gracie. I almost thought you were having an affair with someone."

"Oh, Deb, did you?"

"Not really, of course. Not at your age. And of course I know you and Carrot-top are devoted to each other. It was really an idiot called Tony Marsdon who put it into my head. Do you know, Mother—I think I might tell you—he was found afterwards to be a Fifth Columnist. He always did talk rather oddly—how things would be just the same, perhaps better, if Hitler did win."

"Did you—er—like him at all?"

"Tony? Oh, no—he was always rather a bore. . . . I must dance this."

She floated away in the arms of a fair-haired young man, smiling at him sweetly. Tuppence followed their revolutions for a few minutes; then her eyes shifted to where a tall young man in Air Force uniform was dancing with a fair-haired slender girl.

"I do think, Tommy," said Tuppence, "that our children are rather nice."

"Here's Sheila," said Tommy.

He got up as Sheila Perenna came toward their table. She was dressed in an emerald evening dress which showed up her dark beauty. But she greeted her host and hostess somewhat ungraciously.

"I've come, you see," she said, "as I promised. But I can't think why you wanted to ask me."

"Because we like you," said Tommy, smiling.

"Do you really?" said Sheila. "I can't think why. I've been perfectly foul to you both." She paused, then murmured: "But I am grateful."

Tuppence said: "We must find a nice partner to dance with you."

"I don't want to dance. I loathe dancing. I came just to see you two."

"You will like the partner we've asked to meet you," said Tuppence, smiling.

"I—" Sheila began; then stopped, for Carl von Deinim was walking across the floor.

Sheila looked at him like one dazed. She muttered:

"You—"

"I, myself," said Carl.

There was something a little different about Carl von Deinim this evening. Sheila stared at him, a trifle perplexed. The color had come up in her cheeks, turning them a deep glowing red. She said a little breathlessly:

"I knew that you would be all right now—but I thought they would still keep you interned."

Carl shook his head. "There is no reason to intern me."

He went on: "You have got to forgive me, Sheila, for deceiving you. I am not, you see, Carl von Deinim at all. I took his name for reasons of my own."

He looked questioningly at Tuppence, who said:

"Go ahead. Tell her."

"Carl von Deinim was my friend. I knew him in England some years ago. I renewed acquaintanceship with

him in Germany just before the war. I was there on special business for this country."

"You were in the Intelligence?" asked Sheila.

"Yes. When I was there, queer things began to happen. Once or twice I had some very near escapes. My plans were known when they should not have been known. I realized that there was something very wrong, and that 'the rot,' to express it in their terms, had penetrated actually into the service in which I was. I had been let down by my own people. Carl and I had a certain superficial likeness (my grandmother was a German); hence my suitability for work in Germany. Carl was not a Nazi. He was interested solely in his job, a job I myself had also practiced—research chemistry. He decided, shortly before war broke out, to escape to England. His brothers had been sent to concentration-camps. There would, he thought, be great difficulties in the way of his own escape, but in an almost miraculous fashion all these difficulties smoothed themselves out. The fact, when he mentioned it to me, made me somewhat suspicious. Why were the authorities making it so easy for Von Deinim to leave Germany, when his brothers and other relations were in concentration-camps, and he himself was suspected because of his anti-Nazi sympathies? It seemed as though they wanted him in England for some reason. My own position was becoming increasingly precarious. Carl's lodgings were in the same house as mine; and one day I found him, to my sorrow, lying dead on his bed. He had succumbed to depression and taken his own life, leaving a letter behind, which I read and pocketed.

"I decided then to effect a substitution. I wanted to get out of Germany—and I wanted to know why Carl was being encouraged to do so. I dressed his body in my clothes and laid it on my bed. It was disfigured by the shot he had fired into his head, and my landlady, I knew, was semi-blind.

"With Carl von Deinim's papers I traveled to England and went to the address to which he had been recommended to go. That address was Sans Souci.

"Whilst I was there, I played the part of Carl von Deinim and never relaxed. I found arrangements had been made for me to work in the chemical factory there. At first I thought that the idea was I should be compelled to do work for the Nazis. I realized later that the part for which my poor friend had been cast was that of scapegoat.

"When I was arrested on faked evidence, I said nothing. I wanted to leave the revelation of my own identity as late as possible. I wanted to see what would happen.

"It was only a few days ago that I was recognized by one of our people, and the truth came out."

Sheila said reproachfully: "You should have told me."

He said gently: "If you feel like that—I am sorry."

His eyes looked into hers. She returned his gaze angrily and proudly; then abruptly the anger melted and she said:

"I suppose you had to do what you did—"

"Darling—" He caught himself up. "Let us dance!"

They moved off together.

TUPPENCE sighed.

"What's the matter?" said Tommy.

"I do hope Sheila will go on caring for him, now that he isn't a German outcast with everyone against him."

"She looks as though she cared, all right."

"Yes, but the Irish are terribly perverse. And Sheila is a born rebel."

"Why did he search your room that day? That's what led us up the garden path so terribly."

Tommy gave a laugh. "I gather he thought Mrs. Blenkensop wasn't a very convincing person. In fact, while we were suspecting him, he was suspecting us."

"Hullo, you two," said Derek as he and his partner danced past his parents' table. "Why don't you dance?"

He smiled encouragingly at them.

"They are so kind to us, bless 'em," said Tuppence.

PRESENTLY the twins and their partners returned and sat down. Derek said to his father:

"Glad you got a job all right. Not very interesting, I suppose?"

"Mainly routine," said Tommy.

"Never mind; you're doing something. That's the great thing."

"And I'm glad Mother was allowed to go and work too," said Deborah. "She looks ever so much happier. It wasn't too dull, was it, Mother?"

"I didn't find it at all dull," said Tuppence.

"Good," said Deborah. She added: "When the war's over, I'll be able to tell you something about my job. It's really frightfully interesting, but very confidential."

"How thrilling!" said Tuppence.

"Oh, it is! Of course, it's not so thrilling as flying—"

She looked enviously at Derek. She said: "He's going to be recommended for—"

Derek said quickly: "Shut up, Deb."

Tommy said: "Hullo, Derek, what have you been up to?"

"Oh, nothing much—sort of show all of us are doing. Don't know why they pitched on me," murmured the young air-man, his face scarlet. He looked as embarrassed as though he had been accused of the most deadly of sins.

He got up, and the fair-haired girl got up too.

Derek said: "Mustn't miss any of this—last night of my leave."

"Come on, Charley," said Deborah.

The two of them floated away with their partners.

Tuppence prayed inwardly:

"Oh, let them be safe—don't let anything happen to them!"

She looked up to meet Tommy's eyes. He said: "About that child—shall we?"

"Betty? Oh, Tommy, I'm so glad you've thought of it too! I thought it was just me being maternal. You really mean it?"

"That we should adopt her? Why not? She's had a raw deal, and it will be fun for us to have something young growing up."

"Oh, Tommy!"

She stretched out her hand and squeezed his. They looked at each other.

"We always do want the same things," said Tuppence happily.

Deborah, passing Derek on the floor, murmured to him:

"Just look at those two — actually holding hands! They're rather sweet, aren't they? We must do all we can to make up to them for having a dull time in this war."

THE END

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